

TRAIT THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

Topics to Explore

1. Trait Theories
2. Psychoanalytic Theory
3. Social-Cognitive Theories
4. Humanistic Theories

Personality: Some Terms

Personality: a person's internally based characteristic way of acting and thinking

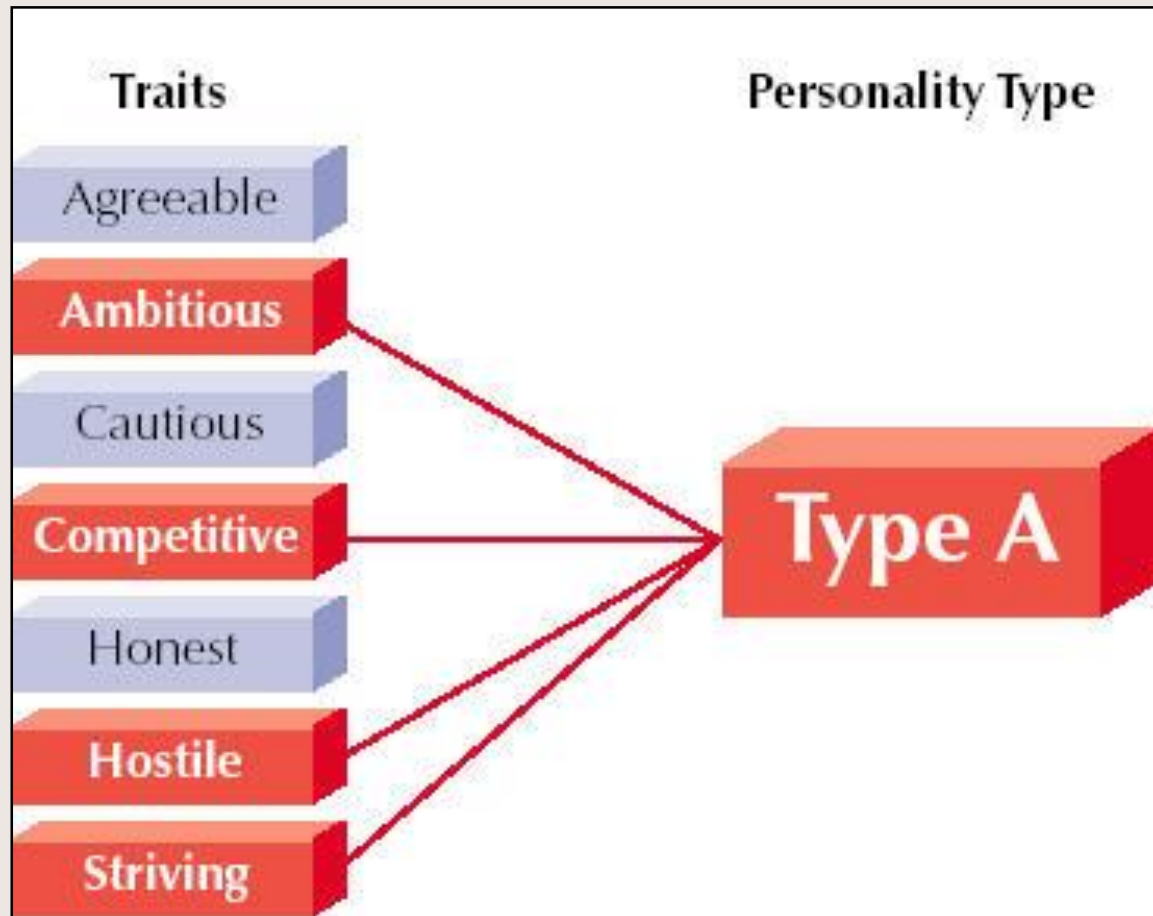
Character: Personal characteristics that have been judged or evaluated

Temperament: Hereditary aspects of personality, including sensitivity, moods, irritability, and distractibility

Personality Trait: Stable qualities that a person shows in most situations

Personality Type: People who have several traits in common

Example of Personality Type



Personality Theories

Personality Theory: System of concepts, assumptions, ideas, and principles proposed to explain personality.

Types of Personality Theories

Trait Theories: Attempt to learn what traits make up personality and how they relate to actual behavior

Psychodynamic Theories: Focus on the inner workings of personality, especially internal conflicts and struggles

Humanistic Theories: Focus on private, subjective experience and personal growth

Social-Cognitive Theories: Attribute difference in personality to socialization, expectations, and mental processes

A Little Exercise

See in class!

