

CHAPTER SIX

PERSONALITY

*“One of the greatest regrets in life is being what **others would want you to be**, rather than **being yourself**”. **Shannon L. Alder***

What does the above quotation reflects?

6.1. Meaning of Personality

- The word **personality** is derived from the word “**persona**”, which has Greek and Latin roots and refers to the theatrical **masks** worn by Greek actors.
- Personality has been defined in many different ways, but psychologists generally view *personality as the unique pattern of enduring thoughts, feelings, and actions that characterize a person.*
- Personality should not be confused with character and temperament, however, both character and temperament are vital components of personality.

6.2. Theories of Personality

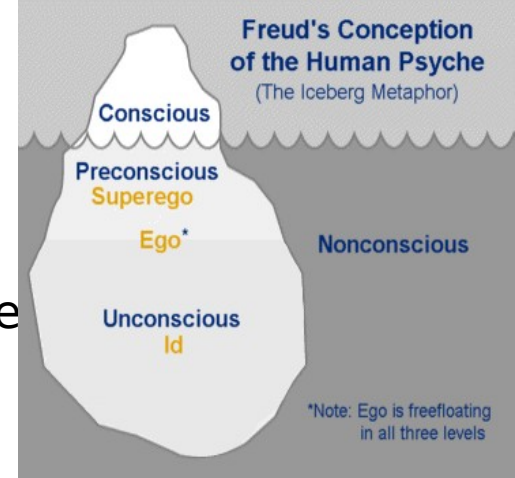
Though there are different theories of personality, we will see only three.

6.2.1. Freud's **psychoanalytic theory of personality**

- According to Freud, personality is formed within ourselves, arising from basic inborn needs, drives, and characteristics.
- He argued that people are in constant conflict between their biological urges (drives) and the need to tame/domesticate them.
- In Freud's view, personality has three structure/parts which serves a different function and develops at different times: the id, the ego, and the superego.
- According to Freud, the way these three parts of personality interact with one another determines the personality of an individual.

Id: If It Feels Good, Do It

- .Exist at birth, all psychic energy resides in the **id**
 - .The seat of biologically based drives (hunger, sex, aggression)
 - .It is completely unconscious, amoral, impulsive, & irrational part of the personality
 - .It seeks immediate gratification/**pleasure**/reduce tension/libido
- “Eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, and satisfy the sex when needed”



Ego: The Executive Director

- .The ego begins to emerge during infancy when the child starts learning.
- .Ego devises **logical and realistic** strategies for meeting needs.
- .It balances the conflicting demands of the id and the superego.

Superego: The Moral Watchdog

- .The conscience/individual's internalized **moral** standards.
- .The superego develops from the ego as 3-to 6-year-old children internalize the moral standards and values.

- For Freud, our personality is the outcome of the continual battle for dominance among the id, the ego, and the superego. This constant conflict between them is managed by psychological defense mechanisms.
- Psychological problems often arise when the individual's supply of the id, the ego, and the superego are unbalanced.
- To defend itself against anxiety, the ego adopts unconscious coping devices called **defense mechanisms** such as;
 - **Repression:** (banishing threatening thoughts, feelings, and memories into the unconscious mind).
 - **Denial:** is refusal to recognize or acknowledge a threatening situation.
 - **Rationalization:** giving socially acceptable reasons for one's inappropriate behavior.
 - **Displacement:** involves expressing feelings toward a person who is less threatening than the actual target of those feelings.
 - **Projection:** attributing one's unacceptable feelings to other people.
 - **Reaction formation:** acting the opposite from one's true feelings.
 - **Sublimation:** expressing sexual or aggressive behavior through indirect, socially acceptable outlets.
 - **Regression:** returning to an earlier stage form of behavior.

6.2.2. The trait theory of personality

- Psychologists who take the trait approach see personality as a combination of stable internal characteristics that people display consistently over time and across situations.
- Trait theorists seek to measure the relative amount of personality characteristics that they believe are present in everyone.
- The trait approach to personality makes three main assumption:
 1. Personality traits are relatively stable & predictable over time.
 2. Personality traits are relatively stable across situations, and they can explain why people act in predictable ways.
 3. People differ in how much of a particular personality trait they possess; no two people are exactly alike on all traits.
- The result is an endless variety of unique personalities.

- Though the history of the trait theory of personality has come through different stages, our attention here will be paid on the five-factor model (OCEAN) or the Big Five theory.
 - **Openness:** being intelligent, creative, inquisitive, flexible, and broad-minded....
 - **Conscientiousness: Being** competitive, self-disciplined, organized, consistent, and deliberative...
 - **Extraversion:** being active, conversational, assertive, and seeking inspiration. The opposite end of extraversion is introversion.
 - **Agreeableness:** being considerate, good-natured, helpful, tolerant, and sympathetic rather than antagonistic...
 - **Neuroticism:** easily experiencing negative and unpleasant emotions, such as fear, anxiety, distrust, unhappiness, and insecurity...

6.2.3. Humanistic theory of personality

- Humanistic approaches to personality emphasize people's inherent goodness and their tendency to move toward higher levels of functioning instead of seeing people as controlled by the unconscious, unseen forces (psychodynamic approaches), and a set of stable traits (trait approaches).
- It is this conscious, self-motivated ability to change and improve, along with people's unique creative impulses, that humanistic theorists argue make up the core of personality.

Carl Rogers and Self-Concept

- Like Maslow, Rogers believed that human beings are always **striving to fulfill their innate capabilities** and to become what their genetic potential will allow them to become. This striving for fulfillment is called **self-actualizing tendency**.
- An important tool in human self-actualization is the development of an **image of oneself or the self-concept**. The self-concept is based on what people are told by others and how the **sense of self** is reflected in the words and actions of important people in one's life, such as parents, siblings, coworkers, friends,

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Real and Ideal Self

- Two important components of the self-concept are the **real self** (one's **actual** of characteristics, traits, and abilities that form the basis of the striving for self-actualization) and the **ideal self** (the perception of what one should be or would **like to be**).
- The ideal self primarily comes from those important, significant others in one's life, most often the parents.
- Rogers believed that when the real self and the ideal self are very close or similar to each other, **people feel competent and capable**, but when there is a mismatch between the real and ideal selves, **anxiety and neurotic behavior** can be the result.

Conditional and Unconditional Positive Regard

- Rogers defined **positive regard** as warmth, affection, **love, and respect that comes from the significant others** (parents, friends etc.) in people's experience.
- Positive regard is vital to people's ability to cope with stress and to strive to achieve self-actualization.
- Rogers believed that unconditioned positive regard, or love, affection and respect with no strings attached, is necessary for people to be able to explore fully all that they can achieve and become.
- Unfortunately, some parents, spouses, and friends give conditional positive regard, which is love, affection, respect and warmth that depend, or seem to depend, on doing what those people want.

- Although “self-actualization” and “to be fully functioning” are highly related concepts, there are some subtle differences.
- Maslow’s **self-actualization** is a goal that people are always striving to reach.
- In Rogers's view, **only a person who is fully functioning is capable** of reaching the goal of self-actualization. To be fully functioning is a necessary step in the process of self-actualization.
- Maslow listed several people that he considered to be self-actualized people, for example, Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela a to this list.
- In Roger's view, these same people would be seen **as having trusted their true feelings and innermost needs rather than just going along with the crowd**, a description that certainly seems to apply in these three cases.