

**CHAPTER 11**  
**Personality**  
**CHAPTER OUTLINE**

**Personality** is the unique pattern of enduring psychological and behavioral characteristics by which each person can be compared and contrasted with other people.

**I. THE PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH**

*How did paralyzed patients lead Freud to psychoanalysis?*

Sigmund Freud treated “neurotic” disorders—blindness, paralysis—for which no physical cause could be found and that could be removed with hypnosis. This led him to believe in *psychic determinism*, the idea that personality and behavior are caused by psychological factors—what one thinks and feels—more than by biology or current events. Freud held that one might be unaware of one’s psychic determinants. From these ideas, he founded the **psychodynamic approach**, which says that thoughts, behavior, and feelings are due to active, but unconscious processes.

**A. The Structure of Personality**

Freud claimed that personality develops from a personal struggle to meet inborn sexual and aggressive needs in a world that may frustrate such efforts.

**1. Id, Ego, and Superego**

- a) Freud saw the personality as made of three basic components: id, ego, and superego.
- b) The **id** contains the basic inborn instincts, such as the life instincts and death instincts. The id operates on the **pleasure principle**, which guides one toward whatever feels good.
- c) The **ego** develops from the id to help satisfy the id in the face of increasing constraints of “reality.” The ego operates on the **reality principle**.
- d) The **superego** develops as one *internalizes* parental and societal values. The superego houses the person’s sense of morality; the “shoulds” and “should nots” of how to behave.

**2. Conflicts and Defenses**

- a) Freud saw basic needs (id), reason (ego), morality (superego), and environmental demands as competing with each other, causing anxiety and *intrapsychic* or *psychodynamic conflicts* for the ego to handle.
- b) The ego may reduce anxiety or guilt with **defense mechanisms**—unconscious psychological and behavioral tactics that protect a person from unpleasant emotions.

**B. Stages of Personality Development**

Freud argued that personality develops during childhood through a series of **psychosexual stages**. Failure to resolve a stage’s conflicts leaves one *fixated*, or overly attached to or unconsciously preoccupied with, the pleasure area associated with that stage.

**1. The Oral Stage**

- a) The **oral stage**, during the first year, focuses on the mouth as the center of pleasure.
- b) Early or greatly delayed weaning may lead to adult characteristics such as talkativeness, smoking, overeating, drinking excessively, or “biting” sarcasm.

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2. The Anal Stage
    - a) The **anal stage**, during the second year, focuses on toilet training. The ego develops to cope with parental demands for socially appropriate behavior.
    - b) Anally fixated adults can be stingy, stubborn, and obsessed with orderliness or—conversely—may be sloppy, disorganized, and impulsive.
  3. The Phallic Stage
    - a) The **phallic stage** occurs between the ages of three and five, when the focus of pleasure shifts to the genital area.
    - b) A boy's id impulses involve sexual desire for the mother and a desire to eliminate, even kill, the father. This is the **Oedipus complex**. Eventually, a boy identifies with his father.
    - c) A girl begins with a strong attachment to her mother. She develops *penis envy*, in which she blames her mother for missing a penis. The child eventually represses the conflict, transfers her love to her father, and identifies with her mother. This is the **Electra complex**.
    - d) Fixation at the phallic stage includes adult problems such as difficulties with authority figures, aggression, uncertainty about one's identity as a male or female, problems maintaining a stable love relationship, and socially disapproved sexual behavior.
  4. The Latency Period

In the **latency period**, between ages six and adolescence, sexual impulses lie dormant as one focuses on education, same-sex play, and the development of social skills.
  5. The Genital Period

The **genital stage** begins in adolescence and continues the rest of one's life. The quality of relationships and the degree of fulfillment experienced during this stage are directly affected by how intrapsychic conflicts were resolved during the earlier stages.
- C. Variations on Freud's Personality Theory
- Neo-Freudian** theorists revised Freud's ideas, still stressing many basic ideas in Freud's theory, but developing their own approaches. *Ego psychologists* modified Freud's ideas to emphasize the ego more than the id.
1. Jung's Analytical Psychology
    - a) One of Freud's most prominent dissenters, Carl Jung's approach emphasized people's innate drive for creativity, growth-oriented resolution of conflicts, and productive blending of basic impulses with real-world demands.
    - b) He suggested that people gradually develop differing degrees of *introversion* or *extraversion*, along with differing tendencies to rely on specific psychological functions such as thinking versus feeling.
    - c) Archetypes
  2. Other Neo-Freudian Theorists
    - a) Alfred Adler emphasized that the most important innate factor driving the development of personality was a desire to overcome infantile feelings of helplessness and gain control over the environment.



