

# Social Learning Theory and Humanism Applied to Personality

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will discuss how the social learning theory and humanist theory explain personality. You will also consider how our self and social awareness skill relates to your belief in yourself and happiness at work and at home. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

## 1. Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is an expansion on behavioral learning theories. This theory states that there is more at work than just a stimulus-response in reaction to different kinds of learning situations. A person is not passive in this process; there are interactions within a person and between people that also affect learning and personality.

Albert Bandura is a psychologist that performed the “Bobo doll” experiments in 1961-1963 . A Bobo doll is an inflatable clown that can be knocked down, and it will pop back up—a popular toy that kids would play with at this time. In these experiments, 72 children were placed in different rooms containing toys. Some of those children had an adult who would come in with them.

Some of these children and adults would also be in a situation in which the adults would display aggressive behavior towards the Bobo doll. Sometimes they would punch it, hit it with a hammer, throw it, etc. The children in the rooms with these aggressive adults were more likely to show aggressive behavior towards the doll after the adult left the room.

Bandura called this observational learning, which is learning about a behavior from watching another person model it. What the children did was called **imitation**, which is performing the same, or similar, behavior observed in another person.

This influenced what Bandura called social learning theory, which is an approach to personality that incorporates behavioral learning theory with cognitive and social theories. Under Bandura's social learning theory, the cognitive aspect also has an effect on the behavioral and social.

There are three major areas to look at that show the elements important to personality, as well as the individual differences in social learning theory:

### Major Aspects

of Social Learning Theory	Description	Example
<b>Expectancy</b>	Refers to a person's thoughts about a reward or the effect of a behavior. If a person expects a reward to occur, this can influence whether a behavior is performed.	If you offer somebody money for completing chores, they're more likely to do it.
<b>Reinforcement value</b>	Represents the person's individual idea about the value of an activity. Different people have different ideas about what is rewarding. Internal reinforcement is the way a person motivates themselves.	A sticker might be very rewarding for a small child, but if you try to give a sticker to a teenager, it's likely not going to motivate them to perform a behavior.
<b>Self-efficacy</b>	Is a person's belief that they can perform some task or action. This belief can affect whether or not an action will be performed. If a person thinks that they're likely to succeed, they are more likely to do something.	You're more likely to ask a person out on a date if you think that you're going to succeed and that person will say yes. You're less likely to do it if you think you're going to be rejected by that person.



### Self and Social Awareness: Skill Reflect

How do expectancy, reinforcement value, and self-efficacy relate to the workplace? People are paid to do their jobs and money can be seen as a reward. Many people find value in the work they do. But what about self-efficacy? Do you feel confident about every task you're asked to take on at work?



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Imitation

Modeling or repeating behaviors we have seen others perform.

#### Expectancy

We learn to expect a response or a consequence following a behavior; from this, we learn to anticipate the response if we engage in a behavior.

#### Reinforcement Value

Costs/benefits have different values depending upon the individuals.

#### Self-Efficacy

Belief in our own ability to perform a behavior, that we are competent to accomplish specific tasks.

## 2. Humanism

Humanism is a theory of psychology that emphasizes a person's perspective and the growth potential of people; it is the psychology of **human nature**. Human nature refers to all the traits, behaviors, and potentials

that are unique to us as human beings.

Humanism is what evolved into the positive psychology movement. This movement focused on human strengths, virtues, creativity, and free will. This is opposed to ideas of behaviorism and psychodynamic theory, which are focused on negative aspects, and put human behavior outside of a person's control. Humanism focuses on people as agents within their own lives that are able to help themselves in some way. The **self and social awareness skill** ties in here with the idea that the more you know yourself the more you can enjoy and influence the world around you.

The two major figures in humanism are Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. They are the ones who developed a lot of the initial theories. They were American psychologists in the mid-1900s that focused particularly on psychotherapy and improving people's lives.

Within humanism, there are two important areas to focus on:

- Subjective experience
- Positive self-regard



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Human Nature

The traits, behaviors, and potentials unique to human beings

## 2a. Subjective Experience

The first area to discuss is on **subjective experience** and how it can be important to a person. Subjective experience is a person's point of view about an experience. It is not focused solely on what happened, but how a person perceived it to happen. This can be just as important in psychology as the actual event itself.

➞ **EXAMPLE** For instance, a person who is depressed might be having negative thoughts about all things around them. These negative thoughts might not necessarily be true, but these thoughts may still cause that person psychological harm.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Subjective Experience

A person's point of view of an experience; not just what happened, but what you think happened

## 2b. Positive Self-Regard/Self Esteem

A person's subjective experience can also influence their views of themselves. This is important in humanism because it can lead to understanding how to become a better person.

This leads to the second concept, which is **positive self-regard/self esteem**. Self esteem is considering yourself to be a good, worthwhile person, or having positive views about yourself.

Early childhood experiences can especially be important in the development of feelings about self and the standard by which a person judges their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to be good. These are what are known as conditions of worth, which can affect a person's positive self-regard.

➞ **EXAMPLE** For example, being told as a child that it's bad to cry can lead a person to have bad feelings about themselves when they feel the urge to cry later on in life.

