

# Chapter 12

## Personality



### Chapter Outline

#### 12.1 The Nature of Personality

- a Consistency and Distinctiveness Define Personality.
- b Culture and Evolutionary Processes Shape Personality.

#### 12.2 The Psychoanalytic Perspective

- a Psychoanalytic Theory Asserts that the Unconscious Controls Behavior.
- b Freud Divided Personality into the Id, the Ego, and the Superego.
- c Personality Development Occurs in Psychosexual Stages.
- d Defense Mechanisms Reduce or Redirect Unconsciously Caused Anxiety.
- e There Are Many Variations on Psychoanalytic Theory.

#### 12.3 The Humanistic Perspective

- a Rogers's Person-Centered Theory Emphasizes Self-Realization.
- b Maslow's Self-Actualization Theory Stresses Maximizing Potential.
- c The Humanistic Perspective Has Been Criticized as Being Overly Optimistic.

#### 12.4 The Trait Perspective

- a Trait Theories Describe Basic Personality Dimensions.
- b Factor Analysis Is Used to Identify Personality Traits.
- c The Five-Factor Model Specifies Five Basic Traits.
- d Positive Psychologists Identify Personality Traits that Are Character Strengths.
- e Critics Challenge Whether Traits Reliably Predict Behavior.

#### 12.5 The Social Cognitive Perspective

- a Personality Is Shaped by the Interaction of People's Cognitions, Behavior, and Environment.
- b Life Experiences Foster Beliefs about Either Control or Helplessness.
- c Social Cognitive Psychologists Have Extensively Studied the Self.
- d The Social Cognitive Perspective Has Difficulty Explaining Nonrational Behavior.

#### 12.6 Measuring Personality

- a Projective Tests Indirectly Measure Inner Feelings, Motives, and Conflicts.
- b Objective Tests Ask Direct Questions about a Person's Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior.

#### 12.7 The Biological Basis of Personality

- a Personality Is Shaped by Nervous System Arousal and Specific Brain Activity.
- b Both Genetic and Environmental Factors Shape Personality.

**Psychological Applications:** *Do You Have a Chameleon-Like Personality?*

*“It is totally me, Dad!”*

**T**his was my daughter Amelia’s reaction a few years ago upon reading the “personality profile” she received from the handwriting analysis machine at Michigan’s Upper Peninsula State Fair. After Amelia slipped her signature into the “Data Entry” slot (and paid a \$2 fee to the cashier), the lights on the graphology machine’s cardboard façade flashed furiously before the machine spit out its evaluation. As Amelia marveled at the accuracy of her personality profile, I noticed a partially hidden worker placing a fresh stack of pretyped profiles into the “Completed Profile” slot behind the machine. At that moment, a scene from *The Wizard of Oz* ran through my mind. It was the scene in which Dorothy returns to Oz and presents the dead witch’s broom to the all-powerful Wizard. As the huge disembodied head of the Wizard blusters and bellows at Dorothy, her dog Toto pulls back a curtain, revealing that the Wizard is really just an ordinary man manipulating people’s impressions with smoke and mirrors.

That day at the fair, I decided not to tell Amelia about the man behind the machine. Sometime later, however, we talked a bit about the validity of handwriting analysis, palm reading, and horoscopes. To put it simply, these techniques that claim to assess personality have no scientific validity (B. Beyerstein & D. Beyerstein, 1992; Kelly, 1997). They provide assessments that appear remarkably accurate in divining our unique characteristics because they are either flattering to our egos or generally true of everybody (Forer, 1949). For example, consider the following generic description of personality:

*You are an independent thinker, but you have a strong need to be liked and respected by others. At times you are outgoing and extraverted, while at other times you are*

*reserved and introverted. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. While you have some personality weaknesses, you can generally compensate for them. You tend to be critical of yourself. You have a great deal of potential, but you have not yet fully harnessed it. Some of your aspirations are pretty unrealistic.*

When college students were provided with personality assessments similar to this one and told that an astrologer had prepared the profiles just for them, almost all the students evaluated the accuracy of these descriptions as either “good” or “excellent” (Davies, 1997; Glick et al., 1989). Further, after receiving their assessments, students were more likely than before to believe that astrology was a valid way to assess personality. This tendency to accept global and ambiguous feedback about oneself—even if the source of the information lacks credibility—is known as the *Barnum effect*, in honor of the master showman P. T. Barnum. He credited his success in the circus industry to the fact that “there’s a sucker born every minute.”

Now, I am not suggesting that my daughter and the majority of college students are “suckers” waiting to be fleeced of their money by unscrupulous fortune hunters. But I am suggesting that there is a more accurate—and yes, more ethical—way to understand our personalities: through the application of the scientific method. In this chapter, we continue our journey of discovery through psychology by venturing behind the scientific “curtain” of personality theory and research. I think you will find that this particular journey will reveal much more than do the “smoke and mirrors” effects typically created by graphologists, palm readers, and astrologers.

## 12.1 The Nature of Personality



- ❖ What does personality research examine?
- ❖ Is personality shaped only by experience?

Before reading further, spend a few minutes identifying certain recurring ways in which you respond to a variety of situations. In addition, identify ways in which you think, feel, or behave that set you apart from many other people. Is there anything on this mental list that your culture might have shaped? Do any of these personal qualities help you successfully meet life's challenges?

### 12.1a Consistency and Distinctiveness Define Personality.

One important quality of personality is *consistency* in thinking, feeling, and acting. We consider people to be consistent when we see them responding in the same way in a variety of situations and over an extended period of time. People do not respond with consistency entirely, but for us to notice that they have a characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and behaving, they must respond consistently across many situations and over time. For instance, you may have a friend who argues a great deal. Name the topic, and he or she probably will carve out a contrary position to that of others. This aspect of his or her interaction style is consistent enough that you have a pretty good idea of how he or she will generally act around others, regardless of whether they are friends, relatives, or strangers.

*Distinctiveness* is another important quality of personality because it is used to explain why everyone does not act the same in similar situations. Let's return to the example of your argumentative friend: Because most people generally try to find points of agreement when interacting with others, your friend's argumentative style is distinctive, setting him or her apart from most people. So, when you see your friend arguing with professors in class and notice that other students don't routinely do so, you begin to think that arguing is a distinctive characteristic for him or her.

Overall, then, when we study personality, we are studying both how people are consistent across situations and how they are different from one another. For our purposes, I define **personality** as the *consistent* and *distinctive* thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in which an individual engages. This definition has its roots in philosophy as much as in science. For that reason, parts of this chapter may seem as though they're describing a different kind of psychology—a more speculative and less data-driven psychology—than other parts of the chapter. You will most likely notice this during the discussion of psychoanalytic and humanistic approaches to personality. During the second half of the twentieth century, the study of personality followed the rest of the field of psychology and moved away from broad theorizing to scientific testing of hypotheses about personality functioning. Modern personality theorists tend to be much more limited and narrow in their approach to the field. In



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Consistency and distinctiveness are important qualities of personality. When we describe certain individuals as "really having a personality," we often mean that we see them responding in the same way in a variety of situations over an extended period of time and that the way they think, feel, and act is unique, setting them apart from others.

**Personality** The consistent and distinctive thoughts, feelings, and behavior in which an individual engages

the later sections of this chapter, these more modern approaches to studying personality functioning are represented by the trait and social cognitive theories. We will also examine various means of assessing or describing personality.

### 12.1b Culture and Evolutionary Processes Shape Personality.

Personality psychology was developed and has flourished in the North American and Western European social climate of *individualism*, which is a philosophy of life stressing the priority of individual rights and desires over those of the group. This individualist perspective conceives of people as unique, independent entities, separate from their social surroundings. In contrast, *collectivism* is a philosophy of life emphasizing group needs and desires over those of the individual. As noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.3f, approximately 70% of the world's population lives in collectivist cultures (Singelis et al., 1995).

During the past 35 years, as psychology has become more of an international science, personality theorists in individualist societies have begun to investigate how personality is a product of the individual's interaction with her or his social settings. In adopting this approach, personality theorists are thinking about human behavior in a way similar to that of collectivists (Brislin, 1993). At various points in this chapter (for example, see Sections 12.4d and 12.5a), we discuss this *interactionist* perspective on personality.

In addition to the influence cultural beliefs can have on the *study* of personality, research further suggests that cultural beliefs can actually shape personality development (Church & Ortiz, 2005). For example, people from collectivist Latin cultures are often taught to have *simpatía*, which is a way of relating to others that is empathic, respectful, and unselfish and helps maintain harmonious social relationships (Varela et al., 2007). Likewise, the Chinese concept of *ren qin* (relationship orientation) and the Japanese concept of *amae* (indulgent dependence) emphasize social ties and dependence on others (Yu, 2007). Individuals who internalize these social norms develop a personality that is characteristic of their social group and may be relatively uncommon in other cultures (Ho et al., 2001).

Although personality characteristics may be associated with particular cultures, most personality researchers strive to identify universal aspects of personality. In this regard, a growing number of social scientists are beginning to examine how certain aspects of personality have been shaped over the course of our species' evolutionary history (MacDonald, 1998; Ridley et al., 2005). According to this viewpoint, because the evolutionary process is the only known creative process capable of producing complex organisms, all theories of human nature—including personality theories—must consider the basic principles of evolution by natural selection (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3e). Consistent with this viewpoint, in this chapter I periodically offer an evolutionary account of personality.

## REVIEW

- Personality research examines how people are consistent across situations and how they differ from one another.
- More than culture influences how personality is studied; many contemporary psychologists study how both cultural and evolutionary forces shape personalities.

## 12.2 The Psychoanalytic Perspective



- ❖ *What aspect of the mind did Freud stress in explaining personality?*
- ❖ *According to psychoanalytic theory, what is the structure of personality, and what are the stages of personality development?*
- ❖ *How is the ego protected from disturbing unconscious desires?*
- ❖ *How did Freud's followers revise his theory, and what are the limitations of psychoanalytic theory?*

The most recognizable person in the field of psychology—Sigmund Freud—was not trained as a psychologist (Colombo & Abend, 2005). Freud (1856–1939) grew up in Austria, was trained as a physician in Vienna, and aspired to become a university professor. Early in his professional career as a medical doctor, he studied the nervous system in the hope of applying newly discovered principles of physics and chemistry to the functioning of the human mind. In addition to teaching and doing laboratory work, Freud worked with patients (mostly women) who seemed to have problems with the functioning of their nervous systems. Freud frequently discovered that their symptoms were not caused by physiological problems but seemed, rather, to originate from emotional trauma. Gradually, this young Viennese doctor developed the idea that the young science of psychology held answers to many of these perplexing disorders (Freud, 1917/1959).

An example of the kind of medical problem that set Freud on his journey of discovery into psychology was a strange neurological-like condition referred to as *glove anesthesia* (see the Chapter 13, Section 13.3d, discussion of *conversion disorders*). In this condition, the patient had no feeling from her wrists to the tips of her fingers, so that if Freud poked her hand with a pin, she would not flinch or complain of any pain. She did have feeling in her forearms, however, and if Freud poked her anywhere above the wrist, she would flinch and say the equivalent of “ouch” in German. Glove anesthesia is not consistent with the way the nervous system functions, which suggested to Freud that its cause was not physiological, but psychological. As you will see, this idea revolutionized the study of personality in the early 1900s (Westen, 1998).

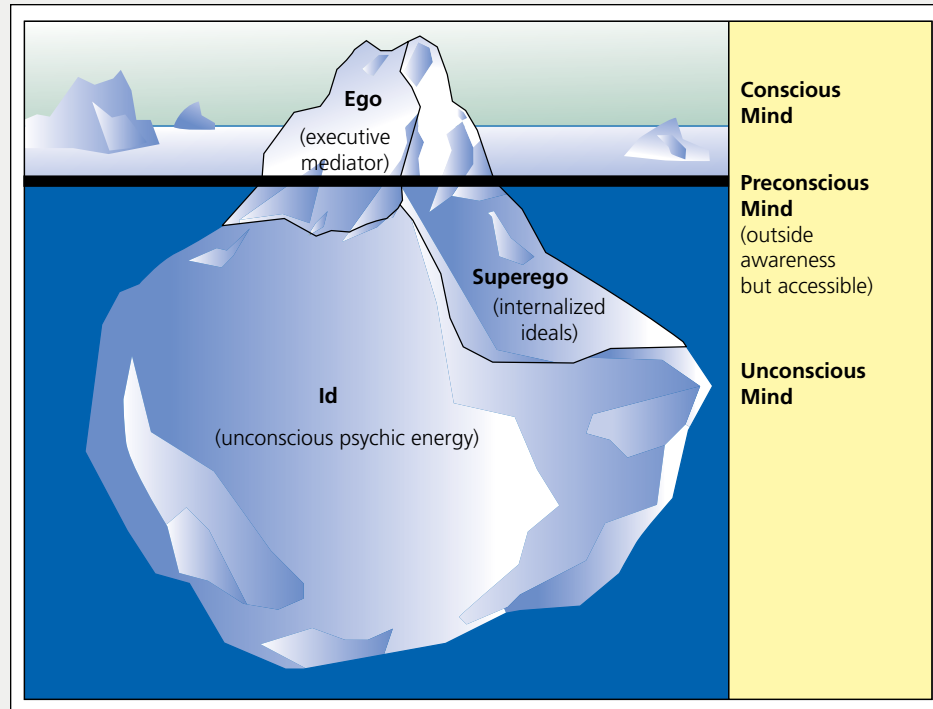
### 12.2a Psychoanalytic Theory Asserts that the Unconscious Controls Behavior.

When Freud suspected that some of his patients' medical problems were in fact caused by emotional disturbances, he sought the advice of a French neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot, who was treating such patients using hypnosis (Gay, 1988). Freud was also impressed by the psychiatrist Joseph Breuer's “talking cure” therapy, in which patients with emotional problems were told to report whatever came to mind. Adapting these two techniques to his own emerging theory of the human mind, Freud encouraged his patients to talk about their symptoms and what was occurring when the symptoms emerged. As they did this, Freud developed the idea that their symptoms were psychologically related to some sort of problem or dilemma they were experiencing. For instance, the previously described glove anesthesia of one of his young patients developed soon after she became aware of her emerging sexual urges. Stimulating herself with her hand was simultaneously very pleasurable and extremely

FIGURE 12-1

**Freud's Model of Personality Structure**

In Freud's theory, the mind is likened to an iceberg: the conscious mind is the small part of the iceberg visible above the water line, and the unconscious mind is that part of the iceberg below the surface. In this metaphor, the ego includes part of the conscious mind and part of the unconscious mind. The same is true of the superego. In contrast, the id is completely unconscious.



anxiety-inducing. Freud believed that to prevent the expression of this unacceptable urge to sexually gratify herself, the woman unconsciously “deadened” her hand, making it unusable. Piecing together his patients’ accounts of their lives while under hypnosis, Freud believed that he had discovered the unconscious mind.

Freud’s model of the mind proposed that it was mostly hidden, like an iceberg. As depicted in Figure 12-1, our **conscious mind** is the relatively small part of our mind that we are aware of at the moment, like the tip of the iceberg that is visible above the surface of the water. Right now, your conscious processes include (I hope!) the material from the previous sentences, perhaps an awareness of certain stimuli in your surroundings, and maybe the thought that you would like to be doing something other than reading this book. Immediately below the surface of the conscious mind resides the **preconscious mind**, which consists of those mental processes that are not currently conscious but could become so at any moment. Examples of preconscious material might include your parents’ phone number, hopefully some of the material from previous sections of this book, and a conversation you had yesterday with a friend. Below this preconscious level resides the **unconscious mind**, which is like the huge section of the iceberg that is hidden in the water’s depths. The unconscious mind is driven by biological urges that have been shaped by our evolutionary history; it contains thoughts, desires, feelings, and memories that are not consciously available to us but nonetheless shape our everyday behavior. Examples of unconscious material are painful, forgotten memories from childhood, hidden feelings of hostility toward someone you profess to like (or even love), and sexual urges that would create intense anxiety if you became aware of them.

Freud’s theory of the mind was an important milestone in the history of psychology because it challenged the prevailing notion that consciousness was the determining factor in the management and control of behavior. As you will see in later sections of this chapter, opposition to Freud’s perspective on the determinants of human behavior spawned a number of competing personality theories.

**Conscious mind** According to Freud, the relatively small part of our mind that we are aware of at the moment

**Preconscious mind** According to Freud, those mental processes that are not currently conscious but could become so at any moment

**Unconscious mind** According to Freud, the thoughts, desires, feelings, and memories that are not consciously available to us but that nonetheless shape our everyday behavior

## 12.2b Freud Divided Personality into the Id, the Ego, and the Superego.

Freud used his model of the conscious and unconscious minds to guide his treatment of patients who came to him with psychological symptoms. His goal was to make conscious what had formerly been unconscious. Yet Freud soon discovered that even when his patients were told about the unconscious forces driving their behaviors, they still had difficulty managing these behaviors. This led him to propose another dimension to his theory of the mind, which came to be called the *structural model*. Freud proposed three subcomponents, or structures, in this model of the mind: the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego* (see Figure 12-1). Each of these structures of the mind has different operating principles and different goals. Frequently, the goals of one component are in conflict with the goals of another component. This model of the mind is sometimes called a *conflict model* because it attempts to explain how psychological conflicts determine behavior.

The **id**—which in Latin means “it”—is an entirely unconscious portion of the mind. It contains the basic drives for reproduction, survival, and aggression. The id operates on the **pleasure principle**. That is, the id consistently wants to satisfy, as quickly and directly as possible, whatever desire is currently active. The id’s agenda, as directed by the pleasure principle, might be summarized by the statement “If it feels good, do it.” Freud referred to this primitive, irrational, and illogical orientation as *primary process thinking*. He believed newborn infants represent the purest form of id impulses, crying whenever their needs are not immediately satisfied. He further proposed that a part of our personality continues to function like that of a newborn—wanting needs met immediately—throughout our lives.

