

## chapter seven

# Personality

### PERSONALITY

Children growing up select from their surroundings and, in turn, are literally captured by aspects of their milieu, which mold them. They like and imitate certain qualities of some adults and children, and shun those they do not need or want. Thus each of us, biologically unique at birth, grows up in surroundings that are somehow special. Through this *heredity environmental interaction*, we develop the individual characteristics, needs, likes, reactions, and responses that constitute our personality.

Most words used by psychologists in special descriptive ways have other common meanings which may conflict with precise scientific definition. Personality is such a term. It has all sorts of ordinary connotations that are different from the meaning psychologists assign. Many

people use personality synonymously with charm or ability, as when they say, "He has a lot of personality." Others use personality to denote fame or eccentricity—"She's not ordinary, she's a personality." Another more troublesome meaning of personality equates it with relatively superficial behavior. It is assumed that personality is that part of an individual's behavior that is readily apparent and easily changed. A 19-year-old girl, for example, contended that she could "switch" personalities. Sometimes she deliberately acted cold, hostile, and aloof, while at other times she played the role of a friendly and bubbling young lady.

Personality as defined by psychologists means none of the above. Behavior scientists know that everyone has a personality; they use the term neither to connote eminence nor peculiarity. Contrary to earlier notions, also, psychologists have learned that people are not just a loose collection of separate acts and superficial appearances. Conduct can not be simply analyzed in specific stimulus-response sequences. Each and every person is a complete and unique entity.

What personality is can be seen best perhaps by contrasting it with our biological structure. Each person is a complete physical system. His lungs, digestive system, circulation, and other components are separately labeled and investigated, since each has particular functions. Yet all these ultimately work together and produce a single, whole anatomical and physiological organism.

Personality is the psychological equivalent of our physical system. It consists of every attitude, trait, and attribute that together comprise the *totality* of our psychological makeup. Generally, these qualities that in combination constitute our own special and unique personality are fairly stable, enduring, and consistent, and so permit an outsider (if he knows us well enough) to predict fairly accurately how we will react in a specific situation. Everyone thus has a personality that, although it may be similar to that of others, is nevertheless unique. Incidentally, carrying the physical-psychological analogy further will permit us to understand what is happening when persons say they are changing their personality (such as when a shy person decides to become aggressive). A person supposedly changing his personality is altering actually a very small part of his total psychological functioning. He is modifying himself slightly, just as a middle-aged man might subtly change his physical makeup if he decides to counteract his continual shortness of breath and weariness by a medical program of exercise to strengthen the capacity of his heart and lungs.

The study and description of personality has followed several different paths. Some of the earliest investigators, such as Sigmund Freud, relied on clinical contact with patients to evolve both a theory of personality and a method of treating the emotionally disordered. On the

other hand, psychologists have typically examined relatively normal individuals, used tests, other measurements, and laboratory investigations to formulate explanations. As might be expected, these divergent approaches to the exploration of personality have produced many different, sometimes conflicting, hypotheses.

### TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

To make sense of the nearly infinite variety of characteristics that seem to distinguish one person from another, keen observers have from the beginning of recorded history tried to describe personality by grouping people in terms of simplified types. The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates (400 B.C.) divided people into four distinct types depending upon which body fluid (humour) was dominant (see Table 7.1). Since that time countless other scholars have attempted to devise type descriptions that might fit all human beings. People have been said to be either leaders or followers; altruistic or selfish; optimists or pessimists, or falling into such categories as religious, artistic, commercial, and others.

Table 7.1 HIPPOCRATES' TYPES

Humour	Temperament
Blood	<i>Sanguine</i> : hopeful, cheerful, optimistic, confident
Black Bile	<i>Melancholic</i> : tearful, depressed, sad, morose
Yellow Bile	<i>Choleric</i> : easily angered, irascible
Phlegm	<i>Phlegmatic</i> : quiet, not easily aroused, apathetic

**INTROVERT-EXTROVERT:** The notions of introvert and extrovert as human types have made their way into everyday language. The distinction was originally made by a Jung, who proposed that what he mystically called psychic energy might be derived or find expression either internally or externally. The person who used his energies to create from within himself was designated introvert; the one who derived psychic energy from his experiences with others was an extrovert. Through the years, the meaning of these terms has been simplified and changed so that introvert now is usually held to refer to someone who is withdrawn, dependent upon his own imagination, and content with a minimum of social contact with others. The extrovert is usually defined as an individual who enjoys the company of others, likes positions of leadership and dominance, and is generally interested in the world about him. Sometimes the terms are so corrupted in common use that introvert and extrovert are erroneously held to be synonymous with nothing more than wallflower and show-off.

Attempts to verify the original classification of introvert-extrovert made by Jung, have failed to show such a division among humans.

People possess a wide variety of traits and cannot simply be pushed into one or another class. Most individuals possess both introversive and extroversive traits. In some situations they are outgoing, while in others they may want only themselves for company. Further, even those who seem consistently extroverted, for example, may actually long for situations where they can exhibit the characteristics we commonly believe found only in introverts.

A recent parallel to the introvert-extrovert dichotomy is the proposal of Riesman that personality patterns could be conceived in terms of the ways in which the individual is socialized. It is suggested that the modern American is an *other-directed* individual who looks to his peers to find out what he should and should not value, desire, and do. Unlike *inner-* or *tradition-directed* types, he has few if any internal strengths or principles that permit him to base his way of life on motives stimulated by ideals or historical values. Table 7.2 reveals further facets of these personality types.

Table 7.2 SOCIAL TYPES

Tradition-Directed	Guides his behavior on the past. Patterns himself on the historical models provided by his society. Highly dependent on the traditional roles assigned by his family and forebears. This personality pattern is contended to be most often found in primitive and other closely knit societies.
Inner-Directed	Is guided by ideals implanted in him as a child. He attempts to lead a moral, productive life and pursue wealth, knowledge, and other goals as he has been taught, since infancy. Largely a very independent individual. This personality configuration is believed typical of those found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America.
Other-Directed	Are guided by their environment and their peer group. They depend upon others to learn what is desirable or acceptable, and guide their behavior by what friends and acquaintances approve or value. Dependent on the opinions of family, acquaintances, and social group. This personality type is supposedly typical of that of contemporary Americans.

