Theories of Personality

PSYCHOLOGY JOURNAL

Think of a person you have had a chance to observe in a variety of social settings. Write an entry in your journal describing that person's way of interacting with people. How do others respond to this person? How does this person influence others? How do they influence him or her? ■

PSYCHOLOGY Online

Chapter Overview
Visit the *Understanding Psychology* Web site at glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 14—Chapter Overviews** to preview the chapter.

Purposes of Personality Theories

Reader's Guide

■ Main Idea
Personality theories provide a way of organizing the many characteristics that people have.

■ Vocabulary
• personality

■ Objectives
• Describe the major purposes of personality theories.
• List the major schools of personality theory.

EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGY

It's in the Personality

Shelly and Deirdre both failed their semester examinations in psychology, but they reacted in very different ways. When Shelly saw her grade, she felt sick to her stomach and had to fight back tears. She rushed home, and shut herself up in her room to lie in bed, stare at the ceiling, and feel inadequate. Deirdre, on the other hand, was all bluster. She ran to the cafeteria to join her friends and make loud jokes about the stupid questions on the test.

—from *Understanding Psychology,* **Richard A. Kasschau, 1995**

W hy did Shelly and Deirdre act so differently in similar situations? There is something inside people that makes them think, feel, and act differently, and that something inside is what we mean by *personality*. When psychologists talk about aspects of personality, most agree that **personality** consists of the consistent, enduring, and unique characteristics of a person.

personality: the consistent, enduring, and unique characteristics of a person

PURPOSES OF THEORIES

The first purpose of personality theories is to provide a way of organizing the many characteristics you know about yourself and other people. You know people may be outgoing or shy, bossy or meek, quick-tempered or calm, witty or dull, fun-loving or gloomy, industrious or lazy. These words describe general ways of behaving that characterize an individual. Personality theorists try to determine whether certain traits go

together, why a person has some traits and not others, and why a person might exhibit different traits in different situations. There is a good deal of disagreement among theorists as to which traits are significant. Nevertheless, all theorists look to discover patterns in the ways people behave.

A second purpose of any personality theory is to explain the differences among individuals. In so doing, theorists probe beneath the surface. Some theorists might explain different behaviors in terms of motives. Others might try to find out how motives were established in the first place. Still other theorists might seek less obvious causes for individual differences, arguing, for example, that the roots of these differences could be traced back to childhood conflicts.

A third goal of personality theory is to explain how people conduct their lives. It is no accident that most personality theorists began as psychotherapists. In working with people who had difficulty coping with everyday problems, psychotherapists inevitably developed ideas about what it takes to live a relatively happy, untroubled life. Personality theorists try to explain why problems arise and why they are more difficult for some people to manage than for others.

In addition, the fourth purpose of personality theorists is to determine how life can be improved. It seems obvious that some people are dissatisfied with themselves, their parents, their husbands, wives, or children, or their home lives. People resign themselves to unrewarding jobs, and there is a widespread feeling that much is wrong with society and the world. Almost everyone recognizes that we need to grow and change, both individually and collectively. But what are the proper goals of growth and change? How can we cope with the inevitable conflicts of life?

Psychologists interested in personality attempt to answer these questions with systematic theories about human behavior. These theories are used to guide research. Research, in turn, can test how well a theory explains behavior. Thus, formal personality theories are attempts to make ideas about why people act in certain ways more scientific by stating them precisely and testing them systematically.

Reading Check
How might psychologists explain differences in personalities?

Figure 14.1 **Personality**

Psychologists who study personality explore whatever it is that makes one person think, feel, and act differently from another. *What are the purposes of personality theories?*

MAJOR SCHOOLS OF PERSONALITY THEORY

Psychology is a young discipline, and the development and testing of personality theories are still gaining sophistication. There are now many conflicting theories of personality, each with positive and negative aspects. Discussing both sides of various theories helps invigorate the discussion about personality.

In this chapter, we will describe major schools of thought among personality theorists. Psychoanalytic theories, developed by Sigmund Freud and his followers, emphasize the importance of motives hidden in the unconscious. B.F. Skinner and the behaviorists study the way rewards and punishments shape our actions. Social learning theories examine the impact of observational learning on personality. Cognitive

Figure 14.2 **Characteristics of Personality**

In psychology, personality refers to the essential characteristics of a person. Cathy Guisewite, a cartoonist, has given personality characteristics to an animal—a dog. *What factors do you think are influencing the personality of the dog in this cartoon?*


cathy®   by Cathy Guisewite
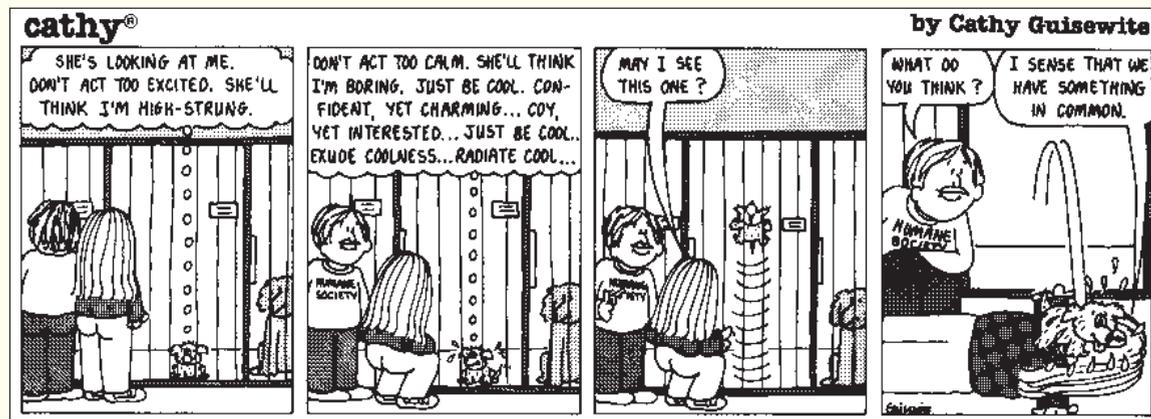
theorists focus on how our thoughts, perceptions, and feelings shape our personalities. Humanistic theorists, like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, stress one's potential for growth, such as creativity and spontaneity. Finally, trait theorists, like Gordon Allport and Hans Eysenck, emphasize the importance of understanding basic personality characteristics such as friendliness and aggression.

Each of the theories we will discuss has a different image of human nature. What they have in common is a concern with understanding the differences among people.

SECTION 1 Assessment

1. **Review the Vocabulary**   Write your own definition of *personality*. How does your definition compare to the textbook's definition?

2. **Visualize the Main Idea**   Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the purposes of personality theories.

   Purposes of Personality Theories

3. **Recall Information**   What are the major schools of personality, and how do they differ?

4. **Think Critically**   Do you think that you choose your own behaviors freely, or do you believe that your current behaviors are determined by previous behaviors and events? Explain.
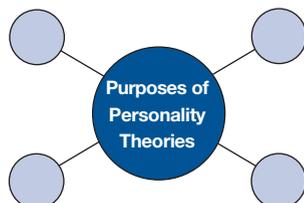
5. **Application Activity**   Work with a small group of students and take turns recalling some early memories. Jot down those memories, and discuss the following question: Do these early memories relate to your present personality?

Psychoanalytic Theories

Reader's Guide

■ Main Idea
Freud's psychoanalytic theory proposes that personality is made up of three components: the id, ego, and superego.

■ Vocabulary
- unconscious
- id
- ego
- superego
- defense mechanisms
- collective unconscious
- archetype
- inferiority complex

■ Objectives
- Explain Sigmund Freud's structural concepts of personality.
- Describe Carl Jung's theory of personality.

Exploring Psychology

Just a Slip

One of my colleagues was lecturing on the importance of regular health care. She said, "It is important to visit a veterinarian for regular checkups." According to Freud, mistakes like substituting *veterinarian* for *physician* are not accidental but rather "intentional" ways of expressing unconscious desires.

As it turns out, my colleague, who is in very good health, was having serious doubts about her relationship with a person who happened to be a veterinarian.

—**from** *Introduction to Psychology* **by Rod Plotnik, 2005**

Slips in speaking are common. People usually laugh at them, even if they are meaningful; sometimes, however, they are disturbing. Everyone has made a remark that hurt a friend and has later asked himself, "Why did I say that? I didn't mean it." Yet, when he thinks about it, he may realize that he was angry at his friend and wanted to get back at him.

SIGMUND FREUD AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

It was Sigmund Freud who first suggested that the little slips that people make, the things they mishear, and the odd misunderstandings they have are not really mistakes at all. Freud believed there was something

behind these mistakes, even though people claimed they were just accidental and quickly corrected themselves. Similarly, when he listened to people describe their dreams, he believed the dreams had some unconscious meaning, even though the people who dreamed them did not know what they meant.

Freud was a neurologist who practiced in Vienna in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Although he specialized in nervous disorders, many people talked to him about their private lives, conflicts, fears, and desires. He concluded that the most powerful influences on human personality are things outside our conscious awareness with no physiological basis.

Freud was the first modern psychologist to suggest that every personality has a large **unconscious,** or unaware, component. For Freud, experiences include feelings and thoughts as well as actual events. Freud believed that many of our experiences, particularly the painful episodes of childhood, are not forgotten but are stored in the unconscious. Although we may not consciously recall these experiences, they continue to influence our behavior. Freud believed that unconscious motives and the feelings people experience as children have an enormous impact on adult personality and behavior. Between the unconscious and the conscious is the *preconscious*—thoughts that can be recalled with relatively little effort. These thoughts consist of information just below the surface of awareness. Preconscious thoughts may include memories of recent events, recollections of friends, and simple facts–anything we can recall.

unconscious: the part of the mind that contains material of which we are unaware but that strongly influences conscious processes and behaviors

THE ID, EGO, AND SUPEREGO

Freud explained human personality by saying that it was a kind of energy system, like a steam engine or an electric dynamo. The energy in personality comes from two kinds of powerful instincts—the life instincts and the death instincts. Freud theorized that all of life moves toward death and that the desire for a final end shows up in human personality as destructiveness and aggression. It is important to remember, however, that *life* instincts were more important in Freud's theory and he saw them primarily as erotic or pleasure-seeking urges. By 1923, Freud had described what became known as the structural concepts of the personality: id, ego, and superego (see Figure 14.3). Freud introduced them as a model of how the mind works. In other words, the id, ego, and superego are not actual parts of the brain; instead, they explain how the mind functions and how the instinctual energies are organized and regulated.