The opposite of having these conditions of worth is what Rogers referred to as unconditional positive regard. This is approval or acceptance of a person, regardless of what they do or say. Rogers considered this to be

the ideal for development because it makes a child feel worthwhile regardless of their actions. It encourages positive growth over time.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### **Positive Self-Regard/Self Esteem**

Thinking of one's self as a lovable, good, worthwhile person

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## 3. Self and Self-Actualization

One key aspect of humanist theory is the idea of self and how it can lead to our personality. Both of these psychologists wanted to identify what were the best possible conditions for human growth, and that led to the development of theories of self and **self-actualization**.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### **Self-Actualization**

Congruence of ideal self, real self, and self-concept

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## 4. Rogers' Theory of Self

Rogers' theory of self stated that a person's self, or personality, is composed of three different parts:

- **Self-concept** or **self-image**, which is a person's image or idea of himself or herself. This includes self-esteem and a person's estimation of their worth. Other people's opinions can have a huge influence on what a person thinks of themselves, and this influence can create **conditions of worth**.

➔ **EXAMPLE** If a parent says that their child is a bad or naughty person, then that child is more likely to think that they're a bad or naughty person, and their behavior will reflect that.

- **Ideal self**, which is an image that a person has of what they would like to be. It might not necessarily be possible to be your ideal self. This ideal self can be shaped by a person's values, culture, and upbringing.
- **Real self** or true self, which is what a person is actually like. It includes elements like a person's abilities, their physical appearance, and anything that would contribute to who they are as a person.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### **Rogers' Theory of Self**

Emphasizes current, subjective understanding; self-concept, real self, ideal self

##### **Self-Concept/Self-Image**

Our total perception of ourselves; mental picture based on our perception (positive and negative) of our traits, behaviors, abilities

##### **Conditions of Worth**

Internalized standards of judgments that evaluate our behavior, emotions, and thoughts

##### **Ideal Self**

Who we would like to be

### Real Self

True representation of the person we are

## 4a. Incongruence

According to Rogers, the way that these three aspects of self interact leads to our personality. **Incongruence** is when these aspects of personality are unbalanced, meaning there are differences between our self-concept, our ideal self, and/or our true self. An individual is not aligned as a person. A person might have unrealistic expectations about what they're actually able to achieve. Their self-concept and ideal self are apart from each other, which leads to stress and anxiety.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Incongruence

Inaccurate self-image; self-image differs from the ideal self

## 4b. Congruence

The ideal situation is **congruence**, which is when a person is honest and has come to terms with what their abilities and potentials are. All aspects do not have to match exactly, but should be very closely aligned. Rogers referred to this as a **fully-functioning persona**. This is a person that has found a balance between their thoughts and feelings, and they have a balanced personality. A fully-functioning persona is a person that's congruent.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Congruence

Parts of self are in alignment and balanced

#### Fully-Functioning Persona

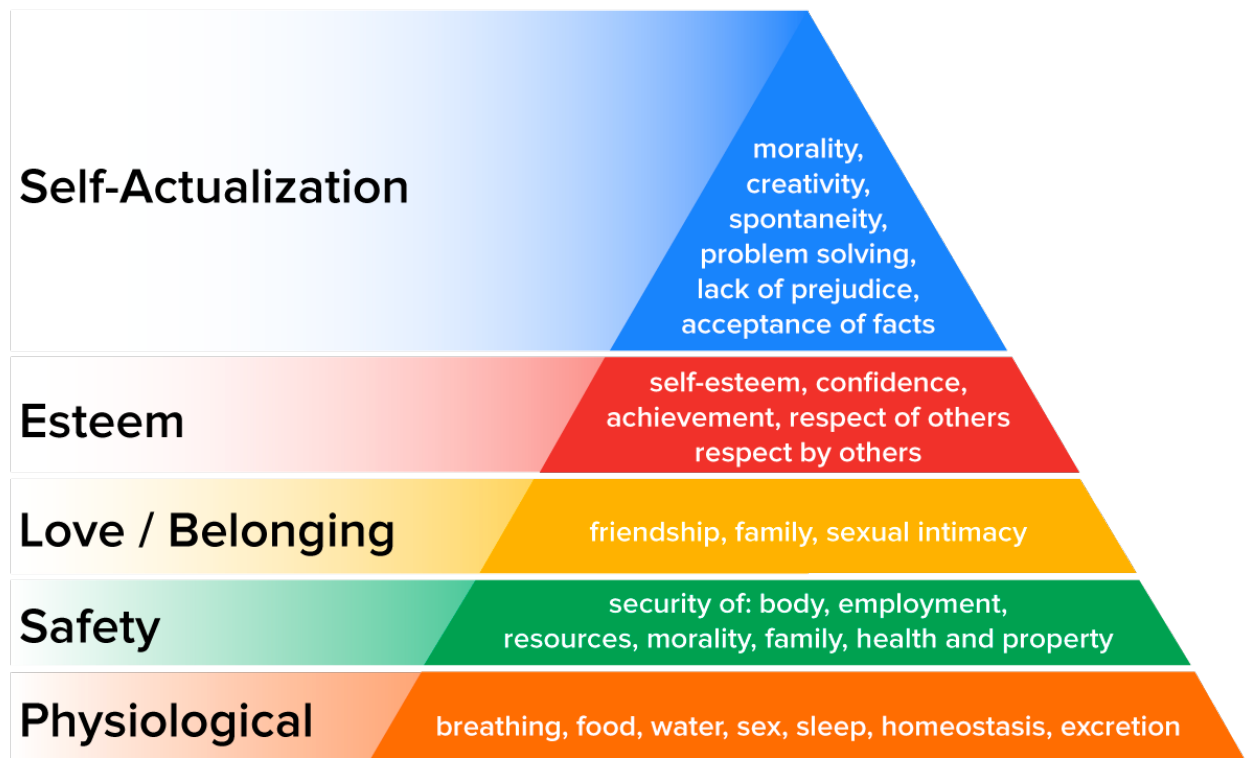
Person who strives to live in harmony with their present impulses and feelings