Scoring the PTQ

On the score sheet, for each item, circle the term you circled on the questionnaire for that item. If you circled “heredity” for item 1, circle “heredity” under both X and Y on the answer sheet.

Add up the number of items circled in each column. The column with the greatest number of items circled represents the type of personality theory closest to your own views.

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Part 1 Trait Theories

Jung's Theory of Two Types

Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist who was a Freudian disciple, believed that we are one of two personality types:

- **Introvert**: Shy, self-centered person whose attention is focused inward
- **Extrovert**: Bold, outgoing person whose attention is directed outward

Carl Jung



Eysenck's Three Factor Theory

Hans Eysenck, English psychologist, believed that there are three fundamental factors in personality:

- **Introversion** versus **Extroversion**
- **Emotionally Stable** versus **Unstable (neurotic)**
- **Impulse Control** versus **Psychotic**

Hans Eysenck



Eysenck's Theory, continued

The first two factors create 4 combinations, related to the four basic temperaments recognized by ancient Greeks:

- **Melancholic** (introverted + unstable): sad, gloomy
- **Choleric** (extroverted + unstable): hot-tempered, irritable
- **Phlegmatic** (introverted + stable): sluggish, calm
- **Sanguine** (extroverted + stable): cheerful, hopeful

Cattell: Source & Surface Traits

Raymond Cattell: from Devon, England, believed that there were two basic categories of traits:

- **Surface Traits:** Features that make up the visible areas of personality
- **Source Traits:** Underlying characteristics of a personality

Cattell also constructed the *16PF*, a personality test identifying 16 personality factors (source traits).

Raymond Cattell

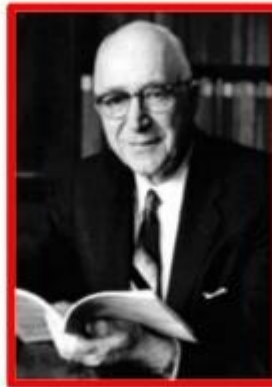


personality traits are "enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts."

A **trait** is what we call a characteristic way in which an individual perceives, feels, believes, or acts.

Theorists generally assume

1. Traits are relatively stable over time,
2. Traits differ among individuals
3. Traits are also bipolar and
4. Traits influence behavior.



Three trait theory

In 1936, psychologist Gordon Allport found that one English-language dictionary alone contained more than 4,000 words describing different personality traits. He categorized these traits into three levels.