In Freud's theory, the **id** is the reservoir or container of the instinctual and biological urges. At birth, all your energy is invested in the id, responding unconsciously to inborn instinctive urges for food and water. The id

id: the part of the unconscious personality that contains our needs, drives, instincts, and repressed material

Figure 14.3	Freud's Model

The ego tries to balance the demands of the id and the superego and the realities of the world. These interactions and conflicts are represented by arrows in the figure. *Which of these components is the source of guilt feelings?*
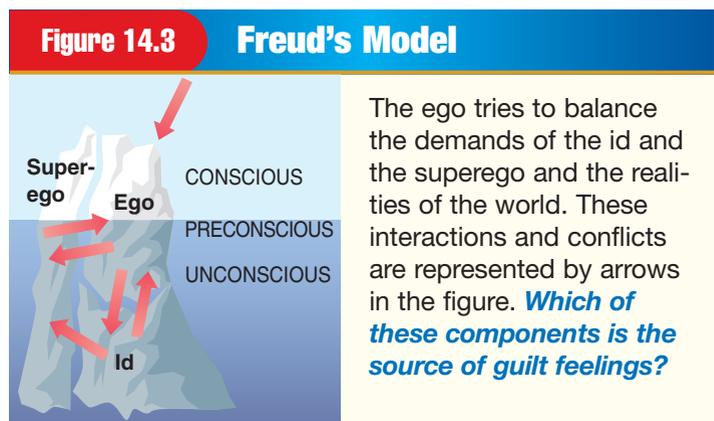
is the lustful, impulsive, fun, or drive-ridden part of the unconscious. The demand of Sesame Street's Cookie Monster—"Me want cookie!"—is pure id. It operates in terms of what Freud called the *pleasure principle,* seeking immediate gratification of desires, regardless of the consequences. Doing something that may hurt someone's feelings, lying, and having fun are examples of the id's influence.

The personality process that is mostly conscious is called the **ego.** Gradually forming during the second and third years of life and driven by psychic energy borrowed from the id, the ego is the rational, thoughtful personality process that operates in terms of Freud's *reality principle.* If, for example, a person is hungry, the id might drive her to seek immediate satisfaction by dreaming of food or by eating all the available food at once instead of keeping some of it for later. The ego would recognize that the body needs real food and that it will continue to need food. It would use the id's energy to urge preserving some of the food available now and looking for ways of finding more.

Suppose you thought of stealing the desired food from someone else. The **superego,** which represents the learning and incorporation of your primary caretaker's ideals, is the part of the personality that would stop you. The id represents what the person wants to do, the ego plans what she can do, and the superego advocates what she should do. It is the moral part of the personality, the source of conscience and of high ideals that can be said to operate in terms of a *moral principle.* The superego can also create conflicts and problems. It is sometimes overly harsh, like a very strict parent. Hence, it is the source of guilt feelings, which come from deviations from what it defines as right—better known as the conscience, or internalized values of the parents.

The id and the superego frequently come into conflict with each other. Because neither is concerned with reality, they may both come into conflict with the outside world as well. Freud saw the ego as the part of the person that must satisfy the demands of the id without offending the superego. If the id is not satisfied, the person feels an intolerable tension of longing or anger or desire. If the superego is not obeyed, the person feels guilty and inferior. If outside reality is ignored, the person suffers such outcomes as starvation or dislike by other people.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

The ego's job is so difficult that all people unconsciously resort to psychological defenses. Rather than face intense frustration, conflict, or feelings of unworthiness, people deceive themselves into believing nothing is wrong. If the demands of the id and the ego cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to distort reality. Freud called these techniques **defense mechanisms** because they defend the ego from experiencing anxiety about failing in its tasks (see Figure 14.5). Freud believed that these defense mechanisms stem from the unconscious part of the ego. They ordinarily become conscious to the individual only during a form of psychotherapy called psychoanalysis—and then only with great difficulty.

ego: the part of the personality that is in touch with reality and strives to meet the demands of the id and the superego in socially acceptable ways

superego: the part of the personality that is the source of conscience and counteracts the socially undesirable impulses of the id

defense mechanisms: certain specific means by which the ego unconsciously protects itself against unpleasant impulses or circumstances

To some degree, defense mechanisms are necessary for psychological well-being. They relieve intolerable confusion and stress, help people weather intense emotional crises, and give individuals time to work out problems they might not be able to solve if they allowed themselves to feel all the pressures at work within them. However, if a person resorts to defense mechanisms all of the time, he will avoid facing and solving his problems realistically. A few of the defense mechanisms Freud identified are discussed below.

Rationalization

If you explained your poor performance on your last math test by saying, "The test questions were bad; they didn't make sense," rather than admitting that you did not study for the test, you practiced *rationalization*. Rationalization involves making up acceptable excuses for behaviors that cause us to feel anxious.

Repression

When a person has painful memories and unacceptable thoughts and motives that cause the ego too much anxiety, she may push those thoughts or urges out of consciousness down into the unconscious. This process is called *repression*. The person simply pushes the disturbing thoughts and memories out of awareness without ever realizing it. For example, a grown woman whose father is meddling in her life may have the impulse to say, "I hate you, Dad." The woman may feel so anxious and afraid about having such an impulse that she unconsciously will come to believe that what she feels is not hatred. She replaces the feeling with apathy. She says, "I don't hate you. I have no special feelings at all about you." Nevertheless, the feelings of anger and hostility remain in the unconscious and may show themselves in cutting remarks, sarcastic jokes, slips of the tongue, or dreams.

Denial

You are in *denial* if you refuse to accept the reality of something that makes you anxious. For example, it is a stormy and frightening night, and the local television and radio announcers are advising citizens to take cover and observe the tornado warnings in effect. David does not believe that his town will get hit (he is in denial) and is severely injured after failing to heed the warnings.

Projection

Another way the ego avoids anxiety is to believe that impulses coming from within are really coming from other people. For example, a boy who is extremely jealous of his girlfriend but does not

Figure 14.4	Freudian Slip

Freudian slips are mistakes or slips of the tongue that we make in everyday speech. Freud believed that these slips reflect our unconscious thoughts or wishes. **What is the Freudian slip that this turkey makes?**


Why you should always stick to the script.

Figure 14.5 | **Defense Mechanisms**

Projection refers to a person seeing attributes of his own personality in others. Repression is shown by a woman who is not only restraining a monstrous impulse but also trying to conceal from herself that she is doing so. The displacement of a widow's love for her lost husband onto her pets is another defense mechanism. *In what ways are defense mechanisms helpful?*

Projection: a person believes that impulses really coming from within himself are coming from other people. (He is jealous of his girlfriend but claims that she's the one who is jealous.)

Displacement: a widow transfers her love for her late husband to her cats.
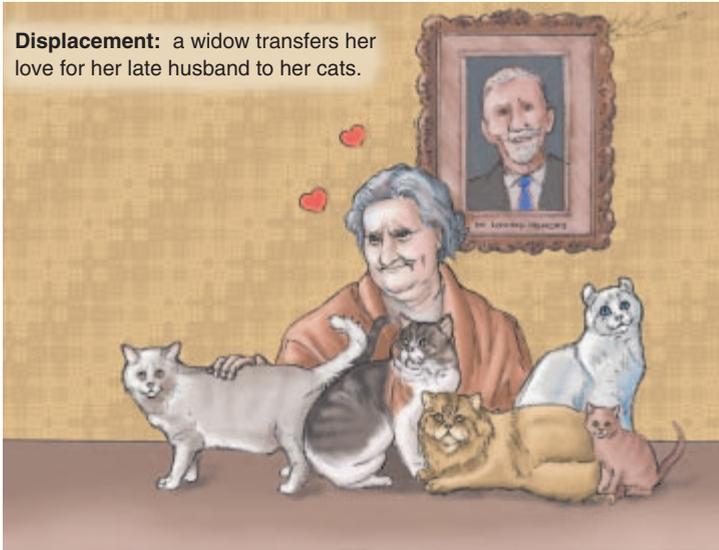
Repression: a person pushes painful memories or anxiety out of her consciousness; a person denies or forgets what is disturbing her.
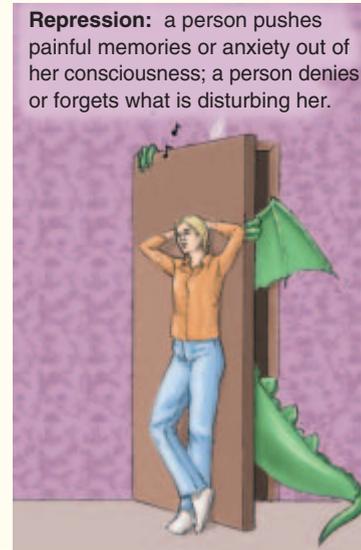
want to admit to himself that he is threatened by her independence may claim, "I'm not jealous—she's the one who's always asking where I've been, who that girl was I was talking to. She's the one who's jealous." This mechanism is called *projection* because inner feelings are thrown, or projected, outside the self and assigned to others. If a person thinks, for example, that others dislike him when in reality he dislikes himself, he is said to be projecting. This is a common mechanism, which you may have used yourself from time to time.

Reaction Formation

Reaction formation involves replacing an unacceptable feeling or urge with an opposite one. For example, a divorced father may resent having his child for the weekend. Unconsciously, he believes it is terribly wrong for a father to react that way, so he showers the child with expressions of love, toys, and exciting trips. A woman who finds her powerful ambitions unacceptable may play the role of a weak, helpless, passive female who

wants nothing more than to please the men in her life—unconsciously covering up her true feelings. Have you ever put on a front and acted strong and confident when you were really scared?

Regression

Regression means going back to an earlier and less mature pattern of behavior. When a person is under severe pressure, he may start acting in ways that helped him in the past. For example, he may throw a temper tantrum, make faces, cry loudly, or revert to eating and sleeping all the time the way he did as a small child. If you have ever been tempted to stick out your lower lip and pout when you know that you should really accept that you cannot have your own way, you have experienced regression.

