

# Influential psychologists on behavior

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There are a number of influential psychologists that have shaped the way we think about human behavior and characteristics. A brief overview of these theories will help us understand the field of psychology as we understand it in the 21st century. You may wonder why there are so many different psychology perspectives and whether one approach is correct and others wrong. Most psychologists would agree that no one perspective is correct, although in the past, in the early days of psychology, the behaviorist would have said their perspective was the only truly scientific one.

A very notable psychologist is Sigmund Freud. Freud is known as the father of psychoanalysis; focusing on the unconscious aspects of the human mind and behavior. Freud once said, “ The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.” To Freud, most of the human ideology was encompassed by the subconscious rather than the conscious mind. Freud considered three aspects of the mind: the id, ego, and superego.

The id signifies our basic desire to seek gratification. The ego centers on the outside world such as the environment and other people. It serves as an objective lens for which the id can operate. The superego correlates to the qualities of one’s personality and serves as a mechanism of guiding the ego by feelings of guilt and confirmation. Freud believed that these parts of the mind were developed through early stages of life. These stages were distinct and represent specific developments of the id, ego, and superego.

Freud believed that some children may spend substantial amounts in some stages rather than others; and this could be a bad thing, he believed.

Psychoanalysis in the modern days has become a type of therapy in which individuals are allowed to understand their unaware emotions and feelings and where these might have developed from. Another, psychologist is Carl Jung. Jung is famous for his ideology of personalities; he described two personalities that are obeyed in life. These are the extrovert and the introvert. He said, “ The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.

” The extrovert is characterized by outward desire for relationships between people and objects. Characteristics often include sociability, confidence, optimism, and joyful. Jung believed that the extrovert can experience downfalls such as desiring to fit-in and remain conventional. The introvert often focuses within; the imagination and self-reflection are notable in an introvert. Timidity and fear are often associated with introverts as they often focus more on what they are feeling within than what is happening around them. Jung believed that these different personalities were magnetic much like a positive and negative end of a magnet.

Another notable psychologist is Carl Rogers. Rogers developed the idea that every individual wants to continue to grow emotionally and intellectually. Self-esteem and self-awareness are constantly in the forefront of the mind and are always being changed by external stimuli. Rogers believed that the concept of, “ unconditional positive regard” was necessary for an individual to develop and grow. Since most of Rogers theories were developed due to his position as a psychotherapist, he believed that reflection was necessary between his clients. In this reflection, the therapist reiterates what the client

has said in order to make the client feel accepted and aware of what he/she is saying throughout the session.

The ideology of Rogers has developed the concept of “ people-centered” therapy and often encompasses areas such as marriage counsel, occupation, and relationship building. Rogers said, “ In my early professional years I was asking the question: How can I treat, or cure, or change this person? Now I would phrase the question in this way: How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for his own personal growth?” Roger’s theory contains basic elements:

- The first is that the individual comes for reconciliation in a difficult matter whether he subconsciously realizes it or not.
- The individual desires to be helped and makes the decision to seek advice. The client is reminded that he/she can obtain the solutions to his/her problems without being told what he/she should do by the counselor.
- The counselor encourages open conversation in which the client feels completely free to express himself or herself without reservation.
- Negative feelings are followed by expressions of positivity that foster growth.

- The counselor values both the positive and negative equally.
- Insight is developed through awareness of self and emotions arising from the positive and negative feelings
- Positive action encourages which decreases the necessity for reliance on the counselor

Finally, Abraham Maslow is the last psychologist examined. His theories are centered on the basic necessity of needs and wants. He is known as the father of humanistic psychology, he is quoted saying, “ What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself.” His theories assert that personality and behavior are controlled and guided by external forces such as the environment. Maslow

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was unaccepting of the idea that behavior and feeling could be controlled only by internal or external stimuli.

He believed that both contributed to the development of a human being and also signified the idea that humans are able to make choices freely. Maslow believed in an inherent, DNA-based desire for certain needs. He believed these needs were the same for all people on the earth and incorporated both psychological and physiological aspects. A hierarchy was created to place the most important needs and then gradually reduce the necessity. As basic needs are satisfied other needs or desires emerge. Therefore, in conclusion, there are so many different perspectives in psychology to explain the different types of behavior and give different angles.

No one perspective has explanatory powers over the rest. What I also have learned is that each person's perspective has its strengths and weaknesses, and brings something different to our understanding of human behavior. It is important that psychologists have different perspectives to the understanding and study of human behavior.