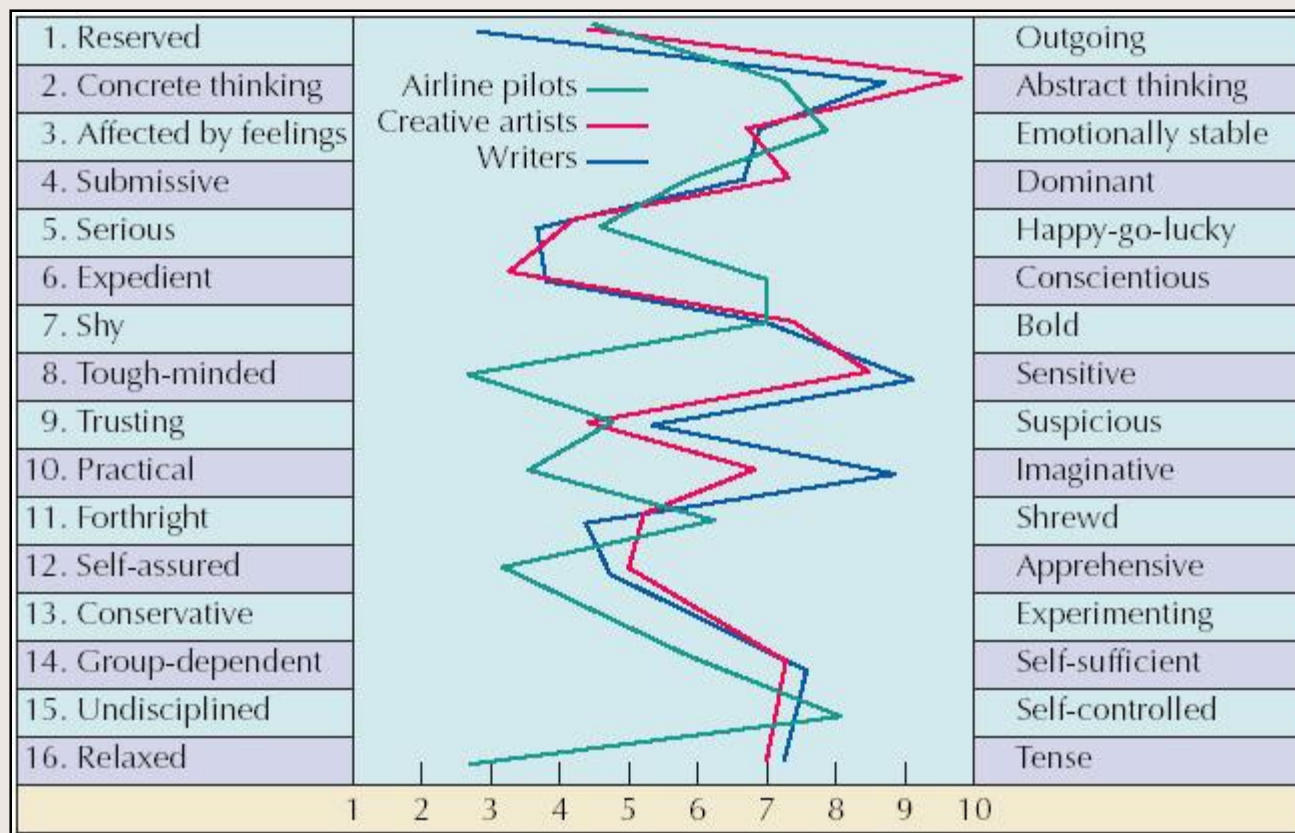
Three trait theory

1. **Cardinal Traits:** Traits that dominate an individual's whole life, often to the point that the person becomes known specifically for these traits. Freudian, Machiavellian, narcissism, Don Juan, Christ-like, etc.
2. **Central Traits:** These are the general characteristics that form the basic foundations of personality. Terms such as intelligent, honest, shy and anxious are considered central traits.
3. **Secondary Traits:** These are the traits that are sometimes related to attitudes or preferences and often appear only in certain situations or under specific circumstances. Some examples would be getting anxious when speaking to a group or impatient while waiting in line.

16 personality factor theory

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. emotional, easily upset | vs. calm, stable |
| 2. Intelligent | vs. unintelligent |
| 3. suspicious | vs. trusting |
| 4. reserved, unfriendly | vs. outgoing, friendly |
| 5. assertive, dominant | vs. not assertive, humble |
| 6. sober, serious | vs. happy-go-lucky |
| 7. conscientious | vs. expedient |
| 8. shy, timid | vs. venturesome |
| 9. tender-minded | vs. tough-minded |
| 10. practical | vs. imaginative |
| 11. shrewd | vs. forthright |
| 12. self-assured, placid | vs. apprehensive |
| 13. conservative | vs. experimenting |
| 14. group oriented | vs. self-sufficient |
| 15. undisciplined | vs. self-disciplined |
| 16. Relaxed | vs. tense, driven |

The Sixteen Personality Factors



Cattell: The Big Five

Cattell believed that five factors were most important:

Openness

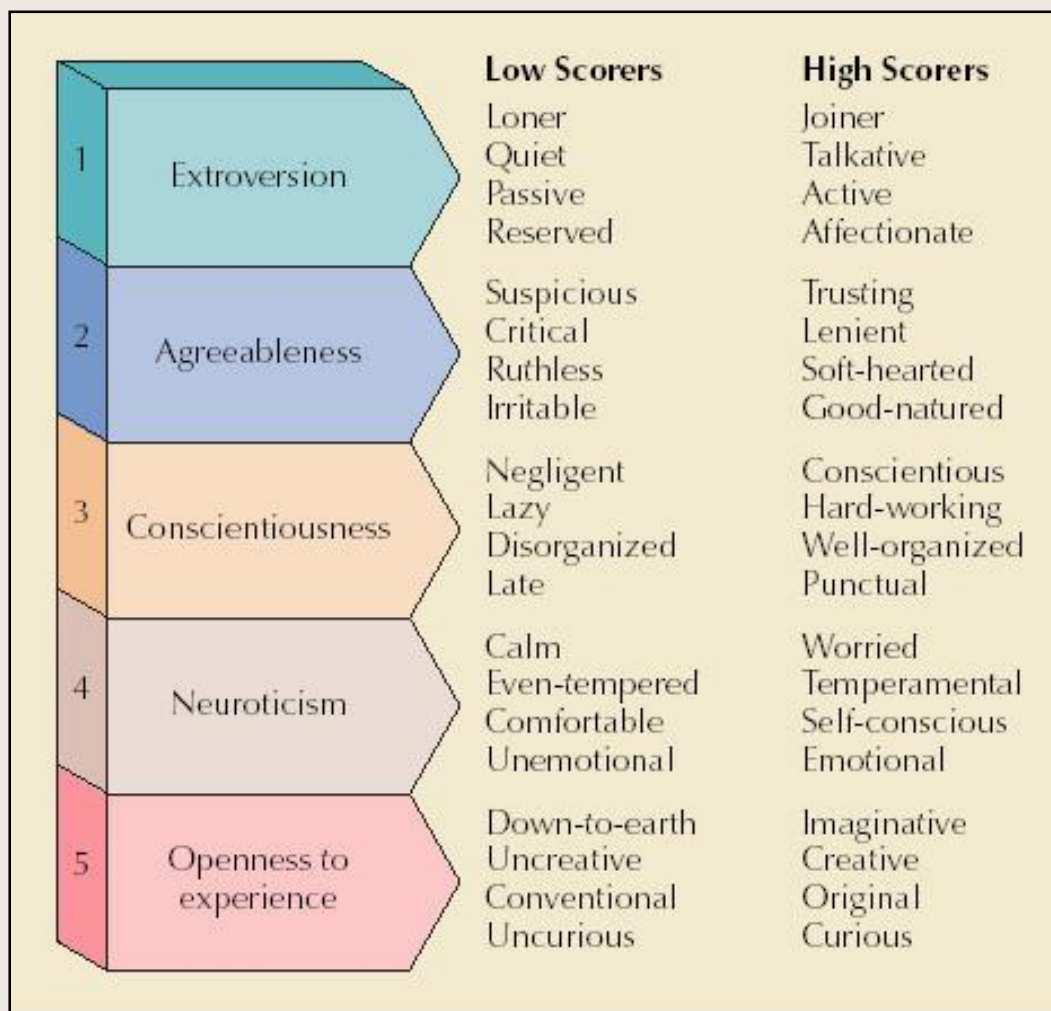
Conscientiousness

Extraversion

Agreeable

Neuroticism

Graphic: The Big Five



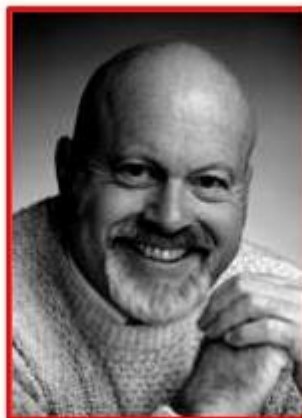


Universal trait theory

British psychologist Hans Eysenck developed a model of personality based upon just **three universal traits** were sufficient to describe human personality. Differences between Cattell and Eysenck emerged due to preferences for different forms of factor analysis, with Cattell using oblique, Eysenck orthogonal rotation to analyze the factors that emerged when personality questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis.

Universal trait theory

1. **Introversion/Extraversion:** Introversion involves directing attention on inner experiences, while extraversion relates to focusing attention outward on other people and the environment. So, a person high in introversion might be quiet and reserved, while an individual high in extraversion might be sociable and outgoing.
2. **Neuroticism/Emotional Stability:** This dimension of Eysenck's trait theory is related to moodiness versus even-temperedness. Neuroticism refers to an individual's tendency to become upset or emotional, while stability refers to the tendency to remain emotionally constant.
3. **Psychoticism:** Later, after studying individuals suffering from mental illness, Eysenck added a personality dimension he called psychoticism to his trait theory. Individuals who are high on this trait tend to have difficulty dealing with reality and may be antisocial, hostile, non-empathetic and manipulative.