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B. The Big-Five Model of Personality

1. The **big-five model** or **five factor model** of personality was discovered through the use of *factor analysis*. Its factors are: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.
2. Some version of the big-five factors reliably appears in many countries and cultures, thus providing evidence that these factors may represent basic components of human personality.

*Note:* These five factors can be remembered with the mnemonic OCEAN, which lists the first letter of each of the big-five factors.

C. Biological Trait Theories

1. Eysenck's Biological Trait Theory

- a) Hans Eysenck's research using factor analysis convinced him that personality can be described using two main factors or dimensions:
  - (1) **Introversion-Extraversion**
  - (2) **Emotionality-Stability**
- b) Eysenck argued that variations in personality characteristics could be traced to inherited differences in the nervous system, especially the brain.
- c) His theory suggests that extroverts inherit low levels of arousal will be relatively insensitive to rewards and punishments, leading them to constantly look for excitement to increase their arousal. Introverts inherit high levels of arousal that make them relatively more sensitive to rewards and punishments, leading them to readily develop fear responses and avoid excessive stimulation.
- d) Critics, such as Jeffrey Gray, have challenged Eysenck's explanation of the biological origins of the two personality dimensions. Gray argues that the personality dimensions stem from two related brain systems:
  - (1) The *behavioral approach system* affects sensitivity to rewards and their motivation to seek these awards. People with an active behavioral approach system tend to experience more positive emotions.
  - (2) The *behavioral inhibition system* affects sensitivity to punishment and the motivation to avoid punishment. People with an active behavioral inhibition system tend to experience more negative emotions.
- e) Gray's theory is more widely accepted than Eysenck's because it is supported by neuroscientific research.

D. *Thinking Critically:* Are Personality Traits Inherited?

1. *What am I being asked to believe or accept?*  
Some core aspects of personality might be partly, or even largely, inherited.
2. *Is there evidence available to support the claim?*  
Anecdotal stories describe personality similarities among family members. Studies show small but significant correlations on personality test scores between family members. Such correlations persist in identical twins (who share identical genes) reared apart. Behavior geneticists conclude that at least 30% and possible as much as 60% of variability in adult personality traits is due to genetic factors.

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3. *Can that evidence be interpreted another way?*  
Parent-child similarities in personality may come from their similar environmental surroundings, especially from the modeling that parents and siblings provide. Compared to twins, nontwins tend to be affected more by *nonshared environments*.
  4. *What evidence would help to evaluate the alternatives?*  
Studies of infants before the environment exerts an influence are needed. Newborns do show differences in temperament, suggesting a biological and perhaps genetic influence. Studies evaluating the personality characteristics of adopted children shows that their personalities are more like that of their biological family rather than their adoptive family. More research should address which environmental aspects most importantly shape personality.
  5. *What conclusions are most reasonable?*  
Genetic influences do appear to contribute significantly to the differences between people in many personality traits, primarily in the form of physical characteristics and temperament. These characteristics interact with environmental factors to produce specific features of personality. People appear to inherit raw materials that are then shaped by the world into individual personalities.
- E. Evaluating the Trait Approach
1. Trait theories describe personality more than they explain it. And they tell little about how traits relate to the thoughts and feelings that precede, accompany, and follow behavior.
  2. Trait approaches only give a static list of superficial personality descriptions, without clarifying the dynamics of how such traits combine and interact in a real person.

### **III. THE SOCIAL-COGNITIVE APPROACH**

*Do we learn our personality?*

The **social-cognitive approach**, sometimes called the *social-learning approach*, sees personality as a set of behaviors and cognitive habits that people acquire through learning and then display in particular situations. This view expands beyond traditional behaviorism by emphasizing *learned patterns of thought* as guiding actions and the fact that much of personality is learned in social situations from observing others.