Displacement

Displacement occurs when you cannot take out your anger on the source of your frustrations, so you displace it or take it out on a less powerful person. For example, if you wanted to hit your father but were afraid to, you might hit your little brother instead. Your poor brother gets slapped around partly because he reminds you of your father and partly because he is not as likely to hit back.

Sublimation

Sublimation refers to redirecting a forbidden desire into a socially acceptable desire. For example, you may be so frustrated by your friend's arrogant attitude that you work extra hard at soccer practice, pushing yourself to your physical limits. You have channeled your aggressive feelings into physical activities.

EVALUATING FREUD'S CONTRIBUTION

The recognition of the tremendous forces that exist in human personality and the difficulty of controlling and handling them were Freud's great contributions to understanding human life. After Freud, it became easier to understand why human life contains so much conflict. It is a matter, Freud thought, of a savage individual coming to terms with the rules of society. The id is the savage part, and the superego is the representative of society. In a healthy person, the ego (the "I") is strong enough to handle the struggle (Hall, 1954).

Freud was also the first psychologist to claim that infancy and childhood are critical times for forming a person's basic character structure. In his theory of psychosexual development, Freud reasoned that a child goes through five stages of development—oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. Conflicts arise in each of

More About...

Birth Order

Are you either the oldest child in the family or the youngest? Does this affect your personality? Frank Sulloway (1996) studied birth-order effects on personalities, coming up with the following characteristics:

• Firstborns are interested in preserving the status quo; later-borns are more open to new experiences and ideas.

• Firstborns are usually more responsible, achievement-oriented, and organized than those born later.

• Later-borns are usually more agreeable than firstborns.

• Firstborns are more jealous and fearful than later-borns.

• Firstborns have more assertive and dominant personalities but may not be as sociable as later-borns.

It is important to note that Sulloway's research focused on middle- to upper-class people in Western cultures and therefore may not apply to other cultures. Sulloway's research also is generalized, meaning it may not apply to every individual or every family.

the stages. Freud claimed that a child's personality largely developed in the first five years, during which the child went through the first three stages of development. That child's personality became the result of how the child dealt with the conflicts that arose in each stage of development. Freud believed that personality was well formed by the time the child entered school and that subsequent growth consisted of elaborating this basic structure. Freud was the first person to demonstrate how the personality develops in a person. (Review Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of Freud's stages of development.)

Freud was also the first person to propose a unified theory to understand and explain human behavior. No other theory has been more complete, complex, or controversial. Some psychologists treat Freud's writings as a sacred text. At the other extreme, many have accused Freud of being unscientific by proposing a theory too complex to be tested. Freud's theories continue to be debated. Although not widely practiced now, psychoanalysis was the predecessor of all later personality theories, which were either extensions of Freud's work or reactions against it.

IN FREUD'S FOOTSTEPS

Freud's revolutionary ideas attracted many followers who ultimately disagreed with him, and a number of these psychoanalysts developed important theories of their own.

Carl Jung

collective unconscious: the part of the mind that contains inherited instincts, urges, and memories common to all people

archetype: an inherited idea, based on the experiences of one's ancestors, which shapes one's perception of the world

At one time, Carl Jung (1875–1961) was Freud's closest associate. When Freud and Jung started to argue about psychoanalytic theory, though, their personal relationship became strained. They stopped speaking to each other entirely a mere seven years after they met.

Jung disagreed with Freud on two major points. First, he took a more positive view of human nature, believing that people try to develop their potential as well as handle their instinctual urges. Second, he distinguished between the personal unconscious, which was similar to Freud's idea of the unconscious, and the **collective unconscious,** which is a storehouse of instincts, urges, and memories of the entire human species throughout history. He called these inherited, universal ideas **archetypes.** The same archetypes are present in every person. They reflect the common experiences of humanity regarding mothers, fathers, nature, war, and so on (see Figure 14.7).

Jung went on to identify the archetypes by studying dreams and visions, paintings, poetry, folk stories, myths, and religions. He found that the same themes—the archetypes—appear again and again. He found that many cultures share certain myths, dreams, religious beliefs, and symbols separated by time. For example, the story of Jack and the Beanstalk is essentially the same as the story of

Figure 14.6   Carl Jung

Carl G. Jung was one of the most mystical and metaphysical of the pioneer theorists. *What is the collective unconscious?*

David and Goliath. Both tell how a small, weak, good person triumphs over a big, strong, bad person. Jung believed such stories are common and easy to understand because the situations they describe have occurred over and over again in human history and have been stored as archetypes in the unconscious of every human being (Jung, 1963). Jung argued that these archetypes influence our thoughts and feelings and help us build the foundation of our personalities. For example, one archetype is our sense of self. Our sense of self gives us direction and provides a sense of completeness. We use the concepts in our personal unconscious and collective unconscious to develop our personalities. We fit our personalities to these concepts. In the process of fitting our personalities to these beliefs, we may hide our real feelings and our real personalities, though.

Alfred Adler

Like Jung, Alfred Adler (1870–1937) was an associate of Freud who left his teacher in the early part of the twentieth century to develop his own approach to personality theory. Adler believed that the driving force in people's lives is a desire to overcome their feelings of inferiority. Classic examples are Demosthenes, who overcame a speech impediment by practicing speaking with pebbles in his mouth and became the greatest orator of ancient Greece; Napoleon, a short man who conquered Europe in the early 1800s; and Glenn Cunningham, an Olympic runner who, as a child, lost his toes in a fire and had to plead with doctors who wanted to amputate his legs because they thought he would never be able to use them again.

Everyone struggles with inferiority, said Adler. He describes a person who continually tries to compensate for his weakness and avoid feelings of inadequacy as having an **inferiority complex.** Children first feel inferior because they are so little and so dependent on adults. Gradually they learn to do the things that older people can do. The satisfaction that comes from such simple acts as walking or learning to use a spoon sets up a pattern of overcoming inadequacies, a pattern that persists throughout life. Adler called these patterns *lifestyles.*

Adler believed that the way parents treat their children influences the styles of life they choose. Overpampering, in which the parents attempt to satisfy the child's every whim, tends to produce a self-centered person who has little regard for others and who expects everyone else to do what he or she wants. On the other hand, the child who is neglected by his or her parents may seek revenge by becoming an angry, hostile person. Both the pampered and the neglected child tend to grow into adults who lack confidence in their ability to meet the demands of life. Ideally, said Adler, a child should learn self-reliance and courage from the father and generosity and a feeling for others from the mother (Adler, 1959). Adler believed that all humans are motivated by social urges and that each person is a social being with a unique personality.

Figure 14.7 **Archetypes**

According to Jung's theory, Superman can be considered an archetype of a hero and of goodness. *What are archetypes?*

inferiority complex: a pattern of avoiding feelings of inadequacy rather than trying to overcome their source

Figure 14.8 Finding Individual Fulfillment

According to Adler, each person creates a plan—a lifestyle—for achieving superiority. The lifestyle of this Buddhist monk differs from that of Bill Gates. Each may have a different path to fulfillment. *How does Adler's theory differ from Freud's?*

Other Theorists

Although Jung and Adler were the first figures to break with Freud, many others have followed. Erich Fromm's (1900–1980) theory centered around the need to belong and the loneliness that freedom can bring. Karen Horney (1885–1952) stressed the importance of basic anxiety, which a child feels because she is helpless, and basic hostility, a resentment of one's parents that generally accompanies this anxiety. She also disagreed with Freud on several basic beliefs. Horney believed that if a child is raised in an atmosphere of love and security, that child could avoid Freud's psychosexual parent-child conflict.

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) accepted Freud's basic theory, but he outlined eight psychosocial stages (described in Chapter 3) that every person goes through from birth to old age and that describe the importance of interacting with other people. These and other neo-Freudians have helped keep psychoanalytic theory alive and debated (Friman et al., 1993).

SECTION 2 Assessment

1. **Review the Vocabulary** Explain how the id, ego, and superego work together in a person.

2. **Visualize the Main Idea** Using a diagram similar to the one below, describe the basic views of personality of the following psychoanalysts: Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, and Sigmund Freud.

Psychoanalyst	Views of Personality

3. **Recall Information** What is the difference between personal unconscious and collective unconscious? How does the unconscious affect our personalities?

4. **Think Critically** What part of a personality—id, ego, or superego—do you think is the most important? Explain your answer.

5. **Application Activity** Create a cartoon that illustrates the use of one of the defense mechanisms discussed in this section.

Learning Theories

Reader's Guide

■ Main Idea
Behaviorists are interested in how aspects of personality are learned.

■ Vocabulary
- behaviorism
- contingencies of reinforcement

■ Objectives
- Describe Skinner's concept of personality.
- Explain Bandura's social cognitive theory of personality.

EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGY

Responding to Oppression

There is such a thing as the freedom of exhaustion. Some people are so worn down by the yoke of oppression that they give up. A few years ago in the slum areas of Atlanta, a Negro guitarist used to sing almost daily: "Been down so long that down don't bother me." This is the type of negative freedom and resignation that often engulfs the life of the oppressed.

But this is not the way out. To accept passively an unjust system is to cooperate with that system; thereby the oppressed become as evil as the oppressor. . . .

—**from** *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* **by Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963**

I n the excerpt above, Martin Luther King, Jr., described the behavior of some African Americans in the 1950s. King, a leader in the struggle for civil rights, observed this behavior and looked to the environment to see what was causing it. King recognized that an oppressive system maintained these behaviors. Like King, behaviorists look to the environment to see what is reinforcing behavior.

American psychology has long been dominated by the study of human and animal learning. John Watson believed that the proper subject matter of psychology ought to be observable behavior. He believed that if it could not be seen, then it could not be studied. His beliefs led to the study of behavior and what is called **behaviorism.** Behaviorists believe that as individuals differ in their learning experiences, they acquire different behaviors and, hence, different personalities.

behaviorism: belief that the proper subject matter of psychology is objectively observable behavior—and nothing else

Figure 14.9   B.F. Skinner's Box

Skinner devised a box to test the observable behavior of rats. *According to Skinner, what motivates behavior?*

"IF WE DIDN'T DO SO WELL IN THE EASY BOX, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN US THIS COMPLICATED BOX."

contingencies of reinforcement: the occurrence of rewards or punishments following particular behaviors

✓ *Reading Check*
How do behaviorists study personality?

B.F. SKINNER: BEHAVIORISM

Although his behaviorism was not proposed as a theory of personality, B.F. Skinner had a major impact on personality theory. Skinner saw no need for a general concept of personality structure. He focused instead on precisely what causes a person to act in a specific way. It is a very pragmatic approach, one that is less concerned with understanding behavior than with predicting it and controlling it. He was interested in how aspects of one's personality are learned. (See Chapter 9 for more discussion of behaviorism.)

Consider the case of Ruben, a college sophomore who has been rather depressed lately. Sigmund Freud would likely seek the roots of Ruben's unhappiness in events in his childhood. Skinner's approach is more direct. First, Skinner would reject the vague label *depressed*. Instead, he would ask exactly how Ruben behaves. The answer may be that Ruben spends most of the day in his room, cuts all his classes, rarely smiles or laughs, and makes little effort to talk to anyone.

Skinner would try to uncover the **contingencies of reinforcement.** What conditions are reinforcing these behaviors? What rewards does Ruben receive for never leaving his room? One hypothesis is that Ruben's girlfriend Brandi has unintentionally reinforced this behavior by spending a lot of time with him, trying to cheer him up. Perhaps she did not pay enough attention to Ruben before he was depressed. Note that Skinner's approach immediately suggests a hypothesis that can be proved true or false. If paying attention to Ruben encourages his depression, then ignoring him should decrease the likelihood of this behavior. Brandi, therefore, might try ignoring Ruben for a few days. If he then starts leaving his room, which she should reinforce, she has discovered the contingencies of reinforcement that govern Ruben's behavior. If he does not leave his room, she will know that the hypothesis is wrong, and she can try something else. Perhaps Ruben is glued to the television in his room all day and has become a game show addict. Take away the television, and you will find out whether that is the reinforcer.

At first, behaviorism may seem to imply that Ruben is somehow faking his depression so that he can watch game shows or see more of his girlfriend. Skinner does not make this assumption. Ruben may be entirely unaware of the rewards that are shaping his behavior. In any case, Ruben's feelings are beside the point. What matters is not what is going on inside Ruben's head but how he is behaving. The point is to specify his behavior and then find out what causes (reinforces) it.

Skinner's approach has become very popular among psychologists, partly because it is so action-oriented. Followers of Skinner's work have applied the techniques to a wide range of behaviors, from teaching pigeons to play table tennis to teaching severely mentally challenged people to dress themselves and take part in simple activities once believed beyond their abilities. Therapies have also been devised to help people with specific behavioral problems, such as phobias and obsessive-compulsive behavior.

Other human behavior, too, can be changed using rewards and punishments. The success of behaviorists with most people has been limited, however, partly because our reinforcers are so complex. To behaviorists, behavior in general is a combination of specific behaviors that have been reinforced, or learned. To change behavior, you change the reinforcer.

ALBERT BANDURA: SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Skinner emphasized reinforcement in his description of how personalities develop. Albert Bandura and his colleague Richard Walters (1963), however, argued that personality is acquired not only by direct reinforcement of behavior but also by observational learning, or imitation. As you remember from Chapter 9, in *observational learning* an individual acquires a new behavior by watching the actions of other people. For example, to teach a child how to hit a baseball with a bat, you could hand the child the bat and ball and reinforce him every time he used the bat and ball correctly. However, you would probably demonstrate the correct way to hold the bat and swing at the ball instead because this way the child would acquire the behavior more quickly. Bandura and Walters believed that much of a young child's individual behavior and personality is acquired by exposure to specific everyday models.

In Bandura's view, people direct their own behavior by their choice of models. In part, when your parents object to the company you keep, they are trying to change the models you use. The most effective models are those who are the most similar to and most admired by the observer. Thus, you are more likely to learn new behaviors from friends of your choosing than from friends your parents choose for you.

PSYCHOLOGY and You

What Is Your Locus of Control?

Julian Rotter wrote the first book describing the social cognitive approach to personality. Rotter argued that a person's behavior depends not only on objective, situational factors but also on that person's subjective beliefs. Our *locus of control* refers to our beliefs about how much control we have over certain situations. If you believe that you do have control over situations, you have an *internal* locus of control. If you think that your fate is determined by forces beyond your control, you have an *external* locus of control. People with an internal locus of control are, on average, less anxious and more content with life than those with an external locus of control.

To find a person's locus of control, a psychologist might ask the person if he believes the following:

1. In the long run, people get what they deserve.
2. Most tests are fair if a student is prepared.
3. Many times, tests are so unfair that studying is wasted energy.
4. It is better to make decisions and take action than to trust fate.

Figure 14.10 Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

According to Bandura's theory, a person's personality is shaped by an interaction among three forces—cognitive factors, behaviors, and environmental factors. *What are the cognitive factors?*

1. Cognitive-Personal Factors:
our beliefs, expectations, values, intentions, social roles, as well as our emotional makeup and biological and genetic influences

2. Behaviors:
our personal actions

3. Environmental Factors:
our social, political, and cultural influences and our personal learning experiences

Personality Development
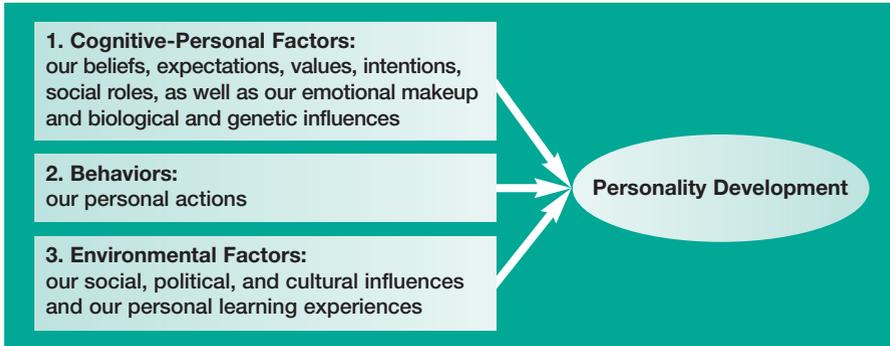
Bandura has made significant contributions to the development of behavioral theories of personality. His social cognitive theory (1986) recognizes the interaction called *reciprocal determinism* that occurs among the observing individual, the behavior of that individual, and the environment in which the behavior occurs (see Figure 14.10). One important concept that governs our behavior is our view of our ability to succeed, which Bandura called *self-efficacy*. You decide whether to go on a date by assessing the environment—the weather, your parents' current state of mind, your potential date's recent behaviors—the effects of your own past behavior, and your long-term past successes and failures. This leads to the development of an expectancy of success. As the behavior unfolds, you also develop *outcome expectations* (Bandura, 1997). As long as they remain positive, you will keep trying.

Whereas psychoanalytic theories emphasize the influence of childhood experiences, irrational thoughts, and unconscious forces, the advantage of learning theories of personality is that they focus on concrete actions that can be tested and measured. However, critics argue that the learning theories do not explain personality, nor do they give enough attention to the influence of genetic factors, emotions, and childhood experiences on personality.

SECTION 3 Assessment

1. **Review the Vocabulary** According to behaviorism, what is the proper subject matter of psychology? How does this relate to the study of personality?

2. **Visualize the Main Idea** Using a diagram similar to the one below, compare and contrast the following theories of behavior: behaviorism and social cognition.

Behaviorism / Similarities / Social Cognition

3. **Recall Information** Why do you think people have different personalities? How would behaviorists explain the differences?

4. **Think Critically** How would behaviorists and social learning theorists explain a person's persistence in becoming an accomplished tennis player?
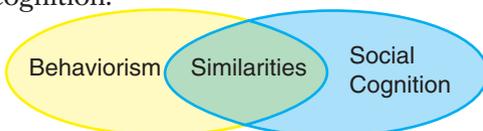
5. **Application Activity** Choose a behavior of a younger sibling or of a friend that you would like to see change. Suggest a way to do so, using reinforcers to change the particular behavior.

Humanistic and Cognitive Theories

Reader's Guide

■ Main Idea
Humanistic and cognitive theories of personality stress the positive aspects of human nature.

■ Vocabulary
- humanistic psychology
- self-actualization
- self
- positive regard
- conditions of worth
- unconditional positive regard
- fully functioning

■ Objectives
- Explain Maslow's idea of self-actualization.
- Describe Carl Rogers's view of human behavior.

EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGY

Changing a Nation

Jackie Robinson had to be bigger than life. He had to be bigger than the Brooklyn teammates who got up a petition to keep him off the ball club, bigger than the pitchers who threw at him or the base runners who dug their spikes into his shin, bigger than the bench jockeys who hollered for him to carry their bags and shine their shoes, bigger than the so-called fans who mocked him with mops on their heads and wrote him death threats. . . . Somehow, though, Jackie had the strength to suppress his instincts, to sacrifice his pride for his people's. It was an incredible act of selflessness that brought the races closer together than ever before and shaped the dreams of an entire generation.

—**from "Jackie Robinson" by Henry Aaron in** *TIME* **magazine, June 14, 1999**

I n 1947 life in America was one of segregation. There were separate schools for African Americans and whites, separate restaurants, separate hotels, separate drinking fountains, and even separate baseball leagues—that is, until Jackie Robinson began playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson played the game passionately and, despite colossal obstacles, changed the face of baseball. His experience shows the impact that believing in one's own abilities can have on personal success. The idea that individuals' perceptions of themselves can become their reality is part of the humanistic and cognitive theories of personality.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

humanistic psychology:
a school of psychology that emphasizes personal growth and the achievement of maximum potential by each unique individual

Humanistic psychology may be viewed as a rebellion against the rather negative, pessimistic view of human nature that dominated personality theory in the early 1900s. Psychoanalysts emphasized the struggle to control primitive, instinctual urges on the one hand and to come to terms with the demands of the superego, or conscience, on the other. The behaviorists, too, saw human behavior in mechanistic terms: our actions are shaped by rewards and punishments. Humanistic psychologists object to both approaches on the grounds that they demean human beings—Freud by emphasizing irrational and destructive instincts, Skinner by emphasizing only external causes of behavior. In contrast, the humanists stress our ability to create and live by personal standards and perceptions.

self-actualization: the humanist term for realizing one's unique potential

Humanistic psychology is founded on the belief that all human beings strive for **self-actualization**—that is, the realization of our potentialities as unique human beings. Self-actualization involves an openness to a wide range of experiences, an awareness of and respect for one's own and other people's uniqueness, accepting the responsibilities of freedom and commitment, a desire to become more and more authentic or true to oneself, and an ability to grow.

Figure 14.11 An American First

Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play in major league baseball and became a hero to millions. *How does Jackie Robinson's life reflect the humanist ideal of self-actualization?*

ABRAHAM MASLOW: GROWTH AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) became one of the guiding spirits of the humanistic movement in psychology. He deliberately set out to create what he called "a third force in psychology" as an alternative to psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Maslow tried to base his theory of personality on studies of healthy, creative, self-actualizing people who fully utilize their talents and potential rather than on studies of disturbed individuals.

When Maslow decided to study the most productive individuals he could find—in history as well as in his social and professional circles—he broke new ground. Psychotherapists developed the theories of personality discussed earlier after years of working with people who could not cope with everyday frustrations and conflicts. In contrast, Maslow was curious about people who not only coped with everyday problems effectively but who also created exceptional lives for themselves, people like Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Maslow found that although these people sometimes had great emotional difficulties, they adjusted in ways that allowed them to become

highly productive. Maslow also found that self-actualized individuals share a number of traits (see Figure 14.12). First, they perceive reality accurately, unlike most people who, because of prejudices and wishful thinking, perceive it rather inaccurately. Self-actualized people also accept themselves, other people, and their environments more readily than most people do. Without realizing it, most of us project our hopes and fears onto the world around us. We deny our own shortcomings and try to rationalize or change things we do not like about ourselves. Self-actualizing individuals accept themselves as they are.

Figure 14.12	Characteristics of Self-Actualized People

Maslow proposed the concept of a self-actualized personality, which identifies a person with high productivity and enjoyment of life. *Do you think any person can develop a self-actualized personality, regardless of his or her social or economic status? Explain.*

They are realistically oriented.

They accept themselves, other people, and the natural world for what they are.

They have a great deal of spontaneity.

They are problem-centered rather than self-centered.

They have an air of detachment and a need for privacy.

They are autonomous and independent.

Their appreciation of people and things is fresh rather than stereotyped.

Most of them have had profound mystical or spiritual experiences, although not necessarily religious in character.

They identify with humanity.

Their intimate relationships with a few specially loved people tend to be profound and deeply emotional rather than superficial.

Their values and attitudes are democratic.

They do not confuse means with ends.

Their sense of humor is philosophical rather than hostile.

They have a great fund of creativeness.

They resist conformity to the culture.

They transcend the environment rather than just coping with it.

Source: Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Because they are secure in themselves, self-actualized individuals are more problem-centered than self-centered. They are able to focus on tasks in a way that people concerned about maintaining and protecting their self-image cannot. They are more likely to base decisions on ethical principles rather than on calculations of the possible costs or benefits to themselves. They have a strong sense of identity with other human beings, and they have a strong sense of humor but laugh with people, not at them.

Maslow also found that self-actualized people are exceptionally spontaneous. They do not try to be anything other than themselves, and they know themselves well enough to maintain their integrity in the face of opposition, unpopularity, and rejection. They are autonomous. They value privacy and frequently seek out solitude. This is not to say that they are detached or aloof; rather than trying to be popular, they focus on deep, loving relationships with the few people to whom they are truly close.

Finally, the people Maslow studied had a rare ability to appreciate even the simplest things. They approached their lives with a sense of discovery that made each day a new day. They rarely felt bored or uninterested. Given to moments of intense joy and satisfaction, or peak experiences, they enjoyed life itself. Maslow believed this to be both a cause and an effect of their creativity and originality (Maslow, 1970).

Maslow believed that to become self-actualized, a person must first satisfy his or her basic, primary needs—for food and shelter, physical safety, love and belonging, and self-esteem. Of course, to some extent the ability to satisfy these needs is often beyond our control. Still, no amount of wealth, talent, or beauty can totally shield someone from frustration and disappointment. All people have to adjust to maintain themselves and to grow.

Many psychologists have criticized Maslow's work. His claim that human nature is good, for example, has been called an intrusion of subjective values into what should be a neutral science. The levels of specific needs, such as physical contact comfort, discussed in Chapter 12, have not been defined (Feist, 1985). His study of self-actualizing people has been criticized because the sample was chosen on the basis of Maslow's own subjective criteria. How can one identify self-actualized people without knowing the characteristics of such people? But then, if one knows these characteristics to begin with, what sense does it make to list them as if they were the results of an empirical study?

Figure 14.13 — Proclaiming Your Self-Worth

You can progress toward self-actualization after you have developed a sense of self-esteem, or self-worth. *What traits associated with Maslow's definition of a self-actualized person does Charlie Brown display?*

CARL ROGERS: SELF THEORY

Carl Rogers (1902–1987) called the people he counseled "clients," not "patients." The word *patient* implies illness, a negative label that Rogers rejected. As a therapist, Rogers was primarily concerned with the path to self-actualization, or "full functioning," as he called it. Rogers believed that many people suffer from a conflict between what they value in themselves and what they believe other people value in them. There are two sides or parts to every person. Rogers believed that each person is constantly struggling to become more and more complete and perfect. Anything that furthers this end is good—the person wants to become everything he or she can possibly be. Different people have different potentialities, but every person wants to realize these potentialities, to make them real, whatever they are. Whatever you can do, you want to do—and do as well as possible. This optimism about human nature is the essence of humanism.

Profiles In Psychology

Carl Rogers
1902–1987

"[T]he client knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been buried."

Carl Rogers is best known for his role in the development of counseling. Rogers believed that therapy should focus on present problems—psychologists should not dwell on the past and the causes of present problems. Rogers believed that people are basically good and can solve their own problems once they realize that they can.

Rogers started out by rejecting two principles. He first began studying to become a minister, but then he started to doubt that the religious approach was the most effective way of helping people. Then, while training to become a psychoanalyst, Rogers realized that psychoanalysts focused on gaining insight into the causes of a patient's problems. Rogers rejected this approach, finally creating his client-centered approach. Rogers used his approach to help clients better understand their subjective experiences and then work to change their own subjective views of themselves, the world, and other people.

Rogers was also a teacher. He advocated one-on-one approaches to teaching. He saw the role of the teacher as one who creates an environment for engagement; that is, the teacher inspires an exploratory atmosphere in which students seek answers to problems.

Each individual also has what Rogers called a **self.** The self is essentially your image of who you are and what you value—in yourself, in other people, in life in general. The self is something you acquire gradually over the years by observing how other people react to you. You want approval or **positive regard.** You ask yourself, "How does she see me?" If the answer is "She loves me. She likes what I am and what I do," then you begin to develop positive regard for yourself.

Yet often this does not happen. In other words, she places conditions on her love: *If* you do what she wants, she likes you. Young and impressionable, you accept these verdicts and incorporate **conditions of worth**

self: one's experience or image of oneself, developed through interaction with others

positive regard: viewing oneself in a favorable light due to supportive feedback received from interaction with others

conditions of worth: the conditions a person must meet in order to regard himself or herself positively

unconditional positive regard: the perception that individuals' significant others value them for what they are, which leads the individuals to grant themselves the same favorable opinion or view

fully functioning: an individual whose person and self coincide

More About...

Culture and Personality

As you read this chapter, you should realize that the personality theories presented here do not apply to all humans. The observations on which these theories are based center primarily on studies of people in North America and Western Europe. Those studied, then, represent only a minority of the humans on Earth. People in non-Western cultures may look at themselves differently. For instance, such a person may not view herself as a separate entity from her family or community. Concepts such as internal locus of control, self-efficacy, and optimism may have different meanings depending on one's culture. In one study of Asian Americans, for example, those who expressed pessimism about their abilities performed better at solving problems than those who expressed optimism (Chang, 1996). In studies of Caucasian Americans, just the opposite results occurred—an optimistic belief in one's abilities correlates positively with problem solving.

into yourself. You begin to see yourself as good and worthy only if you act in certain ways. You have learned from your parents and from other people who are significant to you that unless you meet certain conditions, you will not be loved.

Rogers's work as a therapist convinced him that people cope with conditions of worth by rejecting or denying parts of their person that do not fit their self-concept. For example, if your mother grew cold and distant whenever you became angry, you learned to deny yourself the right to express or perhaps even feel anger. In effect, you are cutting off a part of your whole being; you are allowing yourself to experience and express only part of what you are.

The greater the gap between the self and the person, the more limited and defensive a person becomes. Rogers believed the cure for this situation—and the way to prevent it from ever developing—is **unconditional positive regard.** If significant others (parents, friends, a mate) convey the feeling that they value you for what you are in your entirety, you will gradually learn to grant yourself the same unconditional positive regard. The need to limit yourself declines or never develops in the first place. You will be able to accept your person and become open to *all* your feelings, thoughts, and experiences—and hence to other people. This is what Rogers meant by **fully functioning.** The person and the self are one. The individual is free to develop all of his or her potentialities. Like Maslow and other humanistic psychologists, Rogers believed that self-regard and regard for others go together and that the human potential for good and self-fulfillment outweighs the potential for evil and despair (Rogers, 1951, 1961, 1980).

Humanistic approaches to personality emphasize that life is a conscious experience—that is, we freely choose how we spend our lives. Our conscious experience, though, is private and subjective. Critics argue that the humanistic theories cannot be tested. These theories describe behavior rather than explain it. Humanists themselves argue that each individual is unique, and therefore their theories cannot predict behavior.

COGNITIVE THEORY

Cognitive theory is based on analysis of our own perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. George Kelly (1905–1967) based his *personal construct theory* on an analysis of our perception of ourselves and our environment. In Kelly's view, our personality consists of our thoughts about ourselves, including our biases, errors, mistakes, and false conclusions.

Kelly's fundamental idea is that our "processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which (each of us) anticipates events" (Kelly, 1958). He thought

these processes were channeled because our response options are limited by the organization of the network of our potential responses. Our individuality comes from the unique manner in which we organize our personal constructs–our schemas–our mental representations of people, events, and concepts.

Expanding on Kelly's work, psychiatrist Aaron T. Beck (1921-) noted his clients' tendency to think negatively–anticipating the worst–and maintain irrational thought processes. Beck developed a theory that would concentrate on turning negative thoughts into constructive ones by challenging clients' fundamentally flawed thought processes. Beck's intent was to help the client develop ways to explain his or her problems as related to the environment rather than automatically assuming they were personality flaws. Finally, a rational analysis would be conducted to develop new, different strategies for the experiences that previously had yielded negative conclusions from flawed thinking (Beck & Rush, 1989; Beck, 1995).

Some aspects of cognitive theory are moving closer to traditional behavioral theories of personality. However, the modern cognitive theories, in contrast to behavioral theory, maintain a more positive, optimistic view of our personality.

Figure 14.14 I'm OK—You're OK

Rogers proposed that people should relate to one another with unconditional positive regard. *What is unconditional positive regard?*
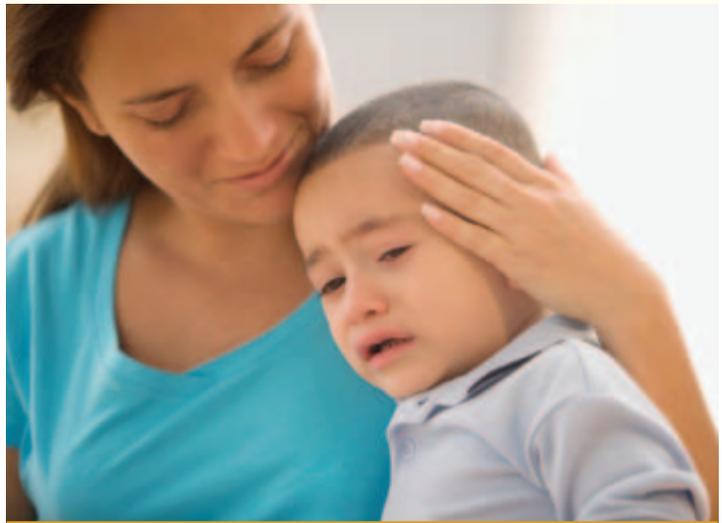
SECTION 4 Assessment

1. **Review the Vocabulary** What is self-actualization? How does one achieve it?

2. **Visualize the Main Idea** Using a diagram similar to the one below, illustrate the steps an individual needs to take to be fully functioning, according to Rogers's theory.

3. **Recall Information** How do conditions of worth influence your personality, according to Rogers?

4. **Think Critically** Do you think unconditional positive regard is important for healthy personality development? Why or why not?
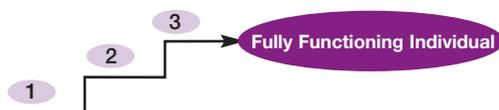
5. **Application Activity** Think of a close friend, family member, or one of your heroes. Using the information in Figure 14.12, evaluate which traits of self-actualized individuals he or she shares.

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        3
    2          ⟶  Fully Functioning Individual
1
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Trait Theories

Reader's Guide

■ Main Idea
Trait theorists believe that character traits account for consistency of behavior in different situations.

■ Vocabulary
- trait
- cardinal trait
- factor analysis
- surface trait
- source trait
- extravert
- introvert

■ Objectives
- Explain the main features of trait personality.
- Describe Allport's, Cattell's, and Eysenck's theories of personality.

EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGY

Characteristics of Personality

"Tell me about Nelson," said Johnetta.

"Oh, he's just terrific. He's the friendliest guy I know—goes out of his way to be nice to everyone. He hardly ever gets mad. He's just so even-tempered, no matter what's happening. And he's really smart, too. About the only thing I don't like is that he's always in such a hurry to get things done. He seems to have boundless energy, much more than I have."

"He sounds great to me, especially in comparison to Rico," replied Johnetta. "He is so self-centered and arrogant it drives me crazy. I sometimes wonder why I ever started going out with him."

—from *Understanding Psychology* **by Robert S. Feldman, 2005**

trait: a tendency to react to a situation in a way that remains stable over time

Terms such as *nice, smart,* and *arrogant* refer to personality traits. Some theorists have argued that studying such traits in detail is the best approach to solving the puzzle of human behavior.

A **trait** is "any relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from another" (Guilford, 1959). A trait, then, is a predisposition to respond in a certain way in many different kinds of situations—in a dentist's office, at a party, or in a classroom. More than any other personality theorists, trait theorists emphasize and try to explain the consistency of a normal, healthy individual's behavior in different situations.

WHAT IS THE TRAIT THEORY OF PERSONALITY?

Trait theorists generally make two basic assumptions about these underlying sources of consistency. First, every trait applies to all people. For example, everyone can be classified as more or less dependent. Second, these descriptions can be quantified. We might, for example, establish a scale on which an extremely independent person scores 1, while a very dependent person scores 10.

Thus, every trait can be used to describe people. Aggressiveness, for example, is measured on a continuum; a few people are extremely aggressive or extremely unaggressive, and most of us fall somewhere in the middle. We understand people by specifying their traits, and we use traits to predict people's future behavior.

Trait theorists go beyond this kind of common-sense analysis, however, to try to discover the underlying sources of the consistency of human behavior. What is the best way to describe the common features of someone's behavior? Is he friendly, or socially aggressive, or interested in people, or self-confident, or something else? What underlying trait best explains his behavior?

Most (but not all) trait theorists believe that a few basic traits are central for all people. An underlying trait of self-confidence, for example, might be used to explain more superficial characteristics like social aggressiveness and dependency. If this were true, it would mean that a person would be dependent because he or she lacked self-confidence. Psychologists who accept this approach set out on their theoretical search for basic traits with very few assumptions.

This is very different from the starting point of other personality theorists we have considered. Freud, for example, began with a well-defined theory of instincts. When he observed that some people were stingy, he set out to explain this in terms of his theory. Trait theorists would not start by trying to understand stinginess. Rather, they would try to determine whether stinginess was a trait. That is, they would try to find out whether people who were stingy in one type of situation were also stingy in others. Then they might ask whether stinginess is a sign of a more basic trait like possessiveness: Is the stingy person also very possessive in relationships? Thus, the first and foremost question for the trait theorists is, "What behaviors go together?"

"That's Mr. Brock. He didn't have a happy New Year, a happy Valentine's Day, a happy St. Patrick's Day, a happy Easter, a happy Father's Day, a happy Halloween, a happy Thanksgiving, or a merry Christmas. He <u>did</u> have, however, a safe and sane Fourth of July."

Figure 14.15 | Personality Traits

This cartoon highlights personality traits. Often we describe a person's personality in terms of traits. *Which personality traits does this cartoon emphasize?*

Reading Check
How does trait theory differ from psychoanalytic theories of personality?

GORDON ALLPORT: IDENTIFYING TRAITS

Gordon W. Allport (1897–1967) was an influential psychologist in his day. A trait, Allport said, makes a wide variety of situations "functionally equivalent"; that is, a person's traits will be consistent in different situations. Allport, along with H.S. Odbert, probed an English dictionary, searching for words that described personality traits. They found almost 18,000 such words. They then narrowed the list by grouping synonyms and keeping just one word for each cluster of synonyms. Assuming any important personality trait is reflected in language, if Allport's team found words such as *honesty* and *dishonesty,* each was assigned to a separate cluster with similar contrasting words. Allport defined common traits as those that apply to everyone and individual traits as those that apply more to a specific person.

cardinal trait: a characteristic or feature that is so pervasive the person is almost identified with it

Allport described three kinds of individual traits. A **cardinal trait** is one that is so pervasive that the person is almost identified with that trait. An example would be Scrooge, who is identified as stingy and cold-hearted in Charles Dickens's tale *A Christmas Carol.* A *central trait* makes us predictable (she's assertive; he's a flirt) in most situations. *Secondary traits,* such as our preferences in food and music, are least important to Allport and have a less consistent influence on us.

An example of an individual trait is found in Allport's book *letters from Jenny* (1965), which consists of hundreds of letters that a woman whom Allport calls Jenny Masterson wrote to a friend (see *Readings in Psychology,* p. 408). Jenny reveals herself in these letters, which she wrote between the ages of 58 and 70, as a complex and fiercely independent woman. In his preface to the book, Allport wrote:

> [The] fascination of the Letters lies in their challenge to the reader (whether psychologist or layman) to "explain" Jenny—if he can. Why does an intelligent lady behave so persistently in a self-defeating manner?

Allport's own attempt to understand Jenny began with a search for the underlying traits that would explain the consistency of her behavior.

Figure 14.16 — Cattell's Sixteen Source Traits

Cattell used his sixteen source traits to develop a personality questionnaire, which was used to measure the traits in an individual. Each trait is listed as a pair of opposites on a continuum. *What did Cattell believe measuring the source traits could predict?*

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

RAYMOND CATTELL: SIXTEEN TRAIT THEORY

More recent theorists have concentrated on what Allport called *common traits,* which they try to quantify in a precise, scientific manner. Their primary tool in this task has been **factor analysis,** a sophisticated mathematical technique that describes the extent to which different personality variables are related.

Using Allport's list of traits, Raymond Cattell (1905–1998) proposed that characteristics that can be observed in certain situations make up 46 traits, called **surface traits,** of observable behavior. These traits make up behavior that is based on people's perceptions of personality. Using further factor analyses, Cattell found that certain surface traits seem to occur in clusters. Cattell further researched what these clusters had in common. This analysis resulted in 16 **source traits**—traits that he considered to be at the core of personality (see Figure 14.16). Cattell believed that by measuring these traits, psychologists could predict people's behavior in certain situations.

HANS EYSENCK: DIMENSIONS OF PERSONALITY

Using factor analysis of personality data, Hans Eysenck (1916–), an English psychologist, concluded that there are two basic dimensions of personality (see Figure 14.17). The first dimension, *stability versus instability,* refers to the degree to which people have control over their feelings. At the emotionally stable end of the personality spectrum is a person who is easygoing, relaxed, well-adjusted, and even-tempered. At the anxiety-dominated end of the spectrum is the moody, anxious, and restless person.

Eysenck's second dimension was actually identified years earlier by Carl Jung as *extraversion versus introversion.* **Extraverts** are sociable, outgoing, active, lively people. They enjoy parties and seek excitement. On the other end of the dimension are **introverts,** who are more thoughtful, reserved, passive, unsociable, and quiet.

Years after he identified the first two dimensions, Eysenck added a third, *psychoticism.* At one end of this dimension are self-centered, hostile, and aggressive people, who act without much thought. Individuals at the other end of this dimension have what Freud might label high superego. They tend to be socially sensitive, high on caring and empathy, and easy people with whom to work (Eysenck, 1970, 1990).

