
Personality

I. SIGMUND FREUD AND THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Personality is an individual's unique and relatively stable pattern of thinking, feeling, and behaving.
2. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) is the best-known figure in the history of psychology, and one of the seminal figures in twentieth century thought.
3. Freud's psychoanalytic perspective on personality emphasizes the following three factors:
 - ▶ *The influence of unconscious mental processes*
 - ▶ *The importance of sexual and aggressive instincts*
 - ▶ *The enduring consequences of early childhood experiences*

B. LEVELS OF AWARENESS

1. Conscious
 - ▶ *According to Freud, the conscious level consists of thoughts or motives that a person is currently aware of or is remembering.*
 - ▶ *At this moment, your conscious mind is focusing on studying Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality as part of your review for the upcoming AP Psychology exam.*
2. Preconscious
 - ▶ *According to Freud, the preconscious level consists of thoughts, motives, and memories that can be voluntarily brought to mind.*

- ▶ *At this moment, your preconscious mind may include feelings of fatigue and hunger, plus random thoughts about what could be on the AP Psychology exam.*
3. Unconscious
 - ▶ *According to Freud, the unconscious level consists of thoughts, feelings, motives, and memories blocked from conscious awareness. Freud believed that the unconscious is not directly accessible. However, dream analysis can be a useful tool for gaining insight into unconscious motives.*
 - ▶ *At this moment your unconscious contains an array of aggressive impulses, sexual desires, and occasional irrational thoughts about not taking the AP Psychology exam.*

C. PERSONALITY STRUCTURE

1. Freud believed that personality is composed of three distinct psychological processes—the id, the ego, and the superego. It is important to remember that these are personality structures and not separate parts of the brain.
2. The id
 - ▶ *According to Freud, the id (Latin for “it”) is completely unconscious. It consists of innate sexual and aggressive instincts and drives. The id is impulsive, irrational, and immature. It operates on a pleasure principle, seeking to achieve immediate gratification and avoid discomfort.*
 - ▶ *For example, Ethan’s grandmother gave him a large amount of money as a high school graduation present. Rather than using the money to pay for his college tuition, Ethan’s id wants to buy a new car.*
3. The superego
 - ▶ *According to Freud, the superego is partly conscious. It consists of internalized parental and societal standards. Popularly known as the “conscience,” the superego operates on a morality principle, seeking to enforce ethical conduct.*
 - ▶ *For example, Ethan’s superego would oppose using his grandmother’s gift to buy a sports car. It would put*

pressure on Ethan by making him feel guilt, shame, and self-doubt.

4. The ego

- ▶ According to Freud, the ego (Latin for “I”) resides in the conscious and preconscious levels of awareness. The ego is rational and practical. It operates on a reality principle, seeking to mediate between the demands of the id and the superego. Keenly aware of external realities, the ego attempts to facilitate an appropriate and timely gratification of desires.
- ▶ For example, Ethan’s ego would mediate a compromise between the aggressive demands of the id that he buy a new sports car and the moral demands of his superego that he use his grandmother’s gift for college tuition. Ethan’s ego resolves this dilemma by deciding to use most of the money for college tuition while setting aside some money for a less-expensive, used sports car.

D. EGO DEFENSE MECHANISMS

1. Mediating the conflicting demands of the id and superego is difficult. Anxiety often results when the ego cannot find a realistic compromise. According to Freud, the ego uses unconscious distortions of reality called defense mechanisms to reduce anxiety.
2. Repression
 - ▶ Preventing anxiety-producing thoughts and painful feelings from entering consciousness. Freud believed that repression is the first and most basic form of anxiety reduction.
 - ▶ For example, you forget the details of what you said when you broke up with your boyfriend or girlfriend.
3. Projection
 - ▶ Transferring one’s own unacceptable thoughts, motives, or personal qualities to others.
 - ▶ For example, you feel dislike for a coach, and then insist that she dislikes you.
4. Denial
 - ▶ Protecting oneself from anxiety-producing information by refusing to acknowledge it.

- ▶ *For example, you refuse to admit that you have a drinking problem although you drink alcoholic beverages every day.*
- 5. Reaction formation
 - ▶ *Thinking or behaving in a way that is the opposite of your own unacceptable thoughts and feelings.*
 - ▶ *For example, you take care of a sick relative whom you actually despise.*
- 6. Displacement
 - ▶ *Redirecting anger and other unacceptable impulses toward a less-threatening person or object.*
 - ▶ *For example, you yell at a teammate after being criticized by your coach.*
- 7. Rationalization
 - ▶ *Justifying one's actions by using socially acceptable explanations.*
 - ▶ *For example, you deal with the disappointment of being rejected by a top college by saying that you really didn't want to attend such an elitist institution.*
- 8. Regression
 - ▶ *Retreating from a threatening situation by reverting to a pattern of behavior characteristic of an earlier stage of development.*
 - ▶ *For example, you throw a temper tantrum when your parents refuse to extend your curfew.*



Defense mechanisms have generated a significant number of multiple-choice questions. Test writers favor a format in which the question names a defense mechanism and then asks you to select an example that best exemplifies it.