Based on Riesman, et al.

**THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY:** The readiness with which some people comply with dictatorial leaders and quickly become obedient followers has suggested that there might be a distinct authoritarian personality type. Studies have confirmed the suspicion that some individuals do possess a combination of traits which make it very likely that they will find satisfaction in a rigid, dogmatic, sometimes conspiratorial, setting. These people are uncomfortable if forced to make decisions and direct their own lives, but feel relieved when a strong, paternal figure gives orders.

The authoritarian type is believed to be quite inhibited, often excessively modest and conventional, and frequently very conforming and compliant. In the proper group setting, he fiercely identifies with his leader or cause, totally denying his own individuality. At the same time, authoritarian types are usually quite harsh in that they seem to obtain satisfaction both from suffering themselves and hurting others.

The characteristics of authoritarian types have been summarized as follows (Adorno, *et al.*):

**CONVENTIONALISM** Rigid adherence to middle-class values and ideas.

**SUBMISSIVENESS** Uncritical acceptance of authorities and leaders.

**AGGRESSION AND HOSTILITY** Tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values; generally angry attitudes toward people.

**STEREOTYPY** Disposition to think in rigid categories and prejudicial terms.

**POWER AND TOUGHNESS** Preoccupied with dominance—submission, leader-follower relationship; identification with power figures.

**PROJECTIVITY** Disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things are going on in the world, and exaggerated concern with sexual activities.

Discussion of the authoritarian type has led to the speculation that there might be an opposite "democratic" personality. But investigation have not confirmed personality patterns distinctly contrary to the combinations of traits called authoritarian. However, some have suggested that, like all attempts to type individuals, the notion of a clear-cut authoritarian type is itself inaccurate. It is conceded that individuals can be prejudiced, contemptuous of the opinions of others, unreasonably suspicious, and overconforming, and that these traits do occasionally occur in combination. But rather than stating that someone is therefore an authoritarian, one should view such an individual in the same way others are seen; namely, as a combination of specific traits.

Personalities like the authoritarian type are not limited to any special political ideology or particular society, although sometimes they constitute the bulk of the membership of extremist groups. But people with traits that give them authoritarian inclinations are also found in all kinds of organizations, labor unions, and businesses, as well as in religious and social groups. Often their presence makes smooth functioning difficult because they are impatient with parliamentary rules, voting, and other procedures considerate of the opinions of others.

Questions such as those in Table 7.3 appear on various tests used to evaluate the authoritarian personality. Those scoring high in authoritarianism usually agree strongly with all these statements.

Table 7.3 THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

*Test Items*

1. America is getting so far from the true American way of life that force may be necessary to restore it.
2. It is only natural and right that women be restricted in certain ways in which men have more freedom.
3. It is essential for learning or effective work that our teachers or bosses outline in detail what is to be done and exactly how to go about doing it.
4. There are some activities so flagrantly un-American that, when responsible officials won't take the proper steps, the wide-awake citizen should take the law into his own hands.
5. The sexual orgies of the old Greeks and Romans are nursery-school stuff compared to some of the goings on in this country today, even in circles where people might least expect it.
6. Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
7. Human nature being what it is there will always be war and conflict.
8. Nowadays when so many different kinds of people move around so much and mix together so freely, a person has to be especially careful to protect himself against infection and disease.

*Physical Types*

It is tempting to discuss personality in physical terms, for we recognize that an individual's build might have something to do with his character. Someone described as thin and lanky suggests a different set of attributes than a person pictured as overweight, short, and rotund. One of the first modern attempts to correlate physique with personality was that of a psychiatrist, Ernest Kretschmer. He delineated several types, including two whose names still appear in medical and other scientific literature. Kretschmer believed that tall, thin, narrow-chested, long-limbed individuals, called *aesthenic*, were shy, sensitive, intellectual, and withdrawn. Those whose figures were relatively rounded, perhaps plump, with thick limbs and of medium height, he called *pyknic*. The pyknics were stated to be jovial, generally lively, and outgoing, although their moods could fluctuate. Kretschmer's typing stimulated interest in attempting to scientifically measure body type and personality. When his type descriptions were carefully evaluated however, Kretschmer's classification quickly fell by the wayside. It was shown to be an immense oversimplification and full of serious errors.

In recent years the relation between physical build and personality

type has been revised by the research of Sheldon and several associates. These psychologists first explored the dimensions along which physique could accurately be described. They viewed thousands of pictures of the figures of college students and adults, made direct bodily measurements, and concluded that build might be mathematically portrayed in terms of a combination of three dimensions: *endomorphy*, *mesomorphy*, and *ectomorphy*. The endomorphy dimension is characterized by massiveness and roundness; mesomorphy by hard muscular tissue and thick bones; ectomorphy by long thin limbs and stringy muscle tissue. (See Figure 7.1.)

