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## Self-Awareness

An individual's self-concept is the core of his personality. It affects every aspect of human behavior: the ability to learn, the capacity to grow and change, the choice of friends, mates, and careers. It is no exaggeration to say that a strong, positive self-image is the best possible preparation for success in life.

*Joyce Brothers*

## THINK ABOUT THIS . . . MY “SELF-IMAGE”— STUDENT STORY

In my memories of when I was a “little” kid, between the ages of two and four, it seemed like everything I would attempt would be a “No, No,” “No” to this, and “No” to that, and “No” to everything. For awhile I almost thought my name was “NoNo.” I soon learned that my life was much easier if I just sat and watched television.

Life was not much fun because I was afraid to try anything since I thought I would get in trouble. I didn’t think I was a very good kid since most of the people around me kept telling me that I wasn’t capable of doing anything. I thought it was because I was “no good” and “inferior,” but in reality I just wasn’t old enough to do what I wanted to do. I didn’t realize that.

When I turned six, I was excited because it was time to go to school like the “big kids.” It was a new life, and I needed a change. It didn’t take long for me to realize that I was not as good as the rest of the kids. They laughed at my overalls and shiny shoes. When it came time to select teams, I was the last to be picked since I was short, skinny, and wore glasses.

I wanted to be liked by the other students and my teachers, so I became the “class clown.” I needed attention and I got it, but it was the wrong type of attention. I became depressed and felt inferior to the people around me, so I withdrew into my own little world and isolated myself as much as I could. I would sit in the corner at school, and at home I would go to my room and draw.

My early school years were not fun. In middle school I got mixed up with the “wrong crowd.” I wanted to be accepted, so I thought I had to be like everyone else. I wanted to be part of a group with an identity so I got involved in a gang. In the meantime I tried a few drugs and got in trouble. It wasn’t a happy time in my life.

In ninth grade, I registered for an art class, not knowing what art was all about. The teacher asked the students to draw a picture. I turned mine in and the teacher thought it was great. The teacher thought that I had talent, but I knew better. I have been told that I am “dumb, inferior and not capable of accomplishing anything,” so why try. My teacher encouraged me and kept telling me how good I really was, so I kept trying. All of a sudden the other students were also telling me that I was good and I began to believe it. I became motivated to succeed in the field of art. I overcame my depression, set some goals, found some friends that accepted me for being me and not because of my size or looks.

I am now a professional artist and feel good about myself and my life. I like people and accept them as they are and will allow them the freedom to grow and develop as an individual. I hope you will too.

### “Self-Image” Development

Reviewing the story above, we realize that people acquire a sense of self throughout their life. It is an ongoing process that evolves from our experiences and interactions with others within the environment. Significant adults in our life also provide us with feedback as to who we are. This is the beginning of *self-image development*. In this chapter you can learn ways in which you can identify and better understand your *real self* and learn strategies to improve your self-esteem.

**Was I born this way?** Are you born with a self-image or is it acquired? Most psychologists say that it is acquired. During infancy, early emotional experiences form the basis for its development (Eder & Mangeldorf, 1997). Our *self-image* is affected by all the experiences we have had—successes and failures, compliments and “put downs,” happy times and sad times, personal thoughts and experiences, our own expectations and others’ expectations of us, and the way other people have reacted to us, especially in our early adulthood. As you can see, a person’s self-concept is not a singular mental self-image, but a multifaceted system of related images and ideas.

**Who are you?** How many times have you asked yourself that question? Before we go on, take a few minutes and try to answer the question by writing twenty brief statements that begin with *I am* \_\_\_\_\_. After you have completed your list, examine it to find ways that your self-image has evolved. It may have developed from your social world with statements such as: I am a Roman Catholic, I am a student, I am an adult, I am a mechanic; or it may refer to the nature of your interactions with others with statements such as: “I am a friendly person,” “I am a shy person,” “I am a family-oriented person,” “I am a political activist.” Still other statements may refer to traits that you attribute to yourself either because other people have attributed them to you or because you have seen that you stand out in those ways in comparison to other people: “I am short,” “I am good at math,” “I am conscientious.” You probably will not find any self-statements in your list that do not stem in one way or another from your social environment. We will now begin to explore many of the theories and ideas of how you have become the person you are. Let us take a look at how other people influence our feelings about ourselves.



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*We learn who we are from the way we are treated by the important people in our lives.*

## Significant Others

We learn who we are from the way we are treated by the important people in our lives. Harry Stack Sullivan (1968) calls these important people *significant others*. Sullivan goes to the extent of saying that a person is nothing more than the reflected appraisal of significant others. From the verbal or nonverbal communication of these significant others, we learn whether we are liked or disliked, accepted or unaccepted, worthy of respect or disdain, a success or a failure. If we are to have a strong self-concept, we need love, respect, and acceptance from the significant others in our life. In essence, our self-image is shaped by those who have loved—or have not loved us.

Where you are now, everything you are, everything you do, begins with and is based on what I call your personal truth. By personal truth, I mean whatever it is that you, at the absolute, uncensored core of your being, have come to believe about you. This personal truth is critical, because if you believe it, if it is real to you, then it is for you the precise reality that you will live every day.

DR. PHIL MCGRAW

**Who are the significant others in your life?** How have they affected your self-image? To whom are you a significant other? Think about the kind of influence you are having on their self-image. Is it a positive or negative effect? You may be surprised to find that if you are a parent, a spouse, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a teacher, a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or a person that can have any impact on another individual, you are a significant other.

A parent says to a child, “You better not try that, I don’t think you can do it.” You tell your husband, “Can’t you ever do anything right?” A teacher tells a student, “Everyone else in the class understands it, what’s wrong with you?” A son tells his mother, “You’re a ‘rotten’ parent, you made me this way.” Have you heard any of these comments? If we hear these comments too often, we soon begin to believe them, especially if the person saying them is important or significant to us.



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*Do you ever compare yourself to other people?*

From all of these numerous experiences, we construct a mental blueprint of the sort of person we believe we are. Once an idea or belief about ourselves goes into this mental picture, it becomes “true” as far as we are personally concerned. We generally do not question its validity, but proceed to act upon it as if it were true. Most of our actions, feelings, responses, and even our abilities are consistent with this contracted self-image. If we see ourselves as incapable when we enter a math class, we will most likely experience difficulty and failure. If you view yourself as well qualified and capable as you are interviewed for a job, the interviewer will evaluate you on a positive basis, and this will improve your prospects of getting the job. Do you remember from Chapter One what this process is called? This is often called the *self-fulfilling prophecy*. For further discussion on the self-fulfilling prophecy, refer to Chapter One.

Do you ever compare yourself to other people? How does this comparison influence your feelings about yourself?

■ One isn't born one's self. One is born with a mass of expectations, a mass of other people's ideas—and you have to work through it all.

V. S. NAIPAUL ■

**Gaining self-knowledge from our perceptions of others: social comparison.** How many times have you asked yourself such questions as, “Am I as good looking as Jake?” “Can I play tennis as well as Anne?” “Am I as smart as Marti?” We gain self-knowledge from our own behavior; we also gain it from others through *social comparison*, the process in which individuals evaluate their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and abilities in relation to other people. Social comparison helps individuals evaluate themselves, tells them what their distinctive characteristics are, and aids them in building an identity. Some years ago, Leon Festinger (1954) proposed a theory of social comparison. He stressed that when no objective mean is available to evaluate our opinions and abilities, we compare ourselves with others. Festinger believed that we are more likely to compare ourselves with others who are similar to us than those who are dissimilar to us. We tend to compare ourselves with others of our own sex; males compare themselves to other males and females compare themselves to other females. Social comparison allows us a way to decide if we are the *same or different, inferior or superior*.

*Same or different?* How did you learn about your ethnicity or that you are male or female? A child that is told that he is a different color than his school mates begins to see himself as different. A 6'4" female student compares herself with her female school mates and perceives herself as weird. “All my friends are from Vietnam just like I am and this makes me feel like I'm part of the group, I'm the same as they are.” This perception of sameness or difference in relation to others has a great influence on how we perceive ourselves (Flora, 2005).

*Inferior or superior?* We tend to decide whether we are superior or inferior by comparing ourselves to others. Are we attractive or ugly? A success or failure? Intelligent or dumb? It depends on those against whom we measure ourselves. In school we compare ourselves with other students, “I'm not as smart as Jose,” or “I'm more intelligent than Gretchen.” In sports we tend to compare ourselves with other athletes, “I'm a better racquetball player than Steve,” or “Ben's a better quarterback than I am.”

Social comparison theory has been modified over the years and continues to provide an important rationale for why we affiliate with others and how we come to know ourselves (Kimmel & Aronson, 2010).

■ Man's main task in life is to give birth to himself.

ERICH FROMM ■

**The importance of self-concept.** When our *self-concept* is intact and secure, we feel good. When it is threatened, we feel anxious and insecure. When it is adequate and one that we can be wholesomely proud of, we feel self-confident. We feel free to be ourselves and to express ourselves. When it is inadequate and an ob-

ject of shame, we attempt to hide it rather than express it—we withdraw inside ourselves. If we have strong, positive feelings about ourselves, we want and feel that we deserve a good loving relationship, or a good job, and even a feeling of freedom—whatever we think of as the highest good for us. On the other hand, if we have a poorly developed, negative, or inferior self-image, we may expect very little for ourselves. We may settle for second or third best because we feel that is all we deserve. In essence, we project to others the way we feel about ourselves. If we cannot like and respect ourselves, how can we ever hope other people will see us as worthy individuals who have something to contribute to the world in which we live?

To gain a better understanding of how the self-image evolves over a life span, we need to study some of the traditional theories of personality that will provide us with a foundation of how we become aware of who we really are.

## Personality Development

Throughout our lives, we will be attempting to understand other people, such as our boyfriends or girlfriends, our bosses, our husbands or wives, or our teachers. In addition, we will also be attempting to understand ourselves. The following theories will help us gain an understanding of ourselves and the people around us. We will consider a variety of theories that will help you in the journey of finding yourself and answering the question, *who am I*.

The theory that has had the greatest impact on the field of psychology was developed by Sigmund Freud. This theory has created a lot of controversy, not only within the realm of psychology, but also within our everyday lives—in literature, movies, child-rearing practices, the feminist movement, etc. Let us take a look at some of Freud's ideas—**The Psychodynamic Approach**.

**Sigmund Freud.** Freud's theory of personality development provided the foundation for many other personality theories. Freud (1965) states that a person's personality is made up of three distinct but interrelated parts: the id, ego, and superego.

**What is this thing called an id?** The *id* is composed of the basic biological drives that motivate an individual. This includes the hunger drive, the thirst drive, sexual impulses, and other needs that assure survival and bring pleasure. The id operates according to the *pleasure principle*, which demands immediate gratification of its urges. Many of Freud's supporters feel that this could be the reason some people resort to drugs, alcohol, or some form of sexual gratification. They do not think about what they are doing, they just look for immediate gratification. The id engages in primary process thinking, which is primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy-oriented. The id is present at birth and remains an active force throughout our life. We are not consciously aware of the actions of our id. As many of you have heard, Freud has received much of his criticism because of the emphasis he puts on the sexual impulses, pleasure drives, and their control over our behavior (Larsen & Buss, 2010).

**When does the superego develop?** The *superego* begins to develop after the age of four and is acquired from the environment around us. It consists of our values, morals, religious beliefs, and ideals of our parents and society. Another name for the superego would be our *conscience*. The superego tells us what is right and

To be at peace with ourselves, we need to know ourselves.

CAITLIN MATTHEWS

I do the very best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep on doing it to the end.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

wrong, what we should do and should not do—the *moral component*. This is the part of our personality that makes us feel guilty and experience anxiety. The superego attempts to limit the sexual and aggressive impulses of the id. As you can observe, the id and the superego are in conflict. Each characteristic is trying to take control of your life. You could use the following analogy—the id is the “devil” and the superego is “God,” each attempting to control your life. If the id or the superego takes control of your life you may develop some form of personality disorder.

**The ego to the rescue.** Thank goodness for the ego and the fact that it develops before the superego. The ego begins to develop after the first year of life and begins to moderate and restrain the id by requiring it to seek gratification of its impulses through realistic and socially acceptable means. The *ego the reality principle*, is the rational, logical, and realistic part of your personality that attempts to maintain balance between the id and superego. The conflict between the id and the superego causes anxiety, which, in turn, leads the ego to create defense mechanisms to control the anxiety. Defense mechanisms will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Freud’s theory has had a major impact in the field of psychology. As you have observed, his theory has created a lot of controversy, but that is not at all bad. Many people became so upset with his ideas that they began doing serious research in the field of psychology, and since that time many new theories have evolved. As you take additional psychology classes, you will study Freud’s theory and many of these other theories in more depth. We will take a brief look at a few of these theories in the following pages.

