The following pages contain stimuli from the Negative Relationship, Explanation, Debriefing condition from:

Anderson, C.A., Lepper, M.R., & Ross, L. (1980). The perseverance of social theories: The role of explanation in the persistence of discredited information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39,* 1037-1049.

All other conditions can be created by changing these materials as described in the original article.

BOOKLET INSTRUCTIONS

Your task involves examining the relationship between success or failure as a fire fighter and general performance of "riskiness" or "conservatism" in responses to a paper and pencil test designed to measure such preferences. In your particular experimental condition you will be concerned with both "discovering" the relationship between these two variables, and with "explaining" this relationship. The relationship may be a strongly positive one (high riskiness being associated with high ability or success as a fire fighter), a strongly negative one (high riskiness being associated with low ability or failure as a fire fighter), or anywhere in between these two extremes, including the possibility that no relationship exists at all.

More specifically, your task will proceed as follows: First you will be given information about one highly successful and one failure fire fighter. The information about these two people will include examples of their responses to the "Risky-Conservative Choice Test," administered when they entered the fire fighter training program. Second, you will be asked to examine the information about these fire fighters, and to make a rating (on a scale provided) showing the direction and strength of the relationship contained in the information. Third, you will be asked to formulate and write an explanation of the relationship you "discovered," based upon the information about the two fire fighters, their test responses, and anything else you can think of that might be relevant. Fourth, (and last) you will be asked to make a number of predictions and ratings related to the fire fighter relationship task used in this experiment.

If you have any questions during the experiment, ask the experimenter (but try to not disturb others in the experiment).

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DESCRIPTIONS OF TWO SAMPLE
FIRE FIGHTERS

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Following are short descriptions of the two men, George H. and Frank K., whose responses to example items on the Risky-Conservative Choice Test you will be examining later in formulating you explanation of the relationship.

<u>George H.</u> is 28 years old. He is married and has a one-year old son. George attended a junior college for two years prior to serving in the Army, which included a tour of duty in Viet Nam. George's father runs a local hardware store; his mother works as a substitute elementary school teacher. George's wife has recently returned to work as a bank teller. George's hobbies include watching television, reading science fiction novels, and playing golf.

<u>Frank K.</u> is also an Army veteran. His father, who died recently, was a foreman at a chemical plant. His mother works as a secretary for a small local business. Frank is 25 years old, and went to college for one year prior to joining the Army. He is married and has a six-month old daughter. Frank's wife is not currently working, but plans to return to her old job as a sales-person in a clothing store when the baby gets a little older. Frank's major hobbies are scuba diving, bicycling, and popular music.

JOB PERFORMANCE AND TEST RESPONSES: GEORGE.

George can be considered a failure as a fire fighter. At the end of the mandatory two-year probationary period following completion of the training program his performance as a fire fighter was rated in the bottom 10 % of his class of 157. He had been put "on report" several times by his superiors for deficiencies in the performance of his job. He was subsequently not hired in the job of fire fighter after his probationary period. Below are five sample items from George's test, chosen to present here because they are typical of the questions on the test and typical of George's responses. On the test, George gave 21 risky responses and 4 conservative responses. Accordingly, 4 of the 5 items below were ones given risky choices by George.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. F is currently a college senior who is very eager to pursue graduate study in chemistry leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree. He has been accepted by both University X and University Y. University X has a world-wide reputation for excellence in chemistry. While a degree from University X would signify outstanding training in this field, the standards are so very rigorous that only a fraction of the degree candidates actually receive the degree. University Y, on the other hand, has much less of a reputation in chemistry, but almost everyone admitted is awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree, though the degree has much less prestige than the corresponding degree from University X. Imagine that you are advising Mr. F. Would you advise him to risk it and go to University X, or to play it safe and go to University Y?

GEORGE'S RESPONSE.