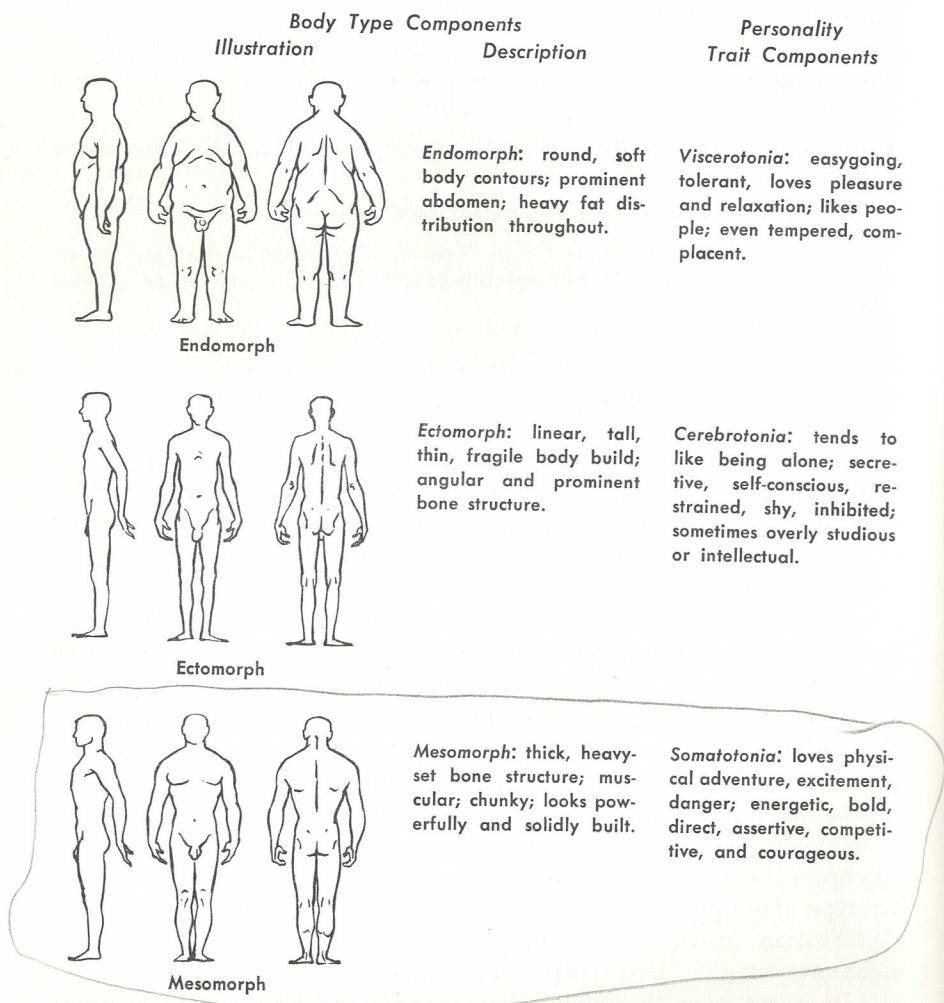


Fig. 7.1 Somatic Types.

Each physical dimension is present in varying degrees ranging from 1, barely discernible, to 7, indicating the highest degree of that component. The existence of different combinations of the three types, together with the varying degrees in which they may exist in any one person, means that well over 300 different physical types could be identified. This kind of body typing thus permits a rather exact description of physical build. If a particular person were examined, his build might be evaluated, for example, as possessing 1 degree of endomorphy, 7 degrees of mesomorphy and 1 degree of ectomorphy. Such an individual would be nearly as pure a mesomorph as could be obtained. Another person whose exact measurements were taken might be endomorphy 3, mesomorphy 5, ectomorphy 5. This would be a fairly mixed type that could not be described as predominantly any one particular body build.

Little controversy exists concerning the validity or usefulness of typing physique. The physical measurements used by Sheldon are reliable and quite accurate, so that different scientists can agree on the classification of body types. But Sheldon and his associates went further and attempted to evaluate whether personality could be divided into fundamental components *analogous* to those discovered in measuring physique. A small number of people were intensively studied, and many possible combinations of personality traits considered, and three major types identified:

*viscerotonia*—pleasure-loving, friendly, and relaxed

*somatotonia*—assertive, energetic, and daring

*cerebrotonia*—intellectual, withdrawn, and inhibited.

Sheldon has reported that when the personality types were rated on a seven-point scale similar to the one used to describe physical types, a close relation between the two was uncovered. It was shown that *endomorphy* and *viscerotonia* were closely related, with *mesomorphy-somatotonia* and *ectomorphy-cerebrotonia* similarly highly correlated. The muscular mesomorph, for example, was reported to be highly assertive, adventurous, and energetic.

The studies suggesting a high correlation between body build and personality types are disputed by many investigators. Raters who evaluated both build and personality may have been predisposed to see a relationship. Some of the characteristics identified as personality traits, such as hypersensitivity to pain for the ectomorph, may not actually be personal variables. Since they themselves may be an inherent part of an individual's physical makeup when classified as a personality component, they may falsely inflate correlations between physique and character. Yet, the results obtained by Sheldon should not be too easily dismissed. There is continuing evidence that physical factors may play a role in

determining personality function. Some explorers have shown a tendency for particular kinds of psychoses to be associated with special physical types. One investigator has demonstrated that if traits can be measured before too many personal changes have been brought about by what the child has learned and experienced, a fairly good correspondence between personality and physical type may still be evident. After studying nursery school children, Walker wrote:

For boys, all but one of the nine cluster scores showed significant relation with mesomorphy, as did 24 of the individual rating items. The girls showed just three significant correlations between mesomorphy and the cluster scores, eight between mesomorphy and the individual rating items. Characteristic of both boys and girls high in mesomorphy is a dominating assertiveness (leader in play, competitive, self-assertive, easily angered, attacks others, etc.), high energy output, openness of expression, and fearlessness. The girls combine this assertiveness with socialness, cheerfulness, and warmth. The boys' items give more suggestion of hostility (quarrelsome, revengeful, inconsiderate), and of an impulsive, headlong quality to their activity (daring, noisy, quick, accident prone, self-confident, etc.).

Ectomorphy. Boys and girls each showed two cluster scores which correlated with ectomorphy, but 27 individual items showed significant association with ectomorphy for the boys, just eight for the girls. In common for both sexes are items suggesting a certain aloofness (not social in play, does not attack others, daydreams, indirect in solving problems). Different items for boys and girls suggest an emotional restraint in both (boys: not easily angered, not expressive in movements, not talkative, etc.; girls: not dramatic, not open in expressing feelings, low verbal interests). For boys, the items in general define a cautious, quiet child, not self-assertive, hesitant to give offense, looking to adults rather than to children for approval, sensitive, slow to recover from upsets. He appears lacking in energy reserves (not energetic, dislikes gross motor play, enjoys hand activities, has few accidents). For girls, the composite picture is similar but tends more to indicate a somberness of outlook—unfriendly, tense, not gay or cheerful, irritable.