Most psychologists today think that Freud put too much emphasis on the biological drives, specifically the sex drive—the id. For example, Alfred Adler, a charter member of Freud’s inner circle, argued that the foremost human drive is not sexuality, but a striving for superiority. Also, Erik Erikson, an original follower of Freud, realized that the biological drives are important, but that the effects of the environment on our development and us are as important, if not more important. Let’s take a look at Adler’s and Erikson’s theories.

## Adler’s Individual Psychology Theory

To Alfred Adler, personality arises from our attempts to overcome or compensate for fundamental feelings of inadequacy. Adler was responsible for coining the popular term **inferiority complex**, a concept, he argued, that underlies and motivates a great deal of human behavior. From his point of view, it is our natural drive for superiority that explains motivation, not sexual gratification as envisioned by Freud. Adler viewed striving for superiority as a universal drive to adapt, improve oneself, and master life’s challenges. He felt that young children understandably feel weak and helpless in comparison to more competent older children and adults. These early inferiority feelings supposedly motivate individuals to acquire new skills and develop new talents (Nevid & Rathus, 2009).

Adler also noted that everyone has to work to overcome some feelings of inferiority. **Compensation** involves efforts to overcome imagined or real weaknesses, limitations, or inferiorities by developing other areas of our personalities. Adler believed that compensation is entirely normal. However, in some people, inferiority feelings can become excessive, resulting in what is called an inferiority complex, exaggerated feelings of weakness and inadequacy. Adler thought

I am not what I think I am, I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.  
AARON BLIEBERG AND HARRY LEUBLING

Your only obligation in any lifetime is to be true to yourself.  
RICHARD BACH

that either parental pampering or parental neglect could cause an inferiority problem. He also believed that early childhood experiences exert momentous influences over adult personality.

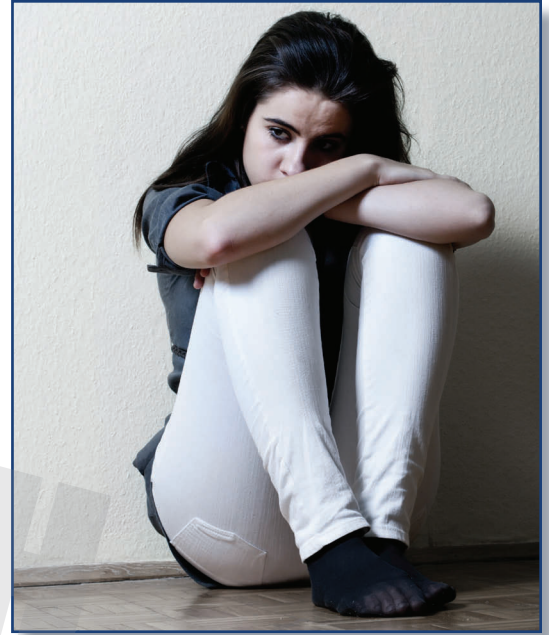
Adler was careful to explain that an inferiority complex can distort the normal process of striving for superiority. He felt that some people engage in overcompensation in order to conceal their feelings of inferiority. Instead of working to master life's challenges, people with an inferiority complex work to achieve status, gain power over others, and acquire the trappings of success (fancy clothes, impressive cars, or whatever looks important to them). Unfortunately, they tend to flaunt their success in an effort to cover up their underlying inferiority complex (Adler, 1998).

**Birth order.** It was also Adler who first focused attention on the possible importance of *birth order* as a possible factor governing personality. Although his theory created many studies on the effects of birth order, the studies failed to support his hypothesis. In recent years, there has been some revived interest in the relationship between birth order and personality, but the research findings have continued to be somewhat inconsistent (Weiten et al., 2012). Yet, the topic is very interesting to discuss. How do you think birth order has influenced your personality development?

**Erik Erikson.** Erikson (1993) has identified *eight stages of psychosocial development* that each individual experiences through his or her life. Each stage is characterized by specific tasks that must be mastered. If these tasks are not satisfied, an unfavorable outcome throws us off balance and makes it harder to deal with later crises. As each stage is completed, we continue to build toward a positive, healthy development and a satisfying life. Those who are plagued with unfavorable outcomes will continue to face frustration and conflict while striving to develop as a person. A brief description of Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development follows (Feldman, 2010).

## Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development

1. **Trust vs. Mistrust.** During the first years of life, a child is completely dependent on others for the satisfaction of his or her needs. If these needs are satisfied on a consistent basis, the child will feel comfortable and secure. If the child's needs are not satisfied on a regular basis, *mistrust* will develop, and this may become the core of later insecurity and suspiciousness. This child will become *mistrusting* and fearful of others and have difficulty developing close, trusting relationships with others in the future.
2. **Autonomy vs. Doubt.** During ages one through three, a child is attempting to become more independent. He or she is learning to walk, talk, explore, and become toilet trained. The people around him or her, especially the parents, help the child to develop a sense of independence and autonomy by encouraging him to try new skills and by reassuring him or her if he fails. Consistent discipline is also important during this time. If the parents



*What is wrong with me?*

are inconsistent, overprotective, or show disapproval while the child is attempting to do things on his or her own, he or she will become doubtful, unsure, and ashamed of himself or herself. If a child is told by a *significant other* that he should be able to read or be toilet trained, s/he may wonder, “What is wrong with me? My parents say I should be able to do that but I can’t do it.” This child will feel doubtful and shameful of himself or herself and thus feel negative about his or her capabilities. A child that has accomplished some of these tasks and is given encouragement and positive reinforcement will feel confident and independent.

3. **Initiative vs. Guilt.** During the ages of four through five, the child moves from simple self-control to an ability to take control. This is the *questioning and exploring stage* when a child wants to try anything and everything. The child becomes very curious about the world around himself or herself. If s/he is encouraged to take the *initiative* and explore the world, the child will feel good about himself or herself and will continue to be curious in the future. If the parents inhibit the child’s activities and curiosity, the child will feel *guilty* whenever he or she takes the initiative and thus cause the individual to become passive. Why try to do something if your parents keep showing disapproval?
4. **Industry vs. Inferiority.** Assume that the child is between the ages of six and twelve and is excited about life and motivated to solve problems and accomplish tasks. These are the early school years when the child should be making new friends, joining clubs and teams, and succeeding in school. When a child has a task to complete, such as a homework assignment, or cookies to sell, or a wood car to make, the child should attempt to accomplish the task with encouragement from others. The parents should not intervene and complete the task for the child. Otherwise, the child will quickly learn that the parents will always complete the task, so why try? Or possibly the child will feel inferior and incapable because his or her parents always ended up completing the tasks for them. Many parents feel like they are being responsible parents by helping their children learn, but, in reality, they are hindering their development. During this stage, the child is becoming involved in the outside world, and other people such as teachers, classmates, and other adults can have a great influence on the child’s attitude toward himself or herself.
5. **Identity vs. Role Confusion.** Between the ages of twelve and twenty, a person is caught between childhood and adulthood. The major task to accomplish during this stage is to answer the question, “Who am I?” Adolescence is a turbulent time for many individuals. Mental and physical maturation brings on new feelings and new attitudes of which people are unsure. Should these new feelings and attitudes be expressed or inhibited—especially one’s new-found sex drive?

Be yourself because if people don't like you as you are, they're not going to like you as someone you are trying to be.

JIMMY DEAN

Our identity evolves from our self-perceptions and our relationships with others. People need to see themselves as positive, capable, and lovable individuals as well as having the feeling that they are accepted by others. Otherwise, they will experience *role confusion*, an uncertainty about who they are and where they are going. Role confusion may lead to a constant searching for acceptance and a feeling of belonging. This search for identity can lead people to unhealthy relationships and to alternatives such as drugs and gangs.

**The beginning of the adult years.** Freud did not put much emphasis on the adult years, but Erikson noticed that we continue to go through different stages as we age.

- 6. Intimacy vs. Isolation (20–40 years).** Now that we feel good about ourselves and have an *identity*, we are ready to form meaningful relationships and learn to share with others. During the young adult years, we must develop the ability to care about others and express a willingness to share experiences with them. Marriage and sexual intimacy does not guarantee these qualities. Failure to establish intimacy with others leads to a deep sense of *isolation*. The person feels lonely and uncared for in life. A person that satisfies this stage is capable of developing close, intimate, and sharing relationships with others and feels comfortable and secure in these relationships.
- 7. Generativity vs. Self-Absorption (40–65 years).** Until middle age, we seem to be preoccupied with ourselves. Even the intimacy stage is primarily for the self to prevent loneliness. Now we are ready to look beyond the self and look to the future, not only for ourselves, but also for others. This seems to be the best time to establish a family because we are concerned about the development and welfare of others. This is the time in our life when we feel productive and are concerned for the benefit of humankind.

What about the individual who does not feel productive and also feels like he or she is not accomplishing any goals in life? This person feels trapped. Life loses its meaning and the person feels bitter, dreary, unfulfilled, and stagnant. This person becomes preoccupied with the self, personal needs, and interests.

Daniel Levinson (1986) has written extensively about stages of adult development. However, most of Levinson's research and work were based on the study of men. According to Levinson, if people do not go through a *mid-life transition stage*, they may live a life of *staleness and resignation*. Some individuals, approximately two to five percent of the population (McCrea & Costa, 2005), will experience a painful and disruptive struggle, which is called the *mid-life crisis*. This is similar to the adolescent identity crisis (Erikson stage of identity versus role confusion), where the individual seeks a new identity or to find an identity. Since these individuals have not satisfied their goals they had set for themselves, they experience frustration. It is not uncommon for individuals to divorce their spouses, quit their jobs, and attempt to start all over again.

- 8. Integrity vs. Despair (65 years–death).** Old age should be a time of reflection, when a person should be able to look back over the events of a lifetime with a sense of acceptance and satisfaction. This is the type of person who has tried to live life to its fullest. The individual who wished he or she could live life over again, and also feels cheated or deprived of any of the breaks in life, will live a life of regret and failure. This is the person that keeps saying, "What if . . .?" or "If I would have taken that opportunity" and because of this, feels depressed and will be unhappy the rest of his or her life.

As most people continue through this stage, they re-evaluate the meaning of life for themselves and ideally find a new meaning that will help reduce fear and anxiety and help prepare them for facing death.

Life is an echo. What you send out—Comes back. What you sow—You reap. What you give—You get. What you see in others—Exists in you.

ZIG ZIGLAR



What dreams do you have for your life?

## Check this out

### There's a Revolution Going On! (Many changes have taken place)

There is a revolution going on in our "life-cycle" development. People are leaving childhood sooner, but they are taking longer to grow up and much longer to die. Look at some of the "happenings" that we have been hearing about in the news, etc.

- Nine-year-old boys carrying a gun to school
- Nine-year-old girls developing breasts and pubic hair
- 16-year-olds divorcing their parents
- 35-year-old men still living at home with their parents
- 40-year-old women are just getting around to pregnancy
- 50-year-old men are forced into early retirement
- 55-year-old women can have egg donor babies
- 65-year-old women receive their doctorate degrees
- 70-year-old men reverse aging by 20 years with human growth hormones
- 80-year-olds run marathons
- 85-year-olds remarry and still enjoy sex
- More and more people are reaching the age of 100

There seems to be a shifting of all the stages of adulthood. Adolescence is being prolonged. Adulthood begins around 30. Most baby-boomers do not feel "grown up" until they are into their forties. When our parents turned 50, we thought they were old! Fifty is what 40 used to be; 60 is what 50 used to be. Middle age has already been pushed far into the 50's (Sheehy, 2006). So what's next? What are your thoughts?

Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

All of us need to continue to evaluate our lives on a regular basis. As long as we do this, we will not experience any traumatic transitions that will disrupt our lives (Gibbs, 2005). As you observe the above eight stages you notice that there is a positive and negative aspect of each stage. Are you able to identify the stage you are in right now? Are you able to identify the stages some of your friends are in? Erik Erikson was one of the first psychologists to put some emphasis on the fact that we continue to go through developmental stages throughout our lives. Freud emphasized that the first six years of life were the most important years.

## Trait Theory

Your friends ask you to tell them about your brother. You tell them he tends to be domineering, anxious, optimistic, intelligent, and athletic. Are these terms you have used to describe other people? Many of us use terms like moody, smart, stupid, restless, impulsive, passive, careful, aggressive, quiet, reliable, shy, outgoing, etc. to describe people. The words you use to describe other people (and yourself) are called **traits**, relatively stable and consistent personal characteristics. Trait theorists are interested in measuring how people differ (which key traits best describe them), and then in measuring how much they differ (the degree of variation in traits within the individual and between the individuals).