One of life’s realities is that our needs are very seldom immediately satisfied. Freud asserted that as infants, whenever our immediate gratification did not occur, we experienced distress and anxiety. As a way to cope with this infantile stress, the **ego**—which in Latin means “I”—develops out of the id. The ego’s function is to be the decision-making part of the personality that satisfies id impulses in socially acceptable ways. In performing this function, the ego is both partially conscious and partially unconscious. The conscious part of the ego is in contact with external reality, while the unconscious part is in contact with the id. In seeking id satisfaction, the ego is guided by the **reality principle**, the process by which the ego seeks to delay gratification of id desires until appropriate outlets and situations can be found. The ego is interested in achieving pleasure but learns that this will more likely occur if the constraints of reality are taken into account. Freud referred to this relatively rational and realistic orientation as *secondary process thinking*.

The **superego**—which in Latin means “over the I”—develops later in childhood, around the age of 4 or 5. The superego has several functions, including overseeing the ego and making sure it acts morally. As such, the superego is concerned not just with what is acceptable but also with what is ideal. It provides us with a conscience, making us feel guilty when we do “wrong” and instilling pride when we do “right.” Essentially, the superego represents the internalization of cultural norms and values into the individual mind. Not surprisingly, the superego and the id are frequently at odds about the proper course of action in a given situation. The ego balances the demands of the id and superego, along with those of external reality, to generate behavior that will still bring pleasure.

Although this description of the three personality components appears to suggest that the ego (the conscious self) is controlling our behavior, Freud contended that

**Id** An unconscious part of the mind that contains our sexual and aggressive drives

**Pleasure principle** The process by which the id seeks to immediately satisfy whatever desire is currently active

**Ego** The part of our minds that includes our consciousness and that balances the demands of the id, the superego and reality

**Reality principle** The process by which the ego seeks to delay gratification of id desires until appropriate outlets and situations can be found

**Superego** The part of our minds that includes our conscience and counterbalances the more primitive demands of the id



Imagine how you might behave if you had no ego and simply acted, instead, on your id desires. When hungry, you would simply grab whatever food was available, even if others were eating that food. How long do you think you would survive with this primary process thinking?

*Too much of a good thing can be wonderful.*

—Mae West, U.S. actress and comedian, 1893–1980

this is largely an illusion. Throughout our daily activities, we are generally unaware of the unconscious compromises our ego makes to create a particular outcome. For example, a college sophomore may agree to spend hours tutoring a group of first-year students, unaware of how his sexual attraction to one member of the group figured in his decision. He may be conscious of feeling altruistic about helping these students, and thus his superego is satisfied, but he is largely unaware of how his ego has unconsciously allowed his id to be gratified as well.

### 12.2c Personality Development Occurs in Psychosexual Stages.

As Freud listened to his patients during therapy, they repeatedly mentioned significant events from their childhood that had left them with emotional scars. Based on his patients' reconstruction of their lives, Freud created a theory about how personality develops and how the ego and superego come into existence. Going along with the idea that personality involves a degree of consistency, his psychoanalytic theory proposed that children pass through a fixed sequence of **psychosexual stages**. Each stage is characterized by a part of the body, called an *erogenous zone*, through which the id primarily seeks sexual pleasure. Critical elements of the personality are formed during each of these stages (see Table 12-1). If children experience conflicts when seeking pleasure during a particular psychosexual stage, and if these conflicts go unresolved, these children will become psychologically “stuck”—or *fixated*—at that stage. **Fixation** is a tendency to persist in pleasure-seeking behaviors associated with an earlier psychosexual stage during which conflicts were unresolved. One important point to keep in mind about fixation is that the conflicts that trigger fixation can be caused by either too little or too much gratification of id desires.

**Psychosexual stages** The fixed sequence of childhood developmental stages during which the id primarily seeks sexual pleasure by focusing its energies on distinct erogenous zones

**Fixation** A tendency to persist in pleasure-seeking behaviors associated with an earlier psychosexual stage during which conflicts were unresolved

#### Oral Stage

The first stage of psychosexual development, which encompasses the first year of life, is referred to as the **oral stage**. During this stage, infants are totally dependent on those around them to care for their needs. Their most salient need is to be nourished. Freud believed that the id derives intense sexual pleasure by engaging in oral activities such as sucking, biting, and chewing. Adults with fixations at the oral stage are often extremely clingy and emotionally dependent on others. In attempting to satisfy oral needs, they might smoke excessively and/or spend a great deal of time eating and

**Oral stage** In Freud's theory, the first stage of psychosexual development, during which the child derives pleasure by engaging in oral activities

**TABLE 12-1** Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development

Stage	Approximate Age	Erogenous Zone	Key Tasks and Experiences
Oral	0–1	Mouth (sucking, biting)	Weaning (from breast or bottle)
Anal	2–3	Anus (defecating)	Toilet training
Phallic	4–5	Genitals (masturbating)	Coping with <i>Oedipal/Electra conflict</i> and identifying with same-sex parent
Latency	6–11	None (sexual desires repressed)	Developing same-sex contacts
Genital	Puberty onward	Genitals (being sexually intimate)	Establishing mature sexual relationships



thinking about eating. However, if adequately gratified during this stage as infants, adults would still derive pleasure from oral activities, but they would not be overly focused on such pleasures.

## Anal Stage

The **anal stage** follows the oral stage, as the focus of erotic pleasure shifts from the mouth to the process of elimination. This psychosexual stage begins at about age 2, when toilet training becomes an area of conflict between children and parents. Freud argued that from the child's point of view, toilet training represents the parents' attempt at denying the child's primary pleasure by exerting control over where and when urination and defecation occur. Thus, toilet training becomes a contest of wills. Adding to this conflict is the fact that the ego is beginning to exert itself, and thus the way this stage of development is managed will have long-term consequences for the characteristic ways a person's ego negotiates the conflicting demands of the id and the environment. Fixation at this stage, caused by overly harsh toilet-training experiences, produces children who too closely conform to the demands of their parents and other caretakers. As adults, they will be excessively neat and orderly (this is the source of the term *anal retentive*). Overly relaxed toilet-training experiences can also cause fixation, with individuals forever being messy and having difficulty complying with authority and keeping their behavior under control (*anal expulsive*). Successful negotiation of this stage results in a capacity to engage in directed work without being dominated by the need to perform perfectly.

**Anal stage** In Freud's theory, the second stage of psychosexual development, during which the child derives pleasure from defecation



## Journey of Discovery

An increasing number of contemporary personality theorists pay attention to how culture and evolutionary forces shape personality. Is there any evidence in Freud's theory of personality indicating that he considered the impact of culture and evolution on personality?

## Phallic Stage

At about age 4, children enter the **phallic stage**, which is characterized by a shift in the erogenous zone to the genitals and deriving pleasure largely through self-stimulation. It is common to see children of this age masturbating while rocking themselves to sleep and displaying a great deal of curiosity about male and female genitals. According to Freud, accompanying this interest in genital stimulation is the association of this pleasure with the other-sex parent. Freud asserted that boys develop an erotic attachment to their mothers, and girls develop a similar attachment to their fathers. Soon, however, children realize that they are in competition with their same-sex parent for the attention and affection of their other-sex parent.

Among boys, Freud related this dilemma to a character in ancient Greek literature, Oedipus Rex, who became king by unknowingly marrying his mother after murdering his father. This so-called *Oedipus complex* arouses fear in boys that their fathers will punish them for their sexual desires for their mother. Freud asserted that this fear of the loss of genital pleasure is psychologically represented as *castration anxiety*, which is the fear that the father will cut off the penis.

**Phallic stage** In Freud's theory, the third stage of psychosexual development, during which the child derives pleasure from masturbation

Among girls, instead of being afraid their mothers will harm them, Freud believed that they are likely to express anger because they believe that their mothers have already inflicted the harm: by removing their penis. This “mother conflict” is now known as the *Electra complex*, after another Greek character who had her mother killed. Freud asserted that the *penis envy* girls experience during this stage stems from their belief that this anatomical “deficiency” is evidence of their inferiority to boys.

Successful negotiation of the phallic stage requires that children purge their sexual desires for their other-sex parent and bury their fear and anger toward their same-sex parent. Children accomplish these dual feats by identifying with the competitive same-sex parent. According to Freud, this process of identification is critical for the development of a healthy adult personality because this is how children internalize their parents’ values. This internalization of parental values—which generally mirror larger societal values—is critical in the development of the superego. Less successful negotiation of this stage can cause people to become chronically timid because they fear they do not “measure up” to their rivaled same-sex parent.

### Latency Stage

From about age 6 to age 11, children are in a psychological period of relative calm called the **latency stage**. During this time, the dramatic struggles of the oral, anal, and phallic stages are forgotten by the ego. Although the ego is relatively free from interference by the id, sexual, aggressive, and other id impulses are still present and must be managed. Often this is accomplished by channeling these desires into socially acceptable activities in school, sports, and the arts.

**Latency stage** In Freud’s theory, the fourth stage of psychosexual development, during which the child is relatively free from sexual desires and conflict

### Genital Stage

Latency is followed by puberty and the onset of the **genital stage**. During adolescence, many of the issues of the earlier stages re-emerge and can be reworked to a certain extent. Mature sexual feelings toward others also begin to emerge, and the ego learns to manage and direct these feelings. Of all the stages, Freud spent the least amount of time discussing the psychological dynamics of the genital stage. This was probably due to his belief that personality was largely determined by age 5.

**Genital stage** In Freud’s theory, the last stage of psychosexual development, during which mature sexual feelings toward others begin to emerge, and the ego learns to manage and direct these feelings

## 12.2d Defense Mechanisms Reduce or Redirect Unconsciously Caused Anxiety.

When Freud’s theory was relatively simple and included only the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious, he proposed that people managed to move certain thoughts into the unconscious by using a very basic defense mechanism that he called **repression**. Repression banishes anxiety-arousing thoughts from consciousness. Freud believed repression is the reason we do not remember our childhood conflicts in each of the psychosexual stages. As Freud’s model developed to greater levels of complexity, his thoughts about how we manage anxiety became more complex. Instead of simply relying on repression, he proposed that the ego uses a variety of more sophisticated techniques, which he called **defense mechanisms**, to keep threatening and unacceptable material out of consciousness and thereby reduce anxiety (Freud, 1926). His daughter, Anna Freud (1936), later described more fully how these ego defense mechanisms reduce anxiety.

Defense mechanisms are very important features of psychoanalytic theory because they explain why humans—whom Freud believed are essentially driven by

**Repression** In Freud’s theory, a very basic defense mechanism in which people remove anxiety-arousing thoughts from the conscious mind

**Defense mechanism** In Freud’s theory, the ego’s methods of keeping threatening and unacceptable material out of consciousness and thereby reducing anxiety

**TABLE 12-2 Major Ego Defense Mechanisms**

Repression	Pushing high-anxiety-inducing thoughts out of consciousness and keeping them unconscious; the most basic of the defense mechanisms
Rationalization	Offering seemingly logical self-justifying explanations for attitudes, beliefs, or behavior in place of the real, unconscious reasons
Reaction formation	Preventing unacceptable feelings or ideas from being directly expressed by expressing opposing feelings or ideas
Displacement	Discharging sexual or aggressive urges toward objects that are more acceptable than those that initially created the arousal
Projection	Perceiving one's own sexual or aggressive urges not in oneself but in others
Regression	Psychologically retreating to an earlier developmental stage where psychic energy remains fixated

sexual and aggressive urges—can become civilized. Furthermore, Freud asserted that the particular defense mechanisms people rely on most often in adapting to life's challenges become distinguishing features of their personalities. Thus, Freud would tell you that, although you have probably used most of the defense mechanisms described in Table 12-2 at least once in your life, your personality can be best described by that configuration of defenses that you rely on most heavily. He would also tell you that, under extreme stress, you may begin to use more powerful defenses, which are also more primitive and associated with psychological disorders.

**Rationalization** is probably one of the more familiar defense mechanisms. It involves offering seemingly logical self-justifying explanations for our attitudes, beliefs, or behavior in place of the real, unconscious reasons. For instance, you might say that you are punishing someone “for their own good,” when in reality the punishment primarily serves to express your anger at the person. Have you ever been romantically rejected and then convinced yourself that you never really cared for the person in the first place? Freud would say that this may well have been your ego's attempt to defend you against feelings of worthlessness.

**Reaction formation** allows us to express an unacceptable feeling or idea by consciously expressing its exact opposite. Thus, if we are interested in sex (and, according to Freud, we all are) but uncomfortable with this interest, we might devote much time and energy to combating pornography. Focusing on defeating the porn industry allows us to think about sex, but in an acceptable way. Of course, there are nondefensive reasons to oppose pornography or to engage in other activities that could indicate a reaction formation. In fact, one of Freud's primary ideas is that all human actions are *multiply determined*, meaning that each behavior has many causes.

**Displacement** is a defense mechanism that diverts our sexual or aggressive urges toward objects that are more acceptable than the one actually stimulating our feelings. This is commonly referred to as the “kick-the-dog” defense, when we unconsciously vent our aggressive impulses toward a threatening teacher, parent, or boss onto a helpless creature, such as the family pet. Similarly, we might displace sexual feelings away from a parent because that is unacceptable and date, instead, someone who is remarkably like dear old Mom or Dad.

**Rationalization** A defense mechanism in which people offer logical, self-justifying explanations for their actions in place of the real, more anxiety-producing, unconscious reasons

**Reaction formation** A defense mechanism that allows people to express unacceptable feelings or ideas by consciously expressing the exact opposite

**Displacement** A defense mechanism that diverts people's sexual or aggressive urges toward objects that are more acceptable than those that actually stimulate their feelings

**Projection** A powerful defense mechanism in which people perceive their own aggressive or sexual urges, not in themselves, but in others

**Regression** A defense mechanism in which people faced with intense anxiety psychologically retreat to a more infantile developmental stage where some psychic energy remains fixated

**Projection** is one of the more powerful defense mechanisms and can involve quite serious distortions of others' motivations. In projection, we perceive our own aggressive or sexual urges, not in ourselves, but in others. Thus, an insecure person may falsely accuse other people of being insecure while not recognizing this characteristic in her own personality. Freud contended that we are more likely to use projection when we are feeling strongly threatened, either by the strength of our feelings or by particularly stressful situations. Soldiers in combat, for instance, may begin to see everyone around them as potential enemies who could hurt them.

Another powerful defense mechanism is **regression**, which occurs when we cannot function in our current surroundings due to anxiety, and we psychologically retreat to a more infantile developmental stage where some psychic energy remains fixated. For example, following the birth of a younger sibling who threatens an older child's sense of "place" in the family, that older child may lose control of bowel or bladder functions, or return to thumb sucking. When this occurs in adults, it may be a relatively contained regression, such as talking like a baby when working with an authority figure.

## 12.2e There Are Many Variations of Psychoanalytic Theory.

Perhaps because of the strength of Freud's thinking and writing, many people assume that psychoanalytic theories are still based exclusively on his work. In the 100 years since Freud began developing his personality theory, we have learned a great deal about human behavior, and many psychologists have worked to adapt Freud's theories to what we have learned about how people function. Yet the process of revising Freud's ideas actually began during his lifetime. Three of his closest coworkers, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, and Karen Horney, disagreed about the central role of sexual drives in determining people's personalities. Freud, an authoritarian individual who demanded strict obedience from his followers, reacted very negatively to such criticism. Let us briefly examine the ideas of some of those individuals who refused to follow Freud's lead. These personality theories, along with Freud's original theory of psychoanalysis, are often placed under the general label of the **psychodynamic perspective**.

**Psychodynamic perspective** A diverse group of theories descended from the work of Sigmund Freud that asserts that behavior is controlled by unconscious forces

### Adler's Individual Psychology

As a youngster, Alfred Adler (1870–1937) was sickly, struggling to overcome rickets (a bone disease) and numerous bouts of pneumonia. In 1902 he joined Freud's inner circle of "disciples," who were expected to carry on their master's work while adhering to its basic theoretical principles. However, Adler soon began developing his own ideas about how personality developed, which led to arguments and tension between him and Freud. Adler's view of personality stressed social factors more than did Freud's theory. For example, concerning family dynamics, Adler felt that Freud focused so much attention on the mother-child-father bonds that he neglected the important influence siblings can have on personality development. In this regard, Adler was one of the first theorists to write about how birth order shapes personality, and he coined the term *sibling rivalry*.

In 1911, the Freud-Adler relationship ended when Adler proposed his *individual psychology*, which downplayed the importance of sexual motivation and asserted, instead, that people strive for superiority. By this, Adler meant that children generally feel weak and incompetent compared with adults and older children. In turn, these feelings of inferiority motivate them to acquire new skills and develop their untapped

potential. Adler (1929) called this process of striving to overcome feelings of inferiority *compensation*. However, for some individuals, such striving can lead to *overcompensation* if the sense of inferiority is excessively strong. Instead of mastering new skills, these people simply seek to obtain outward symbols of status and power, such as money and expensive possessions. By flaunting their success, they try to hide their continuing sense of inferiority.

### Jung's Analytical Psychology

Carl Jung (pronounced “Yoong”; 1875–1961), a native of Switzerland and the son of a Protestant pastor, was inspired to become a psychoanalyst by reading Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900/1953). After corresponding with Freud through letters, Jung met Freud for the first time in 1906; the two men talked nonstop for 13 hours. They quickly became close friends, and Freud viewed his younger protégé as the person most capable of carrying on his work. However, in 1914, after Jung challenged some of Freud’s central ideas concerning personality development, their friendship abruptly ended.