**CRITICISMS OF TYPE DESCRIPTIONS:** Our own experience often makes it appear logical to try to determine basic human types. Perhaps we ourselves may have classified some of the people we know to our own satisfaction. We identify some as "sophisticated," "arty," "motherly," "all-American," etc. But the evidence psychology provides often contradicts common-sense observations. Attempts to scientifically type individuals have achieved very limited success. People are born with temperamental predispositions and, thereafter, personality is shaped by an enormous number of infinitely varied environmental experiences. No matter how

much one's physique may orient one toward being withdrawn or aggressive, the things one learns after birth may radically change such inherent inclinations.

Type theories also tend to confuse an outstanding trait with the entirety of personality. It is true that some individuals may be so lazy or introverted or power-hungry that labeling them with such adjectives tells us a great deal about them. But just knowing that someone is introverted, for example, does not tell us *all* there is to know. Two different friends may both be well known as introverted, yet, in addition friend "A" may be considerate and cheerful, whereas friend "B" might be gloomy and cranky. As soon as an individual is tagged with a type label, the assumption is too easily made that all is known about him, that is he is expected to have all the characteristics associated with that particular name, and be almost without any other important personality traits. This is a thoroughly erroneous supposition since no single trait or combination of characteristics yet isolated can be used to comprehensively explain an entire personality.

#### TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

Trait theorists share with those who favor type approaches the desire to portray personality with as few adjectives as possible. But instead of *grouping* individuals according to type, trait approaches describe individuals according to the degree to which they possess certain qualities. The trait approach contends that every personality may be described in terms of the relative presence or absence of a wide variety of distinct personal features. But which traits can be used to measure and delineate personality?

Through a diligent search of the English language, Allport and Odber compiled a list of nearly 18,000 adjectives used to describe personal traits. But psychologists would be foolish to try to construct 18,000 separate tests so that each personality trait could be distinctively measured. What is needed is some ordered classification so that words describing essentially similar traits are all grouped together.

It might seem reasonable to narrow down the thousands of overlapping trait adjectives to a few dozen broad words by a logical, grammatical approach. Perhaps, for example, words like integrity, rectitude, uprightness, truthfulness, fidelity, frankness, and many others could be subsumed under the psychological trait name of honesty. This has actually been attempted; several different classifications of traits have emerged from sifting the vocabulary used to describe personal attributes. But grammatical definition of traits is not sufficient. The word we use

to describe a trait may only portray some characteristic evident on the outside. A word we believe to be a trait may actually not really describe a significant psychological quality.

Two investigators devised a series of ingenious tests to measure honesty in a number of situations. Fifth- and eighth-grade school children were given tasks, all of which seemed like routine school work to them. Tests in vocabulary, arithmetic, and other subjects were given the pupils, collected and secretly graded that night. When given back the next day, the students were told the correct answers and asked to grade themselves. Another task involved children doing puzzles with a seemingly uncounted large collection of pennies. Pupils were given the impression that they could steal with impunity. Still another interesting situation was a "pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey" type game. Children were to place pencil marks in ten circles drawn on standard sized paper while keeping their eyes tightly closed. Previous trials had revealed that if ones' eyes were shut, the chances for getting more than 10 or 15 dots in the circles out of 30 tries was exceedingly unlikely. Many children placed far more dots correctly in circles than they could have by chance, thus suggesting that they were cheating by peeking to see what they were doing.

Results of the children's performance on the different tasks were carefully compared. The investigators, Hartshorne and May, found very little relation between cheating on one task and on another. If honesty were a meaningful and significant trait, then children dishonest on an arithmetic test would be expected to be dishonest on all others as well. Similarly, if a child were honest in the task involving pennies, and honesty were a true, guiding trait, then they should be honest in all other situations as well. Just the opposite was found. It was impossible to predict whether a student honest in one assignment would cheat or be truthful in the next.

This research suggested that common-sense trait labels can be misleading. Honesty as defined by the investigation with school children may well be a superficial trait seen in some situations but not in others.

**ALLPORT** The American psychologist Gordon Allport attempts to ascertain the personal attributes that actually characterize human behavior. Allport has proposed a system to make order out of the vast number of overlapping descriptive adjectives by dividing traits into common traits, personal dispositions, and cardinal, central, and secondary traits.

*Cardinal* traits are personality characteristics that may literally dominate an individual. For some people a single quality becomes a "ruling passion," so pervading a person's life as to make him seem governed entirely by a single attribute, such as aggressiveness or selfishness. Allport contends that all personalities may possess such outstanding

cardinal traits although they need not always be so powerful as to overshadow others.

*Central* traits are the building blocks of personality. These are the characteristic features that together describe essentially what an individual is. If we are asked to tell what someone else is "really" like we usually list central qualities—fearful, ambitious, moody, and others.

*Secondary* traits, Allport writes, are frequently difficult to observe. These are the very tiny but important tendencies that help distinguish people. Qualities such as shyness, which may never be evident except in special circumstances, are important secondary traits for they reaffirm the fact that a person's responses are never entirely predictable. Each situation may reveal unique traits that have never before evidenced their presence.

The most important trait distinction Allport suggests is that between what are called *common traits* and *personal dispositions*.

A common trait is a category for classifying functionally equivalent forms of behavior in a general population of people. Though influenced by nominal and artifactual considerations, a common trait to some extent reflects veridical and comparable dispositions in many personalities who, because of a common human nature and common culture, develop similar modes of adjusting to their environments, though to varying degrees. [Allport, p. 340.]

Common traits permit the measurement of personality. Since these are characteristics shared by people, one person may be compared to another in order to see how much of a trait is present in each.

Opposed to common, measurable traits are highly individual, elusive *personal dispositions*. These are the qualities that truly delineate the personality. Two people may both be suspicious, but each will be suspicious in his own way, depending upon his own past experiences and beliefs.