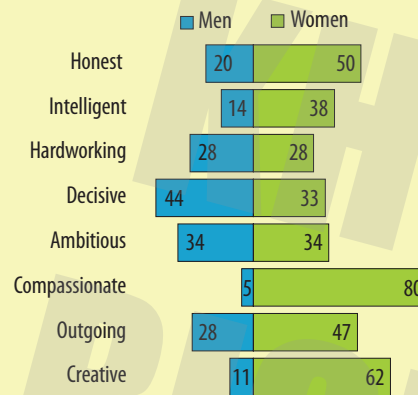
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*What traits do you think this woman possesses?*

## GENDER & YOU: MEN OR WOMEN: WHO'S THE BETTER LEADER?

Americans believe women have the right stuff to be political leaders. When it comes to honesty, intelligence and a handful of other character traits they value highly in leaders, the public rates women superior to men, according to a nationwide Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends survey. Nevertheless, a mere 6 percent of respondents in the survey of 2,250 adults taken in August of 2008 say that, overall, women make better political leaders than men. About one-in-five (21 percent) say men make the better leaders, while the vast majority (69 percent) say men and women make equally good leaders.

Leadership Traits: Women Rule! Percent saying this trait is more true of . . .



Note: Traits listed in order of the public's ranking of their importance to leadership. "Equally true" and "don't know" responses are not shown.

What do you think about the survey results?

From © 2008 Pew Research Center, Social & Demographic Trends Project. *Men or Women: Who's the Better Leader?*  
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2008/08/25/men-or-women-whos-the-better-leader/>

**The Big Five.** Because trait and type theories, developed by well-known psychologists, such as Gordon Allport, Raymond Cattell, and Hans Eysenck, follow a common sense approach, researchers today still find them attractive. However, rather than speaking of hundreds of traits or of a few types, many theorists agree that there are five broad categories. These five major dimensions of personality have become known as the *Big Five* (McCrae & Costa, 2005; 2008). (You can easily remember the five factors with the following mnemonic device by using the first letters of each of the Big Five traits, which spells OCEAN.)

Many researchers are now convinced that the best way to describe personality and individual differences is to find where people stand on the following dimensions: 1) openness to experience, 2) conscientiousness, 3) extroversion, 4) agreeableness, and 5) neuroticism. Like Cattell, McCrae and Costa maintain that personality can be described adequately by measuring the basic traits that they've identified. Their bold claim has been supported in many studies by other researchers, and the five-factor model has become the dominant conception of personality structure in contemporary psychology (John & Srivastava, 2008).

■ A realistic assessment of my strengths usually turns up several weaknesses also. Becoming more self-accepting involves not only awareness of strengths but also the acceptance of my weakness not in the sense of not wanting to do something about them, but in the sense of not letting them block the use of my strengths.

DAVID G. JONES ■

**Table 2.1 THE “BIG FIVE” PERSONALITY FACTORS**

TRAIT	DESCRIPTION OF HIGH SCORER	DESCRIPTION OF LOW SCORER
Openness to experience or Not open	Imaginative Prefers variety Creative	Practical Prefers routine Uncreative
Conscientiousness or Undirected	Responsible Organized Dependable	Negligent Disorganized Undependable
Extroversion or Introversion	Talkative Expressive Active	Quiet Reserved Passive
Agreeableness or Antagonistic	Good-natured Helpful Trusting	Irritable Stubborn Suspicious
Neuroticism or Emotional stability	Worrying Anxious Insecure	Calm Self-controlled Secure

Adapted from McCrae & Costa (2005; 2008).

This is indicated, in part, by the fact that these dimensions are ones to which most people in many different cultures refer in describing themselves.

Trait theories allow us to describe personality, but they do not necessarily help us understand how we developed these traits (Cloninger, 2007). Yet, the above traits are stable across the life cycle; if you’re curious when young, you’re likely to be curious when older. Five decades of research on the determinants of the Big Five suggests that the heritability of each trait is in the vicinity of 50 percent (Krueger & Johnson, 2008). What about describing people in terms of temperament and personality type?

## Personality Types

While there are many personality type indicators and/or tests available, perhaps the best known is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). It is based on the theory of Carl Jung’s psychological types. In essence, we have mental or psychological preferences for performing certain tasks. According to type psychology, there are 16 basic personality types consisting of four dimensions. We will now discuss these four different dichotomies or dimensions (Myers & Myers, 1995).

**Extraversion (E) or introversion (I).** People who prefer extraversion like variety and action in their work and everyday activities. They are sociable, naturally communicate energy and enthusiasm, and are particularly good at interacting with people. Extroverts prefer having people around them most of the time, and it is not unusual for them to act quickly, sometimes without thinking.

Introverts like having a great deal of time for quiet activities so they can concentrate, develop ideas, and reflect on the day’s activities. In fact, one of their strong gifts is their natural ability to reflect on decisions they need to make, so it is rare for them not to think through something very carefully before making a decision. Introverts are collectors of thoughts, and solitude is the place where the collection is curated and rearranged to make sense of the

■ If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step up to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU ■

present and the future (Helgoe, 2010). They keep their energy and enthusiasm inside, prefer working alone, and are quite comfortable with just a few very close friends.

**Sensing (S) or intuition (N).** Individuals who prefer sensing are practical and realistic and like to use facts, details and examples to help them solve problems. They may distrust and ignore their inspirations, preferring to just continue with what is, with some fine tuning. Sensing types like established ways of doing things, usually proceed step-by-step, and rarely make errors of fact.

People who prefer intuition enjoy solving new complex problems and are good at seeing the big picture, new possibilities, and new ways of doing things. It is common for them to rely heavily on insights and imagination. They often follow their inspirations, good or bad, and often may make errors of fact. Intuitive types prefer change, sometimes radical, to continuation of what is and often proceed in bursts of energy, with slack periods in between.

**Thinking (T) or feeling (F).** Thinkers prefer to use logical analysis and deep thought to make decisions, being careful to review the pros and cons of any decision they need to make. They tend to be brief, concise, firm-minded, and can give criticism when appropriate. It is normal for them to be convinced by cool, impersonal reasoning and tend to use emotions and feelings as only cognitive data to weigh in the decision-making process.

Feelers tend to use personal values to make their decisions, while taking time to consider how much they care and how much personal investment they have for each of the alternatives. These individuals are sociable and friendly, prefer harmony with others, dislike telling people unpleasant things, and tend to be sympathetic and appreciative. They are convinced by personal information, enthusiastically delivered.

**Judgment (J) or perception (P).** Individuals who prefer a judging lifestyle tend to live in an organized, structured, planned way, desiring to regulate life and control it. They prefer to “plan their work and work their plan,” and like to get things settled and finished. These individuals create lists to keep them on schedule and often focus on the task to be done. It is important to note that judging does not mean judgmental of others—only as it refers to how one prefers to live their individual life.

Those who prefer a perceptive approach tend to live in a flexible, unstructured, and spontaneous manner. They prefer to leave things open for last-minute changes and dislike deadlines, schedules, and may postpone tasks that need to be done. It is common for these individuals to present views as tentative and modifiable. Perceptive individuals use lists to remind them of all the things they have to do someday.

If you are interested in taking the Myers-Briggs questionnaire, your college counseling service may have a version you can take, or you may have an opportunity in a class or seminar. The book *Please Understand Me* (Keirsey & Bates, 1998), offers a questionnaire that provides scores in the four categories. Also, the Web Resources at the end of the chapter may be of help.

Now, it is time to return to our discussion of other theories that will help us understand how we have evolved into the individuals we are today.

■ The merit of the MBTI is that it enables us to expect specific personality differences in particular people and to cope with the people and differences in a constructive way.

ISABEL MYERS ■

## Strengths-Based Psychology

In 1998, Tom Rath (2007) began working with a team of Gallup scientists led by the late Father of Strengths Psychology, Donald O. Clifton. Their goal was to start a global conversation about what's right with people rather than focusing so much on people's shortcomings. They believed that people have several times more potential for growth when they invested energy in developing their strengths instead of correcting their deficiencies.

Based on Gallup's 40 year study of human strengths, they created a language of the 34 most common talents and developed the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment to help people discover and describe these talents. They have continued to conduct research on their findings, and *StrengthsFinder 2.0* picks up where the first version left off. The language of 34 themes remains the same, and the results yield a much more in-depth analysis of an individual's top five strengths/talents. There is an access code at the back of Rath's book, *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, which directs you to the online assessment and Strengths Discovery and Action-Planning Guide based on your *StrengthsFinder 2.0* results. The access code is valid for one user only.

While there may be other strengths tests, free or fee-based available, at the end of this chapter be sure to review the web resources activity: *Brief Strengths Test*, or *VIA Survey of Character Strengths*, which measures 24 strengths and is free online. You can get an analysis of your scores for your personal evaluation.

Now, it is time to return to our discussion of other theories that will help us understand how we have evolved into the individuals we are today.

### Carl Rogers: Self-Theory—Humanistic Approach

Carl Rogers (1995) defines the development of the self-concept in terms of *self-actualization*, which is defined as the fulfillment of one's own completely unique potential. The key to self-actualization is the self-concept. Rogers maintains that the way we regard ourselves depends largely on the kind of regard given by others. In the ideal situation, love is given freely and does not depend on any specific aspects of behavior. Rogers calls this *unconditional positive regard* (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2011). Unconditional acceptance leads to unimpaired growth and the development of positive characteristics. Individuals who have received unconditional positive regard have a positive realistic self-concept, high self-esteem and feelings of self-respect. Rogers believes that a fully-functioning person lives totally in the present and is continually changing to make full use of their potential.

The difficulties in functioning are caused by a lack of *unconditional acceptance* by others starting at birth. Many parents make their affection and approval conditional on certain kinds of behavior. If the child does what the parent says, the parent will love the child. If the child does not live up to parental expectations, the parent may show disapproval and withhold affection. Consequently, the child attempts to live up to his parents' expectations but cannot always be successful. This is the beginning of an unrealistic self-concept.

In order to become a self-actualized individual, we must accept ourselves as we are, the positive and the negative, with the potential to grow as a person and to accept others as they are, rather than wishing that they were somehow different. We all need to learn to place a high value on the individuality and uniqueness of ourselves and others.

## CONSIDER THIS . . . THE SELF-ACCEPTING PERSON

- The self-accepting person is a participant in life rather than a spectator.
- He is inclined to be objective, spontaneous, emotional, and intellectually honest.
- He tries to understand the interpersonal and environmental problems he faces, but he also accepts his limitations in gaining true insight concerning them.
- He works out the best adjustment to life of which he is capable, often without fully understanding all that is involved.
- However, he is willing to experience the pleasures and discomfort of self-revelation: i.e., he accepts the mixed pain and joy that accompanies each change in his attitude and feeling toward himself and others.
- His claims on life are, for the most part, reasonable. If he wants to be a member of the Country Club and yet cannot afford it, he finds other social and recreational outlets in keeping with his budget.
- The self-accepting person without special talent or ability is able to emotionally share in the gifts of others without undue regret about his own inborn deficiencies.
- He does not brood about missed opportunities, lost causes, errors, and failures. Rather, he looks on them for what they can contribute to his doing things differently or better in the future.
- He does not get stuck in the rut of irrational feelings of love, hate, envy, jealousy, suspicion, lust, and greed, because he lets each feeling spell out its special message for him.

From *Self-Acceptance* by McDonald, Smith and Sutherland. Copyright by The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. The University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

### Viktor Frankl: Search for Meaning

Viktor Frankl (1998) states:

As humans, we are capable of self-awareness, which allows us to reflect and to decide. With this awareness, we become free beings who are responsible for choosing the way we live and thus influence our own destiny.

This awareness of freedom and responsibility gives rise to existential anxiety, which is a basic human condition. Whether we like it or not, we are free, even though we may seek to avoid reflecting on this freedom. The knowledge that we must choose leads to anxiety. Facing the inevitable prospect of eventual death gives the present moment significance, for we become aware that we do not have forever to accomplish our projects.

Our task is to create a life that has *meaning* and *purpose*. (Meaning, purpose, and self-actualization will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Nine and Ten). As humans, we are unique in striving toward creating purposes and values that give meaning to living.

This is an existential view of human nature that states that the significance of our existence is never fixed once and for all. Rather, we continually recreate ourselves through our goals. Humans are in a constant state of transition, emerging, evolving, and becoming. Being a person implies that we are discovering and making sense of our existence.

Life has taught me so many lessons, it's hard to decide which one is of the greatest value, but one of the most important is this: Nobody will believe in you unless you believe in yourself.

LIBERACE (1919–1986), PIANIST

## Virginia Satir: Self-Worth

Virginia Satir (1988; 2001) indicates in her writing that the crucial factor in interpersonal relations—what happens inside people and between people—is *the picture of the individual worth that each person carries around*. A person who can appreciate his or her own self-worth will be able to see and respect the worth of others. She describes a human being who is living humanly as a person who understands, values, and develops his or her body, finding it useful and beautiful. This is a person who is honest about himself or herself and others, who is willing to take risks, to be creative, embrace change, who is feeling, loving, playful, authentic, and productive. She says that the person who is living humanly can stand on his or her own two feet, can love deeply and fight fairly and effectively, and can be on equally good terms with both his or her tenderness and his or her toughness.

