

Personality theory notes essay sample

[Psychology](#)



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1, 000- to 1, 200-word paper comparing the personality theories of Freud, Jung, Rogers, and Maslow. Outline how each theorist contributed to the study of personality. Identify the features of each theory that differentiate them from the other personality theories. Personality Develops Gradually

Can be influenced

Can be reinforced Personalities develop over time and are complicated. They are influenced by many different things including the external environment, reinforcement and conditioning. Is the ego always caught in the middle?

Basically yes, and the pressures on it can be intense. In addition to meeting the conflicting demands of the id and superego, the overworked ego must deal with external reality. According to Freud, you feel anxiety when your ego is threatened or overwhelmed. Impulses from the id cause neurotic anxiety when the ego can barely keep them under control. Threats of punishment from the superego cause moral anxiety. Each person develops habitual ways of calming these anxieties, and many resort to using ego-defense mechanisms to lessen internal conflicts. Defense mechanisms are mental processes that deny, distort, or otherwise block out sources of threat and anxiety. Carl Jung (1875–1961)

Like Freud, Jung called the conscious part of the personality the ego.

However, he further noted that a persona, or “ mask,” exists between the ego and the outside world. The persona is the “ public self” presented to others. It is most apparent when we adopt particular roles or hide our deeper feelings. 12. 4. 4 Carl Rogers viewed the self as an entity that emerges from personal experience. We tend to become aware of experiences that match our self-image, and exclude those that are incongruent with it.

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12. 4. 5 The incongruent person has a highly unrealistic self-image and/or a mismatch between the self-image and the ideal self. The congruent or fully functioning person is flexible and open to experiences and feelings. Jung believed that, from the beginning of time, all humans have had experiences with birth, death, power, god figures, mother and father figures, animals, the earth, energy, evil, rebirth, and so on. According to Jung, such universals create archetypes (ARE-keh-types: original ideas, images, or patterns). Archetypes, found in the collective unconscious, are unconscious images that cause us to respond emotionally to symbols of birth, death, energy, animals, evil, and the like. Jung used the term personal unconscious to refer to what Freud simply called the unconscious: a mental storehouse for a single individual's experiences, feelings, and memories. collective unconscious, or mental storehouse for unconscious ideas and images shared by all humans.

Two particularly important archetypes are the anima (female principle) and the animus (male principle). In men, the anima is an unconscious, idealized image of women. This image is based, in part, on real experiences with women (the man's mother, sister, friends). However, the experiences men have had with women throughout history form the true core of the anima. The reverse is true of women, who possess an animus, or idealized image of men. Jung regarded the self archetype as the most important of all. The self archetype represents the unity of the center of the self. Its existence causes a gradual movement toward balance, wholeness, and harmony within the personality. Jung felt that we become richer and more completely human when a balance is achieved between the conscious and unconscious, the

anima and animus, thinking and feeling, sensing and intuiting, the persona and the ego, introversion and extroversion

Humanism is sometimes called a “third force” in that it is opposed to both psychoanalytic and behaviorist theories of personality. Humanism is a reaction to the pessimism of psychoanalytic theory. It rejects the Freudian view of personality as a battleground for instincts and unconscious forces. Instead, humanists view human nature—the traits, qualities, potentials, and behavior patterns most characteristic of the human species—as inherently good. Humanists also oppose the machine-like overtones of the behaviorist view of human nature, which we will encounter shortly. We are not, they say, merely a bundle of moldable responses. To a humanist, the person you are today is largely the product of all the choices you have made. Humanists also emphasize immediate subjective experience (private perceptions of reality) rather than prior learning. They believe that there are as many “real worlds” as there are people. To understand behavior, we must learn how a person subjectively views the world—what is “real” for her or him.

Abraham Maslow 1908-1970 What steps can be taken to promote self-actualization? idea of self-actualization: the process of fully developing personal potentials a continuous search for personal fulfillment

Maslow made few specific recommendations about how to proceed. There is no magic formula for leading a more creative life. Self-actualization is primarily a process, not a goal or an end point. As such, it requires hard work, patience, and commitment. Nevertheless, some helpful suggestions can be gleaned from his writings

Characteristics of Self-Actualizers

A self-actualizer is a person who is living creatively and fully using his or her potentials. In his studies, Maslow found that self-actualizers share many similarities. Whether famous or unknown, well-schooled or uneducated, rich or poor, self-actualizers tend to fit the following profile:

1. Efficient perceptions of reality. Self-actualizers are able to judge situations correctly and honestly. They are very sensitive to the fake and dishonest.
2. Comfortable acceptance of self, others, and nature. Self-actualizers accept their own human nature with all its flaws. The shortcomings of others and the contradictions of the human condition are accepted with humor and tolerance.
3. Spontaneity. Maslow's subjects extended their creativity into everyday activities. Actualizers tend to be unusually alive, engaged, and spontaneous.
4. Task centering. Most of Maslow's subjects had a mission to fulfill in life or some task or problem outside of themselves to pursue. Humanitarians such as Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa represent this quality.
5. Autonomy. Self-actualizers are free from reliance on external authorities or other people. They tend to be resourceful and independent.
6. Continued freshness of appreciation. The self-actualizer seems to constantly renew appreciation of life's basic goodness. A sunset or a flower will be experienced as intensely time after time as it was at first. There is an "innocence of vision," like that of an artist or child.
7. Fellowship with humanity. Maslow's subjects felt a deep identification with

others and the human situation in general. 8. Profound interpersonal relationships. The interpersonal relationships of self-actualizers are marked by deep, loving bonds (Hanley & Abell, 2002).

9. Comfort with solitude. Despite their satisfying relationships with others, self-actualizing persons value solitude and are comfortable being alone (Sumerlin & Bundrick, 1996).

10. Nonhostile sense of humor. This refers to the wonderful capacity to laugh at oneself. It also describes the kind of humor a man like Abraham Lincoln had. Lincoln probably never made a joke that hurt anybody. His wry comments were a gentle prodding of human shortcomings.

11. Peak experiences. All of Maslow's subjects reported the frequent occurrence of peak experiences (temporary moments of self-actualization). These occasions were marked by feelings of ecstasy, harmony, and deep meaning. Self-actualizers reported feeling at one with the universe, stronger and calmer than ever before, filled with light, beautiful and good, and so forth. 1. Be willing to change. Begin by asking yourself, "Am I living in a way that is deeply satisfying to me and that truly expresses me?" If not, be prepared to make changes in your life. Indeed, ask yourself this question often and accept the need for continual change.

2. Take responsibility. You can become an architect of self by acting as if you are personally responsible for every aspect of your life. Shouldering responsibility in this way helps end the habit of blaming others for your own shortcomings.

3. Examine your motives. Self-discovery involves an element of risk. If your behavior is restricted by a desire for safety or security, it may be time to test some limits. Try to make each life decision a choice for growth, not a

response to fear or anxiety.

4. Experience honestly and directly. Wishful thinking is another barrier to personal growth. Self-actualizers trust themselves enough to accept all kinds of information without distorting it to fit their fears and desires. Try to see yourself as others do. Be willing to admit, “ I was wrong,” or, “ I failed because I was irresponsible.”

5. Make use of positive experiences. Maslow considered peak experiences temporary moments of self-actualization. Therefore, you might actively repeat activities that have caused feelings of awe, amazement, exaltation, renewal, reverence, humility, fulfillment, or joy.

6. Be prepared to be different. Maslow felt that everyone has a potential for “ greatness,” but most fear becoming what they might. As part of personal growth, be prepared to trust your own impulses and feelings; don’t automatically judge yourself by the standards of others. Accept your uniqueness.

7. Get involved. With few exceptions, self-actualizers tend to have a mission or “ calling” in life. For these people, “ work” is not done just to fill deficiency needs, but to satisfy higher yearnings for truth, beauty, community, and meaning. Get personally involved and committed. Turn your attention to problems outside yourself.

8. Assess your progress. There is no final point at which one becomes self-actualized. It’s important to gauge your progress frequently and to renew your efforts. If you feel bored at school, at a job, or in a relationship, consider it a challenge. Have you been taking responsibility for your own personal growth? Almost any activity can be used as a chance for self-enhancement if it is approached creatively. In summary, self-actualizers

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feel safe, nonanxious, accepted, loved, loving, and alive. tried to investigate self-actualization empirically, his choice of people for study was subjective. Undoubtedly, there are many ways to make full use of personal potential. Maslow's primary contribution was to draw our attention to the possibility of lifelong personal growth. Personalities develop over time and are complicated. They are influenced by many different things including the external environment, reinforcement and conditioning. Carl Rogers 1902 1987

12. 4. 4 Carl Rogers viewed the self as an entity that emerges from personal experience. We tend to become aware of experiences that match our self-image, and exclude those that are incongruent with it.

