Traits that shape personality: reflection

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We live in a world that has over 7 billion people and even when there is so many individuals, not one person is the same. There are various characteristics that determine what type of personality a person will endure. Personality can be defined as qualities that mold an individual's original character. It is what makes us all unique. It forever changes as we grow up, influenced by what happens internally and externally. Not one personality is the same because we all have different experiences, different outlooks on life, different cultures, and different perspectives. The three traits that I believe define my personality are high need for affiliation from Henry Murray's theory, extraversion from Eysenck's two-factor theory, and conscientiousness.

A first trait that describes my personality is need for affiliation from Henry Murray's theory from the motive approach. According to the motive approach to personality, it is an assumption that an individual's behavior is reflected on a set of underlying needs. Once a need becomes intense, it turns itself into a motive that influences what behavior is going to be presented. The motive theory also states that behavior is influenced by press, an external stimulant that gives motivation. Needs direct behavior and there are two types of needs: primary and secondary. Primary needs are biological needs such as food and water. Secondary needs are psychological needs such as positive self-views and achievement. The influence of behaviors depend on the strength of the needs. Motives are pertained to the individual's goals and desires (Carver & Sheier 2011). An example of this: a need for food results in a motive state of hunger. Press acts like a trigger

that influence motives. In Henry Murray's theory there are four types of needs: need for power, need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for intimacy. The need for affiliation is the trait that best describes my personality out of the four types of needs. The need for affiliation is the desire to spend time with others (Carver & Sheier 2011). There are many reasons why I believe that I have a high need for affiliation.

All my life I have lived in Chicago with my family. I had all my friends and family close to me so I was never out of touch with anybody. Just a little over a year I have moved to a South Suburb called Oak Forest with my boyfriend. I don't know anybody here. When my boyfriend goes to work and I have no class that day, I am always stuck at home alone. As soon as he leaves, I get anxious and try my best to find something to do and go out to see a friend. I don't even care that I have to drive 30miles plus to see a friend, I just need social contact with a human being. This is definitely an example of the need for affiliation because in this need an individual tries to have some type of social contact with another individual. When I am home alone, I call around to my friends in Chicago to see if they can hang out with me. When my friends are busy and can't go out due to work or school, I call my cousin and hang out with her. If I were just to sit at home and not bother to call anybody to hang out, I would feel very alone and that I don't belong with any social group. However, when I do hang out with my friends or cousin, I feel like I belong to a certain social group and that makes me feel at ease.

When I am outside my home and I am in my school setting, it is also obvious that I have a high need for affiliation. Every time I walk into class, I walk towards the social group and sit next to them. Even when it is the first week

of class and I have no clue who anybody is, I still manage to go to a group of students and talk with them. Most of the time I get a sense that they don't really want to talk to me and they think I am weird, but I don't mind because I am calm knowing that I am around people. " People with a high need for social affiliation do not look for social rewards, but rather intrinsically valuing the relationships with other people" (Carver and Scheier 1992). One time on a beautiful sunny day I was walking around campus by the quads and I saw a group of random girls talking. I came up to them and starting talking to them about random things. I remember one of the girls looking at me as if I was from another planet, she got up and left. After one of the girls left, the rest followed her and left me there. I shrugged and started walking to another group of people. People with a high need for affiliation are likely to interact as much as possible with people so they do no stay alone. This is true in my case because I feel like I need to socialize with people, even when they might think I am strange.

Another trait that describes my personality is extraversion. Extraversion is one of the five traits that make up human personality in Eysenck's theory. Eysenck created a model of personality traits that consisted of the continuum of neuroticism and extraversion. He believed that everybody lied somewhere between the continuum. Extraversion is the best trait that describes my personality. Extraversion is characterized by being very sociable, being talkative, enthusiastic and assertive. People who are extraverts seek any opportunity to engage with others. If you ask a person to describe an extrovert, they would say that they are full of life, full of optimism, and energy. I am very extroverted. In a group setting I am

constantly talking to someone and make sure that there never is any awkward silence. I am very friendly and highly adaptable to any environment. One example of my extraversion is that when I go to a party that I hardly know anybody in, I make the best of it and act as if I knew the people for years. I would go to a random person at the party and introduce myself and talk about anything and everything I could think of. There would be times where I would go to my boyfriend's family's house for a family gathering for a few hours, and after go to my boyfriend's friend's house to see a whole new group of people there and I would just adjust to the environment without a problem.

When I lived with my parents in Chicago, they would always have random family friends come over. Most of these people I wouldn't see ever since I was a baby. Whenever these strangers would come over, my siblings would run upstairs and hide from them or they would never come downstairs to greet them. My siblings would call me " weird" because I would stay downstairs with the adults and have a conversation with them as if they were my best friends. I fit in the category of being extraverted because I am very outgoing and talkative. There is rarely a time where I am quiet. I am excited when I am around people and I like to energize others. Making things happen is what I am good at.

A third trait that perfectly describes my personality is conscientiousness. Conscientiousness is a personality trait that is defined as being careful, thorough, responsible, and diligent. Individuals high in conscientiousness want to achieve and do a task well. Therefore, I feel that conscientiousness fits in my personality well. For example, I am the oldest out of my three

siblings and my mom trusted me at a younger age a lot more than she trusted my other siblings. When I was in kindergarten, my mom would let me walk to school and back without her having to worry that I would get lost or go somewhere else. She trusted that I would get out of school and walk straight home. Even though my school was literally only 3 blocks away, it was a big deal for me. I never really paid attention to it until I grew a little older and my siblings started going to school. My sister was starting kindergarten and I would always have to walk her to school and from school. The reason why I believe that conscientiousness describes my personality is because my mom trusted me, and she didn't trust my sister. That makes me more responsible in my mother's eyes. I also feel obligated to be responsible because I am the oldest. Growing up I always babysat my siblings and there would rarely be an occasion where I wouldn't have another kid to babysit along with my siblings. The neighbors trusted me babysitting their children. I made sure they were safe, full, and happy.

Outside of the home environment, I am a very diligent student. I am in constant effort to accomplish something so I can better myself. I do my best to get a better grade and if I do bad I don't punish myself, I just push myself to do better. I plan my work out ahead of time so I have a set schedule for my work. I have a research paper that is due on April 10 [th] for my CLJ class, and I already went into the writing center to better my paper. This is a good example for conscientiousness because this trait in a personality makes individuals systematic and they plan rather than being spontaneous. Conscientiousness predicts that there will be a higher achievement in both high school and college (Noftle & Robins 2002). Even though I do have a

strong degree of conscientiousness personality, I do not take it to an extreme. I am not a complete workaholic or perfectionist; however, I do try my best in my work and I am hard working and reliable when it comes to doing a job.

In conclusion, just as there are no two people that are the same, no two personalities are the same either. In the world that is filled with over 7 billion people, each individual has a unique personality. Some people might share the same traits as another but there will always be a different pattern, different experiences, and different cultures that will make up a different personality. Three traits that my personality is made up of are need for affiliation, extraversion, and conscientiousness. These shape my personality and make me into the unique person that I am today.

References

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