Big five model

Both Cattell's and Eysenck's theory have been the subject of considerable research, which has led some theorists to believe that Cattell focused on too many traits, while Eysenck focused on too few. As a result, a new trait theory often referred to as the "Big Five" theory emerged. This five-factor model of personality represents five core traits that interact to form human personality. Lewis Goldberg proposed a five-dimension personality model, nicknamed the Big five.

Big five model

1. **Openness to Experience:** the tendency to be imaginative, independent, and interested in variety vs. practical, conforming, and interested in routine.
2. **Conscientiousness:** the tendency to be organized, careful, and disciplined vs. disorganized, careless, and impulsive.
3. **Extraversion:** the tendency to be sociable, fun-loving, and affectionate vs. retiring, somber, and reserved.
4. **Agreeableness:** the tendency to be soft-hearted, trusting, and helpful vs. ruthless, suspicious, and uncooperative.
5. **Neuroticism:** the tendency to be calm, secure, and self-satisfied vs. anxious, insecure, and self-pitying.

Criticisms of trait theories

1. being **purely descriptive** and **offering little explanation** of the underlying causes of personality
2. Lead some people to accept **oversimplified classifications**
3. **Underestimate** the effect of **specific situations** on people's behavior.
4. **Poor predictors** of behavior.

Evaluation of Trait Theories

- Are traits as pervasive as trait theories claim? Is someone shy always or does it depend on the situation?
- Are traits as enduring and unchangeable as trait theories claim? Can we change our traits? If so, how easily?
- Are traits affected by social and cultural upbringing? Or are our personalities formed at birth and unchanging thereafter?



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Part 2

Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory

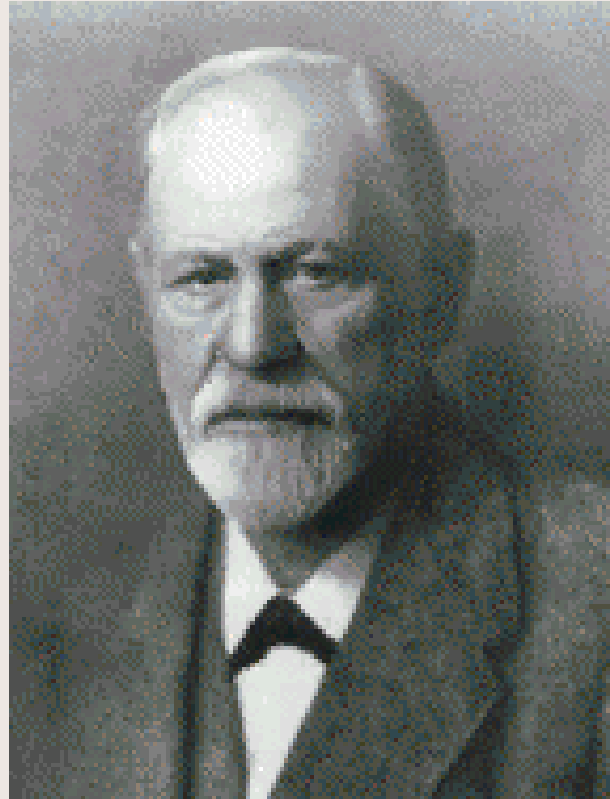
Sigmund Freud, M.D., a Viennese physician who thought his patients' problems were more emotional than physical.

Freud began his work by using hypnosis and eventually switched to psychoanalysis.

Freud had many followers: Jung and Adler, to name a few.

More than 100 years later, his work is still influential and very controversial

Sigmund Freud



Sigmund Freud
Library of Congress

The Id, Ego, and Superego

Id: Innate biological instincts and urges; self-serving & irrational

- Totally unconscious
- Works on **Pleasure Principle**: Wishes to have its desires (pleasurable) satisfied NOW, without waiting and regardless of the consequences

Ego: Executive; directs id energies

- Partially conscious and partially unconscious
- Works on **Reality Principle**: Delays action until it is practical and/or appropriate

The Id, Ego, and Superego, continued

Superego: Judge or censor for thoughts and actions of the ego

- Superego comes from our parents or caregivers; guilt comes from the superego
- Two parts
 - **Conscience:** Reflects actions for which a person has been punished (e.g., what we shouldn't do or be)
 - **Ego Ideal:** Second part of the superego; reflects behavior one's parents approved of or rewarded (e.g., what we should do or be)

