

Personality

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- what personality is
- several different theories of personality
- how various theories compare

Hippocrates, an ancient Greek physician, suggested that the differences among people's thoughts, actions, and feelings were the result of different blends of four basic fluids in the body. Yellow bile was associated with a quick temper (choleric). Blood was responsible for a warm, happy temperament (sanguine). Phlegm produced a cool demeanor (phlegmatic). Black bile was associated with thoughtfulness or melancholy (melancholic). Physicians at the time focused on balancing these fluids, or humors, in the body.

Since the time of Hippocrates, many psychologists have attempted to describe and explain personality. They have based their theories on the words we use to describe one another and ourselves, on the unconscious, on reinforcement, on the "self," and on our interactions with others.

Through a variety of approaches, psychologists are trying to understand why people are different and how these differences develop. Predicting a person's behavior in a specific situation is another goal of personality theories.

What Is Personality?

A psychologist once said, "What personality is, everybody knows; but nobody can tell." Personality has been variously described as a unique pattern of traits, individual differences, and behavioral predispositions and the sum of our behavioral tendencies. For our purposes, we will define **personality** as the relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting possessed by an individual.

Psychology and Personality

Although Hippocrates addressed certain aspects of personality, it wasn't until the 1930s that it became a major topic of study in psychology. In his book *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, psychologist Gordon Allport maintained that psychology had ignored individual differences in an attempt to explain how people were alike. Psychologists of that time were much more interested in theories that might enable them to make explanations and predictions about people in general.

Allport believed that the study of individual differences should be the basis of

psychology rather than just one of many topics of study within the field.

How Personality Is Studied

Given the many different ways that personality is described, it should come as no surprise that the theories describing it take very different approaches. Personality may be studied:

- * In clinical observations, ranging from a psychologist working with a particular problem in a person's life to serious mental illnesses.
- * In experimental psychology where participants may be observed under a variety of conditions.
- * Using tests and measurements of various personality factors.

Depending on a psychologist's preferences, these methods will differ in what content is observed and what form of investigation is seen as most appropriate.

Theories of Personality

In this chapter, we'll look at **five** different theories of personality. (See below.)

Theories of Personality	
1. The Psychoanalytic Approach	Focuses on the role of the unconscious in the development of personality.
2. The Trait Approach	Focuses on characteristic behaviors and conscious motives.
3. The Behavioral Approach	Focuses on behaviorism and social learning.
4. The Humanistic Approach	Focuses on self-awareness and the development of the "self."
5. The Sociocultural Approach	Focuses on the roles of gender, ethnicity, and culture on the development of personality.

The Psychoanalytic Approach

The psychoanalytic approach suggests that inner conflicts and struggles of which people are unaware affect their personalities. Freud claimed that everyone is born with biological drives such as sex and aggression. These drives conflict with society's rules and laws. One's behavior at any given time is determined by these conflicts.

Freud proposed that the mind is like an iceberg. The conscious mind floats above the water and contains our conscious awareness. Below the water is the much larger **unconscious** mind containing thoughts, feelings, and desires of which we are mostly unaware. At times, some of the contents of the unconscious enter the **preconscious** mind, where the conscious mind can retrieve them.

Freud believed that the mass of unacceptable passions and drives in the unconscious are repressed because the conscious mind can't deal with them. However, he believed the unconscious exerts an important influence over our everyday behaviors. He described a series of psychosexual stages of development based on sexual drives.

Id, Ego, and Superego

Freud proposed **three** systems that take part in the conflict between our inner drives and external restraints.