*Self-worth* is learned, and the family is where it is basically acquired. There is always hope that your life can change because you can always learn new things. Human beings can learn, grow, and change all their lives. Every person has a feeling of worth, positive or negative. The question is, which one is it—positive or negative?

**Do you have high or low self-worth?** If you have low self-worth or know someone with low self-worth, you can change or help the other person change. Do not blame other people for your problems or faults. You are already that way, but you can change. Look to the future. For others to change, a nurturing environment needs to be provided, and for you to change, a new environment is also needed. You will be able to develop and grow in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible—this is a nurturing environment. Satir describes the main points that help human beings change and grow:

1. Communication of feelings: all feelings are honorable—Express your feelings—no one knows how you feel if you do not disclose your feelings to them.
2. Belief that a person is able to grow and change—If you believe you can change, you can.
3. Restoring the use of the senses—take in the world and see freely, touch freely, and hear freely.

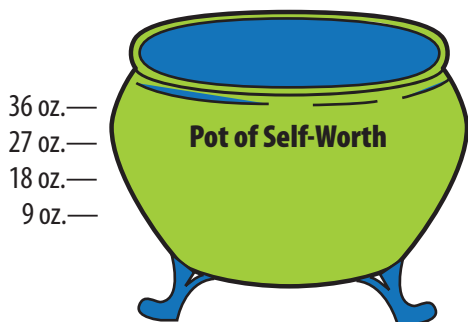
**What is in the pot of self-worth?** Satir uses this *pot concept* to refer to how you feel about yourself, your self-worth. For example, assuming the maximum capacity of a pot of self-worth is 36 ounces, how many ounces would be in your pot today? And, what is it full of?

Suppose your “*pot*” is full of a feeling you have had since childhood, such as hostility toward one of your parents because they abused you. Your inner thoughts say, “I must be a bad person since my parents always beat me. I’m no good. I must have deserved the abuse.” Your pot of self-worth is low because of your past experience. You are experiencing “self-defeating” thoughts.

You can learn to change these feelings. You can change your “self-talk,” and tell yourself that you are a “good person.” You can read a good self-help book that may help you or you may seek professional counseling.

I am  
me  
and  
I  
am  
okay.

VIRGINIA SATIR



How many ounces are in your pot today?

**Does your pot of self-worth change?** Your self-worth pot is constantly changing. One day you get an “A” on a test and you feel great, your pot of self-worth is full of good feelings. The next day you call someone on the phone for a date and you get turned down. Now your pot of self-worth is low—it has a lot of negative feelings in it. Knowing that you are a “good” person no matter what happens to you, will help you maintain a full pot of good feelings and help you succeed in life.

You must learn to free yourself of any rule decreeing that some feeling you have is not a human feeling. Then you are free to function fully and free to make choices about what you want for your life.

## How Do Our Thoughts and Our Environment Relate to the Development of Our Personality?

In Chapter Three we will discover how learning theory relates to the development of our personality, but in the meantime we will discover how our thoughts and our relationships with other people interrelate.

■ One can smile and smile and still be a villain.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE ■

## How Did I Get to Be the Person I Am Today?

Cognitive theories of personality point out that there are important individual differences in the way people think about and define situations. Cognitive theories stress the mental processes through which people turn their sensations and perceptions into organized impressions of reality. They emphasize that people actively choose their own environments to a great extent. People choose to enter those situations that they expect to be reinforcing and to avoid those that are unsatisfying and uncertain. As many of you have observed, some members of minority ethnic groups “stick together” on college campuses. Oftentimes it is that these members are uncertain about whether they would be accepted if they ventured into different ethnic friendships. Most of us tend to avoid relationships that we anticipate as unsatisfying by not attempting to start them and by continuing with familiar ones instead.

■ The most important words we'll ever utter are those words we say to ourselves, about ourselves, when we're by ourselves.

MAYA ANGELOU ■

The cognitive emphasis to personality is the interaction of a person's thoughts and behavior. It considers the uniqueness of human beings, especially of their thought processes. It also assumes that human beings are decision makers, planners, and evaluators of their own behavior. Many contemporary researchers claim that people can change their behavior, their conception of themselves, and their personalities in a short time if they are willing to change their thoughts. More often than not, we hope our cognitions are rational and sensible, thus enabling us to live and make decisions in emotionally healthy ways. But many times, our cognitive processing is irrational and nonsensible, and we may be totally unaware of it.

**Talk to yourself.** Use positive self-talk. It has been said that there is nothing wrong with talking to yourself, but if you should ever start answering back, then it is time to be concerned. Although going around talking to yourself in public may cause people to wonder about you, holding a dialogue is not only very useful, but also quite normal.

In fact, the inner conversations we have with ourselves can have a powerful effect on our emotional well-being and our motivation. Developing an aware-



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ness of precisely what we are saying to ourselves and about ourselves can help us understand why we react the way we do to various people and events in our lives.

Building self-esteem is easier with the help of positive self-talk (self-talk is discussed in depth in Chapter Eight). You may have discovered that negative self-talk can have a tremendous influence in the development of someone’s feelings about themselves—a poor self-concept.

**Thinking positively and optimistically.** You may recall the words of a popular song by Bobby McFerrin, “Don’t worry, be happy” and it continues, “Cause when you worry, your face will frown and that will bring everything down.” Does this kind of thinking influence your behavior? Indeed it does. A positive mood improves our ability to process information more efficiently, increases optimism, and raises self-esteem. A positive attitude enhances our sense of controlling our environment, and acting on this optimism can actually lead to more control over our circumstances. Since many of us are not positive thinkers and are more pessimistic than optimistic, how can we change this behavior?

Does positive thinking influence your behavior?

Let’s take a brief look at what is called *cognitive restructuring*—the process of modifying thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Cognitive restructuring can be used to increase positive and optimistic thinking. This is also known as *self-talk*—the non-verbal, mental speech we use when we think about something, solve problems, and make plans. Self-talk is very helpful in cognitive restructuring. Positive self-talk will allow you the freedom to build the confidence you need in order to reach your potential. Take a look at what you may be saying to yourself in Table 2.2.

Is there a relationship between the self-fulfilling prophecy and positive self-talk? When you keep telling yourself, “I’m no good,” “I’ll never amount to anything,” “I’m a liar,” “Nobody likes me,” “Nobody will ever love me,” “I will never be able to pass math,” etc., you will discover that it unconsciously affects your attitude and behavior. This is why it is so important to monitor your self-talk.

You need to become aware of your self-talk. Several strategies are listed below that will help you monitor and fine tune your self-talk.

**Table 2.2** WHAT DO YOU TELL YOURSELF?

POSITIVE SELF-TALK	NEGATIVE SELF-TALK
I sure am a good person.	I am not a very good person.
I know I can do it.	I cannot do anything right.
I am smarter than most people think.	I sure am stupid.
I know, if I try hard enough, I can pass that math class.	I will never be able to pass math.
If I do not ask, I will never know if Cassandra will go out with me.	Cassandra would not want to go out with me.
I sure feel good.	I feel depressed.
Sabi and Angie are two of my good friends.	Nobody likes me.
What can you say to yourself to make you feel more confident?	

Mental health experts have discovered that this process has had a tremendous influence on the development of positive self-esteem for many people. Our thoughts have a great influence on our behavior, but we also need to look at the importance of external events and see how they are interrelated.

■ Your biggest competitor is your own view of your future.  
WATTS WACKER AND JIM TAYLOR ■

## Cognitive and Social Learning Theories

Two somewhat different theories combine an emphasis on cognitive processes and a focus on social learning processes. Some psychologists believe that we learn many of our behaviors either by conditioning or by observing others and modeling our behavior after them. Like cognitive and social psychological theorists, they emphasize the importance of mental processes: How we think and feel about the situations we are in affects our behavior. So instead of focusing solely on how our environment controls us (learning theory), social-cognitive theorists focus on how we and our environment interact: How do we interpret and respond to external events? How do our schemas, our memories, and our expectations influence our behavior patterns?

Human beings are driven by neither inner forces nor environmental factors but rather by monitoring the impact of their behavior on other people, on the environment, and on themselves. We learn from our own experience and also learn vicariously by observing other people. We can also evaluate our own behavior according to personal standards and provide ourselves with reinforcers, such as self-approval or disapproval. You expect to get at least a “B” in your psychology class, but the night before the final exam you go to a party instead of studying. You only get a “C” for your grade. You tell yourself how dumb you were for not studying and feel disappointed in yourself.

Bandura’s (1996) theory explains the complex interaction of individual factors, behavior, and environmental stimuli. Each factor can influence or change the others, and the direction of change is rarely one-way; it is reciprocal or

■ It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.  
HARRY POTTER ■

### ✓ Check this out Personal Influences on Behavior

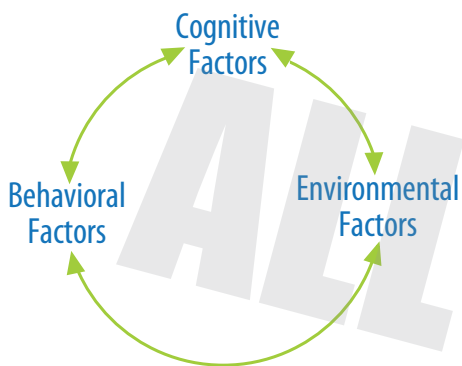
The following categories of cognitive variables may have a tremendous influence on your behavior. Can you identify how these relate to your life?

- 1. Expectancies.** What we have learned from our past experience leads us to form different expectations that help to determine our reactions to future events. You expect that your marriage will be the perfect relationship. When you discover that your spouse does not live up to your expectations, how do you feel? You expect to get a “D” in your calculus class, and you receive a “C.” How do you feel? Think back on some of your experiences. How have your expectations affected your life?
- 2. Competencies.** Each of us has a different combination of abilities and skills that shape our responses to events. Juan and Kyla are both asked to give a speech at a local event. Juan thinks he is a good speaker, so he accepts, but Kyla does not feel competent as a public speaker, so she refuses the offer. What are your competencies and how have they influenced your behavior?
- 3. Personal Values.** Our sense of priorities and values also shape our decisions and actions. You refuse the offer for a job in a store where they sell pornographic magazines, but accept the job as a sales clerk in a store that sells religious goods. Your values influenced your decision.
- 4. Encoding Strategies.** We also have different ways of perceiving and categorizing experiences that shape our responses. One mother gets very angry at her teenager when she sees his messy room, while another mother takes it in stride and realizes that it is a stage most teenagers go through.
- 5. Self-Regulatory Systems.** We also formulate goals, plans, and strategies that influence our actions. You decide to take a physics class because you are majoring in science, and even if you decide to drop science as your major, physics will help you in your other future pursuits. Another student decides that physics would be a waste of time and would not be beneficial (Mischel, 2007).

bidirectional. This is an interactive, reciprocal perspective that has inspired researchers to study how the environment shapes personal factors, such as self-control and self-concept, and how these, in turn, influence behavior.

**What is reciprocal determinism?** We have repeated this statement many times, but we cannot recall who we should credit for it: “We react to others as others react to us; others react to us as we react to them.” “Behavior, internal personal factors, and environmental influences all operate as interlocking determinants of each other” (Bandura, 2004). *Reciprocal determinism* is the interacting influences between person, behavior, and environment. You respond to a new acquaintance as a happy, positive person, and they respond back to you on a positive basis. Your new acquaintance sees you as a friendly, happy person, and you feel good about yourself because they responded back to you on a positive basis. You have a new friend. You were reinforced positively for being friendly, and in the future you will most likely respond positively to other new acquaintances. Your younger sister would like to be just like you, a friendly, happy person. Everytime she tries to be nice and friendly to new people she seems to be rejected. She feels bad and thinks that people must think she is ugly or inferior, so she withdraws from people and becomes shy. She was not reinforced positively for being friendly and she interpreted that response as an indication that she must be inferior or inadequate. Her behavior is being influenced by her environment and she interprets the situation as positive or negative. Someone else may have interpreted the situation differently. They may say to themselves that those other people were sure weird, and do not perceive their reaction as a negative response. Figure 2.1 will demonstrate how reciprocal determinism influences our behavior.

Figure 2.1



## RECIPROCAL DETERMINISM

**How do environments and people interact?** We are both the products and the architects of our environment. Let’s take a look at some specific ways in which people and environments interact.

