

Sigmund Freud's Theories of Personality

Eric Rucks

Personality is defined as an individual's unique and relatively consistent patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. (Hockenbury and Hockenbury 2001) In brief, a person's personality is what they act like. Along with personality is personality theory, which involves the attempt to explain or describe the similarities and differences within each individual. Personality differences are what make people different from other people.

Sigmund Freud was one the most influential figures when it comes to psychology. He was the man that founded psychoanalysis as the theory of personality that stresses the influence of unconscious mental process, the importance of sexual instincts, and the effects of early childhood (Hockenbury and Hockenbury 2001). He wrote about many of his findings about the brain but was looked at as peculiar in the way he thought many things were related to sex. His influence on psychology will be statue and lead to many other views and theories in the psychological field.

Sigmund Freud was one of the great psychological leaders and theorists in history. His theories involved many things including psychoanalysis, dreams, emotions, and personality. Psychoanalysis included his dynamic theory of personality and the psychosexual stages of personality development.

Dynamic Theory of Personality

Freud explained his theory by viewing the conscious, preconscious, and the unconscious as an iceberg. He describes the preconscious and the unconscious as a "harmony of psychoid" and the conscious as "resting on perception of the most immediate and certain" (Freud 1962). The unconscious is under the water, the preconscious is in the middle, and the conscious is on top of the water. How the tip of an

iceberg shows little ice, the ego, it's the part under the water that contains the sum of the iceberg's mass, the id (Shakow 1964)

The id is all the irrational, illogical impulses that drive you to seek pleasure. It says that people do a majority of the things they do because it makes them feel good. The Id is driven by the pleasure principle which says that people are motivated to obtain pleasure and avoid tension and discomfort. This is the most fundamental human motive and the guiding principle of the Id (Hockenbury and Hockenbury 2001). The id is in the unconscious stage where you take information and transform it so that it may be perceived.

The ego was above the water and made up part of the iceberg. This is the part that rationalizes and regulates thoughts and behaviors involved mostly with the external world. The reality principle drives the ego by stating that gratification should be postponed until the appropriate time (Freud 1936). The ego is also used as a defense mechanism. The nine different parts of the Ego defense mechanisms include repression, displacement, sublimation, rationalization, projection, reaction formation, denial, undoing, and regression (Ego Defense Mechanisms 2004). Repression is involved with remembering high-anxiety events such as a crash or an accident. Displacement is involved with the redirection of impulses like slamming a door instead of hitting someone. Sublimation is involved with displacement with sexual urges into nonsexual activities like a wife who works the whole time her husband is away. Rationalization involves the use of rational instead of the real reason, like you actually got fired because you worked poorly, not because you didn't kiss up to the boss. Projection deals with placing unacceptable impulses on failure, like telling someone their stupid when you just lost to them in a match. Reaction formation involves acting in the opposite of acceptable,

like young boys teasing girls that they are actually attracted to. Denial is the failure to accept a situation, like not thinking that the doctor's diagnosis of you was correct. Undoing involves neutralizing an unacceptable action, such as donation extra money toward charity after stealing it. Regression has do deal with the return to a previous stage, like crying after you hear bad news.

The superego is formed with the use of parental and societal values and morals. These are formed when ego thoughts are internalized by being used for a period. A child will try to grow into what they think is accepted by their society. The super ego takes place in the preconscious stage. The way things are transformed into the preconscious stage in by taking the thoughts and feeling, associating them with word representations, to form your memories. In the Oedipus Complex and child gets over the feeling for their parent by turning these preconscious thought into what it supposed to be, or rational. They realize that they are not supposed to have feelings for their parent, that their parents are married and taken, and soon a girl will try to take after her mother as a boy will try to take after his father (Freud 1962).

The Oedipus Complex

Oedipus complex is the child unconscious sexual desires for their parent of the opposite sex (Felluga). This is expressed well in the Greek legend of King Oedipus. The king was destined to kill his father and marry his wife. In order to avoid this, he blinds himself but in the end his fait overturns his attempts. A child will develop desires for his mother during the oral stage when he is breast feeding. A young boy's love for his mother builds anger and jealousy toward his father because his is married to the mother.

The child's desires to carry out the murder of their father are repressed, but may often later arise in dreams.

A little girl might say that "When I get older I'm going to marry daddy", or a little boy may say "I don't want daddy hugging you mommy". Using the identification mechanism, the child soon resolved with his father and starts to imitate him. This identification is taken over using the ego which rationalizes using the restrictions of society (Freud 1962).

The Oedipus complex is closely related to the castration complex in which a child associates pain with not following the rules of society. Parent will often try to put a stop to a child's sexual activities. Many parents may tell their children that if they masturbate that they will go blind. During the castration complex the ego is the conscious part that rationalizes punishments (Almaas 2004).

The Psychosexual Stages

Freud believed in the five stages he explained as the psychosexual stages of development. These are stages a child goes through with different sexual urges happening at each different stage.

1- According to Freud, from birth to age 1, a child would go through the oral stage. A child gets all their feeling from the mouth as it is the primary focus of pleasure. They use their mouth to feed and explore other objects. The feeding of their mother's breast may display the child's desire for his mother.

2 -Between the ages of 1 and 3 the child would go through the anal stage. In this stage the anus became the primary focus of pleasure and the child develops the ability to control one's fecal matter.

3 - During the ages of 3 to 6 the child would go through the phallic stage. This is when the child gets sexually curious and develops a curiosity of masturbation. In this stage you may witness a parent telling their child to stop touching themselves.

4 - From 7 to 11 the child is in the latency stage where he/she develops same-sex friendships. The child tends to focus on school, friendships, and after school activities like sports. During this stage, Freud thought, a child may become subdued of their sexual urges.

5 - In adolescence the child then finishes in the genital stage. The genitals become the primary focus of pleasure while the child seeks to satisfy feeling in a heterosexual relationship. They feel that they have to control their sexual urges in a socially acceptable way.

Freud thought the getting stuck in one of these stages would affect the person. By being stuck in the oral stage a person might take up smoking, chewing tobacco, or biting their finger nails. By being stuck in the anal stage a person would become anal-retentive which would cause them to need things nice and neat and always in order.

Conclusion

All of these areas of Freud's theories, are intertwined and related, and each helps explain another one. Though it not appropriate to say that Freud was the most important person in the history of psychology, he did help so that a lot of other people could get started. People like Carl Jung, Karen Horney, Alfred Alder, Peter gay, and Carl Rodgers. All of these people have played their important in the understanding of psychology; its all of their views combined that make to field so interesting.

Works cited

Almaas, A.H. (2004). Genital Hole

<http://www.ahalmaas.com/glossary/g/genital.htm> (December 3rd, 2004)

Felluga, Dino. (2003) Oedipus Complex

<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/index.html> (December 3rd, 2004)

Freud, Sigmund. (1962). The Ego and the Id

W.W. Norton and Company, USA, 9-29

Freud, Sigmund. (1936). The Problem with Anxiety

W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 24-28

Hockenbury, Don and Hockenbury, Sandy. (2003). Psychology

Worth Publishers, New York, 454-471

Shakow, David. (1964). The Influence of Freud on American Psychology

The World Publishing Company, Cleveland, 111-185

Unknown, Author (2004). Ego Defense Mechanisms.

<http://www.allpsych.com/psychology101/defenses.html> (December 13th 2004)