- 1. The Id.** The **id** is the largest portion of the iceberg—hidden from view and from the conscious mind. The id contains the basic drives to survive, reproduce, and engage in mastery over others. If the id had no restraints, it would satisfy all of its needs. This is called the **pleasure principle**. For example, when an infant is hungry, it cries—demanding immediate attention to that basic need. Because a child is unaware of any social restraints, the id is in full control of his or her behavior.
- 2. The Ego.** The **ego** contains our conscious perceptions that develop with maturity. It operates on the **reality principle**—tempering the needs of the id with the reactions of the real world. For example, the ego understands what would happen if the id's drive for sexual satisfaction or aggression were reflected in one's behavior without restraint. The ego tries to ensure that the individual will experience pleasure rather than pain resulting from society's reactions to unacceptable behaviors.
- 3. The Superego.** As a child absorbs the values of parents and society, the **superego** develops. Rather than focusing on internal wants and needs, the super-ego is driven by what it perceives as ideal—right. The superego operates from the **morality principle**—a combination of conscience and a chosen self-image of ourselves as moral persons. When the ego engages in behaviors that the super-ego considers inappropriate, feelings of guilt may be experienced.

Defense Mechanisms

According to Freud, one of the ways that the ego avoids pain or reduces anxiety is by using **defense mechanisms** to distort reality.

- * **Repression** pushes anxiety-producing ideas into the unconscious. When a person “explodes,” repressed thoughts may have broken into consciousness.
- * **Rationalization** involves making up a reason for your behavior or explaining away that of others. Denied a raise, a person might say, “I really didn’t need the money.”
- * **Projection** involves placing the cause of your problems on someone else or seeing your own faults in other people. You assume there’s tension at home due to your sibling’s behavior, when it is really your behavior causing the tension.
- * **Displacement** is the emotional version of “passing the buck.” You’re angry with your teacher, so you yell at your best friend.
- * **Denial** is refusing to accept something that is upsetting. A smoker may deny the risks of lung cancer.
- * **Reaction formation** is acting contrary to your true feelings. You are “extra nice” to someone you can’t stand.
- * **Sublimation** is finding acceptable outlets for your feelings or desires. An aggressive person might transfer that aggression to sports.
- * **Regression** is reverting to earlier, immature behaviors that once got you what you wanted. You throw a temper tantrum to get your way.

Freud believed that a person with a strong ego could balance the id and super-ego and rarely needed defense mechanisms.

Neo-Freudians

Some of Freud’s followers accepted the id, ego, and superego and Freud’s focus on the importance of the unconscious mind in personality. However, they disagreed with his emphasis on sexual and aggressive drives. Further, some of Freud’s ideas were clearly biased against women. *Psychodynamic* or *neo-Freudian* theories grew out of the work of Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Carl Jung, and Erik Erikson.

Alfred Adler believed that we are all born with feelings of inferiority. Striving for superiority is the main motivational force in the development of personality. We do this by actively developing talents, working toward improvement, and learning to cope with any weaknesses. Some of Adler’s terms are still popular today. **Overcompensation** describes the acts of people who are fanatical in their drive for perfection. **Inferiority complex** results when a person’s conscious thoughts are dominated by an inability to succeed.

Karen Horney agreed with Freud that childhood experiences play a large role in the development of personality, but she believed that it was social influences rather than sexual drives that were most important. Horney studied basic anxiety, which she claimed could be overcome by learning to adjust to and cope with the social world. She said that people suffering from basic anxiety move toward, away from, or against people—all of which can be problems if taken to extremes.

Carl Jung, although he was a close friend of Freud, broke with psychoanalysis and founded what he termed *analytic psychology*. Rather than the unconscious, Jung emphasized what he called the *collective unconscious*—a rather mystical region to which we all have access as a result of being human. Contained within the collective unconscious are various **archetypes**—universal forms that we encounter in our lives, such as mother, father, god, hero, or leader. Archetypes tend to recur in a society’s literature and art.

Jung believed that being in touch with the archetypes within us is important to a healthy personality. For example, women may experience their masculine side and men, their feminine tendencies, in appropriate situations. Jung spoke of our **persona** as the image we present to others. Your real self can be very different from the persona that you allow others to see. Jung suggested that when the persona and real self were substantially different, serious anxieties and emotional problems could occur.