Mr. F would be best off going to the better school, University X. The gains to be made by attending the better school, both in terms of opportunities and quality of education, far outweigh the possibility of not making it. The losses from not trying the harder school would be large. He would never know if he was bright enough to do it. If he fails, then it is good that he find out that he doesn't have the ability to be really good in chemistry, and he owes it to himself to find this out.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. A, an electrical engineer, who is married and has one child, has been working for a large electronics corporation since graduating from college five years ago. He is assured of a lifetime job with a modest, though adequate, salary, and liberal pension benefits upon retirement. On the other hand, it is very unlikely that his salary will increase much before he retires. While attending a convention, Mr. A is offered a job with a small, newly founded company which has a highly uncertain future. The new job would pay more to start and would offer the possibility of a share in the ownership if the company survived the competition of the larger firms.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. A. Would you advise him to take a chance on the new job, or to play it safe and stay with the old job?

GEORGE'S RESPONSE.

I think he ought to take the new job. In the first place, his present job doesn't look like much of a loss. Especially when you compare it to the possible gains. Even if the new company fails, Mr. A will probably be able to get another job similar to his own. He must be fairly good at his job or he wouldn't have been offered a new job. Another thing to consider is how you want to spend your life. Risk is part of living. You owe it to yourself to take a risk now and then.

Mr. M is contemplating marriage to Miss T, a woman whom he has known for a little more than a year. Recently, however, a number of arguments have occurred between them, suggesting some sharp differences of opinion in the way each views certain matters. Indeed, they decide to seek professional advice from a marriage counselor as to whether it would be wise for them to marry. On the basis of these meetings with a marriage counselor, they realize that a happy marriage, while possible, would not be assured.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. M and Miss T. Would you recommend that they take a chance and go ahead and get married, or that they should call it off?

GEORGE' S RESPONSE.

They should go ahead and get married. They're likely to find that their differences will prove to be an asset to their marriage, in that they can learn to enjoy many new things from each other. If it doesn't work out, not much is lost. Divorce doesn't carry the stigma it used to, and they can always marry someone else later. There's also a certain enjoyment in taking risks like this, that makes life worth living. If you wait for a sure thing, then your life will be spent waiting.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. R Lives in a small town in New Mexico, 90 miles from the nearest hospital and doctor. His wife, 8 months pregnant, has just informed him that she is having severe labor contractions, and that she thinks the baby is going to be born very shortly, almost a month early. Upon leaving for the hospital Mr. R. notices that he is low on gas. If he drives slow he is virtually positive that there is enough gas to get them to the hospital, but by going slow the baby is very likely to come before arriving at the hospital. On the other hand, if he drives fast Mr. R can cut the travel time by about 25 minutes, but he may run out of gas before getting to the hospital.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. R. Would you advise him to make. the risky decision and drive fast, hoping to not run out of gas, or to make the more conservative decision and drive slowly, making sure that he doesn't run out of gas?

GEORGE'S RESPONSE.

I would advise Mr. R to drive slow and play it safe. If the baby is born on the way to the hospital, why, at least they'll be sure to get there so proper care can be taken of the baby. By driving fast, however, the potential loss is great. If they run out of gas the baby would be born in the car anyway, and they wouldn't be able to get to the hospital at all. The risk involved in driving fast is thus very high in this situation.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. C, a married man with two children, has a steady job that pays him about $10,000 per year. He can easily afford the necessities of life, but few of the luxuries. Mr. C's father, who died recently, carried a $6000 life insurance policy. Mr. C would like to invest this money in stocks. He is well aware of the secure "blue chip" stocks and bonds that would pay approximately 6% on his investment. On the other hand, Mr. C has heard that the stocks of a relatively unknown Company X might double their present value if a new product currently in production is favorably received by the buying public. However, if the product is unfavorably received, the stocks would decline, in value.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. C. Would you advise him to take a chance and buy the Company X stocks, or to be careful and invest in the "blue chip" stocks?

GEORGE' S RESPONSE.

I would advise Mr. C to invest in Company X stocks. Look at it this way. He stands to make a lot of money in a short time. If he loses, he doesn't really lose anything since the $6000 is extra money anyway. Besides, it is highly unlikely that he would lose all his money, since at the worst the company would simply go out of business, sell their assets and pay back the stockholders some of their money. There's a certain amount of enjoyment in taking such slight risks, too, that enhances life.