Jung (1916) called his approach *analytical psychology*. Like Adler, Jung de-emphasized the sex motive in his version of psychoanalysis. Instead, he asserted that people are motivated by a desire for psychological growth and wholeness, which he called the *need for individuation*. Jung’s idea that humans are motivated to engage in a quest for personal growth later became the central focus of the *humanistic perspective* (see Section 12.3).

Unlike Adler, who also de-emphasized the influence of the unconscious on behavior, Jung agreed with Freud that the unconscious mind has a powerful effect on people’s lives. Yet, for Jung, the unconscious was less a reservoir for repressed childhood conflicts and more a reservoir of images from our species’ evolutionary past. In studying different cultures and religions, he noticed certain universal images and themes, which were also strikingly similar to the images and themes in his patients’ dreams. Based on these observations, Jung asserted that besides our *personal unconscious*, we also have a **collective unconscious**, which is that part of the unconscious mind containing inherited memories shared by all human beings. Jung (1963, 1964) called these inherited memories **archetypes**, and he believed they reveal themselves when our conscious mind is distracted (as in fantasies or art) or inactive (as in dreams). He further believed that archetypes are represented in the religious symbols found throughout the world. Key archetypal figures are *mother*, *father*, *shadow*, *wise old person*, *God*, and *the hero*. Jung also claimed that the feminine and masculine qualities that everyone possesses were represented by the male feminine archetype, *anima*, and the female masculine archetype, *animus*. However, the most important archetype is the *self*, which Jung described as the ultimate unity of the personality, symbolized in religions by the circle, the cross, and the mandala.

Although Jung’s idea of the collective unconscious has generally been dismissed in mainstream psychology, it has had considerably greater influence in other disciplines, such as anthropology, art, literature, and religious studies (Neher, 1996; Tacey, 2001). One aspect of his personality



Carl Jung, founder of analytical psychology

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**Collective unconscious** In Jung’s personality theory, the part of the unconscious mind containing inherited memories shared by all human beings

**Archetypes** In Jung’s personality theory, inherited images that are passed down from our prehistoric ancestors and that reveal themselves as universal symbols in dreams, religion, and art



Carl Jung proposed that universally shared memories within the collective unconscious reveal themselves in religion, art, and popular culture as various archetypal figures. For example, Jung might suggest artist Karl Priebe’s dreamlike painting, *Mayor of Tehuantepec*, depicts the archetype of the “wise old person.”

Source: Karl Priebe, *Mayor of Tehuantepec* for Lisa on the 22nd of August 1966.

**Introvert** A person who is preoccupied with his or her inner world and tends to be hesitant and cautious when interacting with people

**Extrovert** A person who is focused on the external world and tends to be confident and socially outgoing

theory that has been incorporated into mainstream personality theories is the idea that we are born with tendencies to direct our psychological energies either into our inner self or into the outside world (Jung, 1921). **Introverts** are preoccupied with the inner world and tend to be hesitant and cautious when interacting with people. In contrast, **extroverts** are focused on the external world and tend to be confident and socially outgoing.

### Horney's Neo-Freudian Perspective

The German physician Karen Horney (pronounced “HOR-nigh”; 1885–1952) was the first influential female psychoanalyst. Like Adler, Horney (1945) believed social factors play a much larger role in personality development than sexual influences. Instead of perceiving personality problems as being caused by fixation of psychic energy, Horney believed that problems in interpersonal relationships during childhood create anxiety, and this anxiety causes later personality problems. Developmental psychologists later expanded on these ideas by studying how parent-child emotional attachments shape children's personalities (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2a).

Horney was also instrumental in confronting some of Freud's assertions concerning female personality development (Gilman, 2001; Smith, 2007). Whereas Freud proposed that gender differences in behavior are due to biological factors, she argued that the origins of these differences are largely social and cultural. Although conceding that women often felt inferior to men, Horney (1926) claimed that this is due not to penis envy but is rather because of the sexism that denies women equal opportunities. What women really envy, she said, is the social power and privilege that men enjoy in the larger society.

### An Overall Evaluation of Freud's Legacy

As you will see more fully when we discuss psychological disorders and therapies (see Chapters 13 and 14), there is no dismissing the impact of Freud's ideas on psychology. His influence also extends into other disciplines that study humans and their behavior, including anthropology, sociology, literature, and history. Indeed, psychoanalytic theory today may have more influence outside of psychology than within it. For example, a content analysis of 150 highly ranked U.S. colleges and universities found that psychoanalytic ideas are represented somewhere in the curricula of most schools, but significantly more courses feature psychoanalytic ideas outside psychology departments than within them (Redmond & Shulman, 2008).

Despite Freud's influence on the social sciences and the larger culture, a major limitation of his theory is that it is not based on carefully controlled scientific research (Auld et al., 2005). Indeed, Freud's entire theory was developed based on his own self-analysis and a handful of cases from his clinical practice that do not constitute a representative sampling of the human population. As you know from our discussion of scientific methods in Chapter 2, Section 2.1b, a theory's usefulness is difficult to determine if the research sample does not represent the population of interest. Further, reexaminations of Freud's case notes suggest that he may have distorted some of his patients' histories so they conformed to his view of personality (Esterson, 1993). Related to these criticisms is the fact that Freud did not welcome anyone questioning or challenging his ideas. Such a stance is typical of cult leaders but not of those who want to advance scientific understanding.

Another criticism of Freud's theory is that many of its psychological processes—such as that of the id—cannot be observed, much less measured. If aspects of his theory cannot be scientifically tested, then of what use are they to the science of psychology?

Further, when scientific studies have tested some of Freud's concepts, they have found little evidence to support the existence of the Oedipal/Electra complexes, penis envy, or many of Freud's ideas on sexual and aggressive drives (Auld et al., 2005).

Despite the inability to test certain portions of Freud's personality theory and the lack of evidence for other portions that have been scientifically tested, a new scientific movement has developed in recent years to bridge the gap between Freud's theory and science. Employing brain imaging techniques and other neuroscientific methods, researchers in the field of *neuropsychanalysis* claim that at least the following four general ideas concerning personality have received empirical support (Olds, 2012; Panksepp & Solms, 2012):

1. Unconscious processes shape human behavior.
2. Childhood experiences shape adult personality.
3. Learning to regulate impulses is critical for healthy development.
4. Some dreams are associated with wish fulfillment.

Given these continuing contributions, psychoanalysis still deserves recognition as an important, albeit flawed, perspective on personality. As long as psychoanalysis continues to generate interest among scientists who employ cutting-edge technology to test its theoretical arguments, this perspective on personality will continue to enrich and thereby illuminate our understanding of the human mind.

## REVIEW

- Freud believed that the unconscious mind largely determines human behavior.
- Freud's three personality structures are the id (the entirely unconscious part of the personality that contains our sexual and aggressive urges), the ego (the part of the personality that balances the demands of the id, superego, and reality), and the superego (the part of the personality that counterbalances the more primitive id demands).
- Psychosexual stages include the oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latency stage, and genital stage.
- The conscious part of the ego is protected from awareness of disturbing id impulses because defense mechanisms transform raw id desires into more acceptable actions.
- Alfred Adler emphasized personal striving to overcome feelings of inferiority.
- Carl Jung emphasized that our thoughts and actions are influenced by a collective unconscious.
- Karen Horney stressed that social and cultural factors influence female personality.
- Psychoanalytic theory has two major limitations: (1) It is not based on carefully controlled scientific research, and (2) many of its concepts cannot be measured.
- Acknowledging these limitations, researchers in the new area of neuropsychanalysis are using cutting-edge technology to scientifically test various aspects of psychoanalytic theory.

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## 12.3 The Humanistic Perspective



- ❖ How does unconditional positive regard shape personality?
- ❖ What facilitates self-actualization?

As discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.3b, because of many psychologists' dissatisfaction with both the psychoanalytic and the behaviorist views of human nature, in the 1950s a new perspective developed in psychology. This "third wave" in psychology, known as the *humanistic perspective*, emphasized people's innate capacity for personal growth and their ability to make conscious choices. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow were the primary architects of humanistic psychology, and they both contended that psychologists should study people's unique subjective mental experiences of the world. This stance represented a direct challenge to behaviorism and was instrumental in focusing renewed attention on the study of the self within the field of personality. Further, by emphasizing the possibilities for positive change that people can make at any point in their lives, the humanistic perspective stood in sharp contrast to the more pessimistic tone of the psychoanalytic perspective (Lambert & Erekson, 2008).

**Unconditional positive regard** An attitude of complete acceptance toward another person regardless of what she or he has said or done, based on the belief in that person's essential goodness

**Conditional positive regard** An attitude of acceptance toward another person only when she or he meets your standards

### 12.3a Rogers's Person-Centered Theory Emphasizes Self-Realization.

Carl Rogers (1902–1987) believed that people are basically good and that we are all working toward becoming the best we can be. Instead of being driven by sexual and aggressive desires, Rogers (1961) asserted that we are motivated by a wish to be good and that we would achieve our potential if we were given **unconditional positive**

**regard**. Unfortunately, according to Rogers, many of us are frustrated in our potential growth because important people in our lives often provide us with positive regard only if we meet their standards. Being the recipient of this **conditional positive regard** stunts our personal growth because in our desire to be regarded positively, we lose sight of our *ideal self*, which is the person we would like to become. Rogers stated that, as we continue to adjust our lives to meet others' expectations, the discrepancy between our *actual self*, which is the person we know ourselves to be now, and our ideal self becomes greater.

Rogers's theory of personality is as much about how people change as it is about how people are at any given moment (Kirschenbaum, 2004). For him, the dilemma of personality involves how people's thwarted growth potential can be released. The answer to this dilemma is for people with damaged selves, or low self-esteem, to find someone who will treat them with unconditional positive regard. The assumption here is that, when people are accepted for who they are, they will eventually come to accept themselves as well. When this self-acceptance occurs, people then put aside others' standards that are false for them; they get back on track in developing their true selves. Conveying unconditional positive regard to others involves the following three characteristics: *genuineness* (being open and honest), *warmth* (being caring and nurturing), and *empathy* (accurately identifying what the person is thinking and feeling).



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Carl Rogers's person-centered theory of personality considers receiving unconditional positive regard an essential ingredient in healthy personal growth. Parents are the primary providers of this affection to children.



### 12.3b Maslow's Self-Actualization Theory Stresses Maximizing Potential.

Like Rogers, Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) was interested in people's ability to reach their full potential. As discussed in Chapter 11, Section 11.1g, this process of fulfilling one's potential was what Maslow (1970) called *self-actualization*. Like Rogers and Freud, Maslow used the case study method in developing his theory. However, unlike Rogers and Freud, Maslow studied healthy, creative people rather than those who were troubled and seeking therapy. He chose as his subjects people who had led or were leading rich and productive lives, including outstanding college students, faculty members, professionals in other fields, and historical figures, such as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Maslow found that both the self-actualized and self-actualizing people he studied shared important characteristics. They were secure in the sense of who they were and therefore not paralyzed by others' opinions. They were open and spontaneous, able to engage easily and effortlessly with other people, in part because they focused on problems and how to solve them rather than on themselves. They were also loving and caring. And they often focused their energies on a particular task, one they regarded as a life mission. Most of these people had a few deep friendships rather than a large network of more superficial relationships. Maslow also reported that these people had experienced personal or spiritual **peak experiences**, which are fleeting but intense moments of joy, ecstasy, and absorption, in which people feel extremely capable. A peak experience can occur while a person is engaging in a religious activity or service, while performing athletically, while listening to music, or while relating to a lover (Ravizza, 2007). Some women report childbirth as a peak experience. Although anyone can have peak experiences, Maslow's group of self-actualizing people reported more peak experiences, and the quality of those experiences was richer than the experiences reported by others he studied. These peak experiences, regardless of how they occur, have a lasting effect. They enrich the outlook of those who have experienced them and can lead people to become more spontaneous and more open to the experiences of others.

**Peak experiences** Fleeting but intense moments when people feel happy, absorbed, and extremely capable

Maslow was interested in ways to facilitate self-actualization, just as Rogers had been. He noted that the qualities of the self-actualized people he studied were the qualities of mature adults. His theory of motivation suggested that people were more likely to focus on self-actualizing needs after sufficiently satisfying more basic needs, including social and esteem needs. Like Rogers, Maslow was optimistic about what would transpire when people were provided with the psychological and physical nutrients they needed in order to develop.

### 12.3c The Humanistic Perspective Has Been Criticized as Being Overly Optimistic.

Like Freud, humanistic psychologists have had a significant impact on popular culture. If you look in the self-help section of any bookstore, you will find numerous titles emphasizing the control you have over changing your life and achieving your full potential. However, in trying to correct for Freud's gloomy outlook on human nature, the humanistic perspective on personality may have overshot the mark and failed to acknowledge that many people engage in mean-spirited and even cruel behavior on a fairly regular basis. The truth is that people have the capacity to act in a wide variety of ways. Further, some of the forces that shape our behavior are outside our conscious awareness.

Although humanistic psychology has helped revitalize attention to the self, one of its major limitations is that it has not produced a substantial body of testable hypotheses for its personality theories. Like Freud before them, humanistic psychologists have not

clearly defined their concepts and have often rejected the use of carefully controlled scientific studies to test the validity of their theories. As a result, most of the scientific investigations of the self have come from outside the humanistic perspective, especially the social cognitive perspective (see Section 12.5c) and the closely related perspective of positive psychology (see Section 12.4d).

## REVIEW

- Carl Rogers proposed that being provided with unconditional positive regard allows a person to heal the split between the actual and the ideal self.
- According to Abraham Maslow, to self-actualize, people must be motivated to become the best they can be.

## 12.4 The Trait Perspective



- ❖ *How do trait theorists study personality?*
- ❖ *How many basic traits describe personality?*
- ❖ *At what points in life are personality traits most and least stable?*
- ❖ *What interacts with personality traits in predicting behavior?*
- ❖ *What are character strengths?*

During the summer of 1919, 22-year-old psychology student Gordon Allport was traveling through Europe when he boldly decided to ask the world-famous Sigmund Freud to meet with him. Upon arriving at Freud's office, the young Allport was at a loss in explaining the purpose of his visit. In truth, he simply wanted to meet this great man. After a strained silence, Allport told a story about a boy he saw on the train to Vienna who pleaded with his meticulously dressed mother to keep dirty passengers from sitting near him. When Allport finished telling the story, Freud paused and then asked in a soft voice, "And was that little boy you?" Allport was mortified. Freud had mistakenly perceived this "icebreaker" story as a window into the young man's unconscious. Later, after reflecting on Freud's assumption, Allport decided that psychoanalysis was not the best way to understand personality. Instead of searching for hidden, unconscious motives in people's behavior, he thought that personality psychologists should first try to describe and measure the basic factors of personality (Allport, 1967). This set him on a path of research that culminated in the development of the *trait perspective*.

### 12.4a Trait Theories Describe Basic Personality Dimensions.

The **trait perspective** conceives of personality as consisting of stable characteristics that people display over time and across situations (Nicholson, 1998). A **trait** is a relatively stable tendency to behave in a particular way. As an approach to understanding personality, the trait perspective is more concerned with describing *how* people differ from one another than explaining *why* they differ. The way psychologists typically measure traits is similar to the way people normally assess others' personalities.

**Trait perspective** A descriptive approach to personality that identifies stable characteristics that people display over time and across situations

**Trait** A relatively stable tendency to behave in a particular way across a variety of situations

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They observe them over time and in various situations or ask them how they typically behave. For example, if a friend is always prompt, you come to rely on that as one of his or her characteristics. From the trait perspective, we would propose that your friend is consistently on time because of an underlying trait that predisposes him or her to act in this manner. This may seem a little circular, and to a certain extent, it is. However, like so much else in personality psychology, traits cannot be measured directly but instead are inferred from behavior.

In studying traits, Gordon Allport and his colleague Henry Odbert (1936) began by combing through an unabridged dictionary and making a list of words that described people's personal characteristics. This initial list of 18,000 words was eventually reduced to about 200 clusters of related words, which became the original traits in Allport's personality theory (1937). Allport's perspective on personality had a good deal in common with the views of humanistic psychologists in that he emphasized that the whole human being should be the focus of study. Like humanistic psychologists, he further asserted that behaviorism was seriously mistaken when it explained human behavior as no different from that of rats and pigeons. In addition to being influenced by his humanistic associations, Allport was influenced by Gestalt psychology. As you recall from Chapter 1, Section 1.2e, the Gestalt perspective contends that "the whole is different from the sum of its parts." Similarly, Allport (1961) argued that personality is not simply a collection of traits, but that these traits seamlessly fit together to form a dynamic and unique personality.

Allport's contemporary, Henry Murray (1938, 1948), was also a trait psychologist who appreciated humanistic psychology's emphasis on the total person. However, Murray's personality approach was also influenced by Jung's and Freud's theories of unconscious motivation. As a result, he focused on traits that are relatively irrational, passionate, and laden with conflict and emotion. Ironically, both men were doing their research in the same place—Harvard—at about the same time.

How can a single perspective, the trait perspective, include theorists who take such different positions about the nature of personality? Actually, the trait approach is not based on specific assumptions about human nature. Traits are viewed as the small building blocks of personality, and a theorist can fit them together in a variety of ways, just as a landscaper can lay bricks into a path in a variety of patterns. Whereas psychoanalytic and humanistic theorists have definite beliefs about whether human beings are basically rational, aggressive, or unconsciously motivated, the trait approach assumes that people differ in the degree to which they possess personality traits. For example, instead of taking a position that people are basically aggressive or nonaggressive, trait theorists contend that people differ in the degree to which they possess aggressive traits (McCrae, 2005).