Erik Erikson, like Horney, believed that social relationships, such as that of the mother and infant, were of very great importance in personality development. Erikson gave more credit to the ego than Freud and believed that people were quite capable of making choices. As you have seen in earlier chapters, Erikson proposed eight stages of development that focused on developmental tasks rather than on Freud’s sexual forces.

Evaluation of Psychoanalysis

Freud was a brilliant neurologist and the true father of modern personality theory. Many of his principles remain important to this day:

- * Focus on the unconscious.
- * Interest in cognitive and symbolic behavior.
- * Belief in the importance of basic drives of sexuality and aggression.
- * Assumption that early experiences underlie later behavior.
- * Development of psychoanalytic therapy as a treatment for behavior disorders.

Psychologists who came after Freud analyzed his work and used the flaws they found in it as starting points for their own. Among the weaknesses of Freud’s approach are these criticisms:

- * He placed too much importance on the unconscious and not enough on the influence of social relationships.
- * Because Freud worked primarily with white, middle-class individuals, his ideas may not apply across a more general population.
- * Because Freud had very definite ideas about what caused certain problems, he may have influenced what clients said, or his interpretations of what they said might have been biased.
- * Modern research has demonstrated that many of Freud’s explanations for events, such as “Freudian slips,” dreams, and sexual repression, can be explained in other ways.
- * Freud’s ideas about the natural superiority of men have been criticized and are now considered sexist.

The Trait Approach

A **trait** is a characteristic of personality that remains fairly stable over time. Traits may describe:

- * Physical characteristics, such as black hair or brown eyes.
- * Social characteristics, such as shy or humorous.
- * Moral characteristics, such as honest or trustworthy.

Trait Theorists

Trait theorists believe that social and moral characteristics are relatively unchanging and that they determine our behavior during various situations. Leading trait theorists include Gordon Allport, Raymond Cattell, and Hans Eysenck.

Allport's Classification of Traits
Cardinal Trait
A trait that an individual exhibits in all situations
Central Trait
A trait exhibited in most situations
Secondary Trait
A trait whose presence in an individual depends on the situation

Gordon Allport used an unabridged dictionary in the 1930s to identify words used to describe a person. Initially, he identified about 18,000 words, which he then narrowed down to about 4,500. Allport classified the traits in several ways. A common trait is one that is shared by most people, such as honesty. The preceding chart shows another set of classifications that Allport used.

Individuals who exhibit cardinal traits are fairly rare. Secondary traits seem to be fairly common as behaviors change from one situation to the next.

Raymond Cattell used statistical methods to analyze the huge amount of information on traits that Allport had gathered. He first reduced the number of traits to about 200. Cattell identified traits that seemed obvious, such as truthfulness, tidiness, or friendliness. He called these behaviors "surface traits." He then noticed that these traits seemed to fall in clusters—individuals who exhibited one trait in a cluster also exhibited the others. From that, he determined that each cluster was the result of a single, more fundamental trait—a "source trait." Source traits are those believed to be at the core of personality. They correspond roughly to Allport's central traits.

Cattell listed 16 personality source traits. The list is bipolar—that is, it shows the two extremes of each trait. People generally fall somewhere between the two poles of each trait. See the chart on the next page.

Cattell's Personality Traits		
Reserved	↔	Outgoing
Less intelligent	↔	More intelligent
Affected by feelings	↔	Emotionally stable
Submissive	↔	Dominant
Serious	↔	Happy-go-lucky
Expedient	↔	Conscientious
Timid	↔	Venturesome
Tough-minded	↔	Sensitive
Trusting	↔	Suspicious
Practical	↔	Imaginative
Forthright	↔	Shrewd
Self-assured	↔	Apprehensive
Conservative	↔	Experimenting
Group dependent	↔	Self-sufficient
Uncontrolled	↔	Controlled
Relaxed	↔	Tense

