

The Influence of Warmth



I mentioned in a [previous Three Bowls post](#) that a linguist friend of mine once said, the answer is always in the words you choose to use..

I used the example of how we view our bodies...

If you want a 'Hot' Body, you have to sweat and 'Burn' Fat.

When you look good people say you're 'Hot' or as the kids say these days... 'You're Fire'.

However, this applies to personality too...

We all know what a cold-hearted person is...

And it's been said that "Warmth" is the most powerful personality trait in social judgment.

Interestingly, it is believed that most abstract psychological concepts are metaphorically based on concrete physical experiences.

In this way, the feelings of warmth when one holds a hot cup of coffee or takes a warm bath might activate other feelings associated with warmth (trust and comfort).

To test this idea researchers had participants primed with temperature by briefly holding either a cup of hot coffee, or a cup of iced coffee, and then asked to judge an unknown person.

The people who had briefly held the hot coffee cup perceived the target person as being significantly warmer (more trustworthy and kind) than did those who had briefly held the cup of iced coffee.

The effect of the coffee manipulation was specific to feelings of interpersonal warmth and was not a general mood or "halo" effect.

Just another interesting example of the robustness of [temperature's influence](#) on our physiology and psychology.

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