1. Our personalities shape how we interpret and react to events. A shy person is most likely to interpret a frown on someone’s face as a negative response, even though the person is not feeling well.
2. Our personalities help create situations to which we react. You think your roommate is mad at you and you respond negatively to your roommate, and, thus, your roommate responds angrily toward you. Now you are being reinforced correctly for your response, you think. Originally your roommate was not mad at you, but because of your response your roommate now is mad. Has this ever happened to you?
3. Different people choose different environments. The type of party you go to, the friends you associate with, the music you listen to, the type of shows you watch on television, the places you hang out, the reading you do for pleasure—all are environments that you have chosen based on your beliefs, attitudes, and moods. The son of one of our colleagues was trying to decide which college to attend. He made his choice based on his liberal political beliefs. Most of the students attending that college will have similar political beliefs and will thus reinforce each other for having that belief. A person with a conservative orientation would not feel very comfortable at that college.

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*What kind of environment makes you happy?*

As you continue to read this book you will see how your thoughts, behavior, and environment interact to influence your behavior. You may want to refer to locus of control, self-efficacy, and social learning theory in Chapter Three.

We now have some insight into how our personalities have evolved over a period of time. We have looked at a variety of theories that contribute to our development. What theory do you feel has had the greatest influence on you, or do you think that each theory has some valid points that you could use to justify how your personality developed? An interesting project would be for you to write your own personality theory that best describes your development.

Now we need to take a look at the importance of the “self”—your self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem. What kind of influence do these have on your behavior and how does the “self” develop?

## The Self

There is new thinking about the self! The *self* is one of psychology’s most vigorously researched topics. Every year it is amazing to see all the new studies that appear on “self-esteem,” “self-awareness,” and “self-monitoring.”

One example of new thinking about the self is the *concept of “possible selves.”* Your possible selves include your visions of the self you dream of becoming—the rich self, the thin self, the educated self, the successful self, and the admired self. They also include the self you fear becoming—the unemployed self, the addicted self, the failure self, and the unloved self. Such selves motivate us by laying out specific goals to pursue and the energy to work toward them. As they say: “Those who dream most, achieve most.”

**The nature of the self.** One of the main factors differentiating humans from other animals is awareness of “*self*.” As human beings, we can think, feel, and reflect on who we are. We form an identity and attach a value to it.

### *The Person That Is Me*

If ever you should meet me  
the image you may see  
is just a mere reflection  
of the person that is me.

The person I am really,  
the one deep down inside,  
is made of many feelings  
that I sometimes try to hide.

Feelings of doubt and worry,  
wondering how I will fit in.  
Feelings of hope and longing,  
that someday I might win.

Feelings of frustration  
for answers I don’t know.

Feelings for my loved ones.  
relationships that grow.

Feelings of loss and loneliness,  
of memories left behind.

Feelings of excitement.  
for what I have yet to find.

So remember when you meet me  
the image you may see  
is just a mere reflection  
of the person that is me.

Tom Krause

Excerpt “The Person That Is Me” from the book *Touching Hearts—Teaching Greatness* by Tom Krause.  
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The person whom you’re with most in life is yourself and if you don’t like yourself you’re always with somebody you don’t like.

MARC LEWIS

The greatest discovery in our generation is that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

WILLIAM JAMES

- Who are YOU?
- Where are you headed?
- Does it make a difference that you exist?

Over 2,000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Socrates advised all seekers of wisdom to, “*know thyself.*” What Socrates realized and we have discovered since is that the most vibrant, compelling, and baffling reality we can know is, *the self*. It is difficult to define and even more difficult to measure or even investigate. Yet, such awareness of *self* is vital in knowing how people adjust to life.

Many ideas about *the self* have sprung from the humanistic-existential perspective, discussed earlier. Carl Rogers (1995) has summarized a number of important characteristics of the self as follows:

1. It is organized and consistent.
2. It includes one’s perceptions of all that comprises “I” or “me.”
3. It includes the relationship among I or me and other people and features of life, as well as the value and importance of these relationships.
4. The self is available to consciousness (we can become aware of it), but it is not always conscious at any given moment.
5. The shape of the self is constantly changing, yet always recognizable.

We are human. We wrestle with our humanness. Some of us struggle with insecurity or inferiority, some deal with emotional problems, while others face mental or sexual problems. Poverty, illness, and physical disability can also test us. Many feel the pain of gender, racial, or ethnic prejudice. It is as if each of us is given a special task or challenge to work on as part of life and part of what will enhance our growth as an individual. It is the joy of discovering ourselves as human beings, our personal growth, sharing our love with others, and the contribution we make to others’ lives that makes the process of life so exciting. The journey inward is life. Each of us must find our own way.

I often marvel that while each man loves himself more than anyone else, he sets less value on his own estimate than on the opinions of others.

MARCUS AURELIUS,  
A.D. 121–180 MEDITATIONS

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How do you see yourself?

## Find Your Real Self

The *Personal Self-Image* is the part of self that includes physical, behavioral, and psychological characteristics that establish uniqueness. It also includes gender, racial or ethnic identity, age, and status. Your personal self-image, who you think you are, is literally a package you put together from how others have seen and treated you and from your conclusions as you compared yourself to others. Your *sense of identity* is the end result of the interaction between your uniqueness and how others have reacted to it. It is the package you call *me*. But it is not the *real self*.

It is never who you are that hangs you up, but rather who you *THINK* you are. To discover your *Real Self*, it is important to separate the *real you* from your *personal self-image*. Lining up your self picture to fit the “real you” is of the utmost importance. There is probably no more exciting journey than that of *real self* discovery. Once your *self-belief system* is accurate, you are free of the low self-esteem trap. You are free to be the *real you*.

**Where did your “personal self-image” come from?** Your personal self-image includes past teachings about yourself. As a child, you build your *sense of self* based on what others told you about you. If you were exposed to large doses of *put downs* and *belittlers*, your personal self-image does not feel very pleas-

ant. If you grew up in a very positive climate, your *me* package feels good to live in. Your personal self-image is simply a belief system you have constructed about yourself. These past learnings jell into a *self* which may or may not be accurate. But once past learnings are part of your *self-image*, you see the package you have put together as accurate, regardless of the facts.

Tom, for instance, was repeatedly told as a child that he was dumb because he was slow to learn to read. Because he bought that label, he ignored or denied any evidence of his academic ability and creativity. “Dumb” and “smart” do not mix, they are mutually exclusive. Tom held onto those negative messages he received from significant people in his life, such as his parents and teachers. He also ignored any contrary evidence because it did not fit the “dumb” profile.

As an adult, Tom’s past learning limited the accuracy of his “Personal Self-Image.” He saw only evidence of being academically inferior. Years later, despite a college degree and a successful career, Tom still sees himself as “dumb.”

Each of us identifies whatever qualities we learn to place after the words *I am*. Like Tom, we see such traits as truths about ourselves. These truths or *self-beliefs* literally screen out any messages to the contrary. In this way, past teachings can limit our options. If your self-worth is low or shaky, you are still believing things about yourself that are untrue negative ideas programmed into you about *You*.

There was a prisoner who spent years in his cell totally unaware that the door was unlocked. At any point he could have walked out. But because he assumed there was a lock on the door, he remained trapped. His false belief limited his behavior.

**Becoming aware of the self.** Once you become aware that you are not locked into a prison of self-doubt, a whole new set of choices will open up. You become aware of new ways to see yourself, new ways you can behave, and new ways to relate.

■ My Mother said to me, “If you become a soldier, you’ll be a general. If you become a monk, you’ll end up as the pope.” Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso.

PABLO PICASSO ■

## FOCUS ON DIVERSITY—WHAT IS YOUR CULTURAL ORIENTATION?

Answer the following questions Yes or No:

	Yes	No
1. I like to live close to my good friends and family.	_____	_____
2. To be superior, a person must stand up for herself or himself.	_____	_____
3. I enjoy meeting and talking to my neighbors every day.	_____	_____
4. If the group is slowing me down, it is better to leave it and work alone.	_____	_____
5. The larger the family, the more family problems there are.	_____	_____
6. It is reasonable for a son to continue his father’s business.	_____	_____
7. I can count on my relatives for help if I find myself in any kind of trouble.	_____	_____
8. In the long run, the only person you can count on is yourself.	_____	_____
9. There is everything to gain and nothing to lose for classmates to group themselves for study and discussions.	_____	_____
10. If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.	_____	_____

If you answered “yes” to questions 1, 3, 6, 7, and 9, you are more than likely from a collectivist orientation. If you answered “yes” to 2, 4, 5, 8, and 10, you are more than likely from an individualistic orientation. What does this mean?

Of course, such choices and behaviors have been available to you all along. The problem has been you did not fully appreciate your capabilities and potential. As Dr. Phil McGraw (2003) says in his bestseller, *Self Matters*, “What I want to help you do is stop dealing with opinions about yourself, and instead get in touch with the facts about yourself.”

Lack of awareness, of course, is the same as having no choice. It is up to you to increase your awareness about the Real You, so you can experience inner freedom. By increasing your awareness about yourself, you increase your choices in life. Carl Rogers (1995) described such a person as a *fully-functioning person* who feels inwardly free to move in any direction. Being a fully-functioning person can be a reality for you. If you strive to such an inner freedom, little can hold you back.

What about people from different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds? Will this difference have an influence on an individual’s self-concept?

## Self-Esteem

There is overwhelming evidence that the higher the level of self-esteem, the more likely one will treat others with respect, kindness, and generosity. People who do not experience self-love have little or no capacity to love others.

NATHANIEL BRANDEN

**How to appreciate your true self.** This chapter began with a description of the nature of self. Remember that as human beings, we have the ability to reflect on who we are. We are aware of a unique *identity*. But we are not only aware of *ourself*, we attach a value to that *self*. So we can decide whether we will accept or reject our *self*, whether we are *OK* or *not OK*, whether we are good or bad. You are either a *self-hater*, *self-doubter*, or a *self-affirmer*.

So this unique human ability we have—the ability we have to attach a value to our self—can lead to self rejection and tremendous emotional pain. The term *self-esteem* refers to the overall evaluation of oneself, whether one likes or dislikes who one is, believes or doubts oneself, and values or belittles one’s worth. How you evaluate yourself is crucial to your psychological adjustment.

Does your cultural orientation influence your self-esteem?

There is as much difference between us and ourselves, as between us and others.

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE, *ESSAYS*, 1588

## Individualism vs. Collectivism

Over the years, social scientists have observed that cultures differ to the extent to which they value individualism and the virtues of independence, autonomy, and self-reliance, or collectivism and the virtues of interdependence, cooperation, and social harmony. In a collectivist society, a person is first and foremost a loyal member of a family, team, company, church, state, and other groups. In an individualist culture, however, personal goals take priority over group allegiances. In what countries are these different orientations most extreme? The United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands, in that order, are the most individualistic. People from Venezuela, Colombia, Pakistan, Peru, Japan, Taiwan, and China are the most collectivistic (Matsumoto, 2007).

Individualism and collectivism are so deeply ingrained in a culture that they mold our very self-conceptions and identities. Take a brief look at Table 2.3 and see how each culture may influence your personality and self-esteem.



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What groups do you belong to?

**Table 2.3** INDIVIDUALISM VS. COLLECTIVISM

	INDIVIDUALISM	COLLECTIVISM
Concept of self	Independent (identity from individual traits)	Interdependent (identity from belonging)
Relationships	Many, often temporary or casual; confrontation acceptable	Few, close and enduring; harmony required
Attribution	Behavior reflects one's personality and attitudes	Behavior reflects social norms and roles
Coping methods	Changes reality	Accommodates to reality
Morality	Defined by individuals (self-based)	Defined by the group (duty-based)
Life task	Discover and express one's uniqueness	Maintain connections, fit in
What matters	My personal achievement and fulfillment; rights and liberties	We-group goals, and solidarity; social responsibilities and relationships

Adapted from Myers (2012) and Matsumoto (2007).

**The benefits of self-esteem.** How we feel about ourselves is important. Research studies reveal the benefits of positive self-esteem and the hazards of self-righteous pride. High self-esteem—a feeling of self worth—pays dividends. People who feel good about themselves have fewer ulcers, fewer sleepless nights, succumb less to pressures to conform, are less likely to use drugs, are more persistent at difficult tasks, and are just plain happier (McKay & Fanning, 2000).

A study in 1951 by Leaky showed that when a student's self-esteem changed, so did performance. A later study found a positive correlation between self-esteem and grade-point average. Self-esteem was also related to teacher ratings of students and observations of classroom behavior. Students with higher levels of self-esteem generally performed at higher academic levels and got along more positively in the classroom. In terms of academic performance, a student's IQ score may not be as important as the self-esteem rating. Self-confidence permits a child to perform; whereas brilliance may be trapped in low self-esteem (Krueger & Vohs, 2003).

Briggs also stated that “self-esteem is the mainspring that slates every child for success or failure.” Self-esteem has a direct influence on the feeling of self-worth, on human relations, productivity, integrity, stability, and uncertainty. “Self-esteem is the armor that protects a person from the dragons of life: drugs, alcohol, unhealthy relationships, and delinquency” (McKay & Fanning, 2000).