JOB PERFORMANCE AND TEST RESPONSES: FRANK.

Frank is considered to be a highly successful fire fighter. At the end of the mandatory two-year probationary period following completion of the training program his performance as a fire fighter was rated in the top *5%* of his class of 162. Below are five sample items form Frank's test, chosen to present here because they are typical of the questions on the test and typical of Frank's responses. On the test, which contains 25 such items, Frank gave 5 risky responses and 20 conservative responses. Accordingly, only 1of the 5 items below was given a risky response by Frank.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. J is an American captured by the enemy in World War I1 and placed in a prisoner-of-war camp. Conditions in the camp are quite bad, with long hours of hard physical labor and a barely sufficient diet. After spending several months in this camp, Mr. J notes the possibility of escape by concealing himself in a supply truck that shuttles in and out of the camp. Of course, there is no guarantee that the escape would prove successful. Recapture by the enemy could well mean execution.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. J. Would you advise him to take the risk and attempt to escape?

FRANK'S RESPONSE.

I would not try that escape plan. It's just too risky. If it doesn't work, and the odds are pretty high against it, the loss would just be too great. Risking being killed like that just isn't worth it. Besides, there is a good chance that if his escape is successful, others in the camp will suffer reprisals; therefore, to escape wouldn't be right. Also, if he had survived in the camp for several months already, he'd probably survive until the end of the war. And survival is the name of the game.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. E is president of a light metals corporation in the United States. The corporation is quite prosperous, and has strongly considered the possibilities of business expansion by building an additional plant in a new location. The choice is between building another plant in the U.S., where there would be a moderate return on the initial investment, or building a plant in a foreign country. Lower labor costs and easy access to raw materials in that country would mean a much higher return on the initial investment. On the other hand, there is a history of political instability and revolution in the foreign country under consideration. In fact, the leader of a small minority party is committed to nationalizing, that is, taking over, all foreign investments.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. E. Would you advise him to build the new plant in the foreign country, with its possibility of nationalization, or in the U.S.?

FRANK'S RESPONSE.

Mr. E should build the new plant in the U. S., for several reasons. First, the potential loss by investing in an unstable foreign country is quite great. The building costs, materials, and organization costs in setting up such a plant must be fantastic. It wouldn't be right to risk the stockholder's money. Besides, being president of the company Mr. E would have to worry constantly about a foreign plant. To expect a decision that would lead to such constant anxiety would not be fair to Mr. E. Finally, it might be noted that even if not nationalized immediately, small radical groups may consider that plant a political target, which could cost lives as well as money.

Mr. S. is a scuba diver working with a marine biology research team. He has been diving at a fairly deep level for about 30 minutes when he notices that something is wrong with his breathing apparatus. Mr. S may surface slowly to avoid getting "the bends," but he may run out of oxygen if the malfunction in his gear worsens. On the other hand, Mr. S may surface rapidly, assuring himself of not drowning, but this course of action will mean he will have to spend a considerable amount of time, of which the research team has little left, in the ship's decompression chamber to avoid the bends.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. S. Would you recommend that he risk running out of oxygen by surfacing slowly in order to avoid the lengthy decompression chamber process, or that he be conservative in his decision by surfacing rapidly?

FRANK' S RESPONSE.

I would surface rapidly and get into the decompression chamber. It's the only smart thing, and the safe one, to do. The research team would not want one to take such a risk even if it meant that playing safe takes you off the job for a few hours. In situations like this I always take the safe route; in the long run it is usually the right thing to do. After all, you owe it to yourself to play it safe when possible.

TEST ITEM.

Mr. O is an ironworker whose current job is on a framework structure of a skyscraper. He has had trouble finding and keeping jobs recently, and is short of money as a result of this and his constant drinking on weekends. After a particularly drunk Friday night, Mr. O received a call from his foreman, telling him to come on Saturday to work. Mr. O, being quite hungover, fears that he may fall and be killed if he goes to work on Saturday. On the other hand, if he fails to show he might lose his job which, in his present financial state, would be a disaster.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. O. Would you suggest that he should go to work on Saturday and risk falling, or that he should play it safe and stay home from work?