### **12.4b Factor Analysis Is Used to Identify Personality Traits.**

Allport's work in identifying a list of traits was a necessary first step in the development of a scientific trait approach to personality, yet his list of 200-some traits needed to be reduced to a more manageable level. Researchers achieved this by relying on *factor analysis*. As you recall from Chapter 10, Section 10.2a, factor analysis is a statistical technique that allows researchers to identify clusters of variables that are related to—or *correlated* with—one another. When a group of traits correlate in factor analysis, this suggests that a more general trait is influencing them. For example, several studies have found that people who describe themselves as outgoing also describe themselves as talkative, active, and optimistic about the future. This cluster of traits has been associated with the more general trait of *extroversion* (Eysenck, 1973).

**TABLE 12-3** Cattell's 16 Basic Personality Traits

Reserved	↔	Outgoing
Trusting	↔	Suspicious
Relaxed	↔	Tense
Less intelligent	↔	More intelligent
Stable	↔	Emotional
Assertive	↔	Humble
Happy-go-lucky	↔	Sober
Conscientious	↔	Expedient
Venturesome	↔	Shy
Tender-minded	↔	Tough-minded
Imaginative	↔	Practical
Shrewd	↔	Forthright
Apprehensive	↔	Placid
Experimenting	↔	Conservative
Self-sufficient	↔	Group-tied
Controlled	↔	Casual

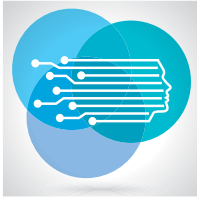
Raymond Cattell (1965, 1986) was one of the first trait theorists to use factor analysis to identify these general traits, which he called source traits. First he collected people's ratings of themselves on many different traits, and then he identified clusters of related traits using factor analysis. Based on this procedure, Cattell concluded that you can understand an individual's personality by identifying the degree to which she or he possesses each of the 16 source traits listed in Table 12-3. To measure these traits, Cattell developed the *Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)*, which is widely used for career counseling, marital counseling, and evaluating employees and executives (Cattell, 2001; Tango & Kolodinsk, 2004).

Cattell was a pioneer in using factor analysis to study personality. He also demonstrated the importance of testing personality traits in applied settings—in business organizations, in schools, in clinical work—and then using that information to better understand the traits. Testing personality theories in applied settings and then refining the theories based on what is learned has become an important part of modern trait approaches to personality.

The British psychologists Hans Eysenck and Sybil Eysenck (pronounced "EYE-zink") also used factor analysis to describe personality functioning. However, unlike Cattell, the Eysencks believed personality researchers should rely on other evidence besides the findings of factor analysis when identifying the basic dimensions of personality. Specifically, they believed researchers should also consider the

biological bases of personality (Eysenck, 1973; H. Eysenck & S. Eysenck, 1963, 1983). Based on thousands of studies conducted over 5 decades, the Eysencks identified three genetically influenced dimensions of personality: *extraversion* (which included Cattell's factors of outgoingness and assertiveness), *neuroticism* (which included Cattell's factors of emotional instability and apprehensiveness), and *psychoticism* (which included Cattell's factors of tough-mindedness and shrewdness).

So how many basic traits are there in personality? Are there 16 source traits, as Cattell proposed, is there a much more modest set of three dimensions as proposed by the Eysencks? Before reading further, complete Explore It Exercise 12.1.



## ***Explore It* EXERCISE 12.1**

### **Can You Perform an Intuitive Factor Analysis of Personality Traits?**

In the 1930s, well before the widespread use of factor analysis in research, Gordon Allport and Henry Odbert (1936) relied upon their intuitive judgment to reduce an initial list of 18,000 personality traits to about 200 clusters of related traits. To gain some appreciation of their effort, examine carefully the 30 traits listed below and sort them into five groups of related traits, each containing 6 traits. In forming each grouping, keep in mind that the traits in each group are assumed to “go together,” so that people who have one of the traits in the group are also likely to have the other traits. After you have finished sorting the 30 traits, identify what they have in common. Can you attach an overall trait name to each of the five groups of traits? Finally, for each group, how would people who possess an abundance of the overall trait differ from people who possess very little of this overall trait?

Achievement-oriented	Eccentric	Positive emotions
Action-oriented	Excitement seeking	Rich emotional life
Altruistic	Full of energy	Rich fantasy life
Anxious	Hostile	Self-conscious
Assertive	Idiosyncratic	Self-disciplined
Competent	Impulsive	Straightforward
Compliant	Modest	Tender-minded
Deliberate	Novel ideas	Trusting
Depressed	Orderly	Vulnerable
Dutiful	Outgoing	Warm

### **12.4c The Five-Factor Model Specifies Five Basic Traits.**

Did you complete Explore It Exercise 12.1? If not, do so now before reading further. When other college students have completed a similar task (Sneed et al., 1998), more than 70% classified 30 traits similar to those in this exercise so that at least 5 of the 6 items in each grouping fell into clusters similar to the following: (1) *rich fantasy life, rich emotional life, action-oriented, novel ideas, eccentric, idiosyncratic*; (2) *competent, orderly, dutiful, self-disciplined, deliberate, achievement-oriented*; (3) *outgoing, positive emotions, assertive, full of energy, excitement seeking, warm*; (4) *trusting, straightforward, compliant, modest, tender-minded, altruistic*; (5) *anxious, self-conscious, depressed, hostile, impulsive, vulnerable*. Did your own clustering conform to this pattern?

**TABLE 12-4** The Five-Factor Model and Its Facets

Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Rich fantasy life	Competent	Outgoing	Trusting	Anxious
Rich emotional life	Orderly	Positive emotions	Straightforward	Self-conscious
Action-orientated	Dutiful	Assertive	Compliant	Depressed
Novel ideas	Self-disciplined	Full of energy	Modest	Hostile
Eccentric	Deliberate	Excitement seeking	Tender-minded	Impulsive
Idiosyncratic	Achievement-oriented	Warm	Altruistic	Vulnerable

**Five-factor model** A trait theory asserting that personality consists of five traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness)

Over the past 25 years, most personality trait researchers have reached the conclusion that the key personality factors do in fact cluster this way. The five factors, or dimensions of personality, are known as the *Big Five personality traits*, or the **five-factor model** (Hong et al., 2008; McCrae & Costa, 1997). These five basic traits are *openness*, *conscientiousness*, *extraversion*, *agreeableness*, and *neuroticism* (use the acronym OCEAN to remember these five traits). As shown in Table 12-4, each of the five factors represents a clustering of more specific traits. For example, people who score high on neuroticism tend to be anxious, self-conscious, depressed, hostile, impulsive, and vulnerable. These lower-order traits are called *facets* of the five-factor model.

With only slight variations, the five basic traits that make up the five-factor model have consistently emerged from studies of children, college students, and the elderly (McCrae et al., 1999). Further, these traits have been found in societies as diverse as those of the United States, Bangladesh, Brazil, Japan, Canada, Finland, Spain, Germany, Poland, China, and the Philippines (Gorostiaga et al., 2011; Katigbak et al., 2002; McCrae et al., 2011; McCrae et al., 1998). This is especially impressive when you consider the wide variety of languages used in these studies to test for these traits. Although gender differences are small, a study of 24 cultures from five continents found that women tend to score higher than men on neuroticism and agreeableness (Costa et al., 2001).

Evolutionary theorists contend that the reason these five traits are found across a wide variety of cultures is that they reflect the most salient features of humans' adaptive behavior over the course of evolutionary history. In other words, these five traits have emerged as the basic components of personality because, as a species, we have evolved special sensitivity to variations in the ability to handle stress (neuroticism), seek out others' company (extraversion), approach problems (openness to experience), cooperate with others (agreeableness), and meet our social and moral obligations (conscientiousness). In contrast, sociocultural theorists propose that the behaviors associated with these five traits are learned through the experiences children and young adults have while mastering important social roles found in cultures throughout the world (Roberts et al., 2005). Instead of genetic predisposition to developing these traits, sociocultural theorists emphasize the role learning plays in shaping the behaviors psychologists associate with these traits. Presently, neither of these theories has received sufficient empirical support to declare it superior to the other.



The five-factor model of personality contends that there are five basic components of personality: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. What traits do you think are strongest in your personality?

You might be wondering whether these five traits comprise an individual's entire personality. Do you think five traits can sufficiently describe your personality? Most trait theorists would say no. Although almost any personality trait probably has a good deal in common with one of these five basic traits, the five-factor model does not capture the entire essence of personality (Funder, 2001). Let us briefly examine each of these traits.

### Openness to Experience

People who are particularly open to experience are adventurous—constantly searching out new ways to do things—and they are sensitive and passionate, with a childlike wonder at the world (McCrae, 1994). They can also flout traditional notions of what is appropriate or expected in terms of their behavior or ideas (McCrae & John, 1992). As with most of the other dimensions, openness to experience is at the end of the pole that appears more desirable, but in fact, many qualities of those who are more closed to experience are quite valuable. These individuals tend to be hardworking, loyal, down-to-earth, and proud of their traditional values. They also tend to be more politically conservative. A meta-analysis of 88 studies with over 22,000 participants found that people who scored low on openness to experience held more conservative political beliefs than those who scored high on openness (Jost et al., 2003).

Openness to experience can be a misleading title because some people might equate this personality dimension with being educated or “cultured.” Although a liberal arts education theoretically may lead to changes in openness to experience, a national survey of nearly 10,000 men and women found only a modest correlation between this trait and the subjects' years of education (Costa et al., 1986). People who are open to experience enjoy gaining information in new fields, including nonintellectual fields. They may, for instance, seek out new tastes in food or new types of music to listen to. Thus, people who are open to experience will broaden their knowledge base across the course of their lifetime and will have new and different interests as time goes on. Having good cognitive abilities helps broaden a person's experience, but it is not necessary—nor does intelligence alone mean that people will be open.

### Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is the measure of a person's willingness to conform to others' expectations and follow through on promises and agreements, despite more tempting options that may arise. People who score high on conscientiousness tend to be well organized, dependable, hardworking, and ambitious, whereas those who score low are more likely to be disorganized, undependable, lazy, and easygoing. This dimension is very important in career planning and workplace productivity. Adolescents who are conscientious are much more likely to spend time thinking about and planning their future career options than those who lack conscientiousness (Lounsbury et al., 2005). Similarly, conscientious employees are good workplace citizens, whereas nonconscientious employees are nonproductive and undermine the organization's health (Barrick & Mount, 1991; P. Howard & J. Howard, 2000).



## Journey of Discovery

How do you think Freud would describe the highly conscientious person?

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## BVT Lab

Visit [www.BVTLab.com](http://www.BVTLab.com) to explore the student resources available for this chapter.

### Extraversion

Extraversion was first identified by Carl Jung (see Section 12.2e) and has been included in virtually every personality system proposed in the last 50 years. Extroverts are people who seek out and enjoy others' company. They tend to be confident, energetic, bold, and optimistic, and they handle social situations with ease and grace. Extroverts' social skills, confidence, and take-charge attitude often make them well-suited for leadership positions (A. Johnson et al., 2004). On the opposite end of this particular personality dimension is the introverted character. Introverts tend to be shy, quiet, and reserved; it is harder for others to connect with them (Tellegen et al., 1988).

### Agreeableness

Agreeableness is a personality dimension that ranges from friendly compliance with others on one end to hostile antagonism on the other (Costa et al., 1989). People who score high on agreeableness tend to be good-natured, softhearted, courteous, and sympathetic, whereas those who score low tend to be irritable, ruthless, rude, and tough-minded. Agreeableness is a useful way to obtain popularity, and agreeable people are better liked than disagreeable people (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). However, people high in agreeableness may be too dependent on others' approval and thus ill-suited for situations requiring tough or more objective decisions. For instance, scientists, art or literary critics, and judges may be able to perform better if they are less agreeable and more "objective" in their jobs (Graziano et al., 1996).

Does being tough-minded versus good-natured affect how much money people earn in their jobs? A series of recent studies found that people who scored low on agreeableness earned 18% more in their jobs than those who were more agreeable (Judge et al., 2012). Interestingly, the relationship between agreeableness and income was significantly stronger for men than for women. One way to interpret these findings is that behaving counter to your sex's traditional gender role—men being softhearted and sympathetic and women being ruthless and tough-minded—causes more of a salary backlash for men than for women. The fact that being tough-minded is a masculine trait, and the finding that it is associated with higher salaries in our culture also reflect the greater value our culture places on masculine traits compared to feminine traits (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2e).

### Neuroticism

At the core of neuroticism is negative affect (McCrae & Costa, 1987). This personality dimension, which is sometimes labeled *emotional stability*, describes how people differ in terms of being anxious, high-strung, insecure, and self-pitying versus relaxed, calm, composed, secure, and content. Neurotics (people low in emotional stability) can either channel their worrying into a kind of compulsive success or let their anxiety lead them into recklessness. Many of the facets underlying neuroticism will be discussed more fully in Chapter 13, when we examine psychological disorders.

### How Do the Five Traits Interact in Predicting Behavior?

Trait theorists often use the five-factor model to identify a cluster of personality traits that are associated with relevant behavioral and mental health outcomes. For example, in an investigation of traits associated with mental health resilience among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender young adults, Nicholas Livingston and his colleagues (2015) found that those who scored low on neuroticism and high on



extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were much less likely to be at risk for suicide when facing discrimination than individuals whose personality traits were high on neuroticism and low on extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. Similarly, in a study of life satisfaction among U.S. high school students, Shannon Suldo and her coworkers (2015) found that, while neuroticism was negatively correlated with satisfaction, the traits of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion were positively correlated with feelings of satisfaction. Interestingly, they also found that, while agreeableness was positively correlated with satisfaction for girls, it was not significantly related to satisfaction for boys. Can you guess why this gender difference might have been found? As discussed in Chapter 11, Section 11.4a, women tend to be more relationship oriented than are men. As such, in our culture, being good-natured, softhearted, courteous, and sympathetic may be more predictive of a teenaged girl's happiness than it is for a teenaged boy's.

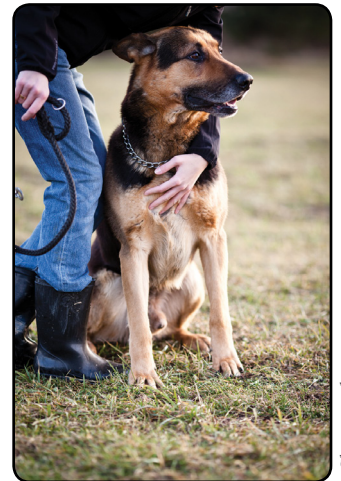
### Personality Traits in Nonhuman Animals

Our family dog, Maizy, is trusting, curious, very energetic, somewhat absentminded, and extremely friendly. I would guess that she is low on neuroticism and high on agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience. Is my application of the five-factor model to a canine based on any scientific evidence, or should it be dismissed as the whimsical musings of a dog lover?

Samuel Gosling and Oliver John believe that the five-factor model can be used to describe the personality of many nonhuman animals, including dogs. In a review of 19 animal personality studies involving 12 different species, Gosling and John (1999) found that the personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism, and agreeableness commonly occur across species. Chimpanzees, gorillas, various other primates, mammals in general, and even guppies and octopuses exhibit individual differences that are remarkably similar to these three personality traits (Gosling, 2001; Locurto, 2007). The researchers believe this cross-species similarity in personality traits suggests that biological mechanisms are likely responsible.

Using personality distinctions similar to those in the five-factor model, John Capitanio (1999) has also discovered that the behavior of adult male rhesus monkeys can be reliably predicted from personality dimensions. Over a 4 1/2-year period, Capitanio found that, compared to monkeys who scored low on these personality dimensions, highly extroverted monkeys engaged in more affiliative behavior, highly neurotic monkeys were more fearful and hypersensitive to changes in their surroundings, and highly agreeable monkeys were more easygoing in their social behavior. Like Gosling and John, Capitanio believes biological mechanisms are shaping the expression of these personality traits (Capitanio & Widaman, 2005).

These consistencies across species and over time further suggest that the five factors identified by trait theorists reflect some of the basic styles of behavior that are necessary for many species to best adapt to their environments (Iwanicki & Lehmann, 2015; Smith & Blumstein, 2008). For instance, an animal high in neuroticism might be the most responsive to the presence of a predator and so could act as a sentinel in a group of animals. Meanwhile, an animal low in neuroticism may promote group solidarity by being relaxed and calm. Together, these animals could contribute to the social functioning of their group in different ways, with the net result that both of them (and their kin) may be more likely to survive and reproduce. Thus, the genes that influence these personality traits are likely to be passed on to future generations (Adams, 2011).



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The five-factor model has been used to describe many nonhuman personalities. Experts' ratings of dog breeds identified traits that closely approximated four of the five traits in the five-factor model, as well as a fifth personality dimension, "dominance-territoriality." Which personality factor do you think they found only in humans and chimpanzees?

So what are the important traits in a dog's personality? I wasn't far off the mark in sizing up Maizy. Factor analyses of experts' ratings of dog breeds identified traits that closely approximated four of the five traits in the five-factor model: neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience. A fifth personality dimension, "dominance-territoriality," was also identified (Gosling & John, 1999). Maizy, a golden retriever, would score very low in this dimension.

What about conscientiousness? Gosling and John's research found that chimpanzees were the only species other than humans that exhibited the trait of conscientiousness (it was not found among gorillas), although it was defined more narrowly in chimps than in humans. Among chimps, conscientiousness included individual behavioral variations involving lack of attention and goal directedness, unpredictability, and disorganized behavior. Because conscientiousness entails following rules, thinking before acting, and other complex cognitive functions, it is not surprising that this trait was found only in humans' closest genetic relative. These findings suggest that conscientiousness is a recent evolutionary development among hominids, the subfamily composed of humans, chimpanzees, and gorillas.

