

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, November 5, 2012

Where: JMHH 340

When: 12:00 noon to 1:20 PM

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The Problem with Principle #8

ABSTRACT: Dale Carnegie wrote the best-selling guidebook for social success (“How to win friends...”). His eighth principle is a frequently endorsed solution for social misunderstanding: “try honestly to see things from the other person’s point of view.” Active perspective taking is commonly presumed to increase insight into the minds of others. I will describe a program of research that calls this presumption into question. Although perspective taking—defined as actively trying to put yourself in another person’s shoes—appears to reduce egocentric biases in judgment, we find no evidence that it provides a systematically more accurate understanding of others minds. If anything, perspective taking reliably decreases accuracy in some tasks. Perspective taking may have many social benefits, but systematically increasing accuracy does not appear to be among them.