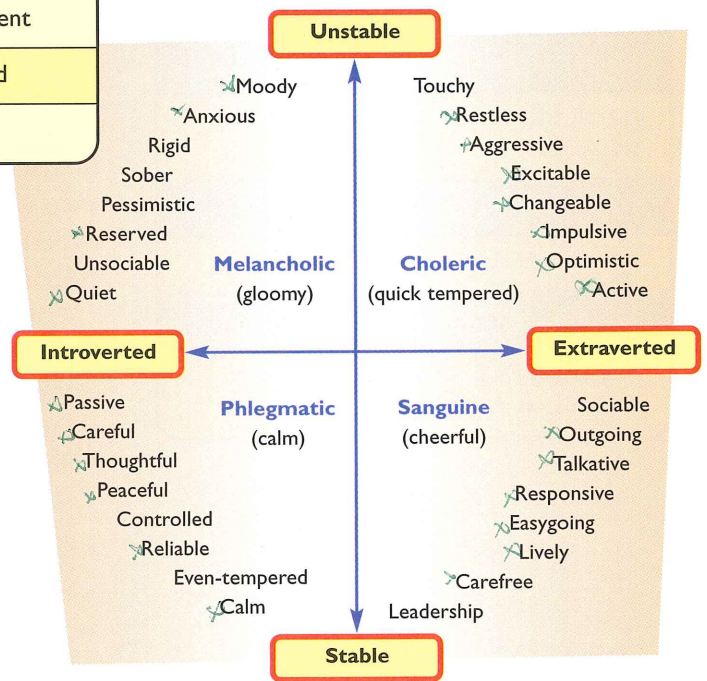
Hans Eysenck was a British psychologist who categorized traits in **two** dimensions:

- 1. Introversion-Extroversion.** Introverts tend to draw their ideas and energy from themselves and are often imaginative. Extroverts get their energy and ideas from others. They tend to be active and self-expressive. Jung first proposed this idea.
- 2. Emotional Stability-Instability.** Stable people tend to be calm, rational, and predictable. Unstable people can become easily agitated and be unpredictable.

Eysenck arranged personality traits along these two dimensions, as shown in the diagram below.

Note that the central "temperaments" were the classic ones used by Hippocrates and the ancient Greeks—melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic, and sanguine.

Temperaments



More recent research supports the theory of five major personality traits. Researchers disagree about all five, and newer theories propose more than five.

The chart below shows the Big Five most commonly mentioned. As you can see, two echo Eysenck's traits. The descriptions are again bipolar.

The Big Five Personality Traits	
Emotional Stability	Calm ↔ Anxious Secure ↔ Insecure
Extroversion	Fun-loving ↔ Serious Affectionate ↔ Reserved
Conscientiousness	Careful ↔ Careless Responsible ↔ Irresponsible
Agreeableness	Trusting ↔ Suspicious Helpful ↔ Unhelpful
Openness to New Experience	Variety ↔ Routine Imaginative ↔ Practical

Evaluating the Trait Approach

Identifying a person's traits can be useful in matching people to jobs or predicting success in various situations. But research has shown that, despite a definition that describes traits as "relatively permanent," individuals rarely exhibit the same trait under every circumstance. As situations vary and change, so do behavior and the traits it reflects. Despite earlier hopes, identifying traits is only mildly useful in predicting behavior.

The major criticism of the trait approach is that, while it describes personality traits, it doesn't explain where they come from.

The Behavioral Approach

Since the work of Pavlov, the behaviorists have focused solely on the effects of the environment on people's behavior. Behaviorists claim there is no need to consider personality or traits because they are created by reinforcement (positive or negative) in the environment. John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner, and Albert Bandura are among the best-known behaviorists.

Behaviorists

John B. Watson theorized that we behave as we do because early behaviors have been



Can Personality Change?

