Theories of Personality

The Psychoanalytic Approach

“I have no desire at all to leave psychology hanging in the air with no organic basis. But, beyond a feeling of conviction [that there must be such a basis], I have nothing, either theoretical or therapeutic, to work on, and so I must behave as if I were confronted by psychological factors only.

-Freud, Sept 22, 1898
Freud: The Man

- Born in 1856 in Moravia to an impoverished, Jewish trader.
- Freud had lifelong anxiety about money.
- Freud always saw himself as an outsider because of his Jewish heritage.
- Law and Medicine were the two professions open to Jews. Freud chose to study medicine.
- He specialized in Neuroscience and wanted an academic research position, but chose instead to go into practice.

Freud: The Man

- Opened a practice and married Martha Bernays.
- Began treating woman with hysteria as if the disorder were neurological (using “electrotherapy”).
- Freud first believed the women’s problems were the result of sexual molestation.
- This was rejected by the intellectual community and Freud began to formulate his theory on childhood sexuality.

Structures of the Personality

- **Id**
  - Unconscious urges and desires
  - Pleasure principle
  - Libido
- **Superego**
  - Unconscious and Preconscious
  - Moral Guardian, Conscience
- **Ego**
  - Conscious and Preconscious
  - Reality Principle, Mediator
Psychosexual Stages

- Oral Stage (0-18 months)
  - Oral pleasure
    - Too much = overly optimistic and dependent adult
    - Too little = pessimistic and hostile
    - Fixation leads to lack of confidence, gullibility, sarcasm and argumentativeness
- Anal Stage (18 months to 3 ½ years)
  - Pleasure from toilet training
    - Too strict = anal retentive, obstinate, stingy, excessively orderly
    - Too relaxed = anal expulsive, messy, disorganized

Psychosexual Stages

- Phallic Stage (3-6)
  - Oedipal or Electra complex
  - Castration Anxiety
  - Penis Envy
  - Fixation leads to vanity and egotism, shyness, low self-esteem, and worthlessness
- Latency Stage (6-13)
  - No interest in opposite sex or sexual behavior
- Genital Stage (puberty onward)
  - Adult sexual behavior

Defense Mechanisms

- Repression
- Denial
- Displacement
- Sublimation
- Regression
- Projection
- Reaction Formation
- Rationalization

Anxiety
The Humanistic Approach

Human life will never be understood unless its highest aspirations are taken into account. Growth, self-actualization, the striving toward health, the quest for identity and autonomy, the yearning for excellence (and other ways of phrasing the striving “upward”) must by now be accepted beyond question as a widespread and perhaps universal human tendency.

And yet there are also other regressive, fearful, self-diminishing tendencies as well, and it is very easy to forget them in our intoxication with “personal growth,” especially for inexperienced youngsters. ...

We must appreciate that many people choose the worse rather than the better, that growth is often a painful process....

Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality

Humanism

- Philosophical movement that emphasizes worth of the individual
- Gives credit to the human spirit
- Emphasis on creative, spontaneous & active nature of humans
- Human capacity to overcome hardship & despair
- Optimistic
- Values the subjective experience of the individual
Roger's Theory

- Emphasized taking personal responsibility for one's own life
- Important issues must be defined by individual
- People tend to develop in a positive direction
- Belief in natural goodness of people
- Inner self-control is better than forced, external control
- Emphasized inner experience over external, objective reality

The Master Motive:
Self-Actualizing Tendency

- An innate motivation within all of us
- An active, controlling drive toward the fulfillment of our potential
- Human behavior is not irrational, but is directed toward the goal of satisfying the need for self-actualization as the individual perceives it.

Development

- Conditions of Worth
  - We perceive experiences or behavior as acceptable only if they meet with approval from others
  - Socialization teaches us to only accept our "good" qualities
- Unconditional Positive Regard
  - A deep and genuine caring by others, uncontaminated by judgments or evaluations of our own feelings.
  - Imposing no conditions of worth.
Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Needs grouped on the first level have the greatest intensity and must be met before you can step up to the next level.

The Trait Approach
Emotional Stability
- High-Scorer:
  - Calm
  - Unemotional
  - Self-controlled
  - Hardy
- Low-Scorer:
  - Worrying
  - Emotional
  - Anxious
  - Vulnerable

Openness
- High-Scorers:
  - Creative
  - Imaginative
  - Curious
- Low-Scorers:
  - Unimaginative
  - Down-To-Earth
  - Like routine

Agreeableness
- High-Scorer:
  - Good-natured
  - Gentle
  - Cooperative
  - Trusting
- Low-Scorer:
  - Irritable
  - Ruthless
  - Suspicious
  - uncooperative
Extraversion

- High Scorers:
  - Talkative
  - Passionate
  - Sociable
  - Fun-loving

- Low Scorers:
  - Quiet
  - Passive
  - Reserved
  - Cautious

Conscientiousness

- High Scorers:
  - Organized
  - Careful
  - Hardworking
  - Ambitious

- Low Scorers:
  - Negligent
  - Lazy
  - Aimless
  - Careless