

Learning reflection journal: theories of personality



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Over the past 7 weeks, we have learned a lot about the different theories of personality from many great personality theorists. We have discussed them all starting with Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory and on through how even culture affects an individual's personality. We have learned about the different research methods that are used to study personality and how to identify the characteristics of abnormal personality development. Through the weeks we have learned how to take a theory that we have learned about and apply it to a situation or experience we have had in our own lives. The purpose of this journal was to give us a chance to choose something we learned through the week that we found interesting and discuss it further as to what we found interesting about it and apply it to our own experiences in the world.

The first journal entry I wrote is about Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory. I found his theory interesting in how he felt the mind is made up of three elements. Those elements being the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. In week three's journal, I found Jeffrey Gray's Reinforcement Sensitivity theory of interest. Gray looks at two biological systems as important and they are the behavioral inhibition system and the behavioral activation system. These systems oversee our response to being rewarded and/or punished. Gray adds to Pavlov's concept of orienting to danger and attraction by use of conditioning. Week five brought in Rollo May, an existential psychologist who placed focus on anxiety. This struck an interest in me as I suffer from mild anxiety. Existential psychology sees anxiety as an element of our existence. In week six, gender came up in the discussion on personality. Here I found the behaviorist approach as interesting. In this approach gender aspects of

personality are attained through modeling, learning, and conditioning. Drugs and Designer Personalities struck an interest with me in week seven. Drug use has a big role in an individual's personality. This struck an interest in me as I have seen how drugs affect personality firsthand by being put on anxiety medication myself and seeing how illegal street drugs can change a person's personality by observing a close friend. My goal upon achieving my degree is to become a substance abuse counselor so it was not difficult to choose a topic this week.

Learning Reflection Journal: Week 2

While reading this week's lesson, I found Sigmund Freud and his Psychoanalytic Theory interesting. According to Freud the mind is made up of three parts: The Id, the Ego, and the Super Ego. According to Freud, the Id runs off the pleasure principle, is biological, and instinctual. The Id contains two instincts: Eros- life instinct and Thanatos- death instinct. The Id looks to obtain what it wants and desires in order to reduce stress. It is seen in babies, as they cry when they need something and will not stop until their needs and desires are met. That is, they obtain what they want. Logic and reality have no bearing on the Id. Then there is the Ego which is centered in reality and follows the reality principle. The Ego is considered a mediator between the Id and the world around it. The Ego finds a compromise to obtain pleasure in a realistic and socially accepted way and to avoid pain. Last, we have the Super Ego. The Super Ego is concerned with what is socially accepted and follows the morality principle. The Super Ego uses morals and values from society and tries to control the antisocial impulses of the Ego like sex and aggression. Freud discussed the conscious and

unconscious as well. He felt that if we could bring the unconscious into the conscious then we could diminish psychological stress. According to Freud, the Id is in the unconscious, the Ego is in the preconscious and conscious mind, and the Super Ego is part of the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious mind.

In real life, I have witnessed this first hand at my place of employment. I currently work in home healthcare and attend elementary school with a nine-year-old child. During recess, I have seen children get upset over wanting a toy that another child has. I have worked with this child since kindergarten and he is currently going to fourth grade. In his kindergarten years, I had witnessed many children get upset over wanting something. One child, in particular, would get angry when he wanted the basketball and another child would not give it to him. I have seen this child push another child down on the ground over his want for the basketball and being denied getting it. I have also seen this same child get angry and stomp off because another child would not play with him. He would in turn stomp over to the nearest corner or wall and pout. Now this same child, when obtaining what he wanted/desired was very happy and nice to the other children. This is an example of the Id playing its part. The Id wants gratification and strives for pleasure by getting what it wants and desires. When the child did not get what he wanted/desired he became aggressive and tense. But when the child got what he wanted/desired, he was happy and pleasant. The lesson this week has helped me to understand why all of this occurs. I have even seen this with my own children as they were growing up. They would ask for a toy or candy at the store and if told no they would immediately get upset

and tense, but if they were told yes, they were happy and not tense. This again is the Id playing its role in the mind and seeking pleasure.