Personality is assumed to be a relatively permanent set of traits and behaviors that is unlikely to change to any great extent over the life of an individual. Yet, the purpose of therapy is to create changes within a person. Does this make sense?

Paul Costa and Robert McCrae cite several different “levels” of personality. Psychophysical systems are *basic traits*—tendencies and abilities of the individual that may be inherited or acquired through experience. During maturation, these tendencies interact with external influences to produce *characteristic traits*—behavior

and thought, typical habits, attitudes, and relationships. For example, if a child with a basic ability in music is never given the opportunity to develop it, his or her characteristic behavior will not exhibit that basic trait or ability.

Even if a person appears to change in radical ways, it may be because that person was open to change—one of the basic Big Five personality factors. In deciding whether change does or does not occur, the level at which the change appears to occur is of utmost importance. Characteristic traits may change, but whether basic traits can change is still open to research.

reinforced. Pointing to experiments such as those with “Little Albert” (page 100), Watson claimed that by controlling a person’s entire environment from birth, you could make a person into anything you wanted. He pointed particularly to ways in which people create fearful associations to objects or events—associations that can affect or limit our choices in later life.

B. F. Skinner agreed that behavior is the key to understanding personality and that looking into people’s minds is not profitable. He claimed that the behaviors of later life were learned as children go through the process of socialization, of learning what behaviors are acceptable and lead to reward and what behaviors

are unacceptable and are punished.

In Skinner’s ideal society, everyone is happy because they have learned to contribute to society and, therefore, receive its benefits—rewards. Skinner insisted that our behaviors aren’t freely chosen but are actually shaped by the environment. According to Skinner, an idea like free will doesn’t explain anything.

Albert Bandura stressed in his “social learning” theory, the role of observation in the development of personality. He demonstrated this in the Bobo doll studies (page 111). Social learning theorists believe that people have free will, which allows them to act on and influence their environments. Further, people are motivated to

Behavior and Internal Factors	
Skills	We have certain innate social and physical abilities.
Values	We determine the relative worth of any behavior.
Goals	We decide what we will work toward and how we will do it.
Expectations	We predict what will happen as a result of a behavior.
Self-efficacy	We have certain beliefs about our own abilities to accomplish a task or reach a goal.

learn more about that environment and about ways to control it. Behavior is based both on what we observe other people doing and on the internal factors charted above.

Evaluating the Behavioral Approach

Undoubtedly, we learn to engage in some behaviors and to avoid others through reinforcement and by observing others. Learning theory is helpful in understanding those behaviors and in helping people to solve problems that they produce. But learning theory doesn't help much in understanding our myriad internal experiences. It diminishes the role of human thought and choice. Although behaviorism and social learning focus on internal feelings and processes, they are limited in their ability to explain individual personalities.

The Humanistic Approach

The humanistic approach is about 180 degrees away from the behavioral approach. While behaviorists refuse to look inward and attribute all behaviors to reinforcement from the environment, humanistic psychologists emphasize internal positive factors in motivation and personality that they see not only as uniquely human, but as unique to each individual. Abraham Maslow and Carol Rogers are major exponents of this theory.

Humanists

Abraham Maslow focused on an individual's desire to reach his or her full potential—and his or her awareness of that desire. He believed that individuals must find their own paths to that goal. Unlike many earlier psychologists, Maslow studied healthy people who coped efficiently with the world and seemed fulfilled.

