

## YOU KNOW YOU HAVE MASTERED THE MAIN TOPICS IN THIS CHAPTER IF YOU ARE ABLE TO . . .

- ∞ Define personality according to the various perspectives in psychology.
- ∞ Discuss Freud's psychoanalytical perspective on personality including the division of the mind, components of personality, stages of development, and modifications of his theory by the neo-Freudians.
- ∞ Describe the behaviorists' perspective on personality and the social cognitive theory including Albert Bandura's model.
- ∞ Introduce the humanistic perspective of personality including Carl Rogers view of the self and concept of unconditional positive regard.
- ∞ Discuss trait theory with regard to the description of personality.
- ∞ Explain what is known about the role of biology and heredity in personality development
- ∞ Describe major methods of personality assessment including interviews, projective tests, behavioral assessment, and personality inventories.

## RAPID REVIEW

**Personality** is the unique way in which each individual thinks, acts, and feels throughout life.

Two components of personality are **character**, which refers to value judgments made about a person's morals or ethical behavior and **temperament**, or the enduring characteristics a person is born with. There are at least four different perspectives regarding personality including the psychoanalytic, behaviorist, humanistic, and trait perspectives.

The **psychoanalytic perspective** originated with the theories of **Sigmund Freud** and focuses on the role of unconscious thoughts and desires in the development of personality. It is important to take into account the sexually repressed Victorian era in which Freud grew up when evaluating his theory or personality. Freud believed the mind was divided into three parts: the **conscious** mind contains all of the things a person is aware of at any given moment, the **preconscious** mind contains all the memories and facts that can be recalled with only minimal effort, and the **unconscious** mind is the part of our mind which remains hidden at all times. Freud believed the unconscious mind was the most important factor in directing behavior and personality. In addition to the divisions of the mind, Freud also believed that personality could be divided into three components: the id, ego, and superego. The **id** resides completely in the unconscious mind and represents the most primitive part of the personality containing all of the basic biological drives such as hunger, thirst, and sex. According to Freud, the id operates on the **pleasure principle**, which attempts to seek immediate gratification of needs with no regard for consequences. Freud referred to the psychological tension created by a person's unconscious desires as the **libido**. The **ego** represents the mostly conscious and rational aspect of personality, which operates on the **reality principle**, attempting to satisfy the desires of the id in a way that will minimize negative consequences. The **superego** is the last part of the personality to develop according to Freud's theory and represents the moral center of personality. The superego contains the **conscience**, or the part of personality that makes a person feel good or bad depending on whether they do the right or wrong thing. According to Freud, the id demands immediate satisfaction, while the superego places restrictions on which behaviors are morally acceptable, and the ego is left in the middle to come up with a compromise.

For Freud, the three components of personality develop in a series of **psychosexual stages** with each stage focused on a different **erogenous zone**, or area of the body that produces pleasurable feelings. Unresolved conflicts at any of the stages of development can lead to **fixation** and subsequent emotional or psychological problems as an adult. The first stage is called the **oral stage** because the erogenous zone is the mouth. Fixation can occur in this stage if the baby is weaned from the mother's breast too soon or too late. The second stage in Freud's theory is the **anal stage**, during which time period the anus serves as the erogenous zone and the conflict centers around toilet training. Fixation resulting from openly

rebellious against the toilet training results in adults who are characteristically messy and are referred to as **anal expulsive personalities**. Fixation resulting from overly strict toilet training results in adults who are stingy, stubborn, and excessively neat and would be referred to as **anal retentive personalities**. The third stage is the **phallic stage** and focuses on the child's own genitals. During this stage the child develops a sexual attraction to the opposite-sex parent, becomes jealous of the same-sex parent, develops anxiety due to the attraction and the jealousy, and resolves the anxiety through sexual repression and identification with the same-sex parent. Freud referred to this process in boys as the **Oedipus complex** and suggested that girls go through a similar process with their fathers as the target of their affection. The process of **identification** leads to the development of the superego so that by the end of Freud's third stage of development, all three components of personality are in place. The fourth stage, known as the **latency stage**, consists of repressed sexual feelings during which children focus on intellectual, physical, and social development but not sexual development. The final stage occurs around the start of puberty when sexual feelings can no longer be repressed and is referred to as the **genital stage**.

A number of psychologists, referred to as **neo-Freudians**, agreed with parts of Freud's theories but not all aspects. **Carl Gustav Jung** believed that there were two parts of the unconscious, a **personal unconscious** similar to the unconscious described by Freud and a **collective unconscious** which contained universal human memories that Jung called **archetypes**. **Alfred Adler** felt that the motivating factor of behavior was not the pleasure-seeking drive of the libido suggested by Freud, but rather the seeking of superiority through defense mechanisms such as compensation. **Karen Horney** disagreed with Freud's emphasis on sexuality and thought personalities were shaped more by a child's sense of **basic anxiety**, which if unattended to could lead to the development of **neurotic personalities**. **Erik Erikson** developed eight psychosocial stages of development which focused on the role of social relationships in the development of personality.