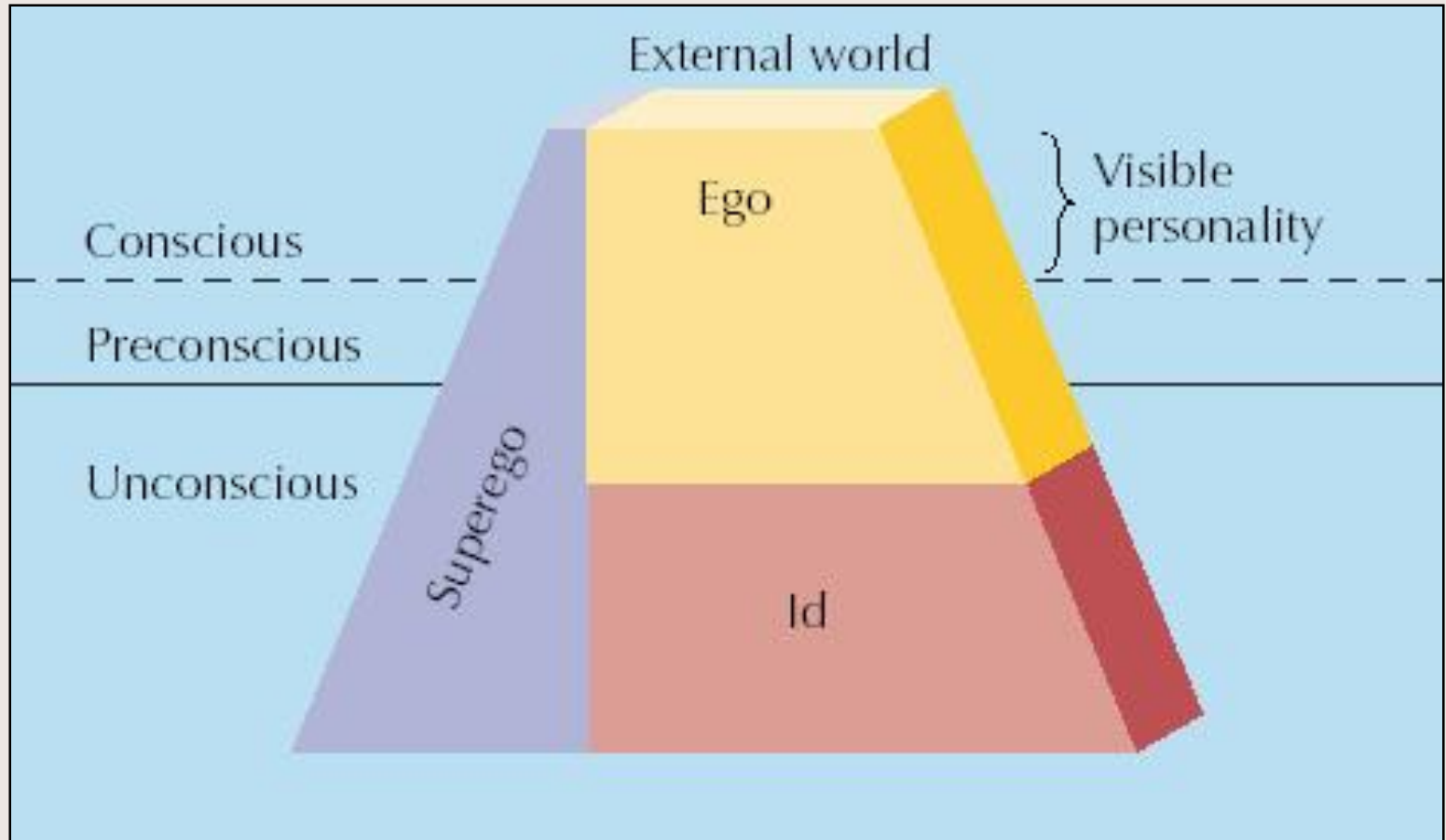
Levels of Awareness

Conscious: Everything you are aware of at a given moment

Preconscious: Material that can easily be brought into awareness

Unconscious: Holds repressed memories and emotions and the id's instinctual drives

Graphic: Levels of Awareness



Cause of Anxiety

Ego is always caught in the middle of battles between superego's desires for moral behavior and the id's desires for immediate gratification

Neurotic Anxiety: Caused by id impulses that the ego can barely control

Moral Anxiety: Comes from threats of punishment from the superego

Defense mechanism: a process used by the ego to distort reality and protect a person from anxiety

Examples of Defense Mechanisms

Regression: Ego seeks the security of an earlier developmental period in the face of stress.