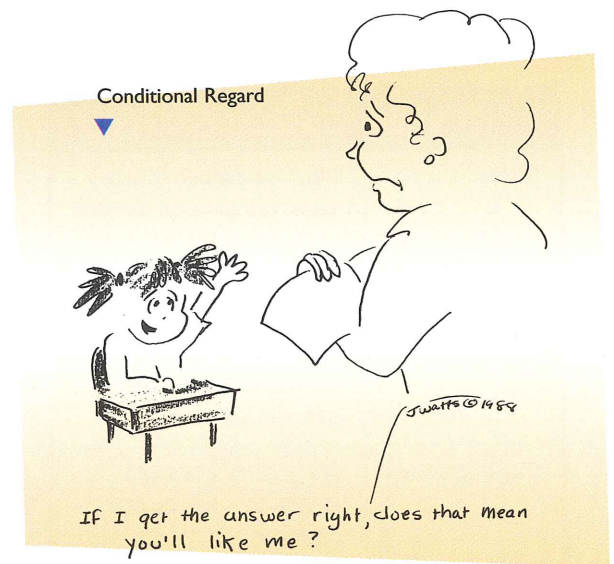
Studying successful people, Maslow determined that they shared certain characteristics. They were self-aware, open and friendly, and not unduly affected by the opinions of others. People such as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and Eleanor Roosevelt had a secure sense of who they were and tended to focus their energies on a single task that they perceived as their mission in life. Maslow termed these people *self-actualized*. This state describes the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy, and he considered it the goal of every individual. (See page 175.)

Carl Rogers, in his work in psychotherapy, noted that many people have conflicts between what they perceive as the ideal person and their real selves. He suggested that unrealistic standards might have been imposed on these individuals as children. As adults, they never feel able to live up to those standards. Rogers suggested that parents should give a child **unconditional positive regard**. While a parent may disapprove of a child's behavior, the child should always receive the parent's love independent of any behavior that the child does or does not exhibit.

Believing that individuals can consciously shape their personalities, Rogers emphasized **self-concept**, our thoughts and feelings about the type of person we are. Rogers believed that our self-concept and our experience in the world must be congruent (in agreement or consistent) for us to be happy and healthy.

Rogers also emphasized self-esteem, one's respect for one's self. Self-esteem arises, in the beginning, through the *esteem, or regard*, in which others hold us. Parents help children establish self-esteem by giving them unconditional positive regard. Conditional positive regard would lead a child to believe that he or she is worthwhile only as a result of certain behaviors.

For Rogers, the key to self-actualization is self-reflection—knowing and understanding your feelings and needs and behaving in a manner consistent with them.



Evaluating the Humanistic Approach

Because humanistic psychology encourages people to grow and progress over time, it has a lot of personal appeal. It stresses control over one's life and happiness and focuses on the rich experiences we have in our lives. But some critics point out that, because conscious experience varies from one individual to the next, one can't apply scientific theories to it. The humanistic approach is criticized for several reasons:

- * Focusing solely on one's own needs and happiness may result in individuals who are selfish and have little regard for others. Humanists argue that self-actualized, effective people are concerned with the greater good.
- * The concepts in the theory are vague, subjective, and not open to testing.
- * The theory ignores the human capacity for evil.
- * Like the behavioral approach, humanistic theory doesn't adequately explain how personality forms or where specific traits come from.

CRITICAL THINKING



What Is the Role of Free Will in Personality?

Behaviors are manifestations of personality. Early behaviorists claimed that a person's behavior is totally controlled by reinforcement from the environment. Humanists say that our choices are made from within ourselves. What do you think? Read about the issues and develop your own opinion.

THE ISSUES

Watson and other early behaviorists insisted that we can be completely "conditioned" by external positive and negative reinforcement and that, even if we think we are freely choosing a behavior, we are not. Instead, the behavior we "choose" is the result of prior conditioning. Behaviorists might point to the ease with which individuals can become "brainwashed" or develop sympathy with terrorists who capture them.

Humanists, on the other hand, argue that we are human because we are aware of having a higher potential and of our desire to reach it. We exert free will when we choose the manner in which we'll move toward that potential. They point to common characteristics among famous people who have accomplished a great deal and who seem to have reached a stable, happy, and committed "personhood." What role does free will play in our personality?