### 12.4d Positive Psychologists Identify Personality Traits that Are Character Strengths.

As previously discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.3b, positive psychology is a psychological perspective, closely related to humanistic psychology, that attempts to identify how people make their lives happy and fulfilling. Researchers who identify themselves as positive psychologists are currently studying what it means to be a well-adapted person in modern-day society, with a good deal of their research investigating personality traits associated with positive living. Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman (2004) are two of the primary investigators who have sought to identify what they refer to as *character strengths* that consistently emerge across history and culture.

According to Peterson and Seligman, **character strengths** are special types of traits that allow optimal functioning in pursuing a virtue. A *virtue* is a core human characteristic valued worldwide in moral philosophies and religions. Character strengths are different from general personality traits because of their association with virtues. In their analysis of religions and philosophies around the world, Peterson and Seligman identified six broad categories of human virtues: *wisdom*, *courage*, *justice*, *humanity*, *temperance*, and *spirituality* (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Ruch & Proyer, 2015). Research suggests that these virtues are also associated with the type of personality traits identified as most desirable for romantic partners or friends to possess (Buss, 1989).

Having identified six common virtues, Peterson and Seligman next attempted to determine how each of these virtues is typically expressed. To achieve this goal, they enlisted a group of psychologists and psychiatrists to examine dozens of existing personality inventories and use designated criteria to identify character strengths. This procedure yielded 24 "strengths" of character distributed across the six virtue categories in their **Values in Action (VIA) classification system**, which is listed in Table 12-5. Peterson and Seligman claim that the character strengths in the VIA Classification define what's best about people. For example, wisdom is a virtue, while creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and perspective are character strengths that can be used to achieve wisdom. Across the 24 character strengths, the researchers assumed that there would be a wide range of individual differences in the degree to which people possess specific strengths. They further assumed that individuals would rarely, if ever, display high degrees of all strengths.

**Character strengths** Traits that allow optimal functioning in pursuing a virtue

**Values in Action (VIA) classification system** A positive psychology classification system of 24 universal character strengths that define what's best about people

**TABLE 12-5 Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Virtues and Strengths**

**Wisdom and Knowledge:** cognitive strengths that are related to acquiring and using knowledge

- Creativity: Thinking of novel and productive ways to understand and do things
- Curiosity: Having an interest in things for their own sake
- Open-mindedness: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides
- Love of learning: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge
- Perspective: Being able to provide wise counsel to others

**Courage:** emotional strength that requires the exercise of willpower to accomplish goals in the face of opposition

- Bravery: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain
- Persistence: Finishing what you start
- Integrity: Speaking the truth and acting in a genuine and sincere manner
- Vitality: Approaching life with excitement and energy

**Humanity:** interpersonal strength that involves tending and befriending others

- Love: Valuing intimate relationships with others
- Kindness: Doing favors and good deeds for others
- Social intelligence: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and yourself

**Justice:** civic strength that underlies healthy community life

- Citizenship: Working well as a member of a group or team
- Fairness: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice
- Leadership: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same time maintaining good relations within the group

**Temperance:** strength that protects against excess

- Forgiveness and mercy: Forgiving those who have done wrong
- Humility/Modesty: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
- Prudence: Being careful about your choices
- Self-regulation: Regulating what you feel and do

**Transcendence:** strength that forges connections to the larger universe and provides meaning

- Appreciation of beauty and excellence: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life
- Gratitude: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen to you
- Hope: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it
- Humor: Liking to laugh and tease
- Spirituality: Having sound beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe

In an Internet study of almost 118,000 adults from 54 countries, Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2006) found that three of the most commonly endorsed character strengths were kindness, integrity, and gratitude. Of the 24 character strengths, research suggests that the ones most strongly associated with life satisfaction and health are the strengths of gratitude, love, hope, curiosity, zest, and self-regulation (Park & Peterson, 2006; Park et al., 2004; Peterson et al., 2007, 2008; Proyer et al., 2013). Additional longitudinal research with over 17,000 individuals living in the United Kingdom found that as people aged, they tended to display higher degrees of their character strengths (Linley et al., 2007).

Given the challenges that life can present to people, positive psychologists have studied the role of character strengths in traumatic life events. For example, following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, a survey of more than 4,800 people in the U.S. compared their character strengths before this national tragedy with 2 months after. Results indicated that immediately following the attacks, people in the U.S. experienced an increase in the seven character strengths of gratitude, hope, kindness, leadership, love, spirituality, and teamwork. Ten months later, these character strengths were still elevated, although to a somewhat lesser degree than immediately following the attacks (Peterson & Seligman, 2003). These findings suggest that when a group experiences a dangerous external threat, individual members often react by experiencing a heightened sense of communion with and gratitude for fellow group members, as well as a stronger belief in the higher purpose and meaning of life. A related study found that hope and spirituality were the two character strengths that contributed most to lower levels of depressive symptoms among U.S. college students following the terrorist attacks (Ai & Evans-Campbell, 2007). Similarly, other studies suggest that recovering from a serious illness can be a character builder for many people (Peterson et al., 2006).

As with the five-factor model, Peterson and Seligman do not contend that the VIA Classification system captures the complete picture of human personality. However, they do contend that the investigation of positive psychologists into human character strengths will provide important insights into how specific aspects of our personalities provide us with the necessary strength to lead healthier, happier, and more fulfilling lives.

### 12.4e Critics Challenge Whether Traits Reliably Predict Behavior.

Personality theorists, whether they take a psychoanalytic, humanistic, or trait perspective view, have all emphasized that personality is relatively stable over time and an important determinant of behavior. Yet, Walter Mischel (1968, 1984) has argued that these are misguided beliefs. Instead, he asserts that personality is not really stable over time and across situations, and that the situations we place people in are much stronger determinants of behavior than their personalities. This viewpoint, which is called **situationism**, asserts that our behavior is not determined by stable traits but is strongly influenced by the situation.

In making a situationist argument, Mischel discussed an early study conducted by Hugh Hartshorne and Mark May (1928), who placed children in many different situations in which they had the opportunity to lie, cheat, and steal. Instead of finding that the children displayed honest or dishonest traits consistently across many different situations, Hartshorne and May found that the situation was the most important determinant of how the children behaved. If kids thought they could get away with it, most of them were likely to behave dishonestly. In Mischel's own research, he found virtually no correlation between people's traits and their behavior across situations (Mischel, 1968, 1984). In other words, personality traits did not reliably predict behavior. Based on this evidence, Mischel argued that personality traits are a figment of trait theorists' imaginations!

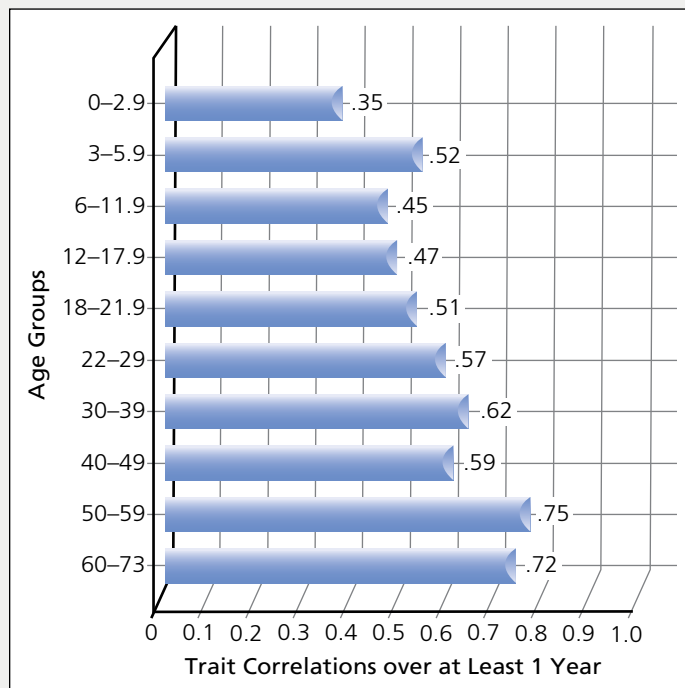
As you might guess, this critique stirred up considerable controversy among personality psychologists. Seymour Epstein (1979, 1980) responded that Mischel was not seeing consistency in behavior across situations because he was not measuring enough behaviors. Using an analogy, Epstein stated that no one expects your IQ score to predict whether you will correctly answer a certain question on a given test in a particular class during a particular semester. Predicting such a thing would be highly unreliable because so many factors might influence your response (Were you rushed for time? Did you

**Situationism** The viewpoint that our behavior is strongly influenced by the situation rather than by personality traits

understand this information in class? Did you read the question correctly?). However, your IQ score will be much more accurate in predicting your *average* performance over many questions on several exams. Similarly, your score on an introversion-extraversion scale will not be very accurate in predicting whether you will introduce yourself to that attractive person you see on campus tomorrow, but your score will probably be much more accurate in predicting your *average* sociability across many situations. By and large, research supports Epstein's argument: Personality trait scores do reliably predict how people generally behave (Funder, 2001; Paunonen, 2003).

Yet what about the assertion by situationists that personality is not stable over time? Actually, most studies find that personality traits are remarkably stable over the adult years but somewhat less so during childhood. The most extensive investigation of personality trait stability at different ages involved a meta-analysis of 150 studies and almost 50,000 participants (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). In the various studies included in this meta-analysis, participants' personalities had been measured for at least a year. As depicted in Figure 12-2, results indicated that personality traits are least stable during childhood (correlations in the .40s), somewhat more stable in early adulthood (correlations in the .50s), and most stable after the age of 50 (correlations in the .70s). These findings do not support the situationists' claim that personality is not stable over time. Our personalities are quite stable, especially during the adult years, with most change occurring during the early years of life. Despite this trait stability, however, additional research indicates that our personalities are certainly capable of changing throughout our lives (Srivastava et al., 2003). They do not necessarily become fixed like plaster at a particular age.

One important contribution to personality theory made by situationists was their insistence that situational factors shape people's behavior. In response, many personality researchers acknowledged that situations do indeed shape behavior, and that how we behave is often determined by an *interaction* of personal and situational factors. In some situations, social norms may constrain the expression of personality



**FIGURE 12-2**

**Stability of Personality Traits at Different Ages**

A meta-analysis of 150 studies involving nearly 50,000 participants examined the stability of personality at different ages (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). Based on the findings depicted in this graph, at what ages is personality least stable? When is it most stable?

Source: Data from Roberts, B.W., and DelVecchio, W. F. (2000). The rank-order consistency of personality traits from childhood to old age: A quantitative review of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 3–25.

traits. For example, extroverts, like everyone else, are likely to be relatively quiet and subdued at a library, in a funeral home, or during a church service. The personalities of those with whom we interact also can significantly alter our own behavior. For instance, a store clerk who is low on agreeableness may treat us very rudely, which may cause us to react in a similar fashion—despite the fact that we generally are kind and considerate. Thus, although personality traits do appear to explain a good deal of our behavior, situational forces significantly influence us (see Chapter 16).

The criticisms of the trait approach have helped sharpen our understanding of the limits of personality as a determinant of behavior, but they have also increased our ability to predict behavior. Attending only to personality traits will not accurately predict behavior in most circumstances. Instead, many personality researchers have increasingly embraced **interactionism**, which is the study of the combined effects of both the situation and the person on human behavior (Sadler & Woody, 2003).

As outlined here, Mischel's critical position toward the trait approach fueled a number of research directions that might not otherwise have been pursued. In psychology, as in all science, a critical or contrary position that is well presented frequently benefits the field by causing everyone to more clearly state (and examine) their assumptions and beliefs.

**Interactionism** The study of the combined effects of both the situation and the person on human behavior

## REVIEW

- The trait perspective is a descriptive approach to personality that focuses on stable characteristics that people display over time and across situations.
- Trait theorists identify traits by relying on factor analysis.
- The five-factor model, the most widely accepted trait theory, contends that personality is best described by the traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.
- The Values in Action Classification of Strengths system identifies 24 universal character strengths that are related to six common virtues; these character strengths define what's best about people.
- Personality traits are most stable during later adulthood and least stable during early childhood.
- Personality traits interact with situational factors in determining behavior.

## 12.5 The Social Cognitive Perspective



- ❖ *How do thoughts and beliefs shape personality?*
- ❖ *What is reciprocal determinism?*
- ❖ *How do people develop a locus of control?*
- ❖ *Is the desire to verify your self-concept stronger than the desire to increase your self-esteem?*
- ❖ *What type of behavior is best explained by the social cognitive perspective?*

The perspectives examined thus far contend that personality consists of internal psychological needs or traits that shape our thoughts, feelings, and behavior. These approaches provide a good illustration of how the ideology of *individualism* has shaped the development of many personality theories. In contrast, our fourth major approach, the **social cognitive perspective**, has a less individualistic bias because it views personality as emerging as people interact with their social environments. This perspective has its roots in the behavioral principles of *classical conditioning* and *operant conditioning*, but its closest associations are with the more cognitively oriented behavioral principles of *observational learning* (Chapter 7) and the principles of *cognitive psychology* (Chapter 8). As you recall from Chapter 7, Section 7.3a, observational learning is the central feature of Albert Bandura's (1986) *social learning theory*. Bandura proposes that people learn social behaviors primarily through observation and cognitive processing of information rather than through direct experience.

### 12.5a Personality Is Shaped by the Interaction of People's Cognitions, Behavior, and Environment.

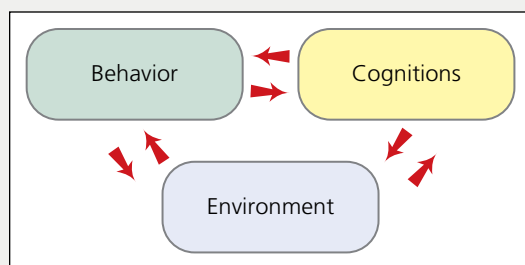
According to Bandura (1986), Skinner was only partly correct when he asserted that the environment determines people's behavior. Bandura pointed out that people's behavior also determines the environment. He further contended that people's thoughts, beliefs, and expectations determine—and are determined by—both behavior and the environment. As such, personality emerges from an ongoing mutual interaction between people's cognitions, their actions, and their environment. This basic principle of the social cognitive perspective is known as **reciprocal determinism** and is depicted in Figure 12-3. Thus, while environmental factors shape our personalities, we think about what is happening to us and develop beliefs and expectations that will alter both our behavior and our environment (Makoul, 2010). In turn, these behavioral and environmental changes will influence our thoughts, which will then alter our personalities. As you can see, the idea that personality emerges through reciprocal determinism does not fit into the individualist mold of traditional personality theories.

One of the most important cognitive factors in reciprocal determinism is **self-efficacy**, which is a person's belief about his or her ability to perform behaviors that should bring about a desired outcome. Perceptions of self-efficacy are largely subjective and tied to specific kinds of activities. For example, you could have high self-efficacy for solving mathematical problems but low self-efficacy for interacting with new acquaintances. Because of these two different self-efficacies, you might approach a difficult calculus course with robust confidence, while you feign illness when invited to a new friend's party. Success in an activity heightens self-efficacy, while failure lowers it. Further, the more self-efficacy you have for

**Social cognitive perspective** A psychological perspective that examines how people interpret, analyze, remember, and use information about themselves, others, social interactions, and relationships

**Reciprocal determinism** The social cognitive belief that personality emerges from an ongoing mutual interaction between people's cognitions, their actions, and their environment

**Self-efficacy** A person's belief about his or her ability to perform behaviors that should bring about a desired outcome



**FIGURE 12-3**  
**Reciprocal Determinism**

Reciprocal determinism is the idea that personality emerges from an ongoing mutual interaction between people's cognitions, their behavior, and their environment.

a particular task, the more likely you will pursue the task, try hard, persist in the face of setbacks, and succeed (Bandura, 1999; Pajares, 2008). Success breeds self-efficacy, which in turn breeds further success. This mutual interaction is an illustration of reciprocal determinism.



## Journey of Discovery

Is self-efficacy the same as self-esteem?

### 12.5b Life Experiences Foster Beliefs about Either Control or Helplessness.

Julian Rotter (1966, 1990) proposed that, through interacting with our surroundings, we develop beliefs about ourselves as either controlling, or controlled by, our environment. The degree to which we believe outcomes in our lives depend on our own actions versus the actions of uncontrollable environmental forces is known as our **locus of control**. People who believe outcomes occur because of their own efforts are said to have an *internal locus of control*, whereas those who believe outcomes are outside their own control are described as having an *external locus of control*. Spend a few minutes responding to the items in Self-Discovery Questionnaire 12.1 to get an idea of whether you have an internal or external locus of control.

**Locus of control** The degree to which we expect that outcomes in our lives depend on our own actions and personal characteristics versus the actions of uncontrollable environmental forces



People with an internal locus of control are more achievement-oriented and successful in life than those with an external locus of control. What sort of thinking causes these differences among “internals” and “externals”?



## SELF-DISCOVERY 12.1

### Questionnaire



#### Do You Have an Internal or an External Locus of Control?

**Instructions:** For each item, select the alternative that you more strongly believe to be true. Remember that this is a measure of your personal beliefs and that there are no correct or incorrect answers.