A. Prominent Social-Cognitive Theories

1. Rotter's Expectancy Theory
  - a) Julian Rotter's expectancy theory holds that learned cognitive *expectancies* guide behavior. Behaviors reflect both expected outcome and the value one places on that outcome. Thus, behavior is determined by its rewarding or punishing consequences and by an expectation that a particular behavior will be rewarded or punished.
  - b) Rotter suggested that people learn general expectancies about how rewards and punishments are controlled. *Internals* expect that their own efforts will

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control events (“I failed the test because I did not study”). *Externals* expect external forces to control them (“I failed the test because it was too hard”).

2. Bandura and Reciprocal Determinism
    - a) Albert Bandura argues that thought, environment, and behavior all interact; each can only be understood relative to the other two. Personality is shaped by the *reciprocal determinism* among these elements.
    - b) In Bandura’s view, one important cognitive element is **perceived self-efficacy**, a learned expectation that you can perform well regardless of past failures or current obstacles.
  3. Mischel’s Cognitive/Affective Theory
    - a) Walter Mischel’s theory is based on trait-like *cognitive person variables*—identifiable dimensions along which people differ.
    - b) The most important person variables are *encodings* (the person’s beliefs about the environment and other people), *expectancies* (including self-efficacy and what the person expects to follow from various behaviors), *affects* (feelings and emotions), *goals and values* (the things a person believes in and wants to achieve) and *self-regulatory plans* (the things a person can do, and the ability to thoughtfully plan behavior).
    - c) The cognitive person variables interact with situation variables to produce behavior.
    - d) The new focus is consistent with Bandura’s concept of reciprocal determinism: Traits influence behavior only in relevant situations; traits can lead to behavior that alters situations, that in turn, promote other behaviors; people choose to be in situations that are in accord with their traits; and traits are more important in some situations than in others.
- B. Evaluating the Cognitive-Behavioral Approach
1. The social-cognitive approach expanded the role of learning principles to include socially important areas. Social-cognitive principles have also generated several effective treatment methods for psychological disorders.
  2. This approach is criticized as reducing humans to behavior-acquiring machines. It neglects unconscious processes, subjective experiences, and genetic or biological issues.

#### **IV. THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH**

*Is everyone basically good?*

The **humanistic approach**, or *phenomenological approach*, holds that personality and behavior are guided by one’s unique perceptions and values and by an innate drive to grow and fulfill one’s natural potential.

##### **A. Major Humanistic Theories**

1. Roger’s Self Theory
  - a) Carl Rogers thought that people have an innate inclination toward growth and fulfillment, called the **actualizing tendency**, that motivated all human behavior. In this view, personality is the expression of that actualizing tendency as it unfolds in each person’s uniquely perceived reality.

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- b) Rogers's concept of *self* refers to who a person really is—preferences, abilities, shortcomings, desires. *Self-actualization* requires a correct **self-concept** (understanding of one's self).
  - c) *Positive regard*—approval of the self from others—also shapes actions. When others' evaluations agree with your own, or are *congruent*, you see yourself as “good”; this becomes part of your self-concept. Psychological discomfort or mental disorder can result when the feelings people experience or express are *incongruent* with their true feelings.
  - d) Positive regard is usually conditional, coming only when **conditions of worth** are met. Conditions of worth are created whenever people, instead of behaviors, are evaluated. Thus, you may learn to believe that your worth as a person depends on showing the “right” attitudes, behaviors, and values.
2. Maslow's Growth Theory
- a) Abraham Maslow saw self-actualization as a human need, not just a capacity. He felt it was the highest need in a hierarchy of needs that exist in life.
  - b) He argued that most people have a *deficiency orientation*, focusing on unmet needs for material things. This tends to render life as meaningless, disappointing, and boring.
  - c) Those with *growth orientations* focus on being satisfied with what they have, what they are, and what they can do. Such people are more likely to have *peak experiences*, feelings of joy over the mere fact of being alive, human, and utilizing their fullest potential.
- B. Evaluating the Phenomenological Approach
- 1. The phenomenological approach fits many people's views of themselves. Their ideas have been applied to therapies and parental techniques.
  - 2. Critics see the phenomenological approach as vague, naïve, romantic, and unrealistic. They see this approach as giving too little attention to the role of inherited characteristics, learning, situational influences, and unconscious motivations. Some phenomenological ideas are culture-specific, particularly the notion of striving to fulfill one's individual and unique potential.

**V. LINKAGES: PERSONALITY, CULTURE, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

Western parents encourage independence, and Western personality theorists see independence and self-esteem as important to mental health.