THE PROCESS

- 1 Restate the issues.** In your own words, state the nature of free will.
- 2 Provide evidence.** From your own experience and from the information above, list the evidence *for* free will in choosing behaviors that manifest our personality.
- 3 Give opposing arguments.** From your own experience and from the information above, list the evidence *against* free will in choosing behaviors that manifest our personality.
- 4 Look for more information.** What else would you like to know before you decide? Make a list of your questions. On the Internet, in the psychology section of the library, or in the index of psychology books, research *free will*, *behaviorism*, and *humanistic psychology*.

- 5 Evaluate the information.** Make a chart with two columns:

Free Will in Choosing Behaviors	
For	Against

Record the arguments in each column and rank each column of arguments in importance from 1 to 5, with 1 as the most important.

- 6 Draw conclusions.** Write one paragraph supporting your answer to the question "What is the role of free will in personality?" Be sure to state reasons, not just opinions.

The Sociocultural Approach

Basic dimensions of personality identified by personality theorists aren't directly applicable across cultures. The sociocultural approach focuses on the effects of ethnicity, gender, and culture on the formation of personality. Dutch social scientist Geert Hofstede analyzed 117,000 responses from participants in 50 countries to identify several cultural dimensions of personality.

In the United States and other Western cultures, **individualism** is a valued trait. People are encouraged to work toward individual achievement and think in terms of individual identities—"I am honest" or "I am a teacher." People from Africa, Asia, and South America tend to define themselves

in terms of a group—**collectivism**. Their goals are those of the group, and people feel complete only in terms of social relationships to family, nation, or religious affiliation. They might say "I am a citizen" or "I am a mother."

Power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of a culture expect and accept unequally divided power. Having an assertive personality wouldn't be valued if you were a member of a "lower caste." This dimension also affects self-concept and self-esteem.

Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. One would be unlikely to develop an innovative personality in a culture that mistrusts and avoids uncertainty.

Comparison of Major Personality Theories			
	Freudian Psychoanalysis	Neo-Freudian Psychodynamics	Trait Approach
Major Theorists	Freud	Adler, Horney, Jung, Erikson	Allport, Cattell, Eysenck
Major Personality Factors	Unconscious conflicts among id, ego, and superego.	The unconscious and social factors.	Early years fix traits.
Healthy Personality Factors	Balance among the needs of inner drives, social constraints, and ideals.	Recognition and adequate conflict resolution between unconscious and social factors.	Recognition of strengths and weaknesses of one's traits and consistent behavior.
Criticisms	Existence of unconscious cannot be confirmed. Theory based on limited cultural sample.	Concepts such as collective unconscious and stages of development may be difficult to confirm.	Descriptive rather than explanatory. Disagreement exists over the number of "basic" traits.

Masculinity/femininity is the extent to which a culture has distinct roles for men and women—such as, men are more assertive, tough, and responsible for material gain, while women are modest, tender, and concerned with quality of life. If the roles are strongly maintained, a person's gender will highly influence the personality characteristics that are developed.

Long-short-term orientation is the extent to which a culture values future rewards and determines personality traits such as perseverance and thrift.

Research suggests that people who are bicultural are more likely to be emotionally stable and have high self-esteem. How might you explain this in terms of the cultural factors listed above?

Evaluation of the Sociocultural Approach

There can be little doubt that the norms of our culture and the expectations of our gender play an important role in shaping our personalities. In most cases, we aren't even aware of the depth of their impact on our behavior.

Attending to ways in which ethnicity, culture, and gender affect personality will no doubt yield insights into the behaviors of individuals within a given culture. However, we still need to study personality outside of any cultural setting. Scientists may yet be able to understand the basic mental processes and behaviors that humans of any culture, ethnicity, or gender are likely to demonstrate.

	Behavioral Approach	Humanistic Approach	Sociocultural Approach
	Watson, Skinner, Bandura	Maslow, Rogers	Hofstede
	Rewards and punishments felt and observed.	The unique potential within each individual.	The way an individual's culture perceives various factors.
	External reinforcement, over which the individual has little control.	Self-actualization and development to the fullest potential.	Happiness and fulfillment within the constraints of cultural determinants.
	Weak in explaining traits and personality. Ignores internal experience and denies free will.	Said to be self-centered and unrealistically optimistic. Weak in explaining personality.	Does not address basic personality tendencies that may be culture free.