Displacement: Ego shifts unacceptable feelings from one object to another, more acceptable object.

Sublimation: Ego replaces an unacceptable impulse with a socially acceptable one

Reaction Formation: Ego transforms an unacceptable motive or feeling into its opposite.

Projection: Ego attributes personal shortcomings, problems, and faults to others.

Rationalization: Ego justifies an unacceptable motive by giving a false acceptable (but false) reason for behavior

A Little Exercise

See in class!

A Little Exercise, continued

See in class!

A Little Exercise, continued

See in class!

Personality Development

According to Freud, personality develops in stages; everyone goes through same stages in same order. Majority of personality is formed before age 6

Erogenous Zone: Area on body capable of producing pleasure

Fixation: Unresolved conflict or emotional hang-up caused by overindulgence or frustration

Stages of Personality Development

Oral Stage: Ages 0-1. Most of infant's pleasure comes from stimulation of the mouth. If a child is overfed or frustrated, oral traits will develop.

- **Oral Dependent Personality:** Gullible, passive, and need lots of attention. Fixations create oral-aggressive adults who like to argue and exploit others.
- **Erogenous zone: mouth (oral)**

Anal Stage: Ages 1-3. Attention turns to process of elimination. Child can gain approval or express aggression by letting go or holding on. Ego develops. Harsh or lenient toilet training can make a child either:

- **Anal Retentive:** Stubborn, stingy, orderly, and compulsively clean
- **Anal Expulsive:** Disorderly, messy, destructive, or cruel
- **Erogenous zone: anus**

Stages of Personality Development, continued

Phallic Stage: Ages 3-6. Child now notices and is physically attracted to opposite sex parent. Can lead to:

- **Oedipus Conflict:** For boys only. Boy feels rivalry with his father for his mother's affection. Boy may feel threatened by father (castration anxiety). To resolve, boy must *identify* with his father (i.e., become more like him and adopt his heterosexual beliefs).
- **Electra Conflict:** Girl loves her father and competes with her mother. Girl identifies with her mother more slowly because she already feels castrated.

Erogenous zone: phallus

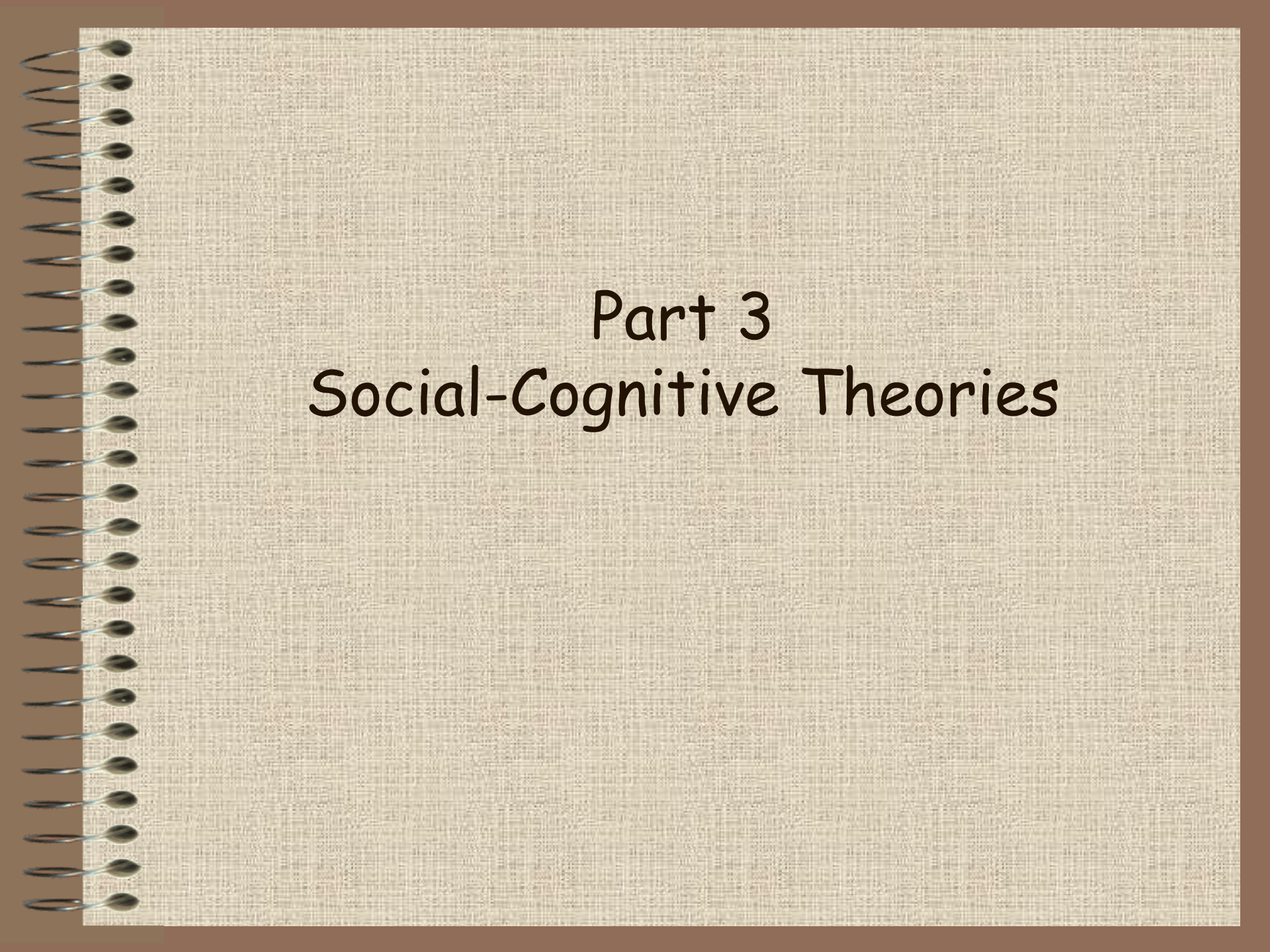
Stages of Personality Development, continued

