

Personality theory

[Psychology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Personality Theory Abstract In the past few weeks we have explored human personality development as theorized by some of the world's most recognized, respected and celebrated psychologists in the field of psychoanalysis. People exists in a culture dependant on social interactions whether it be in their immediate family structure or outside in a community basis, individual personality and behavior reflects who we are as a person. This paper will attempt to analyze and apply the personality theories of Adler, Kelly, and Maslow that best describe the 1986 fictional film character, Forrest Gump. A man who through most of his life was ridiculed because of his slow learning disability and was made to feel inferior by everyone he came in contact with except for his mom, childhood sweetheart and the best friend he had when he was in the military. The film itself is based on his unique personality and his own ambiguous perception of the world around him as he reflects on his life's challenges, quoting anecdotes from his "mama" that instilled the honesty, integrity and sheer simplicity of mind of Forrest Gump. The movie takes place in the small town of Greenbow, Alabama during the early 1950's with a backdrop set to an American tapestry of historical events like racial conflict and the war in Viet Nam as he reflects on his own life. As much as it is a story about a man raised in a single parent home from the deep south, it is an unforgettable nostalgic glimpse to the music, trends, events, and noted people of the time. Forrest Gump was born with a physical condition that required him to wear leg braces until he discovered his ability to run "like the wind", which eventually became his psychological and emotional escape from the cruel realities of life and a stepping stone on his future path. He is depicted as having a below average IQ which made him the target of bullies at an early age and ridicule

<https://assignbuster.com/personality-theory-personal-essay-samples/>

throughout his adult life as he was often asked " Are you stupid or what ? " to which he always replied, " Mama said stupid is as stupid does". An evaluation of how personality theorists or theories, explains this personality : Theorist Adler believed that certain people, " are born with physical inadequacies, which makes young children feel inferior to those around them. As a result, people commit very early in life to rid themselves of these feelings of inferiority". This would be what Adler calls the inferiority complex and recognizes this as being the greatest influence of personality development (Mind & Soul, 2009). Psychologist George Kelly would explain Forrest Gump's personality as being one of a cognitive nature based on his personal constructs theory. Here we have an individual that thinks or contemplates much of the time about specific people of importance in his life and at one point in the film, about a shrimp boat business venture he had planned with his best friend Bubba Blue. Kelly's personal constructs theory sees people as " scientists" emphasizing the fact that " They improve their understandings of reality on the bases of their experiences, like scientists adjust their theories to fit the facts" (Boeree, 2006). It is his concept that people are engaging in their life experiences and all the while trying to make sense of or figure out what's going on in a day to day basis. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs finds Forrest's personality between the " belongingness of love and needs" and " esteem needs". Forest is constantly struggling with his feelings for Jenny's love and wants to peruse a relationship with her but unfortunately he is only a friend to her. His undying love and devotion to her is captured in a single statement he makes one evening where he asks, " Why won't you marry me Jenny, I'm not a smart man but I know what love is". How might this character's behavior be interpreted differently

<https://assignbuster.com/personality-theory-personal-essay-samples/>

theoretically? From Adler's school of thought in individual psychology, he believed that a person's personality motivated their expectations of their future and behaved accordingly. He called these future expectations "fictions" as they only represented the person's subjective perception of reality which in turn does inspire their actions or behavior. Forrest had an undying love for Jenny and although they were different in every way, especially in personality, every time they were together after numerous spans of separation, he always remarked that they were like "2 peas in a pod, again". He always saw nothing but the good in her in spite of the fact that she didn't truly return his affections as he wanted and that she was totally contrary to his beliefs and standards of life. From Forrest Gump's behavior and his capacity to see life for what it is, acting on the things he can change and accepting those things beyond his control, he displays Kelly's concept of construe or the ability to interpret the world around him and acting on his reality. In Kelly's personal constructs system, Forrest Gump slips perfectly into the cognitive complexity versus simplicity of constructs system which indicates a personality that is likely to construe the world as he continues to experience it. His construct system as Kelly sees it is his history and predisposition to perceive. Accepting Jenny numerous times throughout the movie no matter what she has done or where she has been makes his personality truly unique in every way. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the concept of self-actualization relates to Forrest Gump as motivated by his love for Jenny that is seemingly unrelenting and fashions his behavior. He is patient and waits for Jenny, keeping her in his thoughts throughout the entire movie making this an unsatisfied part of his personality and his sole motivation to pursue his happiness only through her. How would each

<https://assignbuster.com/personality-theory-personal-essay-samples/>

theorist or theory address relevant social, cultural, environmental, biological, or unconscious factors that may be influencing the character's behavior? Adler believed that everyone's personality is essentially unique and has a personality unlike anyone else's. According to Adler, although people's desires to strive for success overcoming their inferiorities, their behavior must still be developed by the social environment to which they are subjected to. This is where a person's perception of "fictions" can play an intricate part in their life. Forrest had made a promise to Bubba that they would start a shrimp boat business together after the war and although Bubba died in Viet Nam, Forrest did go into the shrimp business becoming very successful. Adler's theory also uses the term "social interest" which he interprets as fundamental to survival. He refers to this as a style of life influenced in part by heredity and in part by environment. This personal control that we all have over the development of our life style he calls the "creative power" and contributes to everyone's unique personalities. Whether by happenstance or dumb luck, the creative power found in Forrest Gump is seen in his ability to run fast and uses this athletic talent throughout the movie. He is given a college scholarship to the University of Alabama to play football as a running back. When his company is attacked in Viet Nam he is given the Congressional Medal of Honor for running away but re-enters the jungle to save as many fellow soldiers as possible when Bubba loses his life. Kelly would see the choices Forrest made in his life relating back to the anecdotes of life his mother always made to him and they were his inspirations at times when he was uncertain about things or events surrounding him and offering up a simple direction for him to take. Quotes like, "You gotta put the past behind you before you can move on" and the <https://assignbuster.com/personality-theory-personal-essay-samples/>

one that probably made the biggest impression on him and remained with him throughout his life was "Don't let anyone tell you that they are better than you. You are the same as them" (Forrest Gump, 1986). Maslow would see Forrest's experiences through his life as one focused unfulfilled and unsatisfied, until nearly the end when Jenny has a son by Forrest after one night of intimacy which she again leaves him first thing in the morning. She re-enters his life informing him that he is the father of her son but she is sick and dying and wants to marry him. Soon after the wedding she passes away and again Forrest is left alone and at her grave site makes the statement, "I miss you Jenny. If you need anything I'll be right here". Leaving him alone and without love again. References Ceverone, D. & Pervin, L. (2010) "Personality, Theory and Research, Eleventh Edition".. "The Personality Theory of Alfred Adler; Exploring the Human Desire to Strive for Success in a Social World", suite101.com > Mind & Soul > Psychology > Clinical Psychology- Cached 10-10-2009. You +1'd this publicly. Undo Dr. Boeree, G. (2006): "George Kelly- 1905-1967: Personality Theories" webspace. ship.edu/cgboer/kelly.htmlCached - SimilarYou +1'd this publicly. Undo -Kelly's