2. Reflected Appraisals

Social relationships influence the self-concept in another important way. Sometimes people learn about themselves by imagining how they appear in the eyes of others. For example, suppose I tell a joke and nobody laughs. I might reasonably infer that I have a very good sense of humor. The reflected appraisal model describes this process (Cooley, 1902; Kinch, 1963). As shown in Figure 5.4, this process is comprised of three components: (1) What other people actually think of us (the actual appraisals of others), (2) our perception of these appraisals (our perceived appraisals), and (3) our own ideas about what we are like (our self-appraisals). The model assumes that actual appraisals determine perceived appraisals and that perceived appraisals determine self-appraisals. As an example, the model assumes (1) that if other people think you are attractive (actual appraisal), (2) you will become