FRANK' S RESPONSE.

I would go to work on Saturday, if I were Mr. O. In these times of high unemployment, to blow a job is really bad. Especially when you really need the money. Also, being an employee entails certain responsibilities to the employer, among them is a responsibility to work when there is important work to be done. Besides, it's highly unlikely that his sense of balance would be off much from just being hungover. In any case, life has certain risks that we must take from time to time.

Mr. L, a married 30-year old research physicist, has been given a five year appointment by a major university laboratory. As he contemplates the next five years, he realizes that he might work on a difficult long-term problem which, if a solution could be found, would resolve basic scientific issues in the field and bring high scientific honors. If no solution were found, however, Mr. L would have little to show for his five years in the laboratory, and this would make it hard for him to get a job afterwards. On the other hand, he could, as most of his professional associates are doing, work on a series of short-term problems where solutions would be easier to find, but where the problems are of lesser scientific importance.
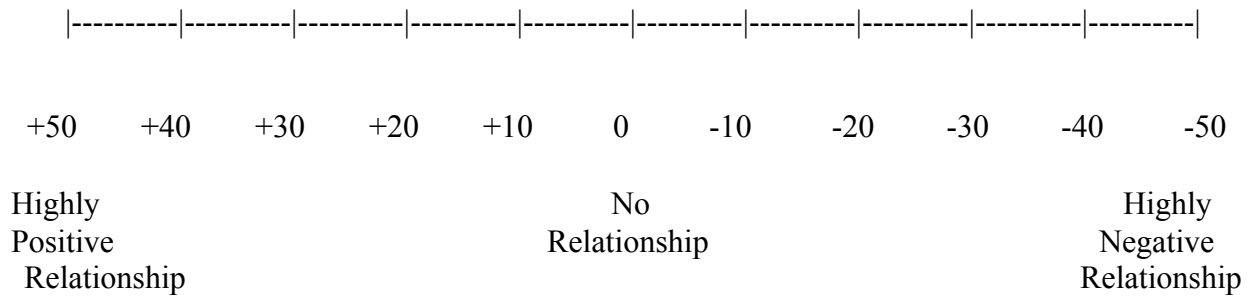
Imagine that you are advising Mr. L. Would you advise him to take the risky approach and work on the difficult long-term problem, or the conservative approach and work on the short-term problem?

FRANK'S RESPONSE.

Mr. L' s best decision would be to work on the short-term problems. The gains to be made by attempting the larger problem just aren't worth the risk of spending five years and accomplishing nothing. Prestige doesn't really mean much, and the resolution of really basic scientific issues will come sooner or later anyway. By risking it on the larger issue, though, he would stand to lose much, possibly even his long-range career. It's just my belief that the best approach to most things is in small steps.

STRENGTH AND DIRECTION OF THE DISCOVERED RELATIONSHIP

On the scale below, place an "X" at the point corresponding to your estimate of the direction and strength of the relationship presented to you. Remember, a positive relationship indicates that high riskiness is associated with success as a fire fighter and low riskiness with failure. A negative relationship indicates that high riskiness is associated with failure as a fire fighter, and low riskiness with success.

|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

+50   +40   +30   +20   +10   0   -10   -20   -30   -40   -50

Highly   No   Highly
Positive   Relationship   Negative
Relationship   Relationship

EXPLANATION TASK

You have now been given the relationship information and have stated what relationship you discovered. On the rest of this page (and on the back if you need more space) write a logical explanation of the "discovered" relationship, using whatever information and interpretations that help in understanding this general relationship. You should have about 10 minutes for this task. If you appear to be taking too long, the experimenter will remind you of the time so that you will be able to finish the remainder of the experiment on time.

You are now ready for your final task which entails making some predictions and estimates about the relationship between fire fighter success and performance on the Risky-Conservative Choice Test. Before you undertake this task we would like to clarify something about the previous task you completed.