Another benefit of self-esteem is the ability to accept criticism and rejection. Those with high self-esteem tend to view criticism as constructive. They do not interpret a “no” as rejection. Instead, these individuals usually learn and “return with a more polished act.”

Clearly, self-esteem influences all aspects of life; in fact, it is the foundation upon which happiness and well-being are built.

**The costs of low self-esteem.** Low self-esteem exacts costs. People who do not feel good about themselves are vulnerable to depression and failure. Those whose self-image falls short of what they think they ought to be are vulnerable to anxiety. Most counselors will agree that most of the clients that they encounter that are unhappy, frustrated, and in a state of despair are individuals that have impairments in self-acceptance and self-esteem. There seems to be a correlation between self-esteem and life problems, but the opposite can also be true, that life problems may be the cause of low self-esteem. People who are negative about themselves also seem to be thin-skinned and judgmental (Cole et al., 2004).

Have patience with all things but first with yourself. Never confuse your mistakes with your value as a human being.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

All of us have inferiority complexes.

JOHN POWELL, 1989

If you feel good about yourself, you are more apt to succeed in whatever you do. Both Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers emphasize the point that a “healthy” self-image pays dividends. Accept yourself, and you will find it easier to accept others. See Table 2.4 for the benefits.

**Table 2.4** HIGH SELF-ESTEEM VS. LOW SELF-ESTEEM

HIGH SELF-ESTEEM TRAITS	LOW SELF-ESTEEM TRAITS
Perceives reality	Avoid reality to avoid anxiety
Relatively undefensive	Defensive
Gives credit to others when it is due	Envy others and puts them down
Natural	Plays a role
Task centered	Self-centered
Enjoys being alone	Oriented toward approval of others
Self-reliant	Dependent
Feels kinship with humankind	Us vs. Them
Relationships are intimate	Relationships are casual
Non-judgmental of others	Critical of others
Acceptance of yourself	Strives to be perfect and avoid mistakes
Well-developed value system	Values not clarified
Philosophical sense of humor	Hostile
Accepts compliments	Rejects compliments or qualifies them
Cooperative with others	Views self as different from others
Makes growth choices	Makes fear choices
Dares to be unpopular	Conforming
Experiences without self-consciousness	Considers what others think

Adapted from Bandura (2004) and McKay & Fanning (2000).

**What is the self-serving bias?** Social psychologists have found that most people are not realistic in evaluating themselves, their capabilities, or their behavior. The *self-serving bias* is a person’s tendency to evaluate their own behavior as worthwhile, regardless of the situation. Most people consider themselves as more intelligent, more sensitive, more considerate, more likely to succeed, and more of a leader than they consider most other people. We tend to be self-enhancing and we often exaggerate positive beliefs about ourselves (Nier, 2004).

People tend to take credit for their successes and blame others for their failures. That is, people assume that good things happen to them because they deserve them and that bad things happen to other people because they deserve them. When something bad happens to you, you may blame it on bad luck or circumstances. When something bad happens to others, you may blame it on their carelessness or reckless behavior (attribution theory). The combination attribution error and self-serving bias helps some people maintain their self-esteem and appear competent. Be careful because this may inhibit some people from having realistic goals, thus setting them up for disappointment.

Psychologists have focused on two possible explanations for the development and role of the self-serving bias. First, a self-serving bias meets people’s need for self-esteem and need to feel good about themselves in comparison to

## My Declaration of Self-Esteem

I am me.

I was uniquely created by God. There's not another human being in the whole world like me—I have my very own fingerprints and I have my very own thoughts. I was not stamped out of a mold like a Coca-Cola top to be the duplicate of another.

I own all of me—my body, and I can do with it what I choose; my mind, and all of its thoughts and ideas; my feelings, whether joyful or painful.

I own my ideals, my dreams, my hopes, my fantasies, my fears.

I reserve the right to think and feel differently from others and will grant to others their right to thoughts and feelings not identical with my own.

I own all my triumphs and successes. I own also all my failures and mistakes. I am the cause of what I do and am responsible for my own behavior. I will permit myself to be imperfect. When I make mistakes or fail, I will know that I am not the failure—I am still OK—and I will discard some parts of me that were unfitting and will try new ways.

I will laugh freely and loudly at myself—a healthy self-affirmation.

I will have fun living inside my skin.

I will remember that the door to everybody's life needs this sign: Honor Thyself.

I have value and worth.

---

other people. It allows people to deal with their limitations and gives them the courage to venture into areas they normally might not explore. Self-serving biases allow people to present themselves to other people in a positive light. Psychologists explain self-serving bias as being partly due to an attempt to “save face” and protect self-esteem in the face of failure (Nier, 2004). We all need to feel good about ourselves, and the self-serving bias allows us to do this.

Review again Table 2.4 illustrating characteristics of low self-esteem and high self-esteem.

Just knowing what traits a *high self-esteem*er has is not enough for most of us to embark upon the philosophical, emotional, and behavioral change necessary to increase our self-esteem. On the following pages is a list of strategies that provide a good start. This list is by no means complete because this process is ongoing and will continue your entire lifetime. Also remember that this is not an easy process. It not only takes work but requires the inner strength to put up with the anxiety that goes along with making change and making mistakes. Remember too, that not all these strategies will work for you. Think of this list as a menu from which you choose what you like, what fits, and from which you reject what you do not like and what does not fit. So, here goes. This is no easy fix, just an aid or guideline for you. And just because you are willing to try to judge yourself less often means you are a courageous person.

■ The self-portraits that we actually believe, when we are given freedom to voice them, are dramatically more positive than reality can sustain.

SHELLY TAYLOR—  
POSITIVE ILLUSIONS, 1989

## Strategies to Improve Self-Esteem

- 1. Recognize That You Are in Control of Your Self-Image.** The first thing you must do is recognize that you ultimately control the way you see yourself. You have the power to change your self-image. You have the choice to accept or reject feedback. Your self-image resides in your mind and is a product of your thinking. Although others may influence your self-concept, you are the final authority.

People with low self-esteem tend to be more accepting of negative feedback about themselves than of positive feedback. Are they in control of their self-image? As people become aware of this they can begin to take control and learn to reject the negative feedback and take control of their own self-image.

- 2. Be Able to Accept All Parts of Your Physical Appearance Now!!!** Describe your age, height, weight, facial appearance, skin, hair, and specific body areas such as chest, waist, and legs. Then accept your body. Treasure it. It is what you have and it works. Say to yourself, "You are all I have and I will take care of you." Judy started working on appreciating her body by completing an appearance inventory as follows:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| ■ middle age                  | ■ + large breasts      |
| ■ + large brown eyes          | ■ slim legs            |
| ■ + dark curly hair           | ■ – big nose           |
| ■ black complexion            | ■ – no chin            |
| ■ + clear, young looking skin | ■ 5'5"                 |
| ■ – buckteeth                 | ■ – 150 lbs.           |
| ■ – fat stomach               | ■ + nice teeth         |
| ■ – fat hips                  | ■ – too many fat cells |

Then she went back over her list and put a plus next to descriptions that represented strengths to her, a minus by items she wanted to change, and did not mark the items she considered to be neutral. She also reworded those minus statements to more accurate less judgmental statements:

### Minus Statement

Buckteeth  
Fat belly  
Fat hips  
Big nose  
No chin  
Too many fat cells

### Less Judgmental

Prominent front teeth  
32 inch waist  
40 inch hips  
Distinctive nose  
Smaller chin  
Slightly overweight

Remember, *low self-esteemers* put off *self-acceptance* until they get that perfect body. It is imperative you treasure your body the way it is now.

- 3. Affirm Your Strengths.** As a result of cultural and parental conditioning, you may find it anxiety provoking to give yourself credit for your assets. It is now time, however, to toot your own horn. Get a BIG piece of blank paper. List all your strengths. Think of all parts of your *Real Self-Image*.

- Your physical appearance
- How you relate to others
- Your personality
- How others see you
- Your work/school/daily task performance
- Your mental functioning
- Your sexuality

It takes a concentrated effort to make this list. If you are having difficulty thinking of strengths, think of how your best friend would describe you in each of these areas. Your list of strengths will be long if you are willing to put forth the effort and willing to experience the anxiety. Once you have listed many of the qualities

■ If you accept your limitations, you go beyond them.

BRENDAN FRANCIS BEHAN ■

■ The purpose of life is undoubtedly to know oneself.

MOHANDAS K. GANDHI ■

in yourself you appreciate, that does not mean you will remember them. Remembering your strengths, particularly at the times when you feel most down on yourself requires a system. The following three strategies may help you really believe in your positive qualities:

- A. Daily affirmations. Write affirmations for yourself each day. Make them believable, comforting, and supportive.
- B. Reminder signs and notes. Many people who post positive messages report they reinforce and strengthen their personal sense of adequacy.
- C. Active integration. Recall specific examples and times when you clearly demonstrated your strengths. Transform your strengths into specific memories. This process will help to convince you that your list of positive qualities actually applies to you.

4. **List Your Faults.** There is nothing wrong with having faults. Every human being has them. The problem is not with your faults, but how you overrate them. The problem is that people use their faults for destructive self-attack and to condemn themselves. There are four basic rules to acknowledging weaknesses:

- A. *Use non-pejorative language*—language that does not make a bad situation worse. Go through your list and eliminate all the words that have negative connotations. Banish certain words from your self-descriptive vocabulary; for example: fat, ugly, dumb, blabbermouth, etc.
- B. *Use accurate language.* Confine yourself to the facts.
- C. *Be specific rather than general.* Eliminate words such as always, never, anything, etc.
- D. *Find exceptions or corresponding strengths.* This is essential for any item you feel particularly bad about.

5. **Attain Legitimate Accomplishments and Successes.** Accomplishing worthwhile activities is a major contributor to self-esteem. It is also important to remember that accomplishments do not have to be *big*. They just have to be something that you achieved through hard work and commitment. Social science research suggests this sequence of events: Person establishes a goal . . . person pursues the goal . . . person achieves the goal . . . person develops esteem-like feelings. (Cole et al., 2004).

6. **Make the Growth Choice Rather than the Fear Choice.** Reject rigidity. Take responsibility to direct your own life. If you are dissatisfied with your life as it is now, be willing to accept change. You promote your growth or fail to do that every time you make a decision. We are constantly making decisions whether to be honest or to lie, to try new things or be safe, to be open or be defensive. If you make each decision a choice for growth, you manifest courage.

7. **Shed Perfectionistic Demands.** Perfectionists, experts now know, are made and not born, commonly at an early age. Concern with mistakes and doubts about actions are absolute prerequisites for perfectionism. Real-world success hinges less on getting everything right than how you handle getting things wrong. There's a difference between excellence and perfection. Excellence involves enjoying what you do. Perfection means not being satisfied—no matter what (Marano, 2008).

8. **Become More Synergistic.** Maslow describes this as being *involved with others*. Become involved with other people and your work and leisure time will become more valuable to you. Make a commitment. Alfred Adler (1998) points out that we greatly promote our health and functioning by cooperation with others.



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*How do you describe yourself?*

■ That you may retain your self-respect, it is better to displease the people by doing what you know is right, than to temporarily please them by doing what you know is wrong.

WILLIAM J.H. BOETCKER

■ You will always be in fashion if you are true to yourself, and only if you are true to yourself.

MAYA ANGELOU

■ The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

MOHANDAS K. GANDHI

*(continued)*

9. **Observe Models.** Identify at least five qualities that you aspire to and admire in others. Become a careful observer. Think of how you can adapt their behavior to fit your own personal style.
10. **Keep a Diary.** Record what you enjoy about your day. You may be doing things out of habit rather than because you enjoy them. By keeping a diary, you may discover that some of your activities do not make you happy. If this is the case, then you can actively make the attempt not to do these things any longer.
11. **Keep a Sense of Humor.** Laugh easily, enjoy a good joke, get fun out of life. Some of us do not know how to play. We take our life and ourselves too seriously. Perhaps we grew up in families in which there was not much fun and happiness. Remember to keep a balance in your life between work and play. Take time for the pleasures in life.

Defeat is a bitter pill. But if you take it as a lesson, defeat may not be as bad as it seems.

HOMER NORTON



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*Do you take time for pleasures in life?*

12. **Do Not Be Afraid to Make Mistakes.** You will make thousands of mistakes during your lifetime if you plan to live up to your creative potential. Do a personal mistake check, then increase the number of mistakes you make each day by 10 percent. You will take more risks, stretch, grow, and enjoy life more. You learn through experience. If you do not try something you may lose out on a lot of experiences in your life.

Everyone makes mistakes; do not worry about them. Forgive yourself for making mistakes. If you do not make mistakes, you're not trying. You learn from your mistakes.

So, there you have it. The twelve strategies listed here to help you to improve your self-esteem will give you a good start. As your work progresses, you may come up with a few of your own that are not listed here. Just remember that as a child you were told all about who you were. Your sense of self came from others. As an adult, it is up to you to develop a realistic positive sense of self. To do this, you must be dedicated to the effort for a lifetime. It is not enough to just say you will love yourself. Your assumptions about yourself and about your world must be positive, healthy, realistic ones.