Learning Reflection Journal: Week 3

After reading this week's lesson, I found Jeffrey Gray's Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory interesting. Gray's theory is "an extension of the physiological, brain-based model of personality" (Friedman, 2016). Gray incorporates modern neuroscience findings into his theory. Gray's theory looks at Pavlov's concept that the nervous system evolves to orient animals to dangers and attractions. Gray's theory adds to Pavlov's by emphasizing rewards and punishments for behaviors. This theory looks at two biological systems as being important: the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) and the behavioral activation system (BAS). According to the BIS, we stay away from things that are unpleasant or offensive or that may be in some way punishing us. The BAS is in control of how we respond to being rewarded. An overactive behavioral activation system (BAS) leads to a person being impulsive and constantly looking for a reward. This is the case with many drug addicts, thrill seekers, and overeaters. It is said that drug addicts are always chasing that high or feeling of euphoria, that is the reward to them. Thrill seekers like the adrenaline rush they get by doing something dangerous or exciting. An overly sensitive BIS or behavioral inhibition system leaves the person anxious and always worrying that bad things are going to happen or will happen. Anxious people avoid the situations or objects that make them feel anxious. A strong BIS will make a person shy away from events due to risk of being embarrassed, injured, or not knowing the risks.

A real-life situation for this is anxiety. I have anxiety which keeps me from doing many things. My mind feels like it is in overdrive. I have always liked to sing and was even in chorus/choir in high school. Even then I had the fear of embarrassment but as long as I was in a big group singing I was fine. Even though I wanted to try to do a solo performance, I could never get myself to do it, as my anxiety would kick in high gear and the fear of messing up and getting embarrassed would take over. Today, I still have the fear of embarrassment and fear of what people are thinking about me in just everyday errand running and social events. I have learned to control it a little better, but it is still there. I have an overactive BIS or behavioral inhibition system according to Gray's theory. On the other hand, a loved one of mine had fallen into drug addiction. This person had gotten so bad with their addiction that they would do anything to get that "high" feeling. They were seeking their reward. Nothing mattered to them, except getting what they wanted. They started off with pain killers for back pain and ended up seeking more when the pain medications were not enough. Eventually this person turned to crack/cocaine, and at this point the addiction took over. They had been in jail several times but that did not stop them, to them the reward (high feeling) was greater than the punishment (jail). They were constantly looking for a way to get more to feel that feeling of euphoria (reward). Gray's theory would suggest that they have an overly active BAS or behavioral activation system.

Learning Reflection Journal: Week 5

I found the section on anxiety and dread to be of the most interest to me this week. Existential psychologist Rollo May focused on anxiety, and " saw <https://assignbuster.com/learning-reflection-journal-theories-of-personality/>

anxiety as triggered by a threat to one's core values of existence”

(Friedman, 2016). In existential psychology, anxiety is a core element of our existence and what it means to be human. Anxiety brings us to search for balance in our lives and the cause for our anxiety. In this section, anxiety is explained not as just a bad thing but also as allowing us to live life to the fullest by taking risks. According to May, having anxiety means you have freedom. May's view correlates with religious philosophy on the thought of humankind's worth. He felt if we did not have struggles then we would not have dignity. Although the world is full of threats it is also full of opportunities to obtain accomplishments. Victor Frankl, an existential-humanistic theorist, focused on personal choices and the benefits from them. The unknown produces great anxiety as we grow and develop, and this anxiety can lead us to self-fulfillment and help us achieve great accomplishments. Frankl was a prisoner of a Nazi concentration camp and chose to find the meaning in his suffering and take the responsibility of controlling the little life he had left instead of just accepting and complying with his surroundings. This helped him to survive psychologically. Frankl believed that meaning was more powerful than pleasure. The struggles we undergo in life cause us to have anxiety and how we choose to react to and see the situation can change the outcome of our life. We can be optimistic and see the worth in things or be pessimistic and only see the bad that happens.

I personally suffer from mild anxiety and often times will have an anxiety attack just from my mind wandering to past events or even something coming up in the future. Not long ago, my family and I went to an

amusement park and although I have been there numerous times and rode the rides there many times, I still felt an anxious feeling while waiting in the lines. Anxiety makes you feel very uncomfortable. But after successfully riding the ride I felt a sense of accomplishment and excitement. Another case of anxiety that very same day was my son decided to ride a particular ride at this amusement park that the rest of us declined to ride and he had to go by himself. He, himself, felt anxious as he boarded the ride and it got started but after felt a huge feeling of " I did it" and of course picked at us for not doing so. While he was waiting in line and boarding the ride, his father and myself also felt anxious. The fears of something happening to the ride while he was on it ran rampant in our thoughts and anxiety crept in. Those were personal choices made by us. Another example is the feeling of social anxiety by being put in a setting with others. The fears of " what are they thinking about me, are they talking about me, who is looking at me?" all creep into your mind. I feel this when I walk into a room with people. If I notice someone that I am friends with or even know and start talking to them, the anxiety starts to fade away a little at a time and eventually I will start to feel comfortable.

