

Ambident

Motivationally ambivalent. A classical example is the situation of Buridan's ass: The hungry ass stands precisely midway between two stacks of hay due to which he cannot move.

Ambivalence (Greek *amphi dissociation* + Latin *valens power, strength*)

Easy transformation of the positive into the negative and vice versa and their frequent simultaneous coexistence; internally inconsistent psychological state; simultaneous actualization of opposite experience (feelings, thoughts, motives...). The state of ambivalence is most typical of **emotions**. For example, a person might simultaneously experience love, sympathy, envy, and hatred in relation to another, often close, person. These feelings merge and exist in the form of complex feeling. At the same time, all of them might be sincere. Also, the feeling of jealousy simultaneously comprises the emotions of love and hatred and strong love often evokes strong anger, even hatred (people could be angry with the people they love even more than with an enemy). Ambivalence is usually caused by the fact that different aspects of an object differently affect the person's needs and attitudes (e.g. we might respect a person for his/her hard work, but criticize them for being explosive).

Ambivalence is also typical of emotionally charged, **distinct** experience (**needs, attitudes**). The basis of ambivalence is a dialectical character of actual set; in particular, actual set often simultaneously involves, as its constituents, the sets with different direction as well as opposite fixed sets. A typical example is the special case of the ambivalence of feelings, when a deep dispositional set (correspondingly, the relevant stable set) and a temporary situational compound of the actual set (correspondingly – the relevant temporary feeling) contradict each other. An example: A person is hurt when a positively evaluated person does not give him/her enough attention.

Another reason for ambivalence is the complexity of the unity of human needs. It often happens that one and the same event satisfies a need and, for this reason, is experienced positively, but, at the same time, it blocks other needs and, therefore, is experienced negatively. Furthermore, when pleasure and its opposite feeling have the same intensity, their merger results in a strong ambivalent **distinctness** rather than indifference or neutral position.

Ambident feelings can be well illustrated by exclamations, which, usually, reflect several opposite feelings: admiration – resentment, happiness – sadness, surprise, regret . . .

The term was introduced by E. Bleuler. Its original meaning: People suffering from schizophrenia are characterized by contradictory attitudes and opposite reactions which replace each other quite fast.