Many non-western cultures, such as those of China and Japan, discourage people from developing a unique and independent self. Children are encouraged to get along with others and to avoid standing out in crowds, lest they diminish someone else. In fact, the Japanese word for “different” (*tigau*) also means “wrong.”

In contrast to the *independent* self-system common in many Western cultures, cultures with a more collectivist orientation promote personality development that sees the self as *interdependent* on others, each person only a fraction of the whole. In the United States, a sense of well being is associated with *having positive attributes* whereas in Japan a sense of well-being is associated with *having no negative attributes*.

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Gender differences must also be evaluated. Females in the United States tend to have an interdependent self-system whereas males tend to have an independent self-system.

A. Focus on Research: Personality Development Over Time

1. *What was the researcher's question?*  
Can young children's temperament predict their personality characteristics and behaviors as adults?
2. *How did the researcher answer the question?*  
Avshalom Caspi and colleagues sought to answer such questions in a longitudinal study. In a longitudinal study, the same group of people are followed over a long period of time. The research sample included all children born in Dunedin, New Zealand between April 1972 and March 1973, about 1,000 people.
  - a) At the age of 3, research assistants observed them in a standard situation and made a rating on a number of dimensions. Each child was placed into one of five temperament categories: *undercontrolled; inhibited; confident; reserved; and well-adjusted.*
  - b) The children were observed and categorized again at ages 5, 7, and 9. Different people made the ratings each time. The ratings indicated that the children's temperaments stayed about the same from 3–9.
  - c) When the children were 18-years-old, they filled out a standard personality test and when they were age 21 they were interviewed about their involvement in risky and unhealthy behaviors. Again, the interviewers were different and had no previous information.
3. *What did the researchers find?*  
The researchers found several significant differences in the personality test results of the five original temperament groups. Eighteen-year-olds who had been classified as "undercontrolled" in childhood showed they were much more aggressive, alienated, negative, and hostile than any other temperament group.
4. *What do the results mean?*  
We can make relatively accurate predictions about people's personality and behavior as adults if we know about their temperament as children. However, it is important to note that although personality is influenced and shaped by temperament, it is not completely determined by it.
5. *What do we still need to know?*  
We still need to know why there is continuity between temperament as a child and personality as an adult. The researchers proposed an explanation that draws heavily on Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism. The process of mutual influence between personality and situations can continue over a lifetime.

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**VI. ASSESSING PERSONALITY**

*How do psychologists measure personality?*

There are four basic methods in assessing and describing personality:

- *Life outcomes* are such things as records of education, income, or marital status.
- *Situational tests* are observations of behavior in situations designed to measure personality.
- *Observer ratings* are judgments made about a person by friends or family.
- *Self-reports* are people's own responses to interviews and personality tests.

*Interviews* gather information from the person's point of view. *Structured* interviews are standardized from person to person, aimed at gaining specific information without taking too much time (for example, a quick medical screening interview before donating blood). *Open-ended* interviews can be tailored to the intellectual level, emotional state, and special needs of the person being assessed

*Personality tests* are a standardized, inexpensive way to gather information. As with all tests, useful personality tests must be *reliable* (measure things in a consistent or stable way) and *valid* (measure what they claim to be measuring).

A. Objective Personality Tests

1. **Objective personality tests** ask clear and direct questions about a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. The answers are used to draw conclusions about an individual's personality. These tests are cheaper and more efficient than other personality assessment methods. The results can be objectively scored and compared to *norms*, average scores from others of the same age and gender.
2. Objective tests can focus on one trait or on many, like the *Neuroticism Extraversion Openness Personality Inventory, Revised (NEO-PI-R)*, which measures the big-five factors. The NEO-PI-R is quite reliable and has successfully predicted performance on specific jobs and overall career success, social status, and the likelihood of continued criminal behavior.
3. The *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)* is the most widely used objective personality test for diagnosing psychological disorders, lists 566 true-false items. It has since been revised and updated in the MMPI-2.
  - a) The MMPI has ten *clinical scales* (groups of items that have previously been shown to correlate with specific psychological disorders) and four *validity scales* (groups of items intended to detect if people distort answers, misunderstand items, or are uncooperative). The person's scores on the scales form a *profile*. Interpretation of the profile focuses on the pattern formed by the highest two or three scales or the overall pattern in the clinical scales.
  - b) Considerable evidence supports the MMPI's reliability and validity.

