

Sigmund freud's personality theory

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According to Freud, mankind has only two drives that determine all thoughts, emotions, and desires- the need for sex and aggression. Sex is the equivalent of life- after all it is how we procreate the species and continue our lineage.

Aggression often leads to its equivalent - death- which is also a control measure for procreating the species as it allows us to remove an adversary that may prevent procreation. Freud proposed that there are three levels to our personalities- the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. At birth, we are born with the Id, which he described as being the part of the personality that demands our basic needs. It is important because it drives our instinct to obtain our basic needs and keep ourselves alive. It looks only for satisfaction of a hunger, whether it is for food, comfort or any other pleasurable sensation.

As a child interacts in his first three years of life, the Ego begins to form. The Ego begins to realize there are others that have needs and that interaction in the world means thinking of this and responding accordingly. Around five, the formation of the Superego starts as the child becomes trained in the moral and ethical ideas of his caregivers- it is often compared to the conscience. Throughout the rest of our life the Ego serves as the mediator between the Superego and the Id, keeping us from becoming either totally self-centered and demanding or rigid and unbending in our interactions with others. In the fights with the Id and Superego, the Ego develops various defense mechanisms to help keep the balance. These defense mechanisms help the ego sate the id's impulsiveness without offending the Superego's moral position- all the while keeping reality in check.

Some of these defenses include denial, intellectualization, regression and sublimation. Perhaps the most debated of Freud's writings is his theory of psychosexual development and its five stages. The first stage, which stretches from birth to 18 months, is the oral stage where the baby is focused on the pleasures associated with sucking. From 18 months to age three, the child is in the anal stage, where pleasure is derived from retaining and releasing. The phallic stage covers age's three to six, in which the pleasure zone switches to the genitals. This is the stage in which the Oedipal complex comes into play.

The latency stage stretches from age six to puberty during which pleasures are repressed in order for learning to take place. From puberty to death, we are in the genital stage in which our pleasure derives from the genitals.

While many of his theories are not as popular today, Freud laid the groundwork for understanding the human mind. References

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