Your previous task involved discovering and explaining a particular relationship between fire fighting success and choices on the test. For purposes of experimental control, we randomly assigned some subjects the task of discovering and explaining an apparently positive relationship between the two variables while assigning other subjects the task of discovering and explaining an apparently negative relationship between the same two variables. Thus, half of our subjects were given information (ficticious) about the responses of the two fire fighters which seemed to provide evidence consistent with a positive relationship. Conversely, half of our subjects were given information (ficticious) about the responses which seemed to support a negative relationship. That is, we actually have no real information about the responses of the two fire fighters to the test items.

The reason for our temporary deception involves, as we have stated earlier, the critical issue of experimental control. It was important for our subjects to do the best possible job in their discovery and explanation tasks, and we thought that this would be difficult if subjects knew that we had deliberately made up or "manipulated" the data presented to them.

It is now time, however, for you to make your predictions or estimates about the actual relationship between job performance and risky vs. conservative choices on the test from which you read some items. The items and the relative abilities of the two fire fighters, we should emphasize, were authentic, it was only the two fire fighters' responses which were fictional. This prediction and estimation task is important for two reasons. First, we want to see what subjects' "intuitive" hypotheses or theories are about the relationship in question. Second, a somewhat more important issue is that we think that the ability to discover and

explain a particular relationship may be systematically influenced by such personal beliefs or theories. Thus, our request for you to make the following predictions and estimates is so that we can determine your own personal estimates or guesses about the relationship between risky or conservative responses and job performance as a fire fighter.

ESTIMATES OF THE GENERAL RELATIONSHIP

1. You have now read a representative sample of 15 items from the Risky-Conservative Choice Test, and so you should have a fairly good idea of what the test is like. Please estimate the _%_ risky responses that you predict for each of the following groups on the test.

___% The average of _all people who apply_ for the fire fighter training program.

___% The average of _all fire fighter trainees who are rated superior_ after their probationary period.

___% The average of _all fire fighter trainees who are rated unsatisfactory_ after their probationary period.

2. For the next set of estimates, make all comparisons to "average applicants for the fire fighter training program. "

A. Of those trainees rated "superior," what _%_ of them do you estimate would make a
"risky" total that is

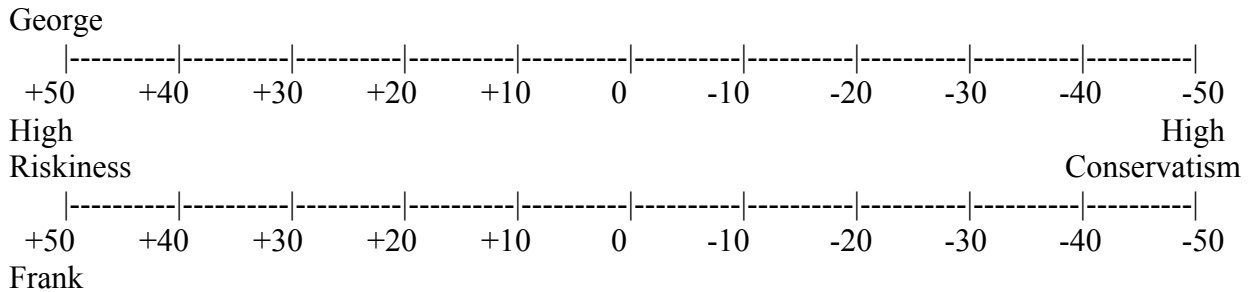|		
[much higher	____%]	than average
[higher	____%]	applicants for
[about same	____%]	the fire fighter
[lower	____%]	training program?
[much lower	____%]	
_____		Total must = 100%.

B. Of those trainees rated "unsatisfactory," what _%_ of them do you estimate would make a
"risky" total that is

[much higher	____%]	than average
[higher	____%]	applicants for
[about same	____%]	the fire fighter
[lower	____%]	training program?
[much lower	____%]	
_____		Total must = 100%.

