**Theories of Emotion**

The major theories of motivation can be grouped into three main categories: physiological, neurological and cognitive. Physiological theories suggest that responses within the body are responsible for emotions. Neurological theories propose that activity within the brain leads to emotional responses. Finally, cognitive theories argue that thoughts and other mental activity play an essential role in the formation of emotions.

* **The James-Lange Theory of Emotion**

The [James-Lange theory](http://psychology.about.com/od/jindex/g/jameslange.htm) is one of the best-known examples of a physiological theory of emotion. Independently proposed by psychologist [William James](http://psychology.about.com/od/profilesofmajorthinkers/p/jamesbio.htm) and physiologist Carl Lange, the James-Lange theory of emotion suggests that emotions occur as a result of physiological reactions to events.

According to this theory, you see an external stimulus that leads to a physiological reaction. Your emotional reaction is dependent upon how you interpret those physical reactions. For example, suppose you are walking in the woods and you see a grizzly bear. You begin to tremble and your heart begins to race. The James-Lange theory proposes that you will interpret your physical reactions and conclude that you are frightened ("I am trembling, therefore I am afraid").

* **The Cannon-Bard Theory of Emotion**

Another well-know physiological theory is the [Cannon-Bard theory of emotion](http://psychology.about.com/od/cindex/g/cannonbard.htm). This theory states that we feel emotions and experience physiological reactions such as sweating, trembling and muscle tension simultaneously. More specifically, it is suggested that emotions result when the thalamus sends a message to the brain in response to a stimulus, resulting in a physiological reaction.

* **Schachter-Singer Theory**

Also known as the two-factor theory of emotion, the Schachter-Singer Theory is an example of a cognitive theory of emotion. This theory suggests that the physiological arousal occurs first, and then the individual must identify the reason behind this arousal in order to experience and label it as an emotion.