

The Architect of Experience: A Systems Model of Personhood

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What is a Person?

A person is self-regulating, relational, conscious and meaning-mediated animal. A person is self-regulating so the person can control and organize their actions. A person is relational, so the person relates to others to develop a relation and interact with them to experience and learn new things. A person is conscious so the person can be aware of itself and the environment around them. A person is meaning-mediated so the person's experiences and actions are always around meanings. So, the important thing for the person is what that thing means to them. A person is a part of the person-environment system. So, the person is not just an individual but part of a bigger thing. In the roots of a person-environment system there is a combination of action and experience. So, the environment has a big impact and effect on shaping us through our development as a person. The relationship between our surroundings and us shapes our experience and actions.

Building a Person

What does it mean to know? And how do we think? Thinking is a process to understand and create something. It involves actions such as organizing through mind. When a person is thinking it gives meaning to the thing and creates something through their understanding. The person organizes this thing according to their own meaning. Then the person organizes this thing into a schema. The meaning of knowing is to develop and build a scheme. When the person organizes their thinking through their meaning and understanding

they can construct a scheme. When they make the scheme, they can know something. A scheme is a loop and a pattern of how we organize our experiences. A person has past experiences and an object in the moment. The person creates a meaning and some knowledge for the object in the moment with 3 fundamental processes. Assimilation, accommodation and equilibration. In the process of assimilation, the person uses their past experience and existing schemes to understand the new object. In the accommodation process the person changes the existing schemes and past knowledge/experience to fit and adapt the new meaning and experience of the object in the moment. When these changes create new and more adapted schemes the person reaches equilibration.

An emotion is a feeling process. Emotions help and guide our actions. Emotions help us to understand the feeling of action. Emotions organize our actions. Emotion has parts that include how our body reacts to the action, how the person shows their feelings, and how the person feels inside when the action is still ongoing and when its past. When the person feels sad their face becomes stagnant and their lips becomes downturn. Maybe a few tears may flow from their eyes. The person can show their feeling by crying and that action could be loud. And the person could feel inside lonely or broke. So, we can say that emotions could give meaning to our actions by creating a scheme for the feeling. But not all emotions have the same meaning for the same action. A baby can cry, because of its sadness or maybe because it's hunger. So, we need to combine all parts of emotion. We also need to look at what kind of action the baby is taking. Is the baby sucking because the baby is hungry? Is the baby pulling its hair? Or is something hurting the baby due to environmental factors (for example, did the baby hit its head?). So, the emotions shape the actions and make an

understanding of sense for the experiences within the person-environment system. Emotions start unconsciously. The person unconsciously monitors, appraises the surroundings and the moment. For the beginning the person could be stay unconscious if the ongoing action is aligning with the persons goals and motives. So, in other words we can say If the underlying reason aligns with the current state of the person, the person will continue to appraise unconsciously. That is a comparing process. The person compares the environment unconsciously with their motives. When these unconscious appraisal processes detect something that does not align with the person's goals or motives, the person generates the affect. The affection of the person's body as a physical affection, the person's mind as a mental affection and the person's consciousness as a reflective affection. This affect is the feeling part of the emotion. The person feels fear in the presence of danger, joy in the presence of success, surprise in the presence of unexpected. So there should be something that could affect and then reflect the feeling of the thing. Then the action starts. Those actions are fast and adaptive functions. When the person rides an e-scooter in a seemingly clear bike line and sees a relatively big piece of metal, the person feels the fear of the dangerous metal. So, in other words when the person appraises the environment unconsciously, the appraisal process alerted the person about the unknown piece of thing in the way of the motive of driving. Then the person takes the action of stopping or changing the direction of the scooter before thinking of hitting or bursting a tire or losing balance while driving over. Then the consciousness begins and organizes the problem and tries to align with the motive. And in the same time thinking starts about do not hit, do not burst a tire, do not lose the balance and do not try to drive over.

Consciousness is something that feeling yourself. Feeling the present, the moment and realizing the now. It's something that starts with awareness. So, there should be a starting point. The person looks at their own experience and finds a starting point. Then they can use that starting point to develop some kind of awareness. When they have awareness, they can feel the consciousness. Just the consciousness cannot make itself conscious of the something if there is not awareness. There should be something that triggers consciousness. The person becomes conscious when it needs to survive. This starting point is an underlying unconscious process. The emotion organizes this unconscious process and creates the consciousness. Consciousness has two parts. Primary Conscious Activity and Secondary Reflective Awareness. Primary Conscious Activity is more directed and more emotion based. It is about the awareness of the feeling in the action. For example feeling the shame when a failure happens. Secondary Reflective Awareness is more about symbols. A Symbol is an object or an action for something unconscious or hard to explain directly. A symbol has more than one meaning and deeper emotional connections and it is more than a physical thing. It is something when consciousness has the capacity to take itself as its own object of awareness. This is the base for self-awareness and eventually the "Me". Psychological actions take an object. That means they are directed toward something, and we can find that thing by looking at the 'what' of the action. That's the intentionality. It is the initial goal directed object of the action.

Self is a reflective awareness of the person's processes. The person could be conscious without being self-conscious. The person feels the self when consciousness gains the capacity to take itself as its own object. The person's consciousness realizes itself

and takes the object as itself. It's something that when the person feels the 'Me' in the moment. The person feels themselves. But that feeling inside the mind and body. The person feels it's alive. The person focuses on the moment, perceives and realizes everything that happens around them. It's directed towards themselves. The person stares into space or just closes their eyes. Then they sense themselves, that they are breathing, that they are in a body, that they are human. They feel that they are somewhere as a being. They perceive themselves and their own position in the moment.

Self and The Person-Environment System

The self develops through social interaction. The person needs something additional to develop and create identity. That development happens inside the person-environment system. A person is a part of the person-environment system. The person-environment system has 5 parts. These parts are individual action, objects of action, the action of others, mediational means and the broader sociocultural system. Individual action is a process. Objects of action are something that the action is trying to achieve. The actions of others are the people that affect the action. Mediational means are symbolic tools that shape and structure of the action. The fundamental of all cultural tools is language, and we can describe the language as a vehicle. Broader sociocultural system is a shared and combined meanings and values.

This model is telling us that the person is not just an individual but a part of a system. So, we must evaluate the emotions, thoughts, experiences and actions that occur within a

person within and together with this model and this system. We can say that person is a relational process, and it develops through interactions with others, inside the person-environment system. So, to understand the person we need to understand the connections between the surroundings and the individual being itself. Individual action is an action that person does. It's like a verb. It could be drinking, writing, looking, listening, playing. Objects of actions are the objects what the action are directed toward. It could be coffee, poem, landscape, a piano, basketball. The actions of others are the people that are around the action, that affects the action, that behaves the action and that responds the action.

Mediational means are the helping tools and some symbolic meanings. It could be a language, a cup, a paper, a binocular, a piano, and a ball. Those tools help organize the person's mind and help the mediate the person's relationship with the world. Mediational meanings are learned from the culture. The culture defines what is a language, what is a cup and what is a ball. The person can control their own mental functions with the mediational means. The person can use language to express their thoughts. Mediational means make the world easier and simpler. It makes the language a something rather than some sound of complex sizzle.

The broader sociocultural system has sociocultural meanings. It can be shared meanings, traditions and expectations. For example, writing a poem. It's shared because the tools that create these meanings are mediational and same for everyone. If the person could understand the poem, it's because of the language that is shared and the words have the same meaning with the person and the writer. There are shared expectations about the things that are ongoing. Those expectations are the things that what people expects certain

things in certain situations. And shared expectations create social rules. There are shared traditions. Those traditions pass some meanings and the way of doing things to the next generations. But sociocultural meanings could be changed over time. When the newer generations come and the things change in the world sociocultural meanings change as well. Even the way of speaking the language can be changed as well. In the past people talked more formally, but in new generation the people talked more informally and used more slang and spoke more casually. The word choices are different.

In an example of the poem, individual action is writing. Besides, we can say grasping the pen, moving the pen back and forth and rubbing it on the paper. In this example object of the action is a poem. In this example the action of others could be a friend, a significant other or a mother. In this example mediational meaning is the language, a paper, a pen and ink. The broader sociocultural system could be an expectation of writing style of the poem, the emotional meaning of the poem and the symbolic idea of who writes the poem. According to this a person's action is not just controlled by itself but also determined by the environment. So, the action and experience come together and interact with each other and create the person-environment system. In the result person is created by the interaction of itself, the others and some tools. So, we constructed self of the poem writer through the use of language in a social interaction when we created the poem.

References:

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