12. 4. 5 The incongruent person has a highly unrealistic selfimageand/or a mismatch between the self-image and the ideal self. The congruent or fully functioning person is flexible and open to experiences and feelings. maximize our potentials, we must accept information about ourselves as honestly as possible. In accord with his thinking, researchers have found that people with a close match between their self-image and ideal self tend to be socially poised, confident, and resourceful. Those with a poor match tend to be depressed, anxious, and insecure

Self TheoryAccording to psychologists Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius(1986), our ideal self is only one of a number of possible selves (persons we could become or are afraid of becoming). Possible selves translate our hopes, fears, fantasies, and goals into specific images of who we could be. Thus, a beginning law student might picture herself as a successful attorney, an

enterprising college student might imagine himself as an Internet entrepreneur, and a person on a diet might imagine both slim and grossly obese possible selves. Such images tend to direct our future behavior. Of course, almost everyone over age 30 has probably felt the anguish of realizing that some cherished possible selves will never be realized. Nevertheless, there is value in asking yourself not just “ Who am I?” but also “ Who would I like to become?” As you do, Of course, almost everyone over age 30 has probably felt the anguish of realizing that some cherished possible selves will never be realized.

Nevertheless, there is value in asking yourself not just “ Who am I?” but also “ Who would I like to become?” As you do, emphasized the human capacity for inner peace and happiness. The fully functioning person, he said, lives in harmony with his or her deepest feelings and impulses. Such people are open to their experiences, and they trust their inner urges and intuitions. Rogers believed that this attitude is most likely to occur when a person receives ample amounts of love and acceptance from others. How does development of the self contribute to later personality functioning? Rogers believed that positive and negative evaluations by others cause children to develop internal standards of evaluation called conditions of worth. In other words, we learn that some actions win our parents’ love and approval, whereas others are rejected. More important, parents may label some feelings as bad or wrong. For example, a child might be told that it is wrong to feel angry toward a brother or sister—even when anger is justified. Likewise, a little boy might be told that he must not cry or show fear, two very normal emotions.

Learning to evaluate some experiences or feelings as “ good” and others as “ bad” is directly related to a later capacity for self-esteem, positive self-evaluation, or positive self-regard, to use Rogers’ term. To think of yourself as a good, lovable, worthwhile person, your behavior and experiences must match your internal conditions of worth. The problem is that this can cause incongruence by leading to the denial of many true feelings and experiences. To put it simply, Rogers blamed many adult emotional problems on attempts to live by the standards of others (Ashcraft, 2012). He believed that congruence and self-actualization are encouraged by replacing conditions of worth with organismic valuing (a natural, undistorted, full-body reaction to an experience).

Organismic valuing is a direct, gut-level response to life that avoids the filtering and distortion of incongruence. It involves trusting one’s own feelings and perceptions. Organismic valuing is most likely to develop, Rogers felt, when children (or adults) receive unconditional positive regard (unshakable love and approval) from others. That is, when they are “ prized” as worthwhile human beings, just for being themselves, without any conditions or strings attached. Although this may be a luxury few people enjoy, we are more likely to move toward our ideal selves if we receive affirmation and support from a close partner (Personality Structure and Dynamics Rogers’ theory emphasizes the self, a flexible and changing perception of personal identity. Much behavior can be understood as an attempt to maintain consistency between our self-image and our actions. (Your self-image is a total subjective perception of your body and

personality.) For example, people who think of themselves as kind tend to be considerate in most situations.

Let's say I know a person who thinks she is kind, but she really isn't. How does that fit Rogers' theory? According to Rogers, we allow experiences that match our self-image into awareness, where they gradually change the self. Information or feelings inconsistent with the self-image are said to be incongruent. Thus, a person who thinks she is kind but really isn't is in a state of incongruence. In other words, there is a discrepancy between her experiences and her self-image. As another example, it would be incongruent to believe that you are a person who "never gets angry" if you spend much of each day seething inside.

Experiences seriously incongruent with the self-image can be threatening and are often distorted or denied conscious recognition. Blocking, denying, or distorting experiences prevents the self from changing. This creates a gulf between the self-image and reality. As the self-image grows more unrealistic, the incongruent person becomes confused, vulnerable, dissatisfied, or seriously maladjusted (• Figure 12. 6). In line with Rogers' observations, a study of college students confirmed that being authentic is vital for healthy functioning. That is, we need to feel that our behavior accurately expresses who we are (Sheldon et al., 1997). Please note, however, that being authentic doesn't mean you can do whatever you want. Being true to yourself is no excuse for acting irresponsibly or ignoring the feelings of others (Kernis & Goldman, 2005).

When your self-image is consistent with what you really think, feel, do, and experience, you are best able to actualize your potentials. Rogers also considered it essential to have congruence between the self-image and the ideal self. The ideal self is similar to Freud's ego ideal. It is an image of the person you would most like to be. Is it really incongruent not to live up to your ideal self? Rogers was aware that we never fully attain our ideals. Nevertheless, the greater the gap between the way you see yourself and the way you would like to be, the more tension and anxiety you will experience.