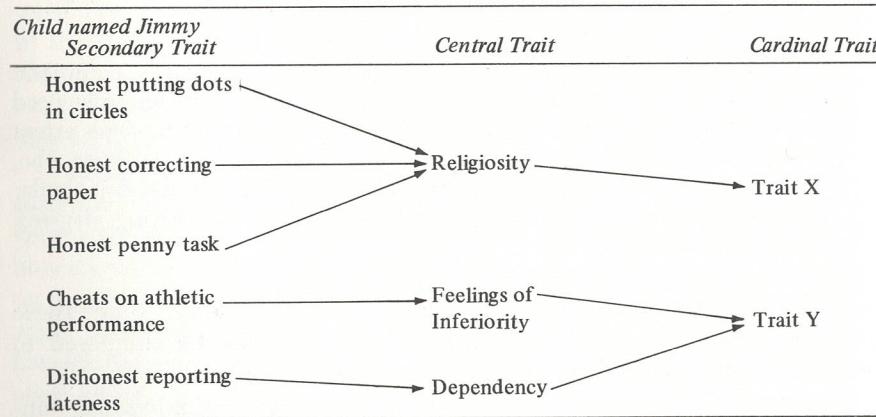
Allport believes that it is the personal dispositions that are at the very core of an individual's functioning. He even suggests how many personal dispositions there may be.

When psychology develops adequate (individual) diagnostic methods for discovering the major lines along which a particular personality is organized (personal dispositions), it may turn out that the number of such foci will normally vary between five and ten. We state this proposition as a hypothesis subject to eventual scientific testing.

Allport's position may be summarized as follows. Within all individuals are a very few personal dispositions, the exact nature of which has

yet to be determined by psychologists. These personal dispositions are highly individual and cannot be measured by common testing techniques. On the other hand because the experiences of growing up are somewhat alike for nearly everyone, people also develop common traits that can be measured by psychological techniques, and can help us to compare one individual to another. Within individuals, dispositions and traits are arranged in hierarchical order from cardinal to central to secondary. The cardinal traits are the single outstanding qualities that give people their unique characteristics, and the central are ordinary traits built into most people by their contact with their environment. Secondary traits are the specific situationally influenced attributes that help to distinguish one individual from another (see Table 7.4).

**Table 7.4 HONESTY: A HYPOTHETICAL ANALYSIS FOR ONE CHILD EMPLOYING ALLPORT'S TRAIT-STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION.**



*Several different tasks supposedly measuring honesty may actually be evaluating three different central and two different cardinal traits. For this reason honesty is not a very pervasive guiding principle for most people. It is determined by deeper traits and specific situations.*

**CRITICISM OF TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS** Trait descriptions (and there are many others in addition to that offered by Allport) cannot tell all there is to know about a person. For knowing a person's traits and dispositions still does not enable any prediction to be made about what he may actually do in a particular situation. A child may be both aggressive and fearful. What will he do, therefore, when confronted with a bully? Will he fight him or run away? When behavior is analyzed into traits, no matter how accurately, we still have no way of knowing how the traits are ordered—i.e., which is more important for an individual in any particular situation.

Second, a trait description is liable to mistake environmental provocation for an internal need. Students heckling a football team may

seem to be extremely aggressive. Yet it would be erroneous to conclude that one particular fan, no matter how loudly he is shouting, is strongly aggressive. In every other situation, except when stimulated by his friends rallying at a game, he may be meek, unassertive, and retiring. Trait theories have not described the circumstances under which a specific trait will be provoked. An individual who is scored as friendly on a trait test may be amicable to those who occupy a similar socio-economic position, but be very hostile to people whose backgrounds are different. Traits are not unchangeable, constantly manifest ingredients of a personality. Further traits, especially those not on the surface, are elusive, changeable, and not easily studied.

With all the shortcomings of trait approaches, few psychologists today deny the value of these descriptions. Traits provide a far more accurate array of variables for evaluating personality than any typology. They permit at least some quantified measurement and comparisons of people, and have enabled personality theorists as well as clinicians to move ahead in their exploration of human behavior.

#### COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATIONS

Both type and trait approaches to the study of personality are often criticized for being relatively fragmentary approaches. They are held to neglect the essential unitary character of the whole organism. More comprehensive approaches are advocated by such critics, and most frequently they cite the work of Sigmund Freud, or designate another psychoanalytic approach as more complete. But although there are comprehensive explanations, these too tend often to deal with disparate aspects of the total person. In addition, the differences among these comprehensive theories will make it apparent that even those approaches attempting to encompass the total human personality are not yet by any means complete or satisfactory.

#### Freud—Psychoanalysis

The most complete theory of personality is the one advanced by Sigmund Freud and some of his followers in the first half of this century. Freud grew up and practiced in Vienna until he was compelled to flee to England in the late 1930s, because of the expanding German dictatorship. In 1881 he had received his medical doctorate and began practicing as a physician. Because he was Jewish he often faced severe hardships and ostracism, which, he wrote in his autobiography, may have helped him later on to withstand the criticism and jibes prompted by his controversial views. Quite early in his medical career, under the stimulus of an older physician, Joseph Breuer, Freud was introduced to emo-

According to Adler, early in life each one of us becomes aware of some deficiencies within ourselves. Often our position in the family, whether we are the youngest, oldest, only boy, or whatever, contributes to our sense of inadequacy. Adler particularly stressed *birth order*, for he felt strongly that individual character was differently influenced depending upon the position each child occupied in the family hierarchy. Eventually the roles that the family forces upon the child and his own real or imagined inferiorities (all the inadequacies together were labeled the *inferiority complex*) produce within the person a set of goals that direct his life-long behavior. Each individual attempts to *compensate* for his own inadequacies and attain mastery, thereby developing a style of life typically his own. If the *life style* includes ambitions or techniques that are unacceptable or deviant, then that individual is psychologically ill.

### Jung

Carl Gustav Jung was also taught by Freud but turned away and became severely critical of him. His views on race and related subjects fit in well with the biases of the European dictatorship in the 1930s and led to his becoming the favorite of the totalitarians of his day. Jung rested his system on notions about a shared or so-called *collective unconscious*, which is transmitted genetically. Within this unconscious there were innate ideas, emotions, symbols, and other representations called *archetypes* which were not so much different among individuals but differed considerably for men and women and from one religious or racial group to another. Some groups, according to Jung, had finer and more uplifting motives, whereas the archetypes of others were less desirable. Later on Jung de-emphasized some of the more controversial aspects of his thinking and moved toward a religious orientation, pointing out how fundamental religious and mystical strivings were within all human beings.