## The Real Journey

At the beginning of the 20th century, sociologist Charles Cooley described the American identity as a “looking-glass self.” Our sense of ourselves, wrote Cooley, is formed by our imagination of the way we appear in the eyes of others. Other people are a looking glass in which we see not merely our own reflection but a judgment about the value of that reflection. (“Each to each a looking glass/reflects the other that doth pass,” he wrote.) If we are lucky, we feel pride in that imagined self; if not, we feel mortification (Elliott, 2004).

Growth and change are not a destination, but rather a journey. All through our lives, if we are to function fully, we will continue to grow and change. Self-esteem is really so much more than just feeling good about oneself. Researchers are quick to assert that excessive pride can be dangerous, and too few people really know how to be humble. Remember, **narcissism** is the tendency to regard oneself as grandiosely self-important. Self-esteem is about having respect for yourself and others. Self-esteem is about trusting your ability to make appropri-

ate choices and cope effectively with adversity. According to self-esteem researcher Dr. Nathaniel Branden (2007), author of *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*, building self-esteem requires a lifelong commitment to six principles and daily practices:

- **Living consciously.** Maintain an unflinching willingness to face reality even when it is painful. Be aware of who you are and what you're doing.
- **Self-acceptance.** Experience and take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, and actions. Avoid denial.
- **Self-responsibility.** Realize that you alone are responsible for your life and well-being. You are responsible for your own choices.
- **Self-assertiveness.** Have the courage to stand up for who you are. Do not pretend to be someone you're not to avoid someone else's disapproval.
- **Living purposefully.** Identify your goals and the actions needed to attain them. Organize your priorities to meet those goals.
- **Personal integrity.** Demonstrate personal integrity by telling the truth, honoring commitments, and dealing with others justly and considerately. Conduct your life by merging what you know, what you profess, and what you do.

In conclusion, authors Linda Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan (1993) describe the power of self-esteem as follows:

Our level of self-esteem affects virtually everything we think, say and do. It affects how we see the world and our place in it. It affects how others in the world see and treat us. It affects the choices we make—choices about what we will do with our lives and with whom we will be involved. It affects our ability to take action to change things that need to be changed.

■ Self-esteem = self-efficacy + self respect.

NATHANIEL BRANDEN ■

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## CHAPTER REVIEW

Life is a journey. All through our lives, if we are to function fully, we will continue to grow and change.

- People acquire a sense of self throughout their life; it is an ongoing process that evolves from our experiences and interactions with others within the environment.
- If we are to have a strong self-concept, we need love, respect, and acceptance from the significant others in our life. Who are the significant others in your life and what impact have they had on your self-concept?
- The self-fulfilling prophecy has a great influence on a person's image of himself or herself.
- As we compare ourselves with others (social comparison) we gain a better understanding of ourselves, be it positive, or negative.
- When our self-concept is intact and secure, we feel good. When it is threatened, we feel anxious and insecure.
- Freud's theory of personality development provides the foundation of many other personality theories. Freud stated that the personality is made up of three distinct, but interrelated, parts: the id, the ego, and the superego.
- The id is composed of the basic biological drives that motivate an individual, including the pleasure-seeking part of your personality. The ego is the rational, logical, and realistic part of your personality. The superego consists of our values, morals, religious beliefs, and ideals of our parents and society.
- To Adler, personality arises from our attempts to overcome or compensate for fundamental feelings of inadequacy. Adler was responsible for coining the popular term "inferiority complex," a concept, he argued, that underlies and motivates a great deal of human behavior. While he believed that everyone has to work to overcome some feelings of inferiority, Adler believed that some people overcompensate in order to conceal their feelings of inferiority.
- Most recent research studies do not seem to support Adler's idea that birth order is a possible factor regulating personality.
- Erik Erikson identified eight stages of psychosocial development that each individual needs to satisfy throughout their life. They include:
  1. Trust vs. Mistrust,
  2. Autonomy vs. Doubt,
  3. Initiative vs. Guilt,
  4. Industry vs. Inferiority,
  5. Identity vs. Role Confusion,
  6. Intimacy vs. Isolation,
  7. Generativity vs. Self-Absorption, and
  8. Integrity vs. Despair.
- The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator covers four dimensions: Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I), Sensing (S) or Intuition (N), Thinking (T) or Feeling (F), and Judgment (J) or Perception (P).
- Some psychologists have developed a personality theory that identifies personality traits that many of us use to describe other people (and ourself). These are called traits, which are relatively stable and consistent personal characteristics. This is known as the Big Five Model of Personality.
- Your personality evolves from the Big Five, these traits include: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.
- Strengths-Based Psychology is based on the work of Tom Rath and a team of Gallup scientists who set out to start a global conversation about what's right with people rather than focusing so much on people's shortcomings. Their work was originally led by the late Father of Strengths Psychology, Donald O. Clifton.

- Carl Rogers' Self-Theory defines the development of the self-concept in terms of self-actualization, which is defined as the fulfillment of one's own completely unique personality. Unconditional positive regard (unconditioned acceptance) leads to unimpaired growth and the development of positive characteristics.
- Viktor Frankl states that our task is to create a life that has meaning and purpose.
- Virginia Satir's Self-Worth theory indicates that what happens inside people and between people is the picture of the individual worth that each person carries around.
- Cognitive theories of personality point out that there are important individual differences in the way people think about and define situations.
- Building self-esteem is easier with the help of positive self-talk and thinking positively and optimistically.
- Cognitive restructuring, the process of modifying thoughts, ideas, and beliefs, can be used to increase positive and optimistic thinking.
- Self-talk is the non-verbal, mental speech we use when we think about something, solve problems, and make plans. Positive or negative self-talk may have an influence on your self-concept.
- Reciprocal determinism is the interacting influences between person, behavior, and environment.
- Your personal self-image is the part of the self that includes physical, behavioral, and psychological characteristics that establish uniqueness.
- There are many benefits to positive self-esteem, including better health, feeling happy, etc.
- There are many costs to low self-esteem, including poor health, not as happy, more frustration, poorer work performance, etc.
- The self-serving bias is a person's tendency to evaluate his or her own behavior as worthwhile, regardless of the situation.
- Individualistic societies value independence, autonomy, and self-reliance. Collectivistic societies value interdependence, cooperation, and social harmony.
- Individualism and collectivism are so deeply ingrained in a culture that they mold our self-concepts and identities.
- There are many strategies to improve self-esteem, including:
  1. Recognize that you are in control
  2. Accept your physical appearance—just the way you are
  3. Affirm your strengths
  4. List your faults
  5. Attain legitimate accomplishments and successes
  6. Make a growth choice rather than a fear choice
  7. Shed perfectionistic demands
  8. Become more synergistic
  9. Observe role models
  10. Keep a diary
  11. Keep a sense of humor
  12. Do not be afraid to make mistakes, etc.
- Self-esteem researcher and author, Dr. Nathaniel Branden, says that building self-esteem requires a lifelong commitment to six principles and daily practices: living consciously, self-acceptance, self-responsibility, self-assertiveness, living purposefully, and personal integrity. Remember, narcissism is the tendency to regard oneself as grandiosely self-important. This attitude is dangerous.

Personal growth and self-awareness involve accepting ourselves and enjoying our relationships with others. Only “you” can make the choice whether you will live an enjoyable and fulfilling life or one of stagnation.

## TEST REVIEW QUESTIONS: LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Why do we need to study about the development of the “self?”
2. Explain how significant others influence a person’s self-image.
3. Define and explain the following concepts of Freud: id, ego, superego.
4. Explain Alfred Adler’s theory of personality development and the inferiority complex.
5. What do the latest research findings suggest about birth order as a possible factor regulating personality?
6. Describe Erikson’s Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development.
7. Briefly explain the four dimensions of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
8. Explain how the Big Five Model of Personality has influenced your perception of others using the “Big Five” Traits.
9. Define Strengths-Based Psychology. Who is the Father of Strengths Psychology?
10. Describe how Carl Rogers’ Self-Theory influences the development of your personality.
11. Describe, briefly, Viktor Frankl’s Search for Meaning theory.
12. Briefly describe Virginia Satir’s theory of Self-Worth.
13. Define Reciprocal Determinism and explain how our thoughts and our environment influence the development of our personality.
14. Explain how cognitive and social-learning theories influence your self-image.
15. Describe the cognitive variables that influence your behavior.
16. Define collectivism and individualism and explain how they may influence an individual’s self-concept.
17. What are the costs of low self-esteem? Explain.
18. What are the benefits of having high self-esteem? Explain.
19. Define the Self-Serving Bias and explain how it influences your behavior.
20. Briefly explain the twelve strategies that will help you improve your self-esteem.
21. Define narcissism and explain how Nathaniel Branden’s views of building self-esteem is exactly the opposite from narcissism.

## KEY TERMS

Agreeableness	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Self-Serving Bias
Autonomy vs. Doubt	Judgment or Perception	Self-Talk
Cognitive Restructuring	Mid-Life Crisis	Self-Theory
Cognitive Theory	Mid-Life Transition Stage	Self-Worth
Collectivism	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	Sensing or Intuition
Compensation	Narcissism	Significant Others
Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Social Comparison
Ego	Openness	Social-Learning Theory
Extraversion or Introversion	Personal Self-Image	Stages of Psychosocial Development
Generativity vs. Self-Absorption	Pot of Self-Worth	Strengths-Based Psychology
Id	Real Self	Superego
Individualism	Reciprocal Determinism	Thinking or Feeling
Industry vs. Inferiority	Search for Meaning	Trait
Inferiority Complex	Self-Awareness	Trust vs. Mistrust
Initiative vs. Guilt	Self-Esteem	Unconditional Positive Regard
Integrity vs. Despair	Self-Image	
Interpersonal Relations	Self-Perception	

## REFLECTIONS: CRITICAL THINKING

1. Do we have a choice in determining who we become? Explain.
2. How do our interactions with others help in discovering who we are?
3. Who are the significant others in your life? What impact have they had on your life? Were they a good influence or a bad influence?
4. How does striving for perfection lead to emotional pain?
5. How does social comparison influence our self-image?
6. How has the id, ego, and superego influenced your behavior?
7. How has the concept of inferiority complex impacted your personality development?
8. Discuss the relationship between your life and Erikson's Stages of Development.
9. Discuss your personality type on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
10. If you have had a chance to take the *StrengthsFinder 2.0* assessment, how do you think you can more effectively use your top five talents/strengths and recommendations given in the Strengths Discovery and Action-Planning Guide evaluation? Or, how do you think you can more effectively use your 24 character strengths revealed from the web-based activity under Web Resources and Web Activity below?
11. Why is it so difficult to make changes in our self-concept?
12. Discuss the cultural influences on a person's development.
13. What theory of personality has had the greatest influence on your development?
14. How can excessive pride be dangerous?
15. How do you think birth order has influenced your personality development?

## WEB RESOURCES AND WEB ACTIVITY

<http://www.selfgrowth.com/topics.html>

This site provides much information about self-improvement and personal growth.

[www.keirseey.com](http://www.keirseey.com)

This Web site is dedicated to personality/trait differences.

<http://www.webheights.net/lovethyself/home.htm>

A resource directing visitors to books, online articles, and programs to enhance the self-worth of adults and children.

**Activity:** [www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter.aspx](http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter.aspx)

Brief Strengths Test or VIA Survey of Character Strengths measures 24 character strengths.

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## The “Big Five” Test

### Purpose

To survey the “Big Five” Personality Traits.

### Instructions

1. Using the numbers on the scale from 1 to 5, indicate how true each of the following terms is in describing you.

1 = Not at all true of me: I am never this way.

2 = Mostly not true of me: I am rarely this way.

3 = Neither true nor untrue of me, or I can't decide.

4 = Somewhat true of me: I am sometimes this way.

5 = Very true of me: I am very often this way.

- |                        |                        |                      |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. _____ imaginative   | 2. _____ organized     | 3. _____ talkative   |
| 4. _____ sympathetic   | 5. _____ tense         | 6. _____ intelligent |
| 7. _____ thorough      | 8. _____ assertive     | 9. _____ kind        |
| 10. _____ anxious      | 11. _____ original     | 12. _____ efficient  |
| 13. _____ active       | 14. _____ soft-hearted | 15. _____ nervous    |
| 16. _____ insightful   | 17. _____ responsible  | 18. _____ energetic  |
| 19. _____ warm         | 20. _____ worrying     | 21. _____ clever     |
| 22. _____ practical    | 23. _____ outgoing     | 24. _____ generous   |
| 25. _____ self-pitying |                        |                      |

### Instructions for Scoring

To compute your score for each of the five scales, simply add your scores for the items that contribute to each of the scales.