- 1. a. Making a lot of money is largely a matter of getting the right breaks.  
b. Promotions are earned through hard work and persistence.
- 2. a. In my experience, I have noticed that there is usually a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.  
b. Many times, the reactions of teachers seem haphazard to me.
- 3. a. Marriage is largely a gamble.  
b. The number of divorces indicates that more and more people are not trying to make their marriages work.
- 4. a. When I am right, I can convince others.  
b. It is silly to think that one can really change another person's basic attitudes.
- 5. a. In our society, a person's future earning power is dependent upon his or her ability.  
b. Getting promoted is really a matter of being a little luckier than the next person.
- 6. a. I have little influence over the way other people behave.  
b. If one knows how to deal with people, they are really quite easily led.

**Scoring instructions:** Give yourself one point for each of the following answers: 1(a), 2(b), 3(a), 4(b), 5(b), and 6(a). Then add up your total number of points. The higher the score, the more external is your locus of control. A score of 5 or 6 suggests that you are in the *high external range*, while a score of 0 or 1 suggests that you are in the *high internal range*. Scores of 2, 3, and 4 suggest that you fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Source: From "External Control and Internal Control" by Julian B. Rotter in *Psychology Today*, June 1971. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Numerous studies indicate that people with an internal locus of control are more likely to be achievement-oriented than those with an external locus of control because they believe their behavior can result in positive outcomes (Findley & Cooper, 1983; Lachman & Weaver, 1998). True to these expectations, "internals" tend to be more successful in life than are "externals." Externals are less independent than internals, and they are also more likely to be depressed and stressed (Presson & Benassi, 1996).

People who believe external events control their lives often develop a feeling of helplessness. As discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.2g, Martin Seligman (1975) defined this *learned helplessness* as the passive resignation produced by repeated exposure to aversive events believed to be unavoidable. Because people develop the expectation that their behavior has no effect on the outcome of the situation, they simply give up trying to change the outcome, even when their actions might bring rewards.

Learned helplessness is an example of the operation of reciprocal determinism. After repeatedly failing to achieve a desired outcome, people develop a belief that they can do nothing to alter their current conditions, so they stop trying. Even when the world around them changes so that success becomes possible, they don't act on opportunities because they falsely believe that such action is futile. Learned helplessness explains why some people who have grown up in poverty don't take advantage of opportunities that, if pursued, could lead to economic rewards. Having developed the belief that they cannot change the cards they've been dealt, these people remain mired in poverty and often instill these pessimistic beliefs in their children. Social welfare programs that have been successful in helping people pull themselves out of poverty specifically attack learned helplessness (Wanberg et al., 1999).

## 12.5c Social Cognitive Psychologists Have Extensively Studied the Self.

In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, humanistic psychologists' attention to the self did not generate a great deal of research, but their self personality theories did help keep the concept alive in psychology during a time when behaviorism was the dominant perspective. Today, the self is one of the most popular areas of scientific study, and social-cognitive theorists are some of the more prominent researchers. As discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2d, *self-concept* is the “theory” that a person constructs about herself or himself through social interaction, whereas self-esteem is a person's evaluation of his or her self-concept. One topic that self researchers have explored is the degree to which our self-concepts are accurate reflections of our personalities. Is wishful thinking a common ingredient in most people's self-concepts? Is the need for accurate self-understanding stronger than the need for positive self-esteem?

### Do We Evaluate Ourselves Accurately?

When you receive a good grade on an exam, do you usually conclude that your success was caused by your intelligence, your hard work, or a combination of the two? What if you do poorly? Are you likely to blame your failure on the unreasonable demands of your professor or on pure bad luck? Overall, this tendency to take credit for success while denying blame for failure is known as the **self-serving bias** (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999). The most agreed-upon explanation for the self-serving bias is that it allows us to enhance and protect self-esteem. If we feel personally responsible for successes or positive events in our lives but do not feel blameworthy for failures or other negative events, our self-worth is likely to be bolstered.

Studies by Michael Ross and Anne Wilson (2002, 2003) indicate that we are motivated to evaluate our past selves in a way that makes us feel good about ourselves now. We accomplish this feat by perceiving our present selves as superior to our former selves, especially in characteristics that are important to our self-concepts (Wilson & Ross, 2001). Although you might think that negatively evaluating our past selves would lower our self-esteem, past selves are not as “real” to us as our present selves. Criticizing our past selves allows us to feel better about our current performance in relation to these important characteristics.

Wilson and Ross (2001) also found evidence that we tend to believe we are more superior to our peers at the present time than we were when we were younger. This is true regardless of age. Of course, it is possible that most people do learn from experience and get better with age, but it is not statistically possible for all of us to improve more than our peers! In fact, do we really improve noticeably over time? Apparently, not nearly as much as we would like to think. When Wilson and Ross studied people longitudinally, they found that although research participants perceived themselves as improving in a number of personal characteristics, there was actually no evidence of any such improvement. These findings suggest that wishful thinking is often an important ingredient in our self-concepts.

### Are Self-Enhancement Needs Stronger than Self-Verification Needs?

Over the years, there has been an ongoing debate regarding self-esteem and self-concept. *Self-enhancement* theories propose that people are primarily motivated to maintain high self-esteem, whereas *self-verification* theories assert that people are primarily motivated to maintain consistent beliefs about themselves, even when

**Self-serving bias** The tendency to bolster and defend self-esteem by taking credit for positive events while denying blame for negative events

*Of all the lives that I have lived, I would have to say that this one is my favorite. I am proud that I have developed into a kinder person than I ever thought I would be.*

—Mary Tyler Moore, U.S. actress, 1937–2017; quoted at age 60

these self-beliefs are negative. For people with high self-esteem, no conflict exists between these two motives because receiving positive evaluations from others verifies positive self-beliefs. However, for individuals with low self-esteem, these two motives often conflict. The need for self-enhancement causes people with low self-esteem to seek positive evaluations, but that action conflicts with their desire to verify existing negative self-beliefs. Self-enhancement theorists contend that people with low self-esteem seek out positive social evaluations to bolster their self-esteem. In contrast, self-verification theorists argue that this positive feedback creates the fear in low self-esteem people that they may not know themselves after all, and therefore they will reject it. Which of these perspectives is correct?

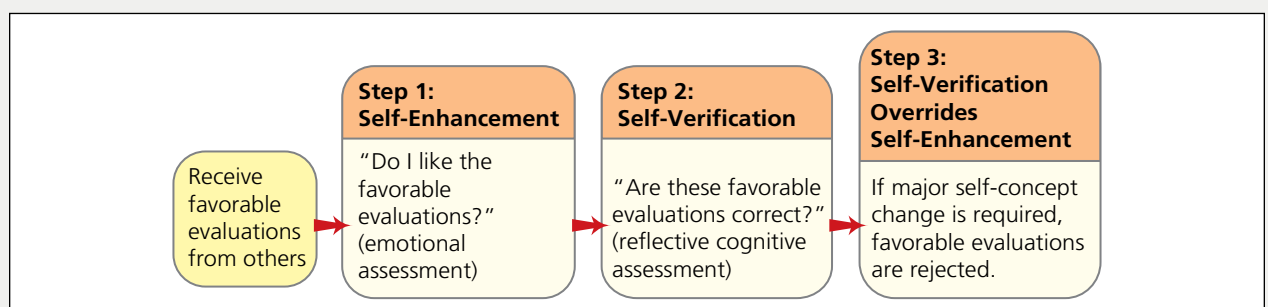
A number of studies suggest that when judging others' evaluations of us, our emotional reaction ("Do I like it?") is based on whether the evaluations bolster our self-esteem (self-enhancement need), whereas our cognitive reaction ("Is it correct?") is based on whether these evaluations are consistent with our self-concepts (self-verification need). Further, as depicted in Figure 12-4, self-enhancement appears to be the automatic and initially strongest response to favorable evaluations; self-verification, however, is the slower, more deliberate, and perhaps more lasting response (Baumeister, 1998; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). When people first receive favorable evaluations, they tend to automatically self-enhance; when they have time to critically analyze the feedback, they tend to self-verify. For example, if you have low self-esteem and someone says you are absolutely wonderful, your initial reaction may be to accept this positive feedback and thereby increase your self-esteem. However, after you engage in more complex cognitive analysis, you may realize that accepting this positive feedback will require a major reassessment of your self-concept, a task you may feel ill-equipped to accomplish. Faced with the possible upheaval caused by such a major self-reconstruction, you may abandon self-enhancement and instead seek self-verification. Therefore, you reject the feedback and retain your original self-concept. A meta-analysis of the findings from more than 100 studies that examined reactions to self-esteem threat found that self-verification is the strongest motive for both high and low self-esteem individuals (vanDellen et al., 2010). The strength of the self-verification motive is one reason why people's levels of self-esteem are remarkably stable over their lifespans (Kuster & Orth, 2013).

*Self-esteem and self-contempt have specific odors; they can be smelled.*

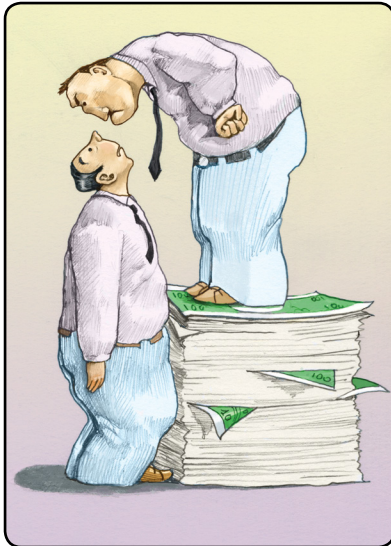
—Eric Hoffer, U.S. social philosopher, 1898–1983

#### FIGURE 12-4 How Do Low Self-Esteem People Typically Respond to Positive Evaluations?

What happens when people with low self-esteem receive positive feedback? Do they accept it and enhance their self-esteem, or do they reject it because it doesn't verify their self-concept? Research suggests that people follow a three-step process in resolving this conflict. In Step 1, the initial reaction is to self-enhance. However, with more time to think about the feedback (Step 2), self-verification dominates thinking. In Step 3, if accepting this positive feedback requires a major reassessment of their self-concept, people will reject the feedback. Why wouldn't people with high self-esteem have this same dilemma?



One final thing to understand when considering the importance of self-enhancement versus self-verification motives is that the studies that have been discussed were conducted in individualist cultures. The findings should not be generalized to collectivist cultures. Why? Steven Heine and Takeshi Hamamura (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of numerous cross-cultural studies involving more than 33,000 participants and found pronounced differences between people from collectivist and individualist cultures in their self-enhancement tendencies. While individualists show a clear self-enhancing tendency, collectivists do not appear to self-enhance. Thus, while self-verification may be a universal human motive, the self-enhancement motive appears to be shaped more by cultural factors.



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People with defensive high self-esteem can become angry and hostile when others criticize them.

### Is There a Dark Side to High Self-Esteem?

Thus far we have discussed the advantages of possessing high self-esteem, but it should be mentioned that there are two types of high self-esteem, one of which is more advantageous than the other. People with *secure high self-esteem* have positive self-evaluations that are confidently held without the need for regular reassurance from others in order to maintain them. In contrast, people with *defensive high self-esteem* have positive self-evaluations that are fragile and vulnerable to criticism. These individuals have internalized many negative self-evaluations in their implicit memory. This causes them to have considerable self-doubts that lurk just below the level of conscious awareness (Laws & Rivera, 2012). Because of this insecurity, defensive high self-esteem individuals need constant positive feedback from others to maintain their feelings of self-worth, and they often behave in a boastful and arrogant manner (Thomaes & Bushman, 2011). Further, when they receive criticism rather than praise, they often become angry and hostile (Kernis & Lakey, 2010). This is the dark side of high self-esteem.



### Journey of Discovery

If people with low self-esteem reject attempts to increase their feelings of self-worth when others lavishly praise them, what strategy might you employ to satisfy their self-enhancement needs without triggering their need for self-verification?

### 12.5d The Social Cognitive Perspective Has Difficulty Explaining Nonrational Behavior.

Traditional behavioral theories of personality that are based primarily on the operant conditioning principles of B. F. Skinner have been criticized for only assessing how environmental factors shape personality. To its credit, the social cognitive perspective has taken a much more complex view of human personality, while still testing its theories using the scientific method. In their reliance on carefully controlled studies, social cognitive theories have much more in common with the trait approach to personality than with the less scientifically based theories from the humanistic and psychoanalytic perspectives.

**TABLE 12-6** The Four Perspectives on Personality

Perspective	Explanation of Behavior	Evaluation
Psychoanalytic	Personality is set early in childhood and driven by unconscious and anxiety-ridden sexual impulses that we poorly understand.	A speculative, hard-to-test theory that has had an enormous cultural influence and a significant impact on psychology
Humanistic	Personality is based on conscious feelings about oneself and focused on our capacity for growth and change.	A perspective that revitalized attention to the self but often did not use rigorous scientific methods
Trait	Personality consists of a limited number of stable characteristics that people display over time and across situations.	A descriptive approach that sometimes underestimates the impact of situational factors on behavior
Social cognitive	Personality emerges from an ongoing mutual interaction among people's cognitions, their behavior, and their environment.	An interactionist approach that tends to underestimate the impact of emotions and unconscious motives on behavior

Social cognitive personality theories have also drawn praise for emphasizing the important role cognitions play in personality. They have quite rightly pointed out that our behavior is significantly shaped by our beliefs and expectations—those related to ourselves and those related to our environment. The social cognitive approach has also drawn praise because its scientific findings have generated useful applications in the real world concerning how to understand and help solve such problems as drug abuse, unemployment, academic underachievement, and teen pregnancy.

The social cognitive perspective's emphasis on cognition has placed it squarely in the mainstream of contemporary psychology, and it enjoys immense popularity among many psychologists. However, by emphasizing the cognitive side of human nature, the social cognitive perspective is best at explaining rational behavior that is "thought through." Like many cognitively oriented theories, it is less able to explain behavior that is spontaneous, irrational, and perhaps sparked by unconscious motives (Schacter & Badgaiyan, 2001). Table 12-6 provides a brief summary of the four personality perspectives we have discussed.

## REVIEW

- In the social cognitive perspective, personality represents the unique patterns of thinking and behavior that a person learns in the social world.
- According to the principle of reciprocal determinism, personality emerges from an ongoing mutual interaction between people's cognitions, their actions, and their environment.
- According to the concept of locus of control, by interacting with our surroundings, we develop beliefs about ourselves controlling, or being controlled by, our environment.
- The need for self-verification tends to override self-enhancement needs.
- Social cognitive theories are best at explaining rational behavior but less capable of explaining irrational behavior.

## 12.6 Measuring Personality



- ❖ What are projective tests supposed to reveal about personality?
- ❖ What is an objective personality test?

Two basic assumptions underlie the attempt to understand and describe personality. The first assumption, which we just examined, is that personal characteristics shape people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior. The second assumption, which we are about to examine, is that those characteristics can be measured in some manner (Briggs, 2005). We will consider two kinds of personality tests: *projective* and *objective*.

### 12.6a Projective Tests Indirectly Measure Inner Feelings, Motives, and Conflicts.

**Projective tests** Psychological tests that ask people to respond to ambiguous stimuli or situations in ways that will reveal their unconscious motives and desires

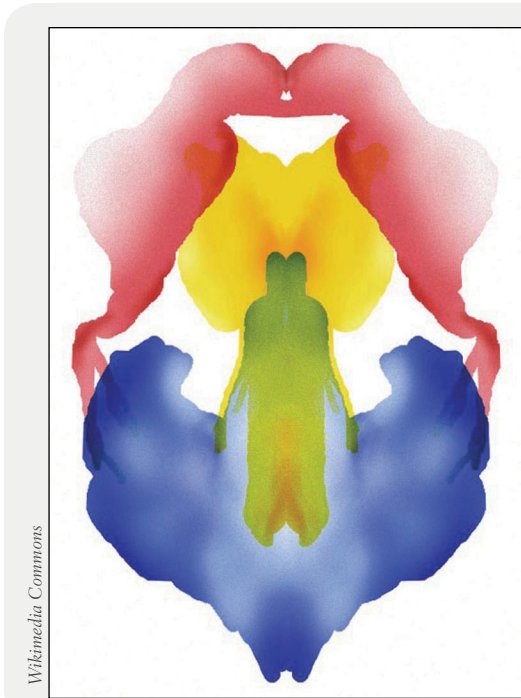
**Projective tests** are based on the assumption that if people are presented with an ambiguous stimulus or situation, the way they interpret the material will be a “projection” of their unconscious needs, motives, fantasies, conflicts, thoughts, and other hidden aspects of personality. In other words, when people describe what they see in ambiguous stimuli, their description will be like the image projected on the screen at the movies. In this analogy, the film in the movie projector represents the hidden personality aspects, and the responses to the test are the images seen on the screen. Projective tests are among the assessment devices most commonly used by psychotherapists in their clinical practices. The most popular projective tests are the *Rorschach Inkblot Test* and the *Thematic Apperception Test*.

#### The Rorschach Inkblot Test

**Rorschach Inkblot Test** A projective personality test in which people are shown 10 symmetrical inkblots and asked what each might be depicting

Have you ever played the “cloud game,” in which you and another person look at cloud formations and tell each other what the shapes look like? The **Rorschach Inkblot Test** has a format similar to that of the cloud game (Woods, 2008). Introduced in 1921 by the Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach (1884–1922), the test consists of 10 symmetrical inkblots. Five cards are black and white, and five are colored like the one in Figure 12-5. Originally designed to measure perceptual and cognitive distortions, the test quickly was employed by psychoanalytically oriented psychologists as a projective measure of motives and desires. Rorschach purposely varied the composition of his inkblots—some of them are essentially large blobs, while others are bits of ink all over the page (Mattlar, 2004).