### Horney and Sullivan

The more recent neo- (new) Freudians, such as Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan, attempt to harmonize Freud's thinking with current evidence and specifically fit it to the American culture. Because of the conditions of our own society, both accent the role of anxiety as a motivator of behavior. But they believe that anxiety is generated not by Oedipal or psychosexual trauma, but by the climate created by the parents as they raise their child in contemporary America. The youngster who is rejected, treated with coldness or hostility quickly

develops insecure and anxious dispositions. Sullivan especially emphasized the important *interactions* that continually take place between the individual and the world about him.

For Horney and Sullivan, personality is not due to a gradual biological evolution. Personality growth is attributable to the fact that there is a regular sequence, in Sullivan's language, of *interpersonal events* (such as the birth of a brother, going to school, getting married) that are likely to occur. The first interpersonal experience, that between dependent newborn infant and mother, tends to determine many of the attitudes and expectations that will characterize and shape the individual's interaction with others later in his life. Although stressing the importance of early childhood experiences, as do all analytically influenced theorists, Sullivan and Horney saw personality as developing *continuously* as new kinds of interpersonal situations arise.

### Learning Explanations

Contemporary learning theory has given rise to attempts to understand and explain personality, using the principles uncovered through animal experimentation. Some learning theorists have, in effect, *translated* psychoanalytic principles into contemporary experimental terms. The importance of early experiences is stressed. But whereas Freud attributes biological motives to an area like toilet training, the learning theorists interpret the same events in terms of the formation of *response patterns* that may *generalize* and influence other interactions.

Dollard and Miller, among the first to portray personality in learning theory terms, set forth the principles they use to guide their thinking.

1. The principle of *reinforcement* is substituted for Freud's pleasure principle. The concept of "pleasure" has proved a difficult and slippery notion in the history of psychology. The same is true of the idea that the behavior that occurs is "adaptive," because it is awkward to have to explain maladaptive behavior on the basis of a principle of adaptiveness. The principle of reinforcement is more exact and rigorous than either the pleasure principle or the adaptiveness principle.

2. A naturalistic account is given of the immensely important mechanism of repression. Repression is explained as the *inhibition* of the stimulus-producing responses that mediate thinking and reasoning. Just what is lost by repression and gained by therapy is much clearer in the light of this account.

3. Transference is seen as a special case of a wider concept, *generalization*. This explanation draws attention to the fact that many humdrum habits that facilitate therapy are transferred along with those that obstruct it. The analysis shows also why such intense emotional responses

should be directed toward the therapist in the transference situation (see Chapter Fourteen).

4. Motives, drives, conflict, and other personality phenomena are shown the result of specific stimulus-response learning situations.

Since all that we are—normal or abnormal—is the product of learning, the stimulus-response sequences that together shape personality can also be unlearned. Dollard and Miller, therefore, see the psychotherapist as a special kind of teacher. He must be fully conversant with learning theory so that he can help the patient to unlearn previous faulty adjustment patterns and substitute more adequate new ones. Some of the ways in which the learning theory therapist might try to help alleviate his patient of undesirable symptoms are set forth in Chapter Fourteen.

### *The Self—Carl Rogers*

Theorists like Rogers have brought back into the language of personality the concept of the *self*. Traditionally such notions as the self, identified with older philosophic approaches to human behavior, were avoided because they brought with them all sorts of logical problems. If personality is to be viewed in terms of some entity called a self, does this not then imply a distinction between self (meaning mind) and body? Few psychologists were willing to reconsider such issues they believed disposed of long ago.

The self concept arose because it was shown that, in order to fully understand the behavior of an individual, it is not sufficient just to evaluate his drives and the environment. The person's *feelings and perceptions about himself* must also be considered. The *self* then is the person that the individual himself *believes* he is. This self is an achievement of growth and experience. It consists of all the feelings, attitudes, ideas and desires that the person himself has and is *aware* of. The self is, in short, the person's own conception of what he himself is.

The self-image evolves slowly as the infant begins to differentiate himself from his environment and the people about him. At the same time, too, as others tell him he is clumsy or lovable, the child develops notions about his own worth which may remain with him throughout life. Ultimately the person guides his every behavior by what he believes he can and cannot do. All a person's actions should be regarded as "purposeful, relevant and pertinent to the situation as *he understands it*" (Combs and Snygg). From this view an individual who seems to act irrationally or inconsistently from *our* point of view is, based on his own frame of reference, acting in ways in perfect accord with his ideas about

himself. Some theorists go even further contending, in fact, that behavior is not only consistent with self but directly intended always to protect and enhance the self concept.

One's own view of one's self need not be realistic. Many people are convinced, for example, that their abilities are limited, or that they are too lazy or too easily frightened to undertake any of numberless interesting opportunities and challenges. Therapist's report, for example, that they may have as patients perfectly good-looking and potentially popular men and women who feel so convinced of their undesirability that they avoid social contact. Typically, too, when they are thrown together with other people, as at a party, they remain so convinced of their ineptitude that they do not try to take part. Left alone, because of their own attempt to preserve their self-image as undesirable, they only reinforce the perception of themselves they had to begin with.

Rogers's propositions about personality have been investigated using such special personality assessment devices as Q-sorting techniques, which enable the measurement of self-concepts. Working with their clients, many Rogers-influenced therapists and personality researchers have found that maladjusted clients have quite unrealistic conceptions of themselves. When instructed to describe themselves the way they would like to be, maladjusted individuals produce a picture of their *ideal selves* quite different from the way in which they describe their *real selves*. In fact, the discrepancy between these two sets of self-description, ideal self and real self, can be measured and used as an index of psychological well-being. As poorly adjusted patients get better, the discrepancy score decreases. The difference between the ideal and real selves become smaller. In Rogers's terms, an integration of experiences and motives takes place, arriving eventually at a meaningful, understood, and desirable self-concept.

### THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

Human personality is a *compromise* between what it itself wishes to be and what the environment permits it to become. All people have capabilities and needs that, for many different reasons, are never permitted or enabled to emerge. In this way the conditions under which everyone functions invariably produce frustrations, fears, and other physical and psychological stresses. If the person who eventually emerges is fairly healthy, he is a good composition of stable and enduring personality patterns that have been shaped by the constant challenging interaction with environment. Each obstacle, every stress has been met and in some way overcome or lived with. In short, we describe the give and take of living by saying that the person has *adjusted*,

and continues to adjust so long as he participates in the world (see Table 7.5). The adjustive process can be described in terms of psychological stresses like frustration, anxiety, and conflict on the one hand, and the personality's reaction to such challenges by responses such as aggression, the defense mechanisms or, when the threats are too great, by emotional disorder.

In the following pages, anxiety, frustration, the defense mechanisms and other components of the adjustment process are described. Conflict is detailed in Chapter Fifteen and psychological disorders, the result of the failure of the adjustive process, are described in Chapters Eleven, Twelve, and Thirteen.

### *Frustration and Aggression*

Frustration, meaning the *blocking of goal-directed behavior*, is an inevitable consequence of learning to adjust to the reality of living with others. The only time that humans are without frustration is before birth where every need is immediately satisfied. But as soon as the child is born he experiences hunger and other physical discomforts that are not immediately alleviated. A baby's response to frustration is apparent. He becomes acutely distressed, cries, kicks, and screams. For many adults the response to frustration is a similar aggressive one. The *frustration-aggression* sequence is, in fact, so common that it has been intensively studied.

In order to evaluate the effect of frustration in a fairly realistic setting, groups of nursery-school children were involved in a play situation where they were made to long for highly attractive toys that were inaccessible behind a screen. In one form or another nearly all the children demonstrated their anger. Many became directly aggressive, attacking the barrier blocking the toys or even attacking the adults involved in the research. In addition the children became much more aggressive toward each other. Fighting, kicking, scratching, and other violent outbursts became common.

In a frustration experiment with adults, a group of college students were kept awake all night on the pretense that they were taking part in a valuable investigation of the effects of fatigue. They were also forbidden to smoke or talk, and recreational activities and food that had been promised were deliberately withheld. In response most expressed their anger by making nasty remarks about the experimenter, the character of the investigators, and questioning the sanity of psychologists.

Aggression is best understood through the *frustration-aggression hypothesis*. This hypothesis is based on two complementary assumptions. First that the occurrence of frustration always leads to a tendency

Table 7.5 KEY INFLUENCES IN DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

Common Results if Favorable	Possible Results If Unfavorable
<b>Heredity and constitution</b> High capacity for achievement; adequate physical and intellectual resources; resiliency.	Restricted capacity for achievement; difficulty in solving life problems; predisposition to illness.
<b>Mothering in infancy</b> Physical well-being; feelings of security and self-acceptance; ability to move ahead with developmental tasks.	Poor physical and psychological development; listlessness; feelings of insecurity; high mortality rate in infancy.
<b>Physical care</b> Good health; physical and psychological efficiency.	Retarded or stunted growth; poor resistance to illness; lowered efficiency in all areas.
<b>Love and acceptance</b> Self-acceptance and self-confidence; trust in others; ability to tolerate failure and disappointment; ability to form warm and open relationships with others.	Feelings of insecurity and inadequacy; withdrawal or retaliation, with accompanying behavior problems; low tolerance for stress; inability to give and receive love.
<b>Protection</b> Feeling of adequacy; gradual assumption of responsible self-direction, commensurate with level of maturity.	<i>Overprotection</i> : passivity and dependency; egocentricity; often rebelliousness. <i>Underprotection</i> : failure to develop feelings of adequacy and/or responsibility to others.
<b>Opportunity and stimulation</b> Curiosity; eagerness to learn and to expand horizons.	Intellectual apathy and provincialism; minimal intellectual growth.
<b>Structuring and discipline</b> Clear values and ethical concepts; strong inner controls; confidence in ability to handle situations.	Confused concepts of right and wrong, of acceptable and unacceptable behavior; weak inner controls.
<b>Guidance and assistance</b> Adequate competencies; integrated values; reliable frame of reference; ability to meet developmental tasks.	Continued reliance on trial and error; important gaps in learning; identification with faulty models.
<b>Success and recognition</b> Self-confidence; ability to make best use of learning potential, desire for further achievement; ability to tolerate failure and use it constructively.	<i>Too much failure</i> : feelings of inadequacy; impaired learning ability. <i>Too easy success</i> : unsureness about actual competency; unrealistic aspirations; low tolerance for failure.
<b>Frustration and trauma</b> Success in handling moderate stress increases self-confidence and ability to tolerate and handle frustrations.	Feelings of insecurity and inadequacy; withdrawal to avoid further hurt; special vulnerability to later stress.

Source: James C. Coleman, *Personality Dynamics and Effective Behavior* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1960), p. 105. Copyright © 1960 by Scott, Foresman and Company. Reprinted by permission.

for an organism to respond aggressively; second, whenever an organism responds aggressively, this in and of itself is evidence of underlying frustration. These general rules have been clarified by detailing the particular conditions that acted as important qualifiers of aggression in each case.

The greater the strength of the drive or the pulling power of the goal that was interfered with, or frustrated, the greater the tendency to aggression. Similarly, the greater the degree of interference, as well as the more continually interference occurs (lots of little frustrations), the greater the tendency to aggression. Put in another way, aggression is increasingly likely as the frustrations become more and more serious. The individual can put up with interference when he is not strongly driven toward a goal; he can even learn to live with the occasional frustration of an important desire. But when the frustrations become severe, aggressive responses are increasingly likely to occur.