Other Theories

In addition to the major personality theories described in this chapter, other theories are growing in importance and replacing the older theories. They include:

- * **Social Cognitive Approach.** This focuses on the context or situation in which behavior occurs. One important aspect of personality is one's sense of personal control—whether one's life is controlled by the individual or from outside.
- * **Evolutionary Approach.** This focuses on the role of adaptation in the development of personality.
- * **Biological Approach.** This focuses on the role of genetics in the development of personality.

As among the multiple approaches to psychology itself, it may well turn out that each approach contributes something of value to our understanding of personality.

Personality Types

In most bookstores, as well as on the Internet, you can find books and web sites offering to help you determine your “type.” A personality **type** is a set of traits that an individual typically demonstrates. One well-known personality test is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which places individuals in one of 16 categories or types. The important thing to remember is that not all “type” tests have much, if any, research data to back them up. Some, in fact, are based on unscientific factors such as your favorite color or the number of letters in your name. Even some of the scientific tests fail to take context or situation into account. They imply that a person behaves in the same way in all situations—something that research has demonstrated is not true.

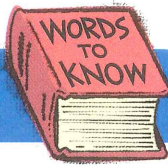
We'll learn more about the Myers-Briggs and other personality tests in the next chapter.

Chapter 16 Wrap-up

PERSONALITY

Personality is defined as the relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting possessed by an individual. The major theories of personality include Freudian and neo-Freudian psychoanalysis, the trait approach, the behavioral approach, the humanistic approach, and the sociocultural approach. Each theory focuses on a different aspect of personality and suggests a different fundamental source of behavior consistent with an individual's personality.

Other theories of personality take a social cognitive approach, an evolutionary approach, or a biological approach in attempting to explain what personality is and how it develops. Each of the theories contributes to psychology's total understanding of personality.



archetypes—Jung’s term for the universal forms that we encounter in our lives, such as mother, father, god, hero, and leader. *p.* 268

collectivism—trait wherein one works for the goals of a group. *p.* 276

defense mechanisms—devices used by the ego to avoid pain or reduce anxiety. *p.* 267

ego—Freud’s term for the cognitive and perceptual processes that are in touch with reality. *p.* 266

id—Freud’s term for the part of the unconscious mind containing the biological and sexual drives. *p.* 266

individualism—trait wherein one works for personal and individual goals. *p.* 276

inferiority complex—mental state that occurs when a person’s conscious thoughts are dominated by an inability to succeed. *p.* 267

morality principle—principle upon which the superego acts; a combination of conscience and a moral self-image. *p.* 266

overcompensation—behavior that is more than what is required to overcome a sense of inferiority. *p.* 267

persona—according to Jung, the image of ourselves that we present to others. *p.* 268

personality—relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that an individual possesses. *p.* 265

pleasure principle—drive to satisfy needs and avoid pain; principle upon which the id acts. *p.* 266

preconscious—part of the mind from which information from the unconscious can be retrieved by the conscious mind. *p.* 266

reality principle—recognition of the real environment; what the ego tempers the needs of the id with. *p.* 266

self-concept—our thoughts and feelings about the type of person we are. *p.* 274

superego—Freud’s term for the part of the mind that engages in ethical decision making and moral reasoning. *p.* 266

trait—characteristic of personality that remains fairly stable over time. *p.* 269

type—set of traits that an individual typically demonstrates. *p.* 278

unconditional positive regard—love given by a parent regardless of the behavior of a child. *p.* 274

unconscious—according to psychoanalysis, the part of the mind that contains thoughts, feelings, and desires of which we are mostly unaware. *p.* 266