

Psychoanalytic personality assessment



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What began as a one man inquiry into the psychological field has expanded into a community of innovators that have broadened the psychoanalytic theory and practice through their own experiences. Pioneers of psychology, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler shared many ideas and theories and were even colleagues at different times. While there is no denying that these men shared the desire to search for a better understanding of the psychological frailties and the explanation of these, no one can debate their contributions to the modern science of psychology.

The Freudian theory suggests the mind is constructed into two main parts, the conscious and the unconscious. His personality theory is divided into three parts consisting of the 'id, ego, and the superego and the stages are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital with an emphasis on sexual motivation. He also theorized that individuals express defense mechanisms in stages of development to protect the 'id, ego, and superego brought about by the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny, or distort reality in order to defend the feelings of anxiety and unacceptable impulses to maintain one's self.

Freud's ideas are more complex and extensive. Carl Jung's theories were based in spiritual phenomena through dreams, myth, art, and philosophy. His theory was that individuation was a necessary process for an individual to become a whole through the conscious and unconscious mind. He believed the human psyche exists in three parts, the ego, personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Jung also demonstrated the personality traits and characteristics of individuals were based upon extroversion, things in the external world, and introversion, things in the internal world.

The four functions of the mind according to Jung are sensing, thinking, feeling, and intuition which determined rational and irrational reasoning. Jung was instrumental in the symbol creation which he proclaims to be the best expression for something unknown. These symbols were formation of Alcoholics Anonymous. Jung's theories are analytical. Alfred Adler's theory addressed equality, parent education, and the influence of birth order, life style, and the holism of individuals. There are many ideas and theories that I may tend to believe and agree with because of my experiences in the psychological profession.

The defense mechanisms given by Freud have been prevalent in my personality in the way of repression of negative feelings that I felt from a traumatic experience, denial with close deaths of family and friends, projection which I imposed on my children and others, and rationalization because of addiction. I find myself disagreeing with his theory of sexual motivation based on the stages but understanding what those stages are makes a great deal of sense, especially with the limited amount of resources available to Freud during his era.

I believe most of his theories were speculation on his part to describe his own personality and emotions. Jungian theory of sensing, thinking, feeling, and intuition is more of how I would agree a person's psyche or mind may work, as well as his interpretation of extroversion and introversion. I have found that I am cyclical in this area where I was more introvert as a child and young adult, then to become open and extrovert as a more mature adult. As I approach middle age, I am becoming the introvert personality once more

because I do not have the desire to be open and explorative, I m more settled and quite.

I do not find Jungs symbol and myth theories to be very informative to the development of human psyche. Alfred Adler's idea that basic human desire and goal is to belong and to feel significant is more the level of psyche that I have experienced not only in my own life but observed in others. His approach seems to be more simplistic according to the mental health areas of humanity. Adler's holistic approach provides more control from the individual for person acceptance through consciousness. I have found more direction through his seven ritual ideas that relates to my individual life and reasoning.

I believe in the unity of an individual, goal orientations, self-determination, and social contact, the feeling of community, the mental health aspect, and the treatment through psychological therapy to be more productive to encourage an individual to become gratified. The basics of Adlerian theory has applied to my life and my treatments of depression and addiction, therefore, I have not found much of his works that I can say I disagree with. Sigmund Freud introduced the stages of psychosexual development as oral, anal, hallic, latent, and genital.

To understand these stages one must look at them individually beginning with the oral stage which is birth to one year. In the Oral stage, Freud says that the primary interaction occurs through the mouth. Oral stimulation through gratifying activities becomes pleasure as well as trust and comfort. If fixation occurs at this age, the results may be smoking, drinking, and eating

disorders. The Anal stage occurs during ages one to 3 years during potty training. Freud believed that if parents took a positive approach to this training then the outcome would produce competency, productivity, and creativity in adulthood.

If the parents responded inappropriately then the results would be adults with anal-expulsive personalities. These individuals are stringent, orderly, rigid, and obsessive. The Phallic stage occurs between the ages of three and six. The obvious difference between male and female is established and the primary focus is on their mothers. The same applies for the girls but Freud emphasizes that they are experiencing penis envy at this stage. He believed that girls remain fixated on this stage. The Latent period refers to ages six through puberty.

Libido interests are suppressed in this stage and the person is more concerned with peer relationships, hobbies, and other interests. This stage is important in the development of social and communication skills and self-confidence. Finally the Genital stage occurs between puberty and death. It has a concentration on the maturing sexual interests and the interest in the wellbeing of others. The goal of this stage is to establish a balance between the various life areas. Freudian theory proposes that each person's ego employs defense mechanisms to help reduce feelings of anxiety.

He describes three major areas of anxiety as neurotic, reality, and moral. In order to deal with these anxieties, Freud believed that the defense mechanisms shielded the ego from conflicts created by the id, superego, and reality. I understand these mechanisms and have used at least three in my

own experiences. While exploring my origins I found that my father was not my biological father and at the age of fourteen my world crumbled around me with feelings of betrayal. As I grew older I repressed these feelings as they were my reality and painful.

It was how I coped with life until I discovered alcohol and drugs to relate. During my active addiction days, denial was a way to continue to suppress my feelings and during the deaths of family and friends I utilized the mechanism of denial to bear the pain of loss. I used rationalization to excuse my actions during my painful times and especially during the times of drug use. This way I believed I could justify my actions, only to find these defenses actually suppressed my reality and afforded me the opportunity to avoid the reality I had created.

Defense mechanisms can be beneficial if they are not incorporated into a person's psyche. It takes a moment to begin the process but a terribly longer time to shed the burden of any defenses. Acceptance was my salvation. In conclusion, Freud, Jung, and Adler were the founding fathers of psychology as we know it. As technology opens the door for more intense research, modern science can now apply, revise, and build on the theories of the great minds that lead the way for a better understanding of the mental state of humanity.