People's responses to the Rorschach Test are scored on three major features: the *location*, or part of the card mentioned in the response; the *content* of the response; and which aspect, or *determinant*, of the card (its color or shading) prompted the response. Rorschach's original system of scoring was later revised, and by 1950, there were five separate systems for scoring and interpreting the inkblots, none of which exhibited good reliability or validity. In an attempt to correct these problems, James Exner integrated the five scoring systems into one system that decreased, but did not eliminate, reliability and validity concerns. One of the more serious validity problems with the Rorschach is that the current scoring system tends to misidentify mentally healthy people as having psychological problems (Daruna, 2004). Although most critics do not think the Rorschach is completely invalid, they believe more valid tests

**FIGURE 12-5****The Rorschach Test**

People taking the Rorschach Inkblot Test look at a series of inkblots and describe what they see. The assumption in this projective personality test is that the way people interpret the inkblots will be a “projection” of their unconscious mind. What is one of the more serious validity problems with the Rorschach Test?

are available that are also cheaper to administer, score, and interpret. Today, many users of the Rorschach administer it as a way to start a conversation with clients seeking therapy rather than as a way to measure personality.

### Thematic Apperception Test

Another widely used projective measure is the *Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)*, which was briefly described in Chapter 11, Section 11.4b. Administering this test involves showing a person a picture and asking him or her to tell a story about it (Ephraim, 2008). This process is repeated using several different pictures, each one depicting a person or people involved in an ambiguous situation. For example, in the TAT-like picture in Figure 12-6, who are these three people? What are their emotional states? Is this a picture of a daughter and parents, a student and teachers, or some other group? Is the girl in trouble, is she being tested, or is she being praised? The person telling the story about the TAT cards is instructed to describe what led up to the story, what the people in the story are thinking and feeling, and how the situation resolves or comes to an end.

When Henry Murray developed the TAT in 1937, he hypothesized that the issues people were struggling with in their own lives would be perceived as issues for the characters in the cards. Murray proposed that the storyteller could give the characters various needs, such as the need for nurturance or the need for achievement. There would also be an opposing pressure from the environment, such as the demand to conform or to provide nurturance to others. Murray further proposed that across the stories people told, certain themes would emerge related to important issues in their lives.

As discussed in Chapter 11, Section 11.4b, Murray and his colleagues were particularly interested in using the TAT to study the need for achievement (n-Ach). Over several decades of research, the TAT and other variations of the test have demonstrated adequate validity in measuring need for achievement, but the test-retest reliability is relatively low

FIGURE 12-6

**Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)**

This picture of two adults sitting in a room focusing their attention on a child is an illustration of a TAT-like image. What sort of story do you think this picture tells? Why is the TAT referred to as a projective test?



Harold Edward Bryant, Evening conversation, 1929, oil painting on canvas, 31.5 × 25.5 inches

(Cramer, 1999; Spangler, 1992). In addition, because the scenarios depicted in the TAT pictures were created for people in the U.S., assessing the motives of people from other cultures using the TAT is often not recommended (Hofer & Chasiotis, 2004). For these reasons, the TAT is not considered one of the better ways to measure personality. Today, as with the Rorschach, psychologists using the TAT in therapy frequently employ it to help start a conversation about a client's problems.

### 12.6b Objective Tests Ask Direct Questions about a Person's Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior.

Unlike projective tests, which are designed to trick the unconscious into revealing its contents, **objective tests** are primarily designed to assess consciously held thoughts, feelings, and behavior by asking direct, unambiguous questions. The questions can be directed toward friends and family members or toward people who have just met the person being assessed. When people evaluate themselves, the test is called a *self-report inventory*. This is the most common kind of objective personality test.

Like college exams, objective personality tests can be administered to a large group of people at the same time. Also similar to exams, objective tests usually ask true-false, multiple-choice, or open-ended questions. However, unlike exams in a college course, there is no one "correct" answer to a personality test question. Each respondent chooses the answer that best describes her or him. Many objective tests measure only one specific component of personality (for example, refer to the *Self-Monitoring Scale* in the end-of-chapter "Psychological Applications" section), whereas other objective tests assess several traits simultaneously.

One test that assesses several traits is the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)**, which is now the most extensively researched and widely used personality inventory (Butcher, 2005). The MMPI was developed in the 1940s to assess personality traits associated with psychological disorders. Since its development, the MMPI has been revised so its language and content better reflect contemporary concerns and a more culturally diverse population. The more recent second edition, the MMPI-2, has 567 items, with participants responding "True," "False," or "Cannot say." The MMPI is an *empirically derived test*, meaning the items were not selected for inclusion on a theoretical basis but were included only if they clearly distinguished one group of people from another (for example, patients with schizophrenia versus a normal comparison group). Each item had to demonstrate its usefulness by being answered differently by members of the two groups but similarly by members within each group.

**Objective tests** Personality tests that ask direct, unambiguous questions about a person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior

**Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)** An objective personality test consisting of true/false items that measure various personality dimensions and clinical conditions such as depression



The MMPI has 10 *clinical scales*, which are used to identify psychological difficulties or interests, so the groups used to choose the scale items were composed of people with different psychological problems or interests. For example, the items comprising the MMPI depression scale were those that depressed individuals endorsed more than did nondepressed people. The statement “Nothing in the newspaper interests me except the comics” is an item from the depression scale. People who score above a certain level on the depression scale are considered to have a problem with depression. Table 12-7 describes the 10 clinical scales of the MMPI-2.

The MMPI also contains four *validity scales*, which are item groups that detect suspicious response patterns indicating dishonesty, carelessness, defensiveness, or evasiveness (Schroeder et al., 2012). The interpretation of responses according to these four scales can help psychologists understand the attitudes a person has taken toward all the test items. For example, someone who responds “True” to items on the *Lie* scale such as “I like every person I have ever met” and “I never get angry” may be trying to favorably impress the test administrator; thus, this respondent may not be providing honest answers to the other test items. The four MMPI-2 validity scales are also described in Table 12-7.

The MMPI is easy to administer and score, and it has proven useful in identifying people who have psychological disorders (Bagby et al., 2005; Sellbom et al., 2012). Despite these advantages, it is often difficult to interpret MMPI scores when trying to diagnose *specific* disorders because people with different disorders score highly on a number of the same clinical scales. Critics also contend that the MMPI has not kept pace with recent advances in personality theory.

One of the most well-known objective personality tests is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), created in the 1940s by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers. Based on Carl Jung’s theory of personality (see Section 12.2e), the MBTI is widely used in many job fields and employment agencies to help people find careers that best fit their personalities (Wilde, 2011). The MBTI measures the degree to which respondents are introverted versus extroverted in their orientation toward the world, practical versus intuitive in dealing with their perceptions, analytical versus emotional in their judgments, and methodical versus spontaneous in their decision-making. When combined, these four classification preferences place a respondent into one of 16 *personality types* (Ross, 2011). Although the MBTI may be the most widely used personality measure in the world, questions remain regarding its accuracy, with some studies supporting and others questioning its validity.

Two more recent objective tests that represent the new wave of modern personality measures are the 243-item *Neuroticism Extraversion Openness Personality Inventory, Revised*, or NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and the 240-item *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths*, or VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Unlike the MMPI, the NEO-PI-R and the VIA-IS measure personality differences that are not problematic. The NEO-PI-R is based on the five-factor model, while the VIA-IS is based on positive psychology’s notion of character strengths being traits that are stable over time yet changeable due to life experiences. In cultures throughout the world, both the NEO-PI-R and the VIA-IS are widely used in research and clinical therapy; they both have validity and reliability (Gorostiaga et al., 2011; McCrae et al., 2011).

**TABLE 12-7** MMPI-2 Clinical and Validity Scales

Scales	Description
<i>Clinical Scales</i>	
Hypochondriasis	Abnormal concern with body functions and health concerns
Depression	Pessimism, feelings of hopelessness; slowing of action and thought
Hysteria	Unconscious use of mental or physical symptoms to avoid problems
Psychopathic deviation	Disregard for social customs; emotional shallowness
Masculinity/femininity	Interests culturally associated with a particular gender
Paranoia	Suspiciousness, delusions of grandeur or persecution
Psychasthenia	Obsessions, compulsions, fears, guilt, anxiety
Schizophrenia	Bizarre thoughts and perceptions, withdrawal, hallucinations, delusions
Hypomania	Emotional excitement, overactivity, impulsiveness
Social introversion	Shyness, insecurity, disinterest in others
<i>Validity Scales</i>	
Cannot say	Not answering many items indicates evasiveness.
Lie	Repeatedly providing socially desirable responses indicates a desire to create a favorable impression; lying to look good.
Frequency	Repeatedly providing answers rarely given by normal people may indicate an attempt to appear mentally disordered; faking to look mentally ill.
Correction	A pattern of failing to admit personal problems or shortcomings, indicating defensiveness or lack of self-insight

## REVIEW

- Projective testing assumes that if people are presented with ambiguous stimuli, their interpretation of it will be a “projection” of their unconscious needs and desires.
- The two most widely used projective tests are the Rorschach Inkblot Test and the Thematic Apperception Test.
- Objective testing involves assessing consciously held thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) are two of the oldest and most widely used objective personality tests.
- The NEO-PI-R is an objective test that measures five-factor model traits.
- The VIA-IS is an objective test that measures positive psychology’s notion of character strengths.

## 12.7 The Biological Basis of Personality



- ❖ *Does an extrovert’s brain operate differently from an introvert’s brain?*
- ❖ *Are people born shy?*
- ❖ *To what degree does personality consist of inherited traits?*

My oldest daughter, Amelia, can be a little absentminded at times, like her father, whereas my youngest daughter, Lillian, is very organized, like her mother. Both girls are generally good-natured, ambitious, and open to new experiences—traits they share with both parents. Did they inherit these traits from one or both of us? Or are they like one or both of us because we shaped their personalities while raising them? To what degrees do heredity and environment account for personality? Also, is there any evidence that personality traits are associated with the activation of different areas of the brain?

Identifying the biological basis of personality is a difficult task. For example, brain imaging studies have found evidence that individual differences in four of the five personality traits in the five-factor model—conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—are correlated with individual differences in the size of specific brain areas (DeYoung et al., 2010). Yet what do these results tell us? In examining the findings for the personality trait of conscientiousness, people who differ in conscientiousness tend to have different volumes in areas of the prefrontal cortex associated with planning and voluntary control of behavior. However, because this relationship is correlational, we don’t know whether this difference in brain volume is causing the difference in conscientiousness or vice-versa. It is also possible that some unknown third variable is causing the changes in both brain volume and in conscientiousness.

### 12.7a Personality Is Shaped by Nervous System Arousal and Specific Brain Activity.

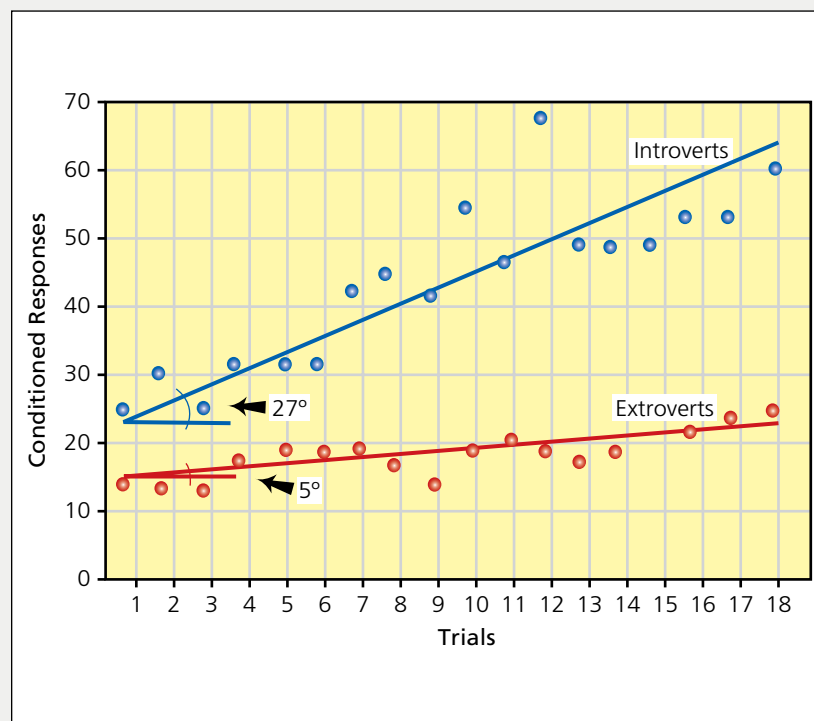
The most convincing evidence that individual differences in personality are caused by biological differences among people comes from a line of research first begun by Hans Eysenck (see Section 12.4b). In studying introverts and extroverts, Eysenck (1997) suggested that these differences in personality types are caused by inherited differences in people's nervous systems, especially their brains. As you recall from Chapter 11, Section 11.1d, the Yerkes-Dodson law informs us that we seek to achieve and maintain an optimum level of bodily arousal—not too much and not too little. Yet the amount of stimulation necessary to reach the optimal level of arousal for one person is often not the same amount of stimulation needed by another person. According to Eysenck, introverts have inherited a nervous system that operates at a high level of arousal and is very sensitive to stimulation. Therefore, introverts avoid a great deal of social interaction and situational change in order to keep their arousal from reaching uncomfortable levels. Extroverts have the opposite problem. Their nervous systems normally operate at a relatively low level of arousal and are much less sensitive to stimulation, and thus they seek out situations that stimulate them. Consistent with this idea of different levels of nervous system activation, researchers have found that introverted students prefer studying in quiet, socially isolated settings, whereas extroverted students prefer studying in relatively noisy settings where they can socialize with others (Campbell & Hawley, 1982). Additional studies indicate that not only do extroverts choose to perform tasks in noisy settings but they also perform *better* in such settings (Geen, 1984). Also consistent with Eysenck's arousal hypothesis are the findings that introverts are more sensitive to pain than are extroverts and that they salivate more when lemon juice is placed on their tongues than do extroverts.

FIGURE 12-7

#### Do Introverts Have Higher Levels of Arousal Than Extroverts?

To test the hypothesis that introverts have higher levels of nervous system arousal than extroverts, numerous studies have classically conditioned the eye-blink response in these two groups of people (Eysenck, 1967; Eysenck & Levey, 1972). Introverts show a much higher percentage of conditioned eye-blink responses to the conditioned stimulus than do extroverts. How do these findings support the hypothesis that introverts have nervous systems that operate at a higher level of arousal than those of extroverts?

Source: From H. J. Eysenck, *The Biological Basis of Personality*, 1967. Courtesy of Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Ltd., Springfield, Illinois.



Some of the more inventive studies that Eysenck and his colleagues conducted to test the hypothesis that introverts have higher levels of arousal than extroverts involved classically conditioning the eye-blink response, using puffs of air to the eye as the unconditioned response (see Chapter 7, Explore It Exercise 7.1). Eysenck reasoned that if introverts' nervous systems operate at a higher level of arousal than those of extroverts, introverts' eye-blinking should become conditioned faster than extroverts' to the conditioned stimulus (Eysenck, 1967; Eysenck & Levey, 1972). As you can see from Figure 12-7, his hypothesis was supported: Introverts exhibited a much higher percentage of conditioned eye-blink responses to the conditioned stimulus than did extroverts.

More recent studies employing brain imaging technology suggest that brain structures in the frontal lobes that inhibit behavior associated with danger or pain are more active among introverts than extroverts. Additional research has found evidence that extraversion may be related to greater activation of dopamine pathways in the brain associated with reward and positive affect (Fishman et al., 2011; Wacker et al., 2006). Further, when introverts and extroverts are shown positive images (for example, puppies, a happy couple, or sunsets), extroverts experience greater activation of brain areas that control emotion, such as the frontal cortex and the amygdala (Canli & Amin, 2002). Together, this research suggests that introversion and extraversion are associated with distinct patterns of brain activity, and that the experience of positive affect may be a primary feature of extraversion.

Another related personality characteristic associated with a hyperactive nervous system and different brain activity is shyness, which involves feelings of discomfort and inhibition during interpersonal situations. Although almost everybody feels shy at some point in their lives, about 40% of the population is excessively shy, which hinders them in making friends, developing romantic relationships, and pursuing other goals involving social interaction. When compared to nonshy people, shy individuals are much more self-focused and spend an excess amount of time worrying about how others are evaluating them. Some studies show that shy children and adults are more likely to have been "high-reactive" infants, meaning they were more sensitive to environmental stimuli and thus fussier than other infants (Woodward et al., 2001). Such reactivity is detectable even in the womb. Fetuses with fast heart rates are more likely to develop into shy children than are those with slow or normal heart rates.

Regarding brain activation, it appears that both the amygdala (which is involved in the emotion of fear) and the right frontal lobe (which is involved in controlling emotions) play a role in shyness. Brain scans of chronically shy adults indicate that when they are shown unfamiliar faces or when they are interacting with strangers, they experience much greater activation of the amygdala and the right frontal lobe than do nonshy people (McManis et al., 2002; Zhou et al., 2011). This different level of brain activation among shy people makes them more susceptible than others to experiencing anxious emotions.

### **12.7b Both Genetic and Environmental Factors Shape Personality.**

Many personality theorists have long assumed that genetic predispositions influence most aspects of personality (DiLalla & Gottesman, 2004; Rowe & Van den Oord, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 10, Section 10.4a, psychologists have conducted a great deal of research comparing twins reared together versus those reared apart to better understand genetic and environmental influences on intelligence. Many of these same studies have also examined personality traits. Overall, they have found that

when raised together, identical twins have more similar traits than do fraternal twins (Agrawal et al., 2004; McCrae, 1996). These findings indicate a moderate genetic influence on personality. However, this same research has found that the trait correlations for identical twins reared apart are considerably lower than for those reared together, which suggests that environment also influences trait development (Borkenau et al., 2001). Currently, the best estimates are that personality differences in the population are between 40% and 50% genetically determined, with the balance attributable to environment (Bouchard, 2004).

