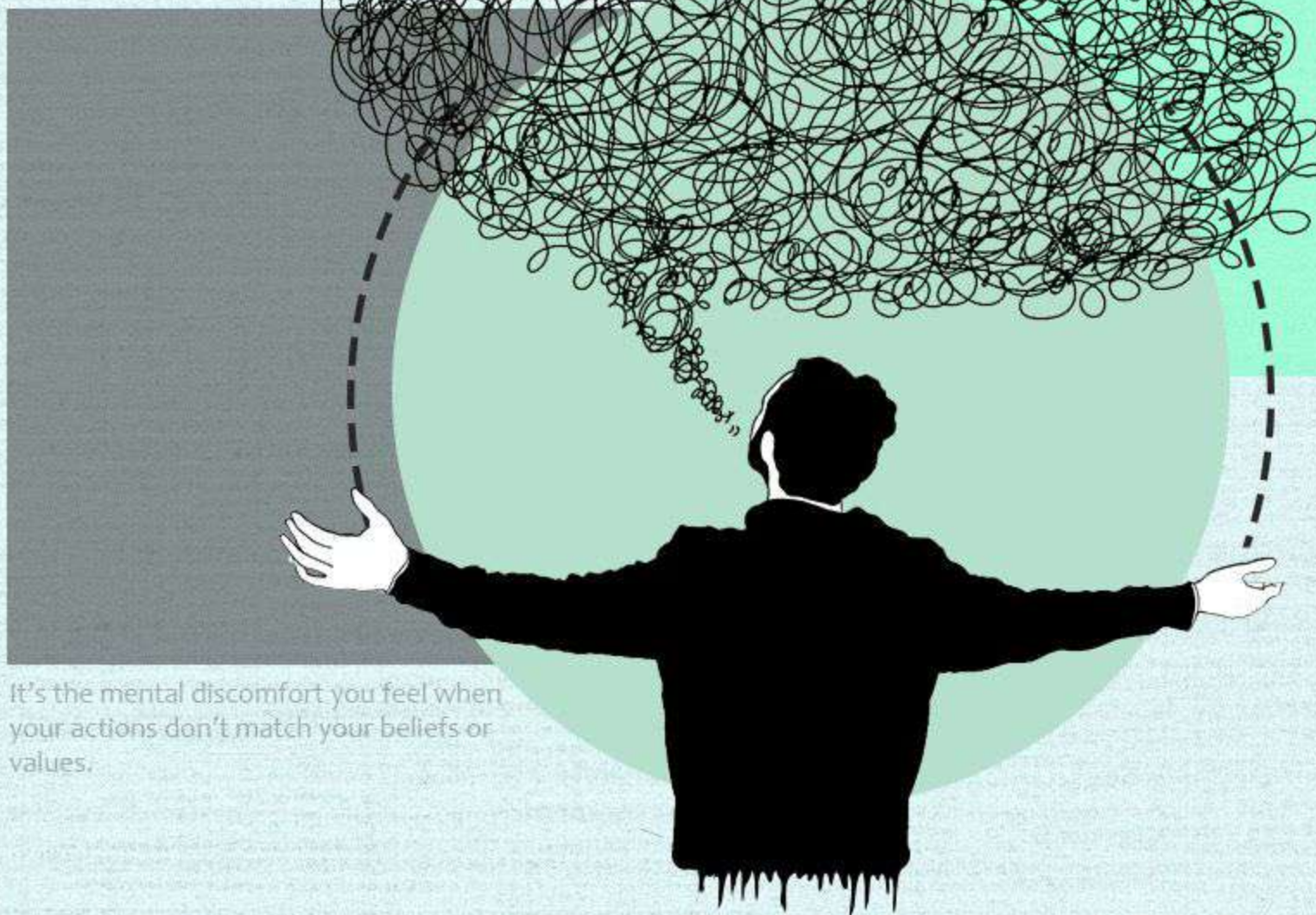


“Why Did I
Just Do
That?”

It's like your brain saying: “This doesn't
feel right...”



It's the mental discomfort you feel when
your actions don't match your beliefs or
values.