3. Make the following Risky-Conservative trait estimates on the basis of George's and Frank's relative abilities as Fire Fighters, ignoring the fictional risky and conservative choices presented in the first part of the experiment. Place an "X" at the point corresponding to your best estimate of each man's general trait of Riskiness-Conservatism.

George
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|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
+50       +40        +30        +20        +10        0         -10        -20        -30        -40        -50
High                                                                                                      High
Riskiness                                                                                          Conservatism
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
+50       +40        +30        +20        +10        0         -10        -20        -30        -40        -50
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Frank

READ EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TEST ITEMS CAREFULLY AND MAKE YOUR PREDICTIONS BELOW EACH ITEM. SOME OF THE ITEMS YOU WILL HAVE ALREADY SEEN; SOME OF THEM ARE NEW ONES.

ITEM 1.

Mr. D is the captain of College X's football team. College X is playing its traditional rival in the final game of the season. The game is in its final seconds, and Mr. D's team is behind in the score. College X has time to run one more play. Mr. D, the captain, must decide whether it would be best to settle for a tie score with a play which would be almost certain to work (i.e., an easy field goal) or to try a more difficult and risky play which could bring victory if it succeeded but defeat if not (an attempt to score a touchdown).

Imagine that you are advising Mr. D. Would you advise him to attempt the risky play in order to win, or the conservative one for a sure tie?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 2.

Mr. G, a competent chess player, is participating in a national chess tournament. In an early match he draws the top favored player in the tournament as his opponent, and in the early part of the game he seems to be holding his own reasonably well. As play progresses, Mr. G notes the possibility of a very deceptive move which might bring him quick victory if his opponent falls for it. If the attempted maneuver should fail, however, Mr. G would be left in an exposed position and defeat would almost certainly follow. On the other hand, a safe line of play seems open to him which should lead to a draw, unless he commits a major blunder.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. G. Would you recommend the risky maneuver which might bring quick victory, or the safe one which should ensure a draw?

____% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

____% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

____% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

____% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 3.

Mr. K is a successful businessman who has participated in a number of civic activities of considerable value to the community. Mr. K has been approached by the leaders of his political party as a possible congressional candidate in the next election. Mr. K's party is a minority party in the district, though the party has won occasional elections in the past. Mr. K would like to hold political office, but to do so would involve a serious financial sacrifice, since the party has insufficient campaign funds. He would also have to endure the attacks of his political opponents in a hot campaign.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. K. Would you advise him to risk all this trouble on a possible defeat?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 4.

Mr. T is an undercover policeman who has infiltrated a youth gang that is involved in the traffic of hard drugs. Mr. T learns that in a few days he will uncover the identity of the major west coast importer of heroin. However, Mr. T has now been captured by a rival youth gang, who are threatening him with bodily harm. Mr. T does have one easy way out. Unknown to his captors, he is constantly monitored by a miniature microphone, and may call in help by uttering an innocuous code word. By calling in help he would certainly blow his cover and with it, the chance at getting the heroin importer.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. T. Would you suggest that he risk it by not calling in help, thereby saving his cover and also risking great bodily harm or even death, or that he play it safe by calling in help?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 5.

       Mr. V is an army deserter living in Switzerland. He has currently been debating returning to the U.S., mainly because he misses his family and friends and because he doesn't seem to fit in Swiss society. If he returns to the U.S., though, he risks a jail term in a military prison. On the other hand, if he stays in Switzerland he will probably continue to be unhappy.

       Imagine that you are advising Mr. V. Would you advise him to come back to the U.S. and risk a jail term, or to remain in Switzerland where he is safe?

       ___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

       ___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

       ___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

       ___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 7.

Mr. C, a married man with two children, has a steady job that pays him about $10,000 per year. He can easily afford the necessities of life, but few of the luxuries. Mr. C's father, who died recently, carried a $6000 life insurance policy. Mr. C would like to invest this money in stocks. He is well aware of the secure "blue chip" stocks and bonds that would pay approximately 6% on his investment. On the other hand, Mr. C has heard that the stocks of a relatively unknown Company X might double their present value if a new product currently in production is favorably received by the buying public. However, if the product is unfavorably received, the stocks would decline in value.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. C. Would you advise him to take a chance and buy the Company X stocks, or to be careful and invest in the "blue chip" stocks?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 8.