Learning Reflection Journal: Week 6

The topic I found the most interesting this week was gender differences in personality. I agree with Freuds psychoanalytic theory that gender differences is biological and that basic evolution also plays a part in it. The behaviorist approach sticks out most to me. Through modeling, conditioning, and learning gender type personality aspects are attained. " According to this perspective, parents, as the primary sources of modeling and

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reinforcement, serve as primary socializers of sex-typed traits” (Friedman, 2016). Often times we model our behavior and roles after what we learned growing up from watching our parents and grandparents. A little girl wearing a pink lacey dress and being told not to get dirty has a role in her personality being shaped. Just as a little boy playing in the dirt plays a role in his personality formation. Many times, I have heard it said, ‘ he is a boy and that’s what they do, they play in the dirt.’ That child will learn from that and come to think it is okay to get dirty if you are a boy, whereas the little girl will think it’s not okay for girls to get dirty, girls are supposed to look nice at all times. Children look up to their parents and that is where they learn the most about how to behave and how they should be. Fathers often times will wrestle and play rough with their sons, yet when it comes to their daughters they treat them as though they are fragile and precious. This plays a role in the formation of the child’s developing personality. The child will often grow up and treat their children the same and the process will continue through generations.

My husband is a clear example of this. We have a son and a daughter. As our son was born and growing up, he would wrestle around with him and play rough just as most fathers. They would play in the dirt and mud. He would have our son working outside with him in grease as he worked on cars or whatever needed fixed at the time. When our daughter was born, she was daddy’s little girl. She was the most precious and fragile little doll to him. They did not wrestle around or play in the dirt. He did not have her outside fixing things with him. She modeled after me and when I would clean the house, she wanted to help. She had her own play cleaning set with a mop

and broom and she would follow behind me pretending to sweep the floors. As our daughter got older and started school, interacting with other girls, she got more interested in playing sports and did not mind getting dirty. The friends that she associates with have the same interests as her. So, by interacting with her peers and seeing female athletes in the media, she modeled from them as well and learned that girls could also play sports and did not always have to look their best. Role models play a big role in personality development and how we perceive the way we should behave in social situations.

Learning Reflection Journal: Week 7

In this week's reading, I enjoyed reading about Drugs and Designer Personalities. I found interest in this topic as I plan to use my degree to be employed as a substance abuse counselor. This topic also hit close to home as I have a friend who suffered from substance abuse and I have seen first-hand how drugs can alter a person's personality. Drugs and alcohol have been used for many years to alter a person's mental status. These drugs range from medically prescribed drugs such as Prozac to street drugs such as heroin and more. Drugs that have been and still are used for medical treatment of mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia can become addictive and are often used illegally as well. Ritalin and Adderall are normally prescribed for someone suffering with attention deficit disorders but are also abused on the streets illegally as the drugs can give a hyped up or energized feeling to the user. Prozac is an example of a designer drug as it enhances the users' mood and alters emotional reactions. Initially Prozac was created to treat depression but now is also used for a wide range

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of problems from shyness to obsessiveness. “ Drugs that alter our thinking and feeling are now being created at a rapid pace, and society will have to decide if, when, and how to use them” (Friedman, 2016).

This topic hit close to home for me as a close friend of mine fell into substance abuse and addiction. They are currently in recovery from their addiction. Over the years, it was very easy to see the changes in their personality. The addiction started after being prescribed pain medication after having back surgery. My friends body and mind got so used to the pain medication that he could not function without them. After a while the pain medication simply was not enough, and this led to trying street drugs such as cocaine, heroin, crack, and whatever else he could get his hands on to numb the pain or alter his mental status enough to not feel it anymore. It became a vicious cycle with no end in sight. This friend was the most loving and caring person I knew. He was always there to help his friends, family, and loved ones. As the addiction to drugs got worse his personality changed drastically. He became the person he said he would never be and couldn't stand. At one point, he even resorted to stealing from family to support his addiction. This was way out of character for him. He ended up in prison after a few years of the drugs taking hold of him. After his release from prison and he was sober, his personality/character was back to what it was before. He is currently still sober but struggles with his past addiction and probably always will. It is extremely hard to watch someone you love turn into someone you do not know. I have also seen the effects that prescribed drugs such as Adderall can have on a person as well. I have seen a friend who was buying it

on the street become extremely hyped up to the point they could not sit still. It is crazy to think how these drugs change our personalities so drastically.

Conclusion

After learning about all the different theories about personality development, I feel that they cannot be merged into one and that there is a place for all of them. I have been able to apply different personality development theories to different individuals that I know personally. I do not believe it is one size fits all, but everyone has a different theory that applies to them and how they developed their own unique personality. While I found interest in many of the different theories from week one through the present, it is easy to see how some overlap or build off others while others are exact opposites.

References

- Friedman, H. S. (2016). Personality, 6th Edition. [Vitalsource]. Retrieved from <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/#/books/9780133829808/>.