THE ROBUST FIVE

Over the years, trait theorists have devised a number of ways to measure personality. Each involves a different number of traits or factors. Trait psychologists have shown that five traits appear repeatedly in
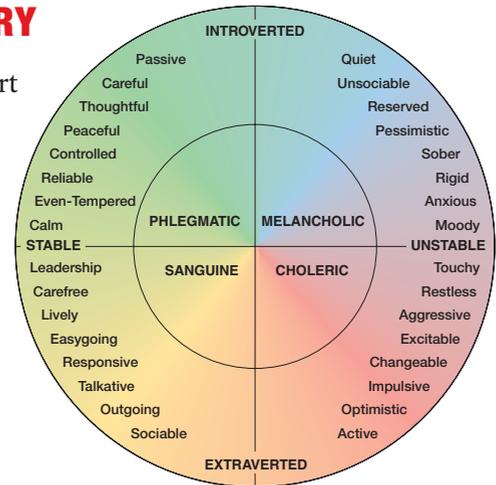

Figure 14.17   **Eysenck's Personality Table**

Eysenck hypothesized that introverted people share a number of traits, while extraverted people share the opposite traits. Eysenck's theory is similar to Galen's ancient theory for four temperaments (see the Case Study on page 23). *What traits would an extraverted and stable (sanguine) person exhibit?*

factor analysis: a complex statistical technique used to identify the underlying reasons variables are correlated

surface trait: a stable characteristic that can be observed in certain situations

source trait: a stable characteristic that can be considered to be at the core of personality

extravert: an outgoing, active person who directs his or her energies and interests toward other people and things

introvert: a reserved, withdrawn person who is preoccupied with his or her inner thoughts and feelings

Do we see ourselves as others see us?

Some personality theorists talk about extraversion versus introversion as being a basic part of personality. Do people exhibit these traits in all situations? Are these traits easily identified?

Procedure
1. Choose five people (family members, friends, or acquaintances) and observe their behavior in several situations.
2. Record your observations by classifying each person as extraverted, introverted, or a combination of both.
3. Ask the five people whether they would consider themselves extraverted or introverted, and then record their responses.

Analysis
1. What do your results tell you about extraversion and introversion as personality traits? Are people extraverted or introverted in all situations all the time?
2. What do your results tell you about people's own perceptions of their personality versus the perceptions of others? What might account for any differences?

See the Skills Handbook, page 622, for an explanation of designing an experiment.

different research studies. Often called the "five robust factors," or "the big five," they are:

- *Extraversion,* which is associated with warmth, talkativeness, and being energetic. The opposite of this dimension is introversion, meaning being quiet or reserved.
- *Agreeableness,* which involves being sympathetic to others, kind, and trusting; the opposite is cruel and nontrusting.
- *Conscientiousness,* which identifies individuals who are dutiful, dedicated to completing tasks, organized, and responsible.
- *Openness to experience,* which describes people who are open-minded and willing to try intellectual experiences, new ideas, or creative experiences.
- *Emotional stability,* which identifies individuals who experience things relatively easily and without getting upset. The opposite is neuroticism—a tendency to experience unpleasant emotions a great deal of the time. (John, 1990; Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991)

Think of each big-five trait as a continuum. Each trait has many related traits. For example, conscientiousness at one end includes being responsible and dependable. On the other end, though, it involves being impulsive or careless.

Trait theorists assume that traits are relatively fixed, or unchanging. The advantage of trait theories is that by identifying a person's personality traits, that person's behavior can be predicted. However, critics argue that trait theories describe personality rather than explain it. Trait theorists cannot explain or predict behaviors across different situations. For example, a person may be quiet and reserved in class but outgoing and wild at a party. Why? Critics of trait theories propose that personality is an interaction between a person's traits and the effects of being in a particular situation. For example, whereas most theories of personality consider the person as an individual, some psychologists regard personality as a function of a person's social environment. One of the first of these thinkers was Harry Stack Sullivan (1892–1949).

Sullivan's ideas have been organized into a two-dimensional model. One dimension is power, which ranges from dominance at one end of the scale to submissiveness at the other. The second dimension is friendliness, which ranges from friendliness to hostility. Most behaviors can be described as a combination of these two dimensions. For example, helpfulness is a combination of dominance and friendliness, while trust is a combination of submissiveness and friendliness.

Figure 14.18 Theories of Personality

Theories of personality are used to organize personality characteristics, explain differences among individuals, explore how people conduct their lives, and determine how life can be improved. *Which theory do you think best describes your personality? Explain.*

Theory	Main Ideas
Behaviorist Theories	focus on the way rewards and punishment shape our actions
Social Learning Theories	cognitive-personal factors, our behaviors, and environmental factors interact to shape our personalities
Psychoanalytic Theories	emphasize the importance of early childhood experiences, repressed thoughts, and conflict between conscious and unconscious forces
Cognitive Theories	our analysis of our own perceptions, thoughts, and feelings shape our personalities
Humanistic Theories	emphasize our capacity for personal growth, development of our full potential, and freedom to make choices
Trait Theories	focus on identifying, measuring, and classifying similarities and differences in personality characteristics or traits

Researchers also noticed that a person's actions tend to elicit specific responses from other people. A behavior and its most likely response are said to be complementary. For example, most people will respond to a request for help (trusting) by offering advice (helping), regardless of how helpful they are as individuals. Thus, many behaviors result not simply from a person's personality but also from that person's social environment.

SECTION 5 Assessment

1. **Review the Vocabulary** What is the difference between cardinal and central traits? Between surface and source traits?

2. **Visualize the Main Idea** Using a diagram similar to the one below, list the traits that make up each of Eysenck's three dimensions of personality.

Eysenck's Dimensions of Personality

3. **Recall Information** What is the importance of common traits in Cattell's theory? What are Cattell's source traits?

4. **Think Critically** Do the five factors of personality in the five robust factors describe you? If not, what other characteristics would you want to add?
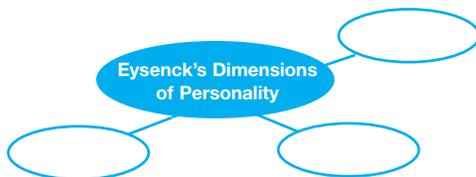
5. **Application Activity** Choose a character in a movie or television show you have recently seen. Describe the character in terms of the personality dimensions proposed by one of the trait theorists discussed in this section.

Personality Disorder

Period of Study: 1967

Introduction: An actor and radio disc jockey, Dan was highly successful in his professional roles, which required an entertaining and extremely outspoken personality. Although Dan had to maintain these personality traits at work, sometimes traces of those traits leaked out into his private life. In one situation while Dan and a friend dined at a restaurant, Dan explicitly and loudly complained about the condition of the food. In actuality, according to Dan's friend, the food was fine—there was no valid reason for Dan's public display.

Dan's friend, psychologist Elton McNeil, described Dan's reactions as inappropriate. When McNeil asked Dan why he had acted that way, Dan said he did it because "he wanted to show how gutless the rest of the world is." Dan then said acting like that separates the classy people from the ordinary and that the next time he eats at that restaurant, he will be treated well. Concerned by his friend's statements, McNeil asked Dan if he felt guilty at all about treating his fellow human beings that way. Dan's answer was, "Who cares?"

Hypothesis: For those of us who are familiar with actors and radio disc jockeys, we know that their jobs require straightforward and sometimes confrontational behavior. An excess of these traits, though, can prove to be too much for healthy functioning in life.

Method: McNeil encouraged his friend to take part in some sort of counseling or therapy. Dan agreed. During a therapy session, Dan disclosed:

I can remember the first time in my life when I began to suspect I was a little different from most people. When I was in high school my best friend got leukemia and died and I went to his funeral. Everybody else was crying and feeling sorry for themselves and as they were praying to get him into heaven, I suddenly realized that I wasn't feeling anything at all. He was a nice guy but what the hell. That night I thought about it some more and found that I wouldn't miss my mother and father if they died and that I wasn't too nuts about my brothers and sisters for that matter. I figured there wasn't anybody I really cared for but, then, I didn't need any of them anyway so I rolled over and went to sleep.

(Davison & Neale, 2001)

Results: This description detailing the absence of emotion clearly indicated the possibility of a personality disorder. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV)* defines a personality disorder as an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that differs significantly from the individual's culture, is extensive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment. An individual with a personality disorder is often capable of functioning normally in society, including holding a job, maintaining some personal relationships, and, on some occasions, showing signs of emotions. This is what makes discovering a personality disorder so difficult.

Dan's unusual behavior may have gone unnoticed for so long because his occupations required a person to behave a certain way. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to actually know if a person is acting out a role or displaying his or her own personality traits. In Dan's case, his role was his personality.

Analyzing the Case Study

1. Why did McNeil encourage Dan to enter therapy?

2. Why do psychologists consider Dan's behavior a disorder rather than just a personality type?

3. Critical Thinking Does everyone's personality change depending on the role they are playing (for instance, as student, friend, son, or daughter)? Explain.

Summary and Vocabulary

Psychologists have proposed various theories of personality. The theories attempt to help explain similarities and to provide reasons for differences in personality.

Section 1 — Purposes of Personality Theories

Main Idea: Personality theories provide a way of organizing the many characteristics that people have.

- Personality theorists try to organize traits by similarities and differences, explore how people cope with life situations, and how people grow and change.

Section 2 — Psychoanalytic Theories

Main Idea: Freud's psychoanalytic theory proposes that personality is made up of three components: the id, ego, and superego.

- Sigmund Freud believed that every personality has an unconscious component and that childhood experiences, even if not consciously recalled, continue to influence people's behaviors.
- The id, ego, and superego explain how the mind functions and how instinctual energies are regulated.

Section 3 — Learning Theories

Main Idea: Behaviorists are interested in how aspects of personality are learned.

- Behaviorists believe that as individuals differ in their learning experiences, they acquire different behaviors and different personalities.
- Albert Bandura believed that personality is acquired not only by reinforcement but also by observational learning.

Section 4 — Humanistic and Cognitive Theories

Main Idea: Humanistic and cognitive theories of personality stress the positive aspects of human nature.