COGNITIVE

Dissonance

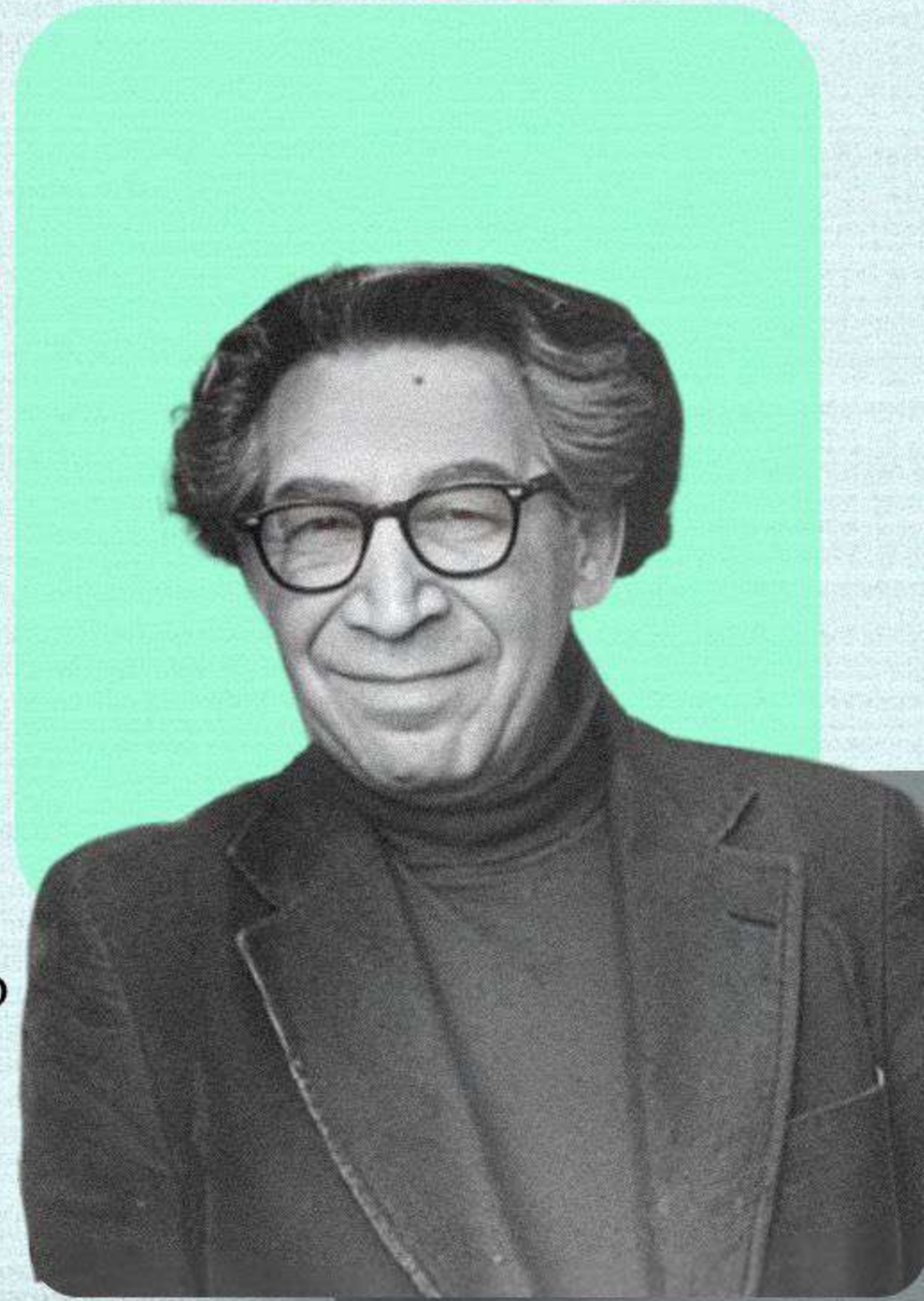
DISSONANCE

What Is Cognitive Dissonance?

It's the mental discomfort you feel when your actions don't match your beliefs or values.

Psychologist **Leon Festinger** (1957) introduced this term to explain why we sometimes **justify, avoid, or change our behaviors.**

It's like your brain saying:
"This doesn't feel right..."



What Triggers It?

Cognitive dissonance can be triggered when you:



Act against your values



Hold two beliefs that clash



Choose between two equally appealing options



Example:

You believe in healthy eating, but end up eating junk repeatedly.

That guilt or discomfort you feel afterward? That's dissonance.

The Famous \$1 Experiment

Conducted by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959).

Participants were asked to do a boring task, then had to lie to the next person, saying it was interesting.

- Some were paid \$20 — enough reason to lie.
- Others were paid just \$1 — not enough to justify the lie.

Those paid only \$1 felt more discomfort (dissonance).

To reduce it, they **convinced themselves** that the task was actually enjoyable.

This shows: when **external justification is low**, we often **adjust our beliefs** to match our actions.