Openness to Experience: 1, 6, 11, 16, 21      Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

Conscientiousness: 2, 7, 12, 17, 22      Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

Extraversion: 3, 8, 13, 18, 23      Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

Agreeableness: 4, 9, 14, 19, 24      Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

Neuroticism: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25      Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Be sure to review Table 2.1 for a description of high and low scores. Also, review the next page for mean scores of men and women. High scores on neuroticism are not desirable. Discuss this with your instructor.

(continued)

Mean scores for men and women on each of the scales are listed below:

	Men	Women	Your Score
Openness to Experience	20.3	19.4	_____
Conscientiousness	18.8	20.2	_____
Extraversion	18.8	19.0	_____
Agreeableness	18.8	22.2	_____
Neuroticism	16.3	18.5	_____

### Discussion

1. Review the descriptions in the text of the five types and answer the following: Do you agree or disagree with your scores? Why or why not?

2. How do you think you could start to improve the areas where you scored the lowest?

Brody, N., & Erlichman, H. (1998). *Personality Psychology: The Science of Individuality*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## I Am a Person Who Conveys

### Purpose

To become more aware of how you are perceived by others and how accurate you are in your perceptions of others.

### Instructions

1. You have two forms—one for you and one for another person. Each person responds to the first scale by circling the number on the continuum that indicates the way you convey yourself to others. Do not mark this the way you see yourself but the way you feel you come across to others.
2. Give the second form to a friend and have him or her evaluate you.
3. Looking at both scales, identify any discrepancies between the two. Ask your friend to discuss the discrepancies in terms of: "I see you this way because . . ."

### I AM A PERSON WHO CONVEYS . . .

Personal warmth		Alloofness, coldness
Neat appearance		Careless appearance
Cheerful disposition		Unhappy disposition
Sincerity, genuineness		Insincerity, artificiality
Insecurity in behavior		Confidence in behavior
Reluctancy to talk with others		Eagerness to talk with others
Desire to listen		No interest in listening
Primary concern for self		Primary concern for others
Ability to express ideas and feelings		Difficulty in expressing ideas and feelings
Awareness of what is happening		Lack of awareness of what is happening
Difficulty in making other people comfortable		Ease in making other people comfortable
Talk too much		Talk too little
Not intelligent		Intelligent
Excitement, enthusiasm		Dullness, apathy

(continued)

**Note**

If you want more than one person to evaluate you, make several copies of this form.

**\_\_\_\_\_ IS A PERSON WHO CONVEYS ...**

Personal warmth		Aloofness, coldness
Neat appearance		Careless appearance
Cheerful disposition		Unhappy disposition
Sincerity, genuineness		Insincerity, artificiality
Insecurity in behavior		Confidence in behavior
Reluctancy to talk with others		Eagerness to talk with others
Desire to listen		No interest in listening
Primary concern for self		Primary concern for others
Ability to express ideas and feelings		Difficulty in expressing ideas and feelings
Awareness of what is happening		Lack of awareness of what is happening
Difficulty in making other people comfortable		Ease in making other people comfortable
Talk too much		Talk too little
Not intelligent		Intelligent
Excitement, enthusiasm		Dullness, apathy

## Discussion

1. Many times we feel we convey a particular characteristic to others because that is the way we see ourselves. What does this activity show us about our awareness and honesty in conveying our true self to others?
2. Did you have a realistic perception of yourself as compared to how the other person perceived you? Discuss the differences between your perceptions and the other person's perceptions.
3. Discuss how our perceptions of another person affect our interactions with them.

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## Adjective Checklist

### Purpose

To provide an opportunity for the class members to reveal themselves to the other group members and to receive feedback on how the other group members perceive them.

### Instructions

1. Review the list of words and place a (+) next to the adjectives you think best describes you and a (-) next to the adjectives which are least descriptive of you.
2. Divide into groups of three or four.
3. Each member then shares, with the group, at least four adjectives most descriptive and least descriptive of them.
4. Another option is to ask a friend, using the form two pages over, to place a (+) next to the adjectives he or she thinks best describes you and a (-) next to the adjectives which are least descriptive of you.

_____ accepting	_____ sarcastic	_____ insensitive
_____ self-accepting	_____ dreamy	_____ nervous
_____ anxious	_____ silly	_____ loving
_____ aggressive	_____ selfish	_____ ambitious
_____ original	_____ carefree	_____ authoritative
_____ happy	_____ determined	_____ calm
_____ vain	_____ spontaneous	_____ conforming
_____ controlling	_____ tense	_____ confident
_____ irritable	_____ certain	_____ intelligent
_____ worried	_____ sentimental	_____ observant
_____ rigid	_____ unpredictable	_____ obsessive
_____ brave	_____ patient	_____ relaxed
_____ responsible	_____ extroverted	_____ intuitive
_____ simple	_____ hostile	_____ serious
_____ proud	_____ questioning	_____ modest
_____ adaptable	_____ remote	_____ mature
_____ dependent	_____ shy	_____ unsympathetic
_____ effervescent	_____ warm	_____ immature
_____ thoughtful	_____ withdrawn	_____ objective
_____ lazy	_____ bitter	_____ religious
_____ dependable	_____ independent	_____ organized
_____ mystical	_____ naive	_____ unorganized
_____ inconsiderate	_____ complex	_____ sympathetic
_____ understanding	_____ sensitive	_____ temperamental

(continued)



## Other Person's Adjective Checklist

### Instructions

1. Review the list of words and place a (+) next to the adjectives you think best describes your friend and a (-) next to the adjectives which are least descriptive of your friend.

<input type="checkbox"/> accepting	<input type="checkbox"/> sarcastic	<input type="checkbox"/> insensitive
<input type="checkbox"/> self-accepting	<input type="checkbox"/> dreamy	<input type="checkbox"/> nervous
<input type="checkbox"/> anxious	<input type="checkbox"/> silly	<input type="checkbox"/> loving
<input type="checkbox"/> aggressive	<input type="checkbox"/> selfish	<input type="checkbox"/> ambitious
<input type="checkbox"/> original	<input type="checkbox"/> carefree	<input type="checkbox"/> authoritative
<input type="checkbox"/> happy	<input type="checkbox"/> determined	<input type="checkbox"/> calm
<input type="checkbox"/> vain	<input type="checkbox"/> spontaneous	<input type="checkbox"/> conforming
<input type="checkbox"/> controlling	<input type="checkbox"/> tense	<input type="checkbox"/> confident
<input type="checkbox"/> irritable	<input type="checkbox"/> certain	<input type="checkbox"/> intelligent
<input type="checkbox"/> worried	<input type="checkbox"/> sentimental	<input type="checkbox"/> observant
<input type="checkbox"/> rigid	<input type="checkbox"/> unpredictable	<input type="checkbox"/> obsessive
<input type="checkbox"/> brave	<input type="checkbox"/> patient	<input type="checkbox"/> relaxed
<input type="checkbox"/> responsible	<input type="checkbox"/> extroverted	<input type="checkbox"/> intuitive
<input type="checkbox"/> simple	<input type="checkbox"/> hostile	<input type="checkbox"/> serious
<input type="checkbox"/> proud	<input type="checkbox"/> questioning	<input type="checkbox"/> modest
<input type="checkbox"/> adaptable	<input type="checkbox"/> remote	<input type="checkbox"/> mature
<input type="checkbox"/> dependent	<input type="checkbox"/> shy	<input type="checkbox"/> unsympathetic
<input type="checkbox"/> effervescent	<input type="checkbox"/> warm	<input type="checkbox"/> immature
<input type="checkbox"/> thoughtful	<input type="checkbox"/> withdrawn	<input type="checkbox"/> objective
<input type="checkbox"/> lazy	<input type="checkbox"/> bitter	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> dependable	<input type="checkbox"/> independent	<input type="checkbox"/> organized
<input type="checkbox"/> mystical	<input type="checkbox"/> naive	<input type="checkbox"/> unorganized
<input type="checkbox"/> inconsiderate	<input type="checkbox"/> complex	<input type="checkbox"/> sympathetic
<input type="checkbox"/> understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> temperamental

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## The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

### Purpose

The scale below is a widely used research instrument that taps respondents' feelings of general self-esteem.

### Instructions

Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each of the following statements.

- | 1                 | 2        | 3     | 4              |
|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |
| _____             |          |       |                |

### Scoring

To calculate your score, first reverse the scoring for the five negatively worded items (**3**, **5**, **8**, **9**, and **10**) as follows: 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1. Then sum your scores across the 10 items. Your total score should fall between 10 and 40. A higher score indicates higher self-esteem.

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion

1. Do you agree or disagree with your score? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. From the strategies to improve self-esteem discussed in the text, what do you think you need to do to improve your self-esteem?

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## Do Gender Roles Still Exist?

### Purpose

Discover how you and others perceive gender roles and issues.

### Instructions

In the spaces below, list 10 characteristics and behaviors that you associate with being male and female in our society.

1. You may either do this activity individually or with a partner. An interesting alternative would be to divide your pairs by sex; males with males and females with females. This will help the class see whether there is a distinct perceived difference or not.

Males	Females
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____

2. Before you go on, make two copies of the list and set them aside for now.
3. Look at the list of the 20 different characteristics, both male and female, and circle the ones that best apply to you. You may discover that you identify with some characteristics of the opposite sex. How many of them did you select?
4. Divide into small groups of 3 to 5 individuals and answer the following questions.

(continued)

## Discussion

1. Did the females in the group circle more of the male characteristics than males circled of the female characteristics? If so, why?
2. Are there some characteristics of the opposite sex that you wish could be attributed to members of your sex? Which ones are they? Why would you like them attributed to your sex?
3. Do you feel our definitions of gender roles are preventing you from behaving or developing in the ways you would prefer? Explain.
4. How has gender role influenced your personality development?
5. How could we best eliminate the effects of gender role development in our society?
5. Now give the copy of the list that you previously made to someone that knows you well and ask them to circle the characteristics that best apply to you, using both male and female characteristics. When they have completed the list, compare your list with theirs. How we see ourselves is not always how others see us. How close did your list compare with your friends? What might the difference tell you about yourself?
6. Give the other copy of the list to someone who knows you well that is at least ten years or more older or younger than you, and do the same as in previous question. Is there a difference because of age? If there is a difference, why?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Human Relations Position Paper

### Purpose

To analyze your present position, based upon your past experiences and learning, in order to have a better idea of the direction in which you want to move in the future.

### Instructions

1. A Human Relations Position Paper should represent a critical analysis of those factors that have brought you to this point in your life and have made you what you are. It should also include your plans for the future.
2. No one but you and your instructor will read your position paper unless, of course, you choose to show it to someone else. Your instructor considers it completely confidential.
3. As a guide for preparing your position paper, the following outline is suggested. This is intended only as a guide, and you may add or delete whatever items you choose.
4. Anything that helps you arrive at your position and chart your course of action (from poetry to pictures to words) is acceptable.
5. Your instructor will determine the length of this paper. We suggest five pages.

### Human Relations Position Paper Outline

- I. The Person I Am (Include the influential factors which have contributed to making you what you are).
  - A. Influence of Family Background
    1. Relationship with parents
    2. Relationship with siblings
    3. Socioeconomic setting
    4. Family's expectations
    5. Other
  - B. Adolescence
    1. School experience
    2. Peer group (left out/included—Why?)
    3. Successes/Failures and their effect
    4. Influential adults other than parents
    5. Other
  - C. Personal Sexuality
    1. Dating experiences and its effect
    2. "Facts of life" information or misinformation and its effect
    3. My "role" as a man/woman
    4. My attitudes toward the opposite sex
    5. Other
  - D. Goals for Future
    1. How have I arrived at my goals?
    2. Occupational choice—Why?
    3. Feelings of personal adequacy or inadequacy
    4. Degree of flexibility
    5. Influential people
    6. Other

(continued)

## II. Where Do I Go From Here?

### A. Summary of Present Position

1. How do I see myself/how do others see me?
2. How well do I communicate?
3. Value system
4. Relationships with others (OKness)
5. My view of a meaningful occupation
  - a. What I expect
  - b. What's expected of me
  - c. My chances for success
6. How I view my sexuality
  - a. In relation to marriage
  - b. "Role" expectations
  - c. Understanding of needs

### B. Plans for Future

1. What is the Good Life for me?
  - a. How I will achieve it
  - b. How it relates to my value system
  - c. How it relates to my chosen occupation
2. What are my priorities for future?
3. Do I want to "go it alone" or build relationships with others?
  - a. How I will do this
4. Do I want to share my life with someone else in marriage?
  - a. My responsibilities
  - b. What I expect of others
5. What will my biggest problems be?

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## Self-Awareness

### Learning Journal

Select the statement below that best defines your feelings about the personal value or meaning gained from this chapter and respond below the dotted line.

I learned that I ...

I was surprised that I ...

I realized that I ...

I was pleased that I ...

I discovered that I ...

I was displeased that I ...

.....

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