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# 5. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow expanded on Rogers' ideas of self, and said that there were certain needs that a person had which were not necessarily simply internal. Having both the internal and external needs met allows a person to become fully functioning. This is what Maslow called his hierarchy of needs. It's what you would consider to be the soil, or what's necessary for a person to grow.

You remember from a previous lesson that **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** are external and internal conditions necessary for a person to become fully functioning; lower needs must be met prior to higher needs, but higher needs must be met for a fulfilling life.



At the bottom are basic kinds of needs. These are physiological needs, which are food, water, shelter, as well as a sense of safety. Above that are social and emotional needs that a person might have, like the need for love and belonging. Moving further up is the need for esteem and cognitive needs, and at the top is self-actualization.

Maslow's idea is that a person needs to fulfill the lower needs first. A person needs to be able to feel safe and have what they need to survive before they can go on to the stages at the top. According to Maslow, those higher needs must be reached in order to have a fulfilled life



### Self and Social Awareness: Skill In Action

How does self-actualization impact you at work? Imagining working every day in a job that was fulfilling. You'd wake up excited to work, ready to face the day, eager to solve problems. You might not even see what you do as "work." Instead, it might be a passion because it is in such close alignment with your true self. This doesn't have to be a dream. By strengthening your self awareness, you can find work that fulfills you.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

External and internal conditions necessary for a person to become fully functioning; lower needs must be met prior to higher needs, but higher needs must be met for a fulfilling life



## SUMMARY

**Social learning theory** posits that there is more than just stimulus-response in reaction to different kinds of learning situations. It states that there are interactions within a person as well as between people that play an important role. This was demonstrated in the “Bobo doll” experiments, which showed that children could learn through observational learning and would perform imitation of behavior.

There are three **major aspects of social learning theory**: expectancy, reinforcement (both internal and external), and self-efficacy.

Humanism is a theory that focuses on a person’s perspective and growth potential. It states that people are the agents of their own lives. There are two important areas of the theory to focus on. **Subjective experience** is the view a person has on an event or experience. This looks at how the viewpoint can be just as important as the actual event itself.

**Positive self-regard** is the positive view of self. Early childhood experiences can have an important impact on feelings of self and the standards by which people judge themselves. Conditions of worth can affect a person’s self-esteem, and unconditional positive regard is considered to be ideal for developing positive growth. With strong self and social skill, you can better know your strengths and abilities. You can also work to focus on things that matter and are important to you in your personal and professional life.

**Rogers' theory of self** stated that the personality is made of three parts: self-concept, ideal self, and real self. When these are aligned, it creates congruence, which is the ideal state. When congruence is achieved, it will lead to a fully-functioning persona.

Maslow expanded on this by saying that a person has certain needs that must be met first. **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** depicts lower needs, which are physical ones like food, shelter, and safety. The highest level is self-actualization, which is achieved when an individual has a fully-functioning persona.

Good luck!

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## TERMS TO KNOW

### Conditions of Worth

Internalized standards of judgments that evaluate our behavior, emotions, and thoughts.

### Congruence

Parts of self are in alignment and balanced.

### Expectancy

We learn to expect a response or a consequence following a behavior; from this, we learn to anticipate the response if we engage in a behavior.

**Fully-Functioning Persona**

Person who strives to live in harmony with their present impulses and feelings.

**Human Nature**

The traits, behaviors, and potentials unique to human beings.

**Ideal Self**

Who we would like to be.

**Imitation**

Modeling or repeating behaviors we have seen others perform.

**Incongruent**

Inaccurate self-image; self-image differs from the ideal self.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

External and internal conditions necessary for a person to become fully functioning; lower needs must be met prior to higher needs, but higher needs must be met for a fulfilling life.

**Positive Self-Regard/Self Esteem**

Thinking of one's self as a lovable, good, worthwhile person.

**Real Self**

True representation of the person we are.

**Reinforcement Value**

Costs/benefits have different values depending upon the individuals.

**Rogers' Theory of Self**

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**Self-Actualization**

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**Self-Concept/Self-Image**

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