The authors of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears were aware that aggressive responses are punished and are, therefore, modified by environmental conditions. Aggressive impulses they stated, may be weakened by anticipated punishment. The child dare not strike his teacher although her work assignments may produce severe frustration. Aggressive urges are, consequently, *displaced* when the frustration source can not be *directly* attacked. A parallel observation, made after the formulation of the original hypothesis, was that aggression could *generalize*. Like other learned responses, under proper stimulus conditions, an organism may broaden his reaction to include all sorts of situations not originally involved. An adult male, for example, extremely frustrated by his wife and unable to express aggression directly against her may find satisfaction by being hostile toward his secretary. Since these aggressive responses are unrestrained, he may learn to generalize them to all his employees and others who are subordinate to him.

But although most psychologists still adhere to some variation of the position that frustration and aggression are *inseparably linked*, some recent theorists have attempted to do away with what they consider a potentially misleading association. Child and Waterhouse argue that, when goal-directed behavior is interfered with, the nature of the original motivation is changed and many kinds of responses may occur. One should not argue that, because some become withdrawn, others regress, and still others project, these are all just variations of hidden aggressive responses. They contend that there is no single mode of response to frustration. Instead frustration leads to a number of responses, including aggressive ones as well as those that are incompatible with aggression. With this explanation in mind, we can predict that frustration

may often lead to some form of aggressive behavior. But this is true only because we are dealing with subjects who are part of our culture and have learned aggressive responses. In other cultures, or for some unique individuals in our own society, where aggressive responses are de-emphasized, frustration may not always lead to aggression.

**DIRECTION OF AGGRESSION** A useful way of summarizing specifically aggressive reactions was first proposed by Rosenzweig, who prepared a threefold division of the *direction* in which aggressive impulses might proceed. Aggressive reactions may be

**EXTRAPUNITIVE** The individual blames the external world, reacts with anger and hostility toward others and strikes out against them.

**INTROPUNITIVE** The individual blames himself, reacts with feelings of remorse and guilt, or otherwise tries to correct his own behavior.

**IMPUNITIVE** The individual passes over frustrating situations making light of the facts as if they were accidents and no one or anything is to blame.

### Anxiety and Defense

The concept of anxiety is central to the description of the adjustive process. In the very broadest sense, the word describes the emotion arising from *all possible threats* to the personality, whether originating from conflict, frustration, or infectious disease. At the same time all the possible responses an individual makes, ranging from attempts to substitute for an unattainable goal to the delusions of the paranoid psychotic, may be viewed as the end results of different degrees of anxiety.

Anxiety should be distinguished from the simple word fear. Fear connotes fright attached to a *specific* stimulus or event. Anxiety is more diffuse and vague. Often it is difficult to pinpoint or name the source of the serious uneasiness an individual may be experiencing. Similarly fear is immediate, whereas anxiety is an *anticipatory* feeling. That is, one fears something now, for example, being frightened of flying in a flimsy-looking private aircraft. Anxiety is a vague foreboding, like being extremely worried about one's ability to successfully complete college, long before one is actually enrolled.

Anxiety is typically accompanied by physical symptoms. All the autonomic responses activated by emotion (Chapter Five) produce symptoms that are typical of prolonged and chronic apprehension. These physical symptoms may range from mild headaches, constant fatigue, and vague aches and pains to severe gastrointestinal disturbances, circulatory and heart difficulties, and other *psychophysiological* difficulties (Chapter Twelve).

The ability of anxiety to produce severe physical symptoms has

# 3 DIRECTIONS OF AGGRESSION

234

THE FUNDAMENTAL PROCESSES

BLAMES  
EXTERNAL  
FORCES



**Fig. 7.2** Direction of Aggression. A test consisting of cartoons similar to the above has been constructed by Rosenzweig and used to measure the direction of aggression. Subjects are required to fill in the response they believe the person would make in the situation depicted. Sample responses have been put in the balloons above and respectively depict extrapunitive, intropunitive, and impunitive aggressive reactions.

PERSONALITY 235

led some scientists to speculate that this process may be responsible for the magical deaths reported by anthropologists and other observers in primitive societies. In some islands of the West Indies, it has been reported that an inhabitant who violates a powerful social or religious taboo may be "cursed" by a sacred potentate. The accused victim, perhaps isolated by his relatives and acquaintances, withdraws to his own hut and for no apparent reason sometimes seems to wither away. The famous physiologist W. B. Cannon, who produced much of the information we now have about the autonomic nervous system and homeostasis, concluded that extreme anxiety was responsible for such "voodoo deaths." Cannon believed that the curse or other psychological punishment caused an exaggerated fear, which produced excessive secretions of adrenalin and other endocrines responsive to severe emotion. The massive outpouring of hormones caused a drastic drop in blood pressure, loss of body fluid to the tissues, decreases in effective metabolism, and other symptoms associated with medical shock. At the same time that the symptoms become severe, they further reinforce the psychological fear, which in turn increases the severity of the symptoms even further.

Anxiety is a *motivator* in that the organism will do nearly anything to relieve anxiety. Hence anxiety is often an effective drive to stimulate learning. But very high anxiety, like other extremes of emotion or motivation, may interfere with adjustment or learning.

An investigator selected college students who were either very high or low in anxiety. He matched the two groups for scholastic ability and found that average students with high anxiety were far more likely to do badly than similarly talented students whose anxiety scores were low. Interestingly students who had very little or, conversely, a great deal of academic ability did not seem particularly affected by their level of anxiety. Dull students did equally badly in school whether or not they had very high or low anxiety scores. The brightest individuals, on the other hand, got high grades, again despite low or high anxiety scores. Only the middle range of students, those who constitute the vast majority, were adversely affected by anxiety.

Anxiety motivates the individual, whether he is aware of it or not, to behave or respond in such a way so as to reduce it. Freud was among the first to suggest that the *personality maintains its normal functioning*, that is overcomes anxiety, by employing several adjustive techniques. As long as the techniques called *defense mechanisms*, function adequately helping the organism adjust to anxiety, the individual is considered healthy. When the mechanisms themselves break down, or dominate behavior, the person may be seriously ill. The mechanisms intended to facilitate adjustment are discussed individually: