

FINAL PART II

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Temperament works with experience to develop a personality in an individual which includes characteristics such as regularity, mood, attitudes, and sensitivity (Rothbart, 2017). In the case of James, the temperament and personality theory would conclude that he has a hard time correctly regulating his emotions. James constantly feels angry at school and expresses this through picking on other children. He may also be a highly reactive child in that he feels big emotions more frequently and intensely in his everyday life.

Effortful control (EC) is an individual's ability to decide a course of action during conflict, to plan for the future, and assess problems. James may have low levels of EC. He cannot put in the effort to make the right choice when at school. Instead of being friendly to his peers, James does not hesitate to harm them. When confronted with his behavior, he denies everything and says it was not his fault (not willing to change in the future). By angrily seeking out the children who complained about him, James starts the cycle over again. James has low levels of EC in that he can not decide on an appropriate course of action, will not plan for the future, and assess problems in a way that allows him to act in anger again. This low level of EC is consistent with James' tendency to externalize his problems (Rothbart, 2017).

The theory claims that temperament can make certain children in certain environments more likely to experience behavioral problems (Nguyen, 2021). This is due to a mismatch between the child's temperament and their environmental demands. For James, maybe when he is confronted about his behavior it is done in a punishment way. The teacher may scold him in front of the class, send him to the principal's office, or make a call home. James' temperament requires patience and instructions rather than punishment. This would explain why he gets so defensive when confronted about his behavior.

At ten years old, kids enter the mutual trust stage of friendship. They can trust and care for each other, they each have a few “good” friends, and can exhibit greater prosocial behavior. James is in this stage, but seems to be struggling to exhibit prosocial behavior thus leading his peers to not trust or care for him. By bullying his peers, James has isolated himself.

The nine characteristics of temperament according to the New York Longitudinal Study are activity level, approach/withdrawal, intensity, threshold, adaptability, rhythmicity, mood, attention span, and distractibility (Rothbart, 2017). It is possible that James has a lot of energy and does not exhibit much physical activity throughout the day. By bottling this energy up, it creates a negative storm of emotions within him that comes out at other people. His quality of emotional expression (mood) is extremely negative and hurtful to others. James is very persistent with his behavior; even when confronted by teachers, James continues to bully his classmates. James is not easily distracted from his behavior either, he does not seem to stop taunting others even when an authority figure is watching.

I would guess that James has big emotions when it comes to novel situations. Since he has a lower level of EC and is a highly reactive child, it makes sense that he fears change. James does not like people telling him what to do, so a novel situation may arouse negative behavior. He would not approach new situations, but rather withdraw. James has high intensity; his emotional expression contains an ample amount of energy. Additionally, James has a hard time adapting to the right direction. His behaviors do not seem to change even when they are not socially acceptable.

James seems to need some intervention to prevent his current temperament from affecting the rest of his life. He currently has poor effortful control over his actions and seems to have unhealthy coping mechanisms. If not intervened, James may do poorly in school thus affecting

his cognitive development. He currently cannot handle change and gets frustrated easily, and this would only continue. By not being able to cope with stress and withdrawing from situations, James would miss out on a deep development of problem solving, thinking deeply, reading comprehension, learning skills, reasoning skills, and memory. With intervention and the right environment, James can turn his thought process around. By teaching him to take effortful control over his actions and to cope with stress/change, James may be able to thrive in a school setting thus positively affecting his cognitive development.

Furthermore, without interventions, James' behavior could negatively impact his socioemotional development. Currently, James is unable to comprehend how his actions are harmful to others. By constantly bullying his peers, he has isolated himself into not having friendships with others. He is rejected by his peers; they do not want to be around him or get close to him emotionally. This would follow him to adulthood. James would continue to lie, fight, harass others, and get into trouble. He would continue not being able to understand the feelings of others, control his own behaviors, and getting along with others. With intervention, James can learn how his actions affect others and how to redirect his negative energy. In this future, James may become an athlete to relieve stress and slowly open up to others.

Lastly, it is known that anger has many adverse health effects. If James continues to exhibit his anger on a daily basis, he would be at risk for anxiety, high blood pressure, and other diseases. Long term anger weakens the heart because it is constantly beating fast and tensed (Staicu & Cuțov, 2010). Although it might not affect James as a child, if he continues to be angry, he may experience these health effects in the future. On the other hand, if he learns to control his emotions and handle his anger, James may be able to avoid these negative effects all together.

References

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