- Humanistic psychology is founded on the belief that all human beings strive for self-actualization.
- Carl Rogers believed that many people suffer from a conflict between what they value in themselves and what they believe other people value in them.

Section 5 — Trait Theories

Main Idea: Trait theorists believe that character traits account for consistency of behavior in different situations.

- Trait theorists believe we understand people by specifying their traits, and we use traits to predict people's future behavior.
- Gordon W. Allport defined common traits as those that apply to everyone and individual traits as those that apply more to a specific person.

Chapter Vocabulary

personality (p. 375)
unconscious (p. 379)
id (p. 379)
ego (p. 380)
superego (p. 380)
defense mechanisms (p. 380)
collective unconscious (p. 384)
archetype (p. 384)
inferiority complex (p. 385)
behaviorism (p. 387)
contingencies of reinforcement (p. 388)
humanistic psychology (p. 392)
self-actualization (p. 392)
self (p. 395)
positive regard (p. 395)
conditions of worth (p. 395)
unconditional positive regard (p. 396)
fully functioning (p. 396)
trait (p. 398)
cardinal trait (p. 400)
factor analysis (p. 401)
surface trait (p. 401)
source trait (p. 401)
extravert (p. 401)
introvert (p. 401)
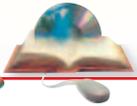
Reviewing Vocabulary

Choose the letter of the correct term or concept
below to complete the sentence.

a. personality
b. contingencies of reinforcement
c. trait
d. defense mechanism
e. inferiority complex
f. self-actualization
g. positive regard
h. conditions of worth
i. extravert
j. introvert

1. People who continuously try to compensate for their weakness and avoid feelings of inadequacy have a(n) _____.
2. A(n)_____ is a person who is reserved, passive, and unsociable.
3. A(n)_____ is a tendency to react the same way to different situations.
4. According to Carl Rogers, people require _____, or approval, from other people in order to acquire a self.
5. Events that maintain certain behaviors are called _____.
6. _____ is composed of the consistent, enduring, and unique characteristics of a person.
7. When a person deceives herself into thinking nothing is wrong instead of facing intense conflict, she is using a(n)_____.
8. A(n)_____ is a person who is outgoing and lively.
9. According to humanistic psychologists, all people strive for _____, or the realization of their potentialities as unique human beings.
10. _____ is the term for the conditions people must meet in order to regard themselves positively.

Recalling Facts

1. Using a graphic organizer similar to the one below, list the "five robust factors" of personality.

The Robust Five
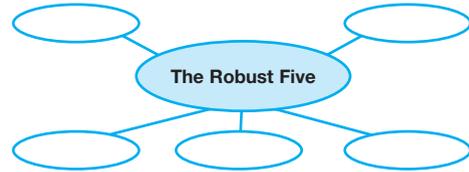
2. How did Bandura and Walters believe personality is acquired?
3. What technique might you be using if you think a teacher is angry at you because he or she gave a difficult test, when in reality the teacher actually is not angry?
4. According to Rogers, what situation creates a gap between the person and the self?
5. What are the two basic assumptions behind trait theories?

Critical Thinking

1. **Synthesizing Information** Imagine that you have a friend who is failing several subjects in school, does little homework, and fails to study for tests. Based on your knowledge of personality theories, how would Skinner explain your friend's behavior? How would Bandura explain the behavior?
2. **Making Inferences** What would life be like if people had only an id? An ego? A superego?
3. **Analyzing Concepts** Recall *Freudian slips* you have seen or heard. Write them down and try to determine the reasons for each slip.
4. **Applying Concepts** List the qualities and traits that you think comprise the self-actualized person.
5. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** Some opponents of the humanistic theory of personality have criticized it for promoting the "me first" approach to living. They believe that the theory encourages selfishness. Do you agree with these critics? Why or why not?

Psychology Projects

1. **Purposes of Personality Theories** Create a collage that depicts your personality, using pictures and words from magazines and newspapers. Display your collage in class and explain which theory discussed best describes your personality.

2. **Psychoanalytic Theories** Archetypes are evident in many myths and fairy tales. Choose a myth or fairy tale and identify the archetypes in it and the common experiences of humanity that these archetypes reflect.

3. **Trait Theories** Select a newspaper or news magazine article that describes the activities or accomplishments of a person—for example, a popular sports figure, politician, or business-person. Then select one of the trait theories of personality to describe the person's behavior and outlook on life. You may have to go beyond the material in the article to make a convincing argument for the theory you have selected. Present your description in a report.

Technology Activity

There are various personality tests available on the Internet. Locate the Web sites of these tests. Report on the aspects of personality that these tests address and evaluate how well they do so. Share the Web addresses you found with the class.

Psychology Journal

1. Analyze the entry in your journal you wrote at the beginning of the study of this chapter. Now write another entry answering these questions: Does the person change behavior depending on the setting? What would you say are important reinforcers for this person? Explain your observations using a behavioral model of personality.

2. In your journal, describe the theory of personality that is most appealing to you. Which seems to make the most sense? Why?

Building Skills

Identifying Cause-and-Effect Relationships Review the cartoon, then answer the questions that follow.

1. What does "Robert's facade" refer to?
2. What aspect of Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality is reflected in the cartoon?
3. How might a behaviorist explain Robert's behavior?
4. How might a trait theorist describe Robert's behavior?
5. How might a humanistic psychologist, such as Carl Rogers, explain Robert's behavior?

"We have to go now. Robert's façade is beginning to crumble."

Practice and **assess** key social studies skills with **Glencoe Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook CD-ROM, Level 2.**

See the Skills Handbook, page 624, for an explanation of identifying cause-and-effect relationships.

Psychologist Gordon Allport presents the letters of Jenny Gove Masterson (and others) as an intense case study of personality. Jenny's letters trace a life of frustration and defeat. Between the ages of 58 and 70, Jenny wrote a series of 301 letters to Glenn and Isabel, two young friends. The letters dramatically illustrate her relationship with her son Ross. Jenny tells of her interests, hates, fears, and conflicts. These letters have led many psychologists and students to seek to explain Jenny's behavior and her personality.

Reader's Dictionary

philanderer: one who has many love affairs
enigma: a mystery

LETTERS FROM JENNY
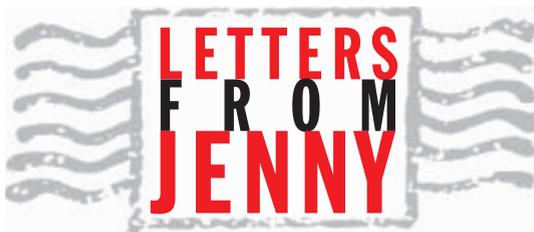
EDITED AND INTERPRETED BY GORDON W. ALLPORT

Friday, April 19/29

Dear Glenn:

I'm afraid that I am quite a nuisance in shoving my affairs on Isabel and you, but when you remember the compact we made that time I was in Chicago, and all your care over me since, you will pardon. You are my only confidant.

My motive in telling you all this is not to gossip, or backbite, but because I know that when *I* drop out Ross will lie to you and make it appear that things were quite different with us. . . .

The chances are that Ross and I are again near the parting of the ways. He has never cared anything at all for me since he adopted, and was adopted by, the old philanderer. It is as well for him to try his luck again in matrimony—he can then take his other wife to visit his "Beloved Mother" his "B.M." as he did the first one, and they can all be happy together.

I have truly a noble son—an honor to his College, his friends, his family. And all for what? Can it be possible all this is merely for the sake of co-habiting with a woman who sells her body to the highest bidder?

Oh! If he would only settle down for 2 or 3 years and get a footing in business and not always belong to the "floating" population. He is not so very old yet altho' he has squandered 10 precious years. What in the world is the matter, Glenn dear?

I am not a charming person—not beautiful— not clever, but what of that? I carried him in my body for 9 mos. was good to him for many years (you know that) altho' he says I wasn't—that it was all *selfishness* on my part—but even granting all that to be so—I am still *his* Mother. Oh! what is it that's so wrong?

Be patient with me—I try you sadly—but I'm *alone,* and it's awful to be in the dark, and be alone.

I sincerely hope you are all well.

Jenny

P.S. *Do not* write to Ross about me. You would mean all right, of course, but Ross would be very angry, and resent it dreadfully. He says you don't "live"—don't know what "life" is—sometimes I think he is a little "off" and might kill me—he resents your having helped me, and my gratitude to Isabel and you.

Excerpts from a letter written by Ross to Glenn:

April 21, 1929

Your last letter was the one about Mother. I appreciate your interest and your desire to help me that I might help her. And yet, in a word, your letter merely emphasized my own feeling of frustration and futility. I'm afraid there is little one can do, or that I can do, to be a comfort and service of any real or lasting pleasure.

Mother has entrenched herself behind truths, half-truths, and utter fabrications concerning my limitations as the ideal son, and there is no dislodging her. No amount of even demonstrating my presence will change her constant reiteration that I am entirely bad and have cast her off in her old age. . . . Day and night, Mother recites her own good deeds to her family, her friends, her husband, her son, and how each in turn failed to pay her back. . . .

Dear Mr. Editor:

It is now twenty-seven years since Jenny Masterson died. You have asked me to re-read her Letters addressed to Glenn and myself, and in this perspective to make comments and interpretations concerning her tortured life.

Her Letters bring back many memories, but even in the perspective of years I cannot pretend to discover the key to her nature. Our relationship to her was essentially "neutral." We took pains not to become too deeply involved, but we always answered her communications and tried to help her in emergencies.

Her behavior, like the Letters, was intense, dramatic, and sometimes "hard to take." But to us her nature posed a challenge to understanding. What made her so intense, so vivid, so difficult? Even now her communications arouse in me a sense of the enigma of her personality as well as sympathy for her predicament. . . .

So we know that early in her life Jenny showed some of the factors evident in the Letters: her aloneness, her intense individuality and dramatization, her temper and tendency to quarrel. She was a puzzle to her family, and socially a problem long before we knew her. But to me the enigma is *how* she came to be such a problem to herself as well as to others. . . .

This self-defeating formula was with her from early years. At the age of 70 she is "the same only more so." . . .

Analyzing the Reading

1. What personality traits does Jenny display?
2. How does Ross view his mother?
3. **Critical Thinking** Isabel writes that Jenny's personality did not change as she aged, but became more difficult. Do you think that it is possible for a person to change his or her personality? Explain.