E. CRITICISMS OF FREUD AND THE PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

1. Freud's sweeping generalizations are based upon evidence drawn from a small number of patients.
2. Freud's key concepts are impossible to empirically measure.
3. Freud's theories often reflect a sexist view of women.

II. THE NEO-FREUDIANS

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Freud's pioneering theories attracted a number of followers.
2. Alfred Adler (1870–1937) and Carl Jung (1875–1961) are called neo-Freudians because they continued to work within the psychoanalytical perspective while proposing new theories of their own.

B. ALFRED ADLER

1. Adler believed that infants and young children are helpless and dependent upon others. This situation produces deep feelings of weakness, inadequacy, and incompetence that Adler called an inferiority complex.
2. Adler believed that individuals deal with feelings of inferiority in either of two ways:
 - ▶ *They can compensate for real or imagined weaknesses by striving to improve themselves and by developing their talents and abilities.*
 - ▶ *They can overcompensate for their feelings of inferiority by developing a superiority complex in which they exaggerate their accomplishments and deny their limitations.*

C. CARL JUNG

1. Like Freud, Jung stressed the importance of unconscious processes. However, Jung distinguished between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious.
2. According to Jung, the personal unconscious consists of experiences that are unique to each individual. In contrast, the collective unconscious refers to that part of a person's unconscious that is common to all human beings.
3. The collective unconscious includes shared human experiences embodied in myths and cultural archetypes such as the wise grandfather, the innocent child, and the rebellious son.

III. THE HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE ON PERSONALITY

A. CARL ROGERS

1. Carl Rogers (1902–1987) rejected Freud’s pessimistic view of human nature. Instead, Rogers offered the optimistic view that people are innately good, and thus, “positive, forward-moving, constructive, realistic, and trustworthy.”
2. Rogers argued that self-concept is the cornerstone of a person’s personality. Self-concept is the set of perceptions and beliefs that individuals have about their own nature and behavior.
3. People whose self-concept matches their life experiences usually have high self-esteem and better mental health.
4. Rogers believed that people are motivated to achieve their full potential or self-actualize. Parents can help their children self-actualize by creating an atmosphere of unconditional positive regard in which a child is accepted and loved without any conditions.

B. ABRAHAM MASLOW

1. Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) shared Rogers’ confidence in human nature. He also stressed that humans have a natural drive to find self-fulfillment and realize their potential.
2. Maslow’s famous hierarchy of needs is discussed in Chapter 9. It is important to note that Maslow viewed self-actualization as an ongoing process of growth.

IV. THE SOCIAL-COGNITIVE APPROACH TO PERSONALITY

A. ALBERT BANDURA AND SELF-EFFICACY

1. As you learned in Chapter 8, Albert Bandura (b. 1925) is best known for his “Bobo doll” experiments and his contributions to social learning theory.

2. Bandura is also known for his pioneering work on the concept of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, self-efficacy refers to the feelings of self-confidence or self-doubt that people bring to a specific situation.
3. Self-efficacy varies from situation to situation. For example, a student could have a high degree of self-efficacy in a computer lab, and a low degree of self-efficacy in a dance studio. It is interesting to note that self-efficacy and achievement motivation are highly correlated with success in college.

B. JULIAN ROTTER AND THE LOCUS OF CONTROL

1. Julian Rotter (b. 1916) argued that a person's sense of personal power or locus of control is key in shaping both personality and the manner of approaching a problem.
2. Rotter made an important distinction between internal and external locus of control. Individuals who accept personal responsibility for their life experiences have an internal locus of control. For example, you are displaying an internal locus of control by studying this book as part of your preparation for the AP Psychology exam. In contrast, individuals who believe that most situations are governed by chance and lucky breaks have an external locus of control. An AP Psychology student who refuses to review, and instead counts on catching a lucky break with easy free-response questions, is displaying an external locus of control.



Cognitive psychologists are especially interested in assessing a person's locus of control. Be sure that you can explain and illustrate the difference between an internal locus of control and an external locus of control. For example, a person with an internal locus of control would carefully prepare for a job interview, while a person with an external locus of control would count on luck.

V. TRAIT THEORIES

A. EARLY TRAIT THEORIES

1. A trait is a relatively stable personal characteristic that can be used to describe how an individual consistently behaves.
2. Gordon Allport (1897–1967) used a comprehensive dictionary to develop a list of 4,504 adjectives that could be used to describe specific personality traits. He then arranged these traits into the following three levels:
 - ▶ *Cardinal traits that dominate and shape a person's outlook*
 - ▶ *Central traits that influence most of our behavior*
 - ▶ *Secondary traits that are only seen in certain situations*
3. Needless to say, the traits on Allport's list proved to be confusing and overlapping. Raymond Cattell (1905–1998) used a statistical technique, called factor analysis, to reduce Allport's list to 171 terms. He later refined this list to 16 key personality factors. This led to the development of a personality measure known as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire or 16PF.

B. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIVE-FACTOR MODEL OF PERSONALITY

1. Led by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae, personality theorists continued to refine the list of traits as they searched for the basic underlying dimensions of personality.
2. Costa and McCrae's research ultimately led to the development of the Five-Factor Model, popularly called the "Big Five Model."

C. THE BIG FIVE

1. Openness
 - ▶ *People with high scores on openness tend to be intellectually curious, open to experience, interested in cultural pursuits, and sensitive to beauty.*
 - ▶ *People with low scores on openness tend to be conventional thinkers who prefer straightforward answers and regard the arts and sciences with suspicion.*

- ▶ *Examples of openness statements include, "I have a vivid imagination," "I spend time reflecting on things," and "I have a rich vocabulary."*
2. **Conscientiousness**
 - ▶ *People with high scores on conscientiousness tend to be self-disciplined, well-organized, and motivated to achieve personal goals.*
 - ▶ *People with low scores on conscientiousness tend to be careless, impulsive, and undependable.*
 - ▶ *Sample conscientiousness items include, "I am always prepared," "I follow a schedule," and "I pay attention to details."*
 3. **Extroversion**
 - ▶ *People with high scores on extroversion tend to be sociable, talkative, and enthusiastic. They like to draw attention to themselves in groups.*
 - ▶ *People with low scores on extroversion tend to be reserved, quiet, and prefer time alone.*
 - ▶ *Examples of extroversion statements include, "I am the life of the party," "I start conversations," and "I feel comfortable around people."*
 4. **Agreeableness**
 - ▶ *People with high scores on agreeableness tend to be trusting, cooperative, and helpful.*
 - ▶ *People with low scores on agreeableness tend to be suspicious, argumentative, and uncooperative.*
 - ▶ *Examples of agreeableness statements include, "I make people feel at ease," "I take time out for others," and "I am interested in other people's problems."*
 5. **Neuroticism**
 - ▶ *People with high scores on neuroticism tend to be insecure, easily upset, anxious, and moody.*
 - ▶ *People with low scores on neuroticism tend to be calm, easygoing, and emotionally stable.*
 - ▶ *Examples of neuroticism statements include, "I get irritated easily," "I worry about things," and "I am relaxed most of the time."*

D. CRITICISMS OF THE BIG FIVE MODEL

1. The Big Five Model underestimates the variability of behavior from situation to situation. For example, a person could

be very extroverted in a setting where he or she feels comfortable and very reserved in a setting where he or she feels uncomfortable.

2. The Big Five Model does a good job of describing personality. However, it does not do a good job of explaining why people develop personality traits.
3. The Big Five Model neglects such key personality dimensions as religiosity, manipulativeness, and sense of humor.



A generation of psychologists used factor analysis to winnow Allport's original list of 4,504 adjectives in the Five Factor Model. Remembering the five factors is easy. The first letter of each dimension—openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—spells the word OCEAN!

VI. PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

A. PROJECTIVE TESTS

1. Projective tests are derived from psychoanalytic approaches to personality. They use ambiguous images, such as inkblots and pictures of people, that are open to a number of interpretations. The subject's response is thought to be a projection of his or her unconscious conflicts, motives, and personality traits into the test images.
2. The Rorschach Inkblot Test
 - ▶ *Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach (1884–1922) developed the first projective test in 1921. Although Rorschach died the following year, his pioneering work led to the inkblot test that now bears his name.*
 - ▶ *The Rorschach test consists of 10 cards with symmetrical inkblot images. The examiner carefully records the subject's responses, paying close attention to descriptions of animate and inanimate objects and human and animal figures.*

3. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

- ▶ *The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) uses a series of provocative, but ambiguous, pictures. Subjects are asked to tell a dramatic story that includes what led up to the event, what is happening at the moment depicted, what the characters are feeling, and what the outcome of the story is.*
- ▶ *Like the Rorschach test, the TAT is intended to reveal the subject's unconscious motivation and personality characteristics.*

4. Evaluating projective tests

- ▶ *Proponents argue that projective tests produce a wealth of information that can yield important insights into an individual's personality.*
- ▶ *Critics argue that projective tests are time-consuming, expensive, and subjective.*

B. SELF-REPORT INVENTORIES

1. Self-report tests contain inventories of multiple-choice and true-false questions designed to differentiate people on a particular personality characteristic.

2. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

- ▶ *The MMPI contains over 500 statements. Subjects respond to each statement by answering "True," "False," or "Cannot say." Sample questions include, "I am often very tense on the job," and "I wish I could do over some of the things I have done."*
- ▶ *Clinical psychologists and psychiatrists use the MMPI to diagnose psychological disorders. It is important to note that the MMPI is not a vocational interest test.*

3. Evaluating self-report inventories

- ▶ *Proponents argue that self-report inventories are standardized, objective, and relatively inexpensive to administer and score.*
- ▶ *Critics argue that respondents can give false answers to hide their true feelings. In addition, many people are not good judges of their own behavior.*