Mr. E is president of a light metals corporation in the United States. The corporation is quite prosperous, and has strongly considered the possibilities of business expansion by building an additional plant in a new location. The choice is between building another plant in the U.S., where there would be a moderate return on the initial investment, or building a plant in a foreign country. Lower labor costs and easy access to raw materials in that country would mean a much higher return on the initial investment. On the other hand, there is a history of political instability and revolution in the foreign country under consideration. In fact, the leader of a small minority party is committed to nationalizing, that is, taking over, all foreign investments.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. E. Would you advise him to build the new plant in the foreign country, with its possibility of nationalization, or in the U.S.?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

<u>ITEM 10.</u>

Mr. J is an American captured by the enemy in World War I1 and placed in a prisoner-of-war camp. Conditions in the camp are quite bad, with long hours of hard physical labor and a barely sufficient diet. After spending several months in this camp, Mr. J notes the possibility of escape by concealing himself in a supply truck that shuttles in and out of the camp. Of course, there is no guarantee that the escape would prove successful. Recapture by the enemy would well mean execution.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. J. Would you advise him to take the risk and attempt to escape?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 13.

Mr. R Lives in a small town in New Mexico, 90 miles from the nearest hospital and doctor. His wife, 8 months pregnant, has just informed him that she is having severe labor contractions, and that she thinks the baby is going to be born very shortly, almost a month early. Upon leaving for the hospital Mr. R notices that he is low on gas. If he drives slow he is virtually positive that there is enough gas to get them to the hospital, but by going slow the baby is very likely to come before arriving at the hospital. On the other hand, if he drives fast Mr. R can cut the travel time by about 25 minutes, but he may run out of gas before getting to the hospital.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. R. Would you advise him to make the risky decision and drive fast, hoping to not rim out of gas, or to make the more conservative decision and drive slowly, making sure that he doesn't run out of gas?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

ITEM 14.

Mr. O is an ironworker whose current job is on a framework structure of a skyscraper. He has had trouble finding and keeping jobs recently, and is short of money as a result of this and his constant drinking on weekends. After a particularly drunk Friday night, Mr. O received a call from his foreman, telling him to come in on Saturday to work. Mr. O, being quite hungover, fears that he may fall and be killed if he goes to work on Saturday. On the other hand, if he fails to show he might lose his job which, in his present financial state, would be a disaster.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. O. Would you suggest that he should go to work on Saturday and risk falling, or that he should play it safe and stay home from work?

___% of American Adults would advise the risky option.

___% of American Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Highly Successful Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

___% of Failure Fire Fighters would advise the risky option.

Following are four items from the Risky-Conservative Choice Test, and actual responses given by four different applicants to a fire fighter training program. Each of the four item/response pairs was selected by a panel of 3 psychologists as being most representative of the test responses given by the respective four applicants. Read each item and response carefully, and make your prediction about the success or failure of each person by circling the letter preceding your prediction.

Descriptions of the four men.

Bob I is 26 years old, has been married for three years, and has no children. His hobbies include skiing, photography, and amateur boxing. He has a B.A. in journalism from the state university.

John P is 21 years old, and has just gotten out of the Army. He is single and says he is "playing the field." He got his high school diploma while in the Army, having dropped out of school to work at age 16. His only hobby is skeet shooting.

William H is 25 years old, and recently quit his job as a construction laborer. He is currently single but engaged to be married in 5 months. He went to college for 5 semesters before starting working construction. His hobbies are camping and rock hunting.

Pete T is 25 years old. He is married and has two children, 3 and 2 years old. His wife is working so he can take the training program. In his spare time he likes to work on cars, and makes a bit of money in doing this.

BOB'S REPRESENTATIVE TEST ITEM.