Although Freud's theory has had a significant impact on the culture of modern Western societies, his theory has been criticized on the scientific grounds due to the fact that it was not developed based on scientific experiments but rather on Freud's personal observations in his private practice as a psychiatrist, and that Freud's personal observations were limited to a specific group of wealthy Austrian women living in the sexually repressed Victorian era.

According to the behaviorists' perspective, personality consists of a set of learned responses or **habits**. A variation on the behaviorist perspective is that of the **social cognitive learning theorists**, who emphasize the role of conditioning along with an individual's thought processes in the development of personality. A strong proponent of the **social cognitive view**, **Albert Bandura**, suggested that the environment, behavior, and personal/cognitive factors all act together to determine an individual's actions in a process Bandura referred to as **reciprocal determinism**. An important component of the cognitive factors is the person's sense of **self-efficacy**, or perception of how effective a behavior will be in a particular context. **Julian Rotter** proposed that individuals develop a relatively set way of responding and this behavior represented "personality." An important determinant of the individual's response was his or her sense of **locus of control**. According to Rotter, the individual's **expectancy** and the response's reinforcement value were the two key factors that determined how an individual would react.

The **humanistic perspective** of personality focuses more on qualities that are considered uniquely human such as free will and subjective emotions. **Carl Rogers** proposed that humans are always striving to fulfill their innate capacities in a process known as the **self-actualizing tendency**. Rogers defined **positive regard** as warmth, affection, love, and respect that comes from significant others. In order for an individual to work towards self-actualization, they need to be exposed to a certain level of **unconditional positive regard** from the significant others in their lives. Rogers felt that **conditional positive regard** would restrict a person's ability to become a fully functioning person. Rogers believed an individual's image of oneself, or **self-concept**, also played a role in becoming **fully functional**. The self-concept was based on what an individual is told by others and also his or her own sense of **self**. According to Rogers, self-concept could be divided into a **real self** and an **ideal self**. If the real self and ideal self concept were too far apart, anxiety and neurotic behavior would result.

**Trait theories** of personality have focused on describing personality and predicting behavior based on that description. A **trait** is a consistent, enduring way of thinking, feeling, or behaving. **Gordon**

Allport identified approximately 200 traits in the English language that he felt were “wired” into each person’s nervous system. Raymond Cattell narrowed the number of traits down further by dividing traits into **surface traits**, such as the 200 traits described by Allport and **source traits**, or the more basic traits that underlie the surface traits and form the core of personality. **Introversion** is an example of a source trait. Cattell believed that there were 16 basic, or source traits. Later researchers narrowed this list to five source traits and developed the personality model known as the **five-factor model**, or the Big Five. The five trait dimensions are **openness**, **conscientiousness**, **extraversion**, **agreeableness**, and **neuroticism**. Critics of the five-factor model have argued that the situation plays a more significant role in determining an individual’s behavior than is suggested by trait theory and have proposed a theory that includes a **trait-situation interaction**.

The field of **behavioral genetics** studies the role of inherited traits in personality. Twin studies have found that identical twins are more similar than fraternal twins or unrelated people in certain aspects of personality such as intelligence, leadership, tendency to follow rules, assertiveness, and aggressiveness. Adoption studies have supported some of these findings and have suggested a biological basis for shyness and aggressiveness.

In an attempt to describe “national personalities,” Geert Hofstede conducted a cross-cultural study for IBM which resulted in a description of each country along four basic dimensions. The dimensions Hofstede observed were individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance.

Methods for assessing personality have been developed based on specific theories of personality as well as the various goals of classification, self-insight, and the diagnosis of psychological disorders. An **interview** is a method of personality assessment in which the professional asks questions of the client and allows the client to answer in either a structured or unstructured manner. Interviews are limited by the fact that clients can lie, intentionally or unintentionally, and the interviewers can bring their own biases into their interpretations including the **halo effect**, which is the tendency of a person’s first impression to influence later assessments. Psychoanalysts have developed **projective tests** in an attempt to assess a person’s unconscious conflicts or desires by having them **projected** onto an ambiguous visual stimulus. Two of the most commonly used projective tests are the **Rorschach inkblot test** and the **Thematic Apperception Test or TAT**. Projective tests are highly **subjective** and have been found to have very low reliability and validity. A behaviorist would be more likely to measure personality by directly observing an individual’s actions. In **direct observation**, the psychologist would observe an individual in a specific setting and record his or her behaviors through the use of a **rating scale** or a **frequency count**. Critics of this approach have pointed out the possibility for both the observer effect and observer bias. Trait theorists would be most likely to use a **personality inventory**, which consists of a questionnaire that has a standard list of questions that require specific answers such as “yes” or “no.” Examples of commonly used personality inventories include Cattell’s 16 PF, the Neuroticism/Extraversion/Openness Personality Inventory (NEO-PI), the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Version II (MMPI-2). The advantage of personality inventories is that they are scored objectively, which eliminates the possibility of observer bias, and they have been found to have very high reliability and validity scores. However, the inventories are still based on self-report.

A large number of personality tests are accessible over the Internet; however, the results of such tests should be interpreted with an appropriate level of skepticism.