Although genetics plays an important role in shaping personality, *how* it does so is not clear (Beckwith & Alper, 2002). David Buss (1995) proposes that genes most likely influence personality through their impact on physical characteristics and general predispositions toward certain temperaments associated with activity, emotionality, and sociability. These physical characteristics and temperaments then interact with environmental factors to shape personality. For example, children who inherit a healthy body and high sociability and activity levels may actively seek opportunities to play with other children. Such interactions may foster the development of important social skills and the enjoyment of social activities, which are characteristic of extroverted personalities. Of course, this does not mean that genetic predispositions will actually lead to specific personality traits for a given person. For instance, even though shyness is an inherited trait, children and older adults can consciously overcome their social inhibitions and become remarkably skilled and outgoing in a wide variety of social settings (Rowe, 1997). Parents are especially important either in diminishing children's shyness or in maintaining it into adulthood. Thus, instead of genetics determining personality in some lockstep fashion, we appear to inherit the building blocks of personality from our parents. Then our interactions with our social environment create the personality that we develop (Johnson & Krueger, 2005; Vierikko et al., 2004).

## REVIEW

- Inherited differences can be seen in introverts' and extroverts' nervous systems, especially in their brains.
- Higher levels of nervous system activity and different levels of brain activation cause shy people to experience anxious emotions more frequently than do other people.
- Both genetic and environmental factors shape personality development.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL applications



### Do You Have a Chameleon-Like Personality?

When studying personality, we are examining how people are consistent across situations and how they are different from one another. What if I told you that personality researchers have identified a trait in which the defining characteristic is that people consistently behave inconsistently when interacting with others? Although this may sound strange to you, this trait is associated with a very normal self-presentation style that many of us exhibit. Before reading further, spend a few minutes responding to the items in Self-Discovery Questionnaire 12.2 to better understand your association with this trait.

*It is not whether you  
really cry. It's whether  
the audience thinks  
you are crying.*

—Ingrid Bergman, Swedish  
actress, 1915–1982

## SELF-DISCOVERY 12.2 Questionnaire



### Do You Closely Monitor Your Self-Presentations?

#### The Self-Monitoring Scale

The personality trait of self-monitoring is measured by items on the Self-Monitoring Scale (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1974). To discover your level of self-monitoring, read each item below and then indicate whether each statement is true or false for you.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6. I would probably make a good actor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7. In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8. In different situations and with different people, I often act like a very different persons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10. I'm not always the person I appear to be.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 11. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone or win his/her favor.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12. I have considered being an entertainer.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 14. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15. At a party I let others keep the jokes and stories going.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 16. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as well as I should.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 17. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 18. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.</p> |
|---|---|

**Directions for scoring:** Give yourself one point for answering "True" to each of the following items: 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 17, and 18. Also give yourself one point for answering "False" to each of the following items: 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Next, add up your total number of points for your self-monitoring score.

When Snyder (1974) developed the Self-Monitoring Scale, the mean score for North American college students was about 10 or 11. The higher your score above these values, the more of this personality trait you probably possess. The lower your score below these values, the less of this trait you probably possess.

Source: Snyder, M., and Gangestad, S. (1986). On the nature of self-monitoring: Matters of assessment, matters of validity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 125–139. Copyright © 1986 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

*continues*



### Do You Have a Chameleon-Like Personality? (Continued)

#### Self-Monitoring

In social relationships, we often try to manage the impression we make on others by carefully constructing and monitoring our self-presentations. Although we all monitor and adjust how we present ourselves to others, there is a personality difference in the degree to which we make such alterations. According to Mark Snyder (1987), these differences are related to a personality trait called **self-monitoring**, which is the tendency to use cues from other people's self-presentations in controlling our own self-presentations. Those of us high in self-monitoring spend considerable time learning about other people, and we tend to emphasize impression management in our social relationships (Peluchette et al., 2006).

**Self-monitoring** A personality trait involving the tendency to use cues from other people's self-presentations to control one's own self-presentations

In social settings, high self-monitoring people become much less physiologically aroused than low self-monitoring individuals, even while striving to project a positive self-image (Blakely et al., 2003; Hofmann, 2006). Due to their greater attention to social cues, high self-monitors are more skilled at both understanding and expressing the proper emotions in a social setting, and they often spontaneously mimic others' nonverbal behavior (Klein et al., 2004). For example, when trying to initiate a dating relationship, high self-monitoring men and women behave in a chameleon-like fashion, strategically and often deceptively changing their self-presentations in an attempt to appear more desirable (Rowatt et al., 1998). In contrast, low self-monitors are less attentive to situational cues, and their behavior is guided more by inner attitudes and beliefs. As a result, their behavior is more consistent across situations. Although it may appear to the casual observer that the low self-monitor has a stable personality and the high self-monitor has no identifiable personality at all, the high self-monitor's inconsistency across situations represents a stable personality trait.

Because of their greater attention to social cues, high self-monitors learn more quickly how to behave in new situations and are more likely to initiate conversations (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). On the negative side, people high in self-monitoring have less intimate and committed social relationships; they tend to judge people more on superficial characteristics, such as physical appearance and social activities, than on their attitudes and values (Evans & Clark, 2012; Jamieson et al., 1987).

#### Self-Monitoring on the Job

Because high self-monitors' actions are guided by what they think are the appropriate behaviors in a given situation, some psychologists have wondered how this might affect their search for a job and their performance in that job (Snyder & Copeland, 1989). What about low self-monitors? Because they are guided more by their inner feelings and beliefs than by social propriety, will they gravitate toward and perform better in different jobs than their more socially sensitive counterparts?

High self-monitors prefer jobs with clearly defined occupational roles, whereas low self-monitors prefer occupations that match their personalities so they can "be themselves" on the job (Snyder & Gangestad, 1982). Thus, if you are high in self-monitoring, you may be more willing than a person low in self-monitoring to mold and shape yourself to "fit" your chosen occupational role. You might find, for example, that occupations in the fields of law, politics, public relations, and the theater are particularly attractive to you. Or, considering yourself assertive, industrious, and a risk-taker, you may gravitate toward careers in business or other entrepreneurial professions. In these careers, you can use your social chameleon abilities to mimic others' social expectations. In contrast, if you are low in self-monitoring and consider yourself warm, compassionate, and caring, you may seek out social service or "helping" occupations such as medicine, psychology, or social work.

After choosing and securing a job, your level of self-monitoring may influence your work performance. High self-monitors' social skills make them well suited for jobs that require the ability to influence others, and they are more likely to become leaders than those low in self-monitoring (Douglas & Gardner, 2004). One category of job that appears particularly suited to the skills of the high self-monitor is a so-called boundary-spanning job, in which individuals must interact and communicate effectively with two or more parties who, because of their conflicting interests, often cannot deal directly with one another. Examples of boundary-spanning jobs are the mediator in a dispute between management and labor, a real estate agent who negotiates the transfer of property from seller to buyer, or a university administrator who deals with students, faculty, and alumni. In an examination of 93 field representatives whose jobs required boundary spanning, researchers found that high self-monitors performed better in these jobs than did low self-monitors (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982). These findings suggest that self-monitoring skills are particularly helpful in occupations that involve interacting with people who have conflicting interests and agendas. In such work settings, high self-monitors are less likely to allow their personal feelings to affect their social interaction—even though they are more willing than low self-monitors to use intimidation if they think it will be effective in securing their goals (Oh et al., 2014).



Being adept at reshaping self-presentation styles to overcome conflict on the job might be particularly useful for women who are breaking the corporate “glass ceiling” in many traditionally male-dominated occupations. For example, there is evidence that women who are business executives are less likely to experience sexist backlash on the job in a traditionally masculine gender role if they are high self-monitors. One study found that over an 8-year period following graduation with an MBA degree, high self-monitoring female executives received more job promotions than did comparable low self-monitoring female executives (O’Neill & O’Reilly, 2011). The greater effectiveness of these high self-monitoring women is likely due to them being more willing and capable of shaping their self-presentations on the job, so they overcome the underlying sexism of coworkers and thereby reduce resentment and resistance to them being in a position of power within the company.

In what type of job might you perform better if you are low in self-monitoring? The job performance of low self-monitors appears to be less influenced by their leaders’ behavior than that of high self-monitors, who are more sensitized to such external demands. In other words, the degree of effort that low self-monitors exert on the job is less dependent on their bosses’ expectations and more determined by their own intrinsic motivation. This suggests that if you are low in self-monitoring, you may be more effective when working in an unsupervised setting than a high self-monitor would be in that same setting—if you feel your work is important.

Now that you have learned about this particular personality trait, which end of the self-monitoring spectrum do you think is more desirable? Do you see high self-monitoring as more socially adaptive because it allows people to better negotiate in an ever-changing and complicated social world? Or do you think the chameleon-like nature of the high self-monitor suggests shallowness? Does the consistency of low self-monitoring individuals suggest “principled behavior” or “inflexibility”? The safest and perhaps wisest conclusion is that neither high nor low self-monitoring is necessarily undesirable unless it is carried to the extreme. Fortunately, pure high or low self-monitoring is rare; most of us fall somewhere on a continuum between these two extremes.

## Key Terms

Anal stage	561	Locus of control	584	Reciprocal determinism	583
Archetypes	565	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)	592	Regression	564
Character strengths	578	Objective test	592	Repression	562
Collective unconscious	565	Oral stage	560	Rorschach Inkblot Test	590
Conditional positive regard	568	Peak experiences	569	Self-efficacy	583
Conscious mind	558	Personality	555	Self-monitoring	600
Defense mechanism	562	Phallic stage	561	Self-serving bias	586
Displacement	563	Pleasure principle	559	Situationism	580
Ego	559	Preconscious mind	558	Social-cognitive perspective	583
Extrovert	566	Projection	564	Superego	559
Five-factor model	574	Projective tests	590	Trait	570
Fixation	560	Psychodynamic perspective	564	Trait perspective	570
Genital stage	562	Psychosexual stages	560	Unconditional positive regard	568
Id	559	Rationalization	563	Unconscious mind	558
Interactionism	582	Reaction formation	563	Values in Action (VIA) Classification	578
Introvert	566	Reality principle	559		
Latency stage	562				

## Suggested Websites

### Great Ideas in Personality

<http://www.personalityresearch.org/>

This website deals with scientific research programs in personality psychology. It provides information about personality research from a variety of perspectives, including some not covered in this chapter. It also contains a good selection of well-organized links to other personality websites.

### The Society for Personality Assessment

<http://www.personality.org/>

This Society for Personality Assessment website is intended primarily for professional use; it contains a section outlining the requirements for personality assessment credentials and telling how to go about becoming a personality psychologist.

### The American Psychoanalytic Association

<http://www.apsa.org/>

The website of the American Psychoanalytic Association is intended for both the general public and the professional psychoanalytic community. Information is given here about the current state of the psychoanalytic theoretical orientation.

### Humanistic Psychology

<http://www.apa.org/divisions/div32/>

This is the official website of the American Psychological Association's division of humanistic psychology. It provides information on upcoming APA events and information for students interested in this perspective.

### QueenDom.com Complete List of Tests

<http://www.queendom.com/tests/alltests.html>

This website has a number of online personality tests that you can take and receive feedback on.

## Review Questions

- The modern study of personality involves all except which one of the following?
  - studying how personality emerges from the interaction between the individual and his or her environment
  - approaches that are more limited and narrow than in the first half of the twentieth century
  - understanding how people may be generally predictable yet different from others
  - both philosophical and scientific roots
  - a focus on overarching and comprehensive descriptions of personality
- Freud is perhaps best known for the significance of his theory of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - glove anesthesia
  - the nervous system
  - the mind
  - biological urges
  - hypnosis

3. Regarding personality, Freud's structural model emphasized the different operating principles and goals that operated within which of the following subcomponents of the mind?
  - a. the collective unconscious and archetypes
  - b. the id, the ego, and the superego
  - c. the id, the pleasure principle, and archetypes
  - d. the ego, the reality principle, and the collective unconscious
  - e. the id, the superego, and reality
4. Among Freud's contributions was his theory of psychosexual stages, which included an emphasis on which of the following?
  - a. five fixed stages of development in childhood and adolescence
  - b. projection, which involves unresolved conflicts emerging from too little gratification of id desires
  - c. the Oedipus complex, in which children develop unconditional positive regard toward their same-sex parent
  - d. the oral stage, when unconscious sexual and aggressive impulses go dormant
  - e. personality development after the age of 5
5. What does the psychoanalytic theory of defense mechanisms, or ways we control anxiety-provoking thoughts and impulses, suggest about defense mechanisms?
  - a. They protect the id from unacceptable urges.
  - b. They represent permanent changes in the structure of the mind.
  - c. They allow us to understand our unconscious motivations.
  - d. They explain why we can become civilized.
  - e. They tend to be consistent, but not distinguishing, characteristics of personality.
6. An individual with a strong desire to perform immoral acts might exhibit extremely moralistic behavior and be harshly judgmental of others if he used which defense mechanism?
  - a. rationalization
  - b. reaction formation
  - c. displacement
  - d. projection
  - e. regression
7. What notion do all the alternative approaches to Freud's psychoanalysis have in common?
  - a. The collective unconscious is a fourth component of the mind's structure.
  - b. Social interaction is the basis for personality.
  - c. The mind can be understood only through carefully controlled scientific research.
  - d. The unconscious mind is less important than Freud claimed.
  - e. Sexual drives are not central in determining people's personalities.
8. In what way did the humanistic model of personality development primarily differ from the predominant views of psychoanalysis and behaviorism?
  - a. the discrepancy between Rogers's actual and feared self
  - b. its exclusive focus on the development of psychologically healthy and creative people
  - c. the belief that individual psychological growth is predetermined
  - d. its optimistic approach to the possibilities for positive human change
  - e. the scientific and testable hypotheses it generated
9. Which of the following is one criticism of the humanistic approach to personality?
  - a. its overreliance on the unconscious as a motivator of action
  - b. its specification of many personality types
  - c. its inability to acknowledge and explain negative and cruel behavior
  - d. its lack of attention to the importance of self
  - e. all of the above
10. The trait approach to personality is primarily focused on which of the following?
  - a. describing how people differ from one another in specific ways
  - b. Allport's view that behavior varies across situations
  - c. relatively new ideas concerning the classification of people according to personality types
  - d. direct measurement, rather than inference, of personality characteristics
  - e. describing why people differ from one another in specific ways

11. What is the statistical technique that can reduce large numbers of measured personality traits into a smaller number of clusters of related traits called?
  - a. a cluster test
  - b. factor analysis
  - c. personality reduction
  - d. relational grouping
  - e. trait clustering
12. Which of the following is a general consensus among personality researchers today regarding the basic personality traits?
  - a. They are biologically or genetically determined.
  - b. They capture the essence of individual personality.
  - c. They are a result of adaptive human evolution.
  - d. They vary across cultures.
  - e. They include openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.
13. In research on the Values in Action Classification of Strengths system, an Internet study of almost 118,000 adults from 54 countries found which of the following were three of the most commonly endorsed character strengths?
  - a. creativity, curiosity, and open-mindedness
  - b. forgiveness, humility, and modesty
  - c. kindness, integrity, and gratitude
  - d. bravery, persistence, and integrity
  - e. citizenship, fairness, and leadership
14. Which of the following is true of Mischel's controversial claim concerning the predictive ability of personality traits?
  - a. It was based on limited samples of behavior.
  - b. It was supported by Epstein's view that traits reliably predict behavior.
  - c. It led to the realization that situations do not play a role in shaping behavior.
  - d. It generated new research but did not increase the ability to predict behavior.
  - e. It indicated that children are reliably honest or dishonest across situations.
15. The social cognitive approach describes personality as primarily based on which of the following?
  - a. classical conditioning
  - b. operant conditioning
  - c. an individualist approach
  - d. observational learning
  - e. direct experience
16. Which of the following does Bandura's reciprocal determinism explain?
  - a. That the environment plays a more important role in behavior than does the individual.
  - b. That self-efficacy is stable and consistent across situations.
  - c. That personality emerges from an ongoing mutual interaction between people's cognitions, actions, and environment.
  - d. That individual perceptions are of little consequence in determining behavior.
  - e. That there is no relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem.
17. The concept of locus of control, originated by Rotter, is associated with all except which of the following?
  - a. a belief in one's ability to control the outcomes in one's life
  - b. learned helplessness
  - c. anger and acting-out behaviors
  - d. achievement orientation
  - e. success in life
18. Self-enhancement theories propose that people are primarily motivated to do which of the following?
  - a. maintain high self-esteem and feelings of self-worth
  - b. optimize personal growth and development
  - c. perform activities that make them a more attractive mate
  - d. educate and develop their mind
  - e. maintain consistent beliefs about themselves
19. What is the primary difference between projective and objective measures of personality?
  - a. Objective measures rely on ambiguous stimuli, whereas projective measures are more direct.
  - b. Projective tests assess unconscious aspects of personality, whereas objective tests assess conscious aspects of personality.
  - c. Objective tests are scored on the basis of a correct answer, but there are no correct answers on projective tests.
  - d. Projective tests are more reliable and valid than objective tests.
  - e. Objective tests are used primarily to start conversations about a client's problems.

20. Eysenck's research on extroverts and introverts suggests that differences of this personality dimension could be due to which of the following?
- brain wave patterns
  - sensory consciousness
  - nervous system arousal
  - parental discipline style
  - all of the above
21. According to the text, what area of the brain activates shyness?
- the amygdala
  - the hypothalamus
  - the thalamus
  - the cerebellum
  - the hippocampus