Mr. B, a 45-year old accountant, has recently been informed by his physician that he has developed a severe heart ailment. The disease would be sufficiently serious to force Mr. B to change many of his strongest life habits--reducing his work load, drastically changing his diet, giving up favorite leisure time pursuits. The physician suggests that a delicate medical operation could be attempted which, if successful, would completely relieve the heart condition. But it's success could not be assured, and in fact, the operation could prove fatal.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. B. Would you advise him to take a chance on the operation, or to play it safe by not having the operation and changing his lifestyle?

BOB'S RESPONSE.

He should risk it. I mean, if it were me in that situation, I would risk it and have the operation. Playing it safe by not having the operation and changing my entire life style would be out of the question. That's just not my style. To do so would mean giving up too much. It would mean giving up what I consider to be real living. If the operation is not successful, well, nothing has really been lost.

Your Prediction.

This person most likely became:
            a) a superior fire fighter
            b) an unsatisfactory fire fighter.

JOHN'S REPRESENTATIVE ITEM.

Mr. Q, a professional safecracker, has just attempted to blow open a bank vault door. While three of the four hinges were successfully split in the explosion, the fourth remains only partially split and is preventing Mr. Q from gaining access to the vault. Mr. Q has enough explosives to try again on the final hinge, and he knows that the amount of profit from this venture, if successful, will be enough for him to retire. However, if someone heard the first explosion and reported it, he will probably be caught if he tries again.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. Q. Would you advise him to take the risk (ignoring the ethical implications) and attempt to blow the door and finish the job, or to play it safe and make his escape without trying again?

JOHN'S RESPONSE.

I'd recommend that he should play it safe and make a quick exit. The bank's alarm system may have been set off by the first attempt. Also, someone in the area probably heard the explosion and reported it to the police. In either case, he most likely would not have time to blow the final hinge, locate and grab the money, and still get away before the police arrived. It just wouldn't be worth the risk.

Your Prediction.

This person most likely became:
        a) a superior fire fighter
        b) an unsatisfactory fire fighter.

Mr. P is a young psychologist examining the process of religious or philosophical conversion. He has the financial backing to take time off from his usual line of research and work, and is considering trying to get first hand knowledge of this process by joining a national mystical religious movement that is noted for its effectiveness in thoroughly converting those who join them. The possible benefits of gaining insight into the conversion process are tremendous. Yet, there is a real possibility that Mr. P himself will be "converted," which would mean that he would never return to the mainstream of academic life. The other alternative for Mr. P is to simply bypass this opportunity and to continue his previous line of research.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. P. Would you advise him to take the risk and join the mystical group to study the conversion process first hand, or to bypass the opportunity and continue his previous research?

WILLIAM' S RESPONSE.

Mr. P should join the group to study the conversion process. The gains to be made from such research are quite high, especially in the value such knowledge has to society. Since great gains come only by taking risks, one has to expect such risks if one expects to make gains in knowledge. Risk is just part of doing anything worthwhile, and my approach to life is to take the risks necessary to possibly perform exceedingly well.

Your Prediction.

This person most likely became:
          a) a superior fire fighter
          b) an unsatisfactory fire fighter.

Mr. W is a research chemist, applying for work on a project that requires a National Security Clearance. Mr. W suffers occasional attacks of epilepsy though usually he can tell shortly in advance when an attack will occur. Mr. W also knows that in such delicate research projects, epileptics are usually given lesser jobs. He can lie on the application and say that he doesn't suffer from epilepsy, to avoid this relegation to a lesser job; if discovered though, he will certainly be fired and banned from future government contract jobs. On the other hand, he can tell the truth, and accept the lesser job.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. W. Would you advise him to take the risk and lie on the application, or to play it safe and be happy with whatever job he is given?

PETE'S RESPONSE.

I think Mr. W should play it straight and safe, and be happy with whatever job he gets. Even if not caught lying, the gains in terms of job satisfaction are likely to be small. If caught lying, his career may be ruined. Also, it's my personal philosophy to be truthful and play it straight. It's the right thing to do. Besides, if he were to lie he would constantly have to worry about being caught. Such worry and such risks are just not worth it.

Your Prediction.

This person most likely became:
           a) a superior fire fighter
           b) an unsatisfactory fire fighter.