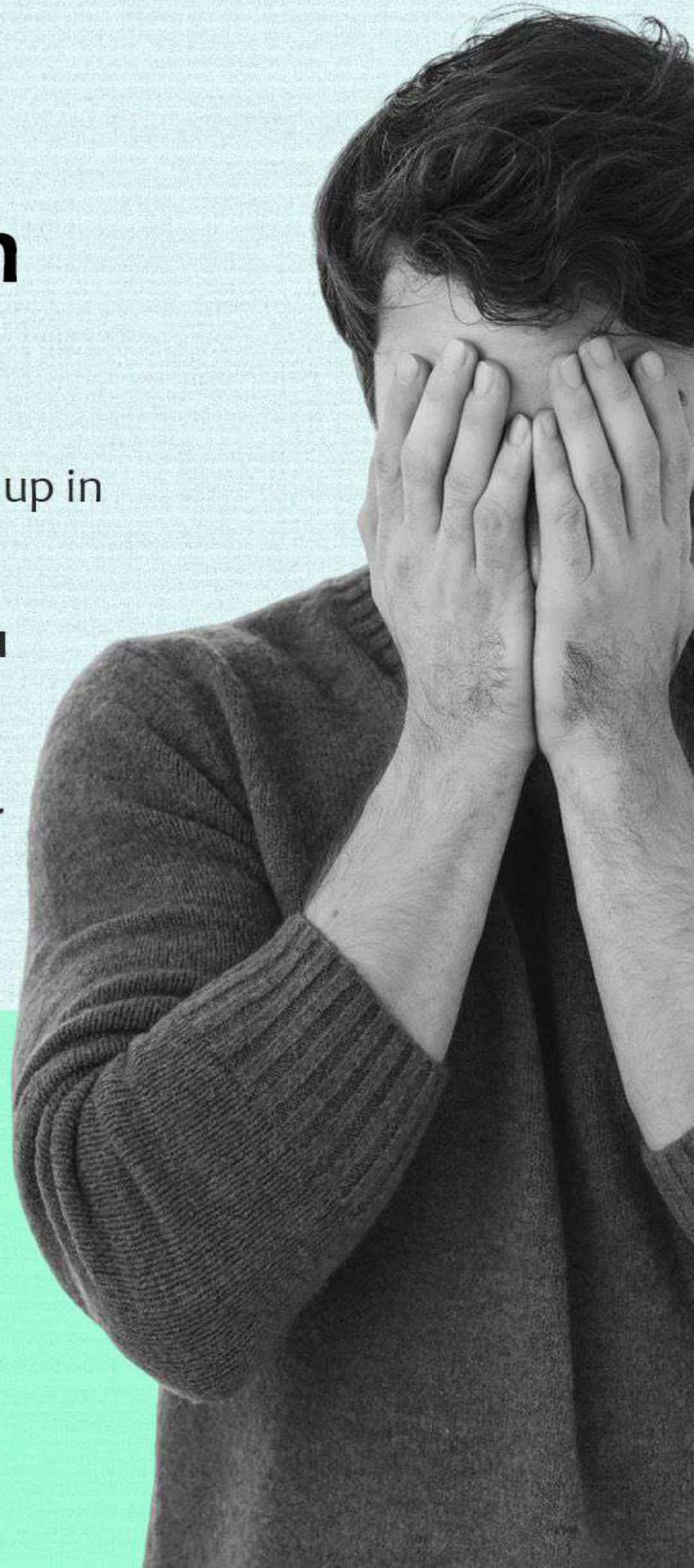


Dissonance in Real Life

Cognitive dissonance shows up in everyday life:

- **Defending a choice you regret**
- **Ignoring facts that challenge your opinion**
- **Justifying bad habits like procrastination**

It's everywhere, from food to friendships.



How Do We Reduce Dissonance?

There are 3 common ways people reduce dissonance:

- 1. Change the behavior** (e.g., stop eating junk food).
- 2. Change the belief** (e.g., believe that eating junk food occasionally is fine).
- 3. Add new thoughts to justify it** (e.g., “I’ve been eating healthy all week, so I deserve a treat”).

These strategies help restore mental balance, even if we’re not fully resolving the contradiction.

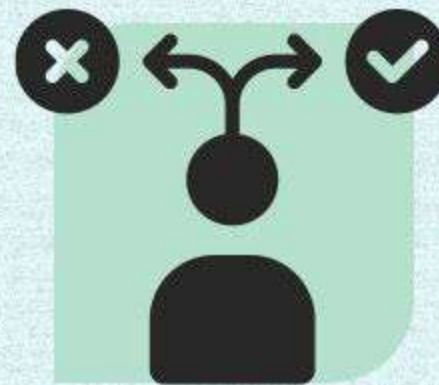


Why It Matters in Psychology

Cognitive dissonance helps us understand:



→ How attitudes
change



→ What drives
decision-making



→ Common patterns
in mental health



→ Case-based questions
in entrance exams!



Let's Reflect!

Ever caught yourself making excuses for something that felt wrong?
That's dissonance in action.

| Don't ignore it-
understanding it can help you grow.



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