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Are leaders intelligent or unintelligent, outgoing or introverted, understanding or insensitive, cooperative or inflexible, strict or undisciplined? Group members answer these questions by drawing on their beliefs about leaders. These implicit leadership theories, or ILTs, are intuitive assumptions about the naturally occurring relationships among various traits, behaviors, and characteristics associated with leadership, and evidence suggests that they often influence who emerges as a leader and how that leader is perceived and evaluated. This presentation will briefly review previous studies of ILTs, focusing on content of most people's intuitive understandings of leadership, but also considering how ILTs can bias their perceptions and interfere with identification of the best leader for a given situation. Because leaders' endorsement by followers depends in how they are perceived by those followers, skilled leaders tailor their self-presentations to match their followers' ILT-based expectations.

For registration questions, contact Veronica Allen, APA Division Services
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Dr. Donelson R. Forsyth is a social psychologist who studies and writes about ethics, groups, and leadership. His recent research focuses on individual, group and cultural differences in idealism and relativism, groups' reactions to success and failure, the interpersonal functions of groups, and environmental sustainability. He is currently on the faculty of the Jepson School at the University of Richmond, where he holds the Leo K. and Gayle Thorsness Chair of Ethical Leadership.

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