Latency: Ages 6-Puberty. Psychosexual development is dormant. Same sex friendships and play occur here.

Genital Stage: Puberty-on. Realization of full adult sexuality occurs here; sexual urges re-awaken.

Evaluation of Psychoanalytic Theory

- Freud overemphasized sexuality and placed little emphasis on other aspects of the child's experience.
- Freud's theory is largely untestable. Particularly, the concept of the unconscious is unprovable.
- According to Freud, the only way that people in psychological distress can get relief is to undergo length therapy, to identify unresolved conflicts from infancy and childhood.
- Freud's view of people is overly negative and pessimistic.

The image shows the front cover of a spiral-bound notebook. The cover is a light beige or tan color with a fine, woven texture. A silver-colored metal spiral binding is visible along the left edge. The text "Part 3" and "Social-Cognitive Theories" is printed in a black, sans-serif font, centered on the cover.

Part 3

Social-Cognitive Theories

Bandura's Theory

Self-system: the set of cognitive processes by which a person observes, evaluates, and regulates his/her behavior. Bandura proposed that what we think of as personality is a product of this self-system.

Children observe behavior of models (such as parents) in their social environment. Particularly if they are reinforced, children will imitate these behaviors, incorporating them into personality.

Bandura also proposed that people observe their own behavior and judge its effectiveness. **Self-efficacy:** a judgment of one's effectiveness in dealing with particular situations.

Rotter's Theory of Locus of Control

Julian Rotter: American psychologist, began as a Freudian! His personality theory combines learning principles, modeling, cognition, and the effects of social relationships

External locus of control: perception that chance or external forces beyond personal control determine one's fate

Internal locus of control: perception that you control your own fate.

Learned Helplessness: a sense of hopelessness in which a person thinks that he/she is unable to prevent aversive events

Julian Rotter



Evaluation of Social-Cognitive Theories

- Social-cognitive theories tend to be overly-mechanical.
- Overemphasizes environmental influences; gives little or no consideration to the possibility of innate personality differences or the effects of genetics.
- Does not recognize internal human qualities such as hope, aspiration, love, self-sacrifice

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Part 4

Humanistic Theories

Humanism

Humanism: Approach that focuses on human experience, problems, potentials, and ideals

Human Nature: Traits, qualities, potentials, and behavior patterns most characteristic of humans

Free Choice: Ability to choose that is NOT controlled by genetics, learning, or unconscious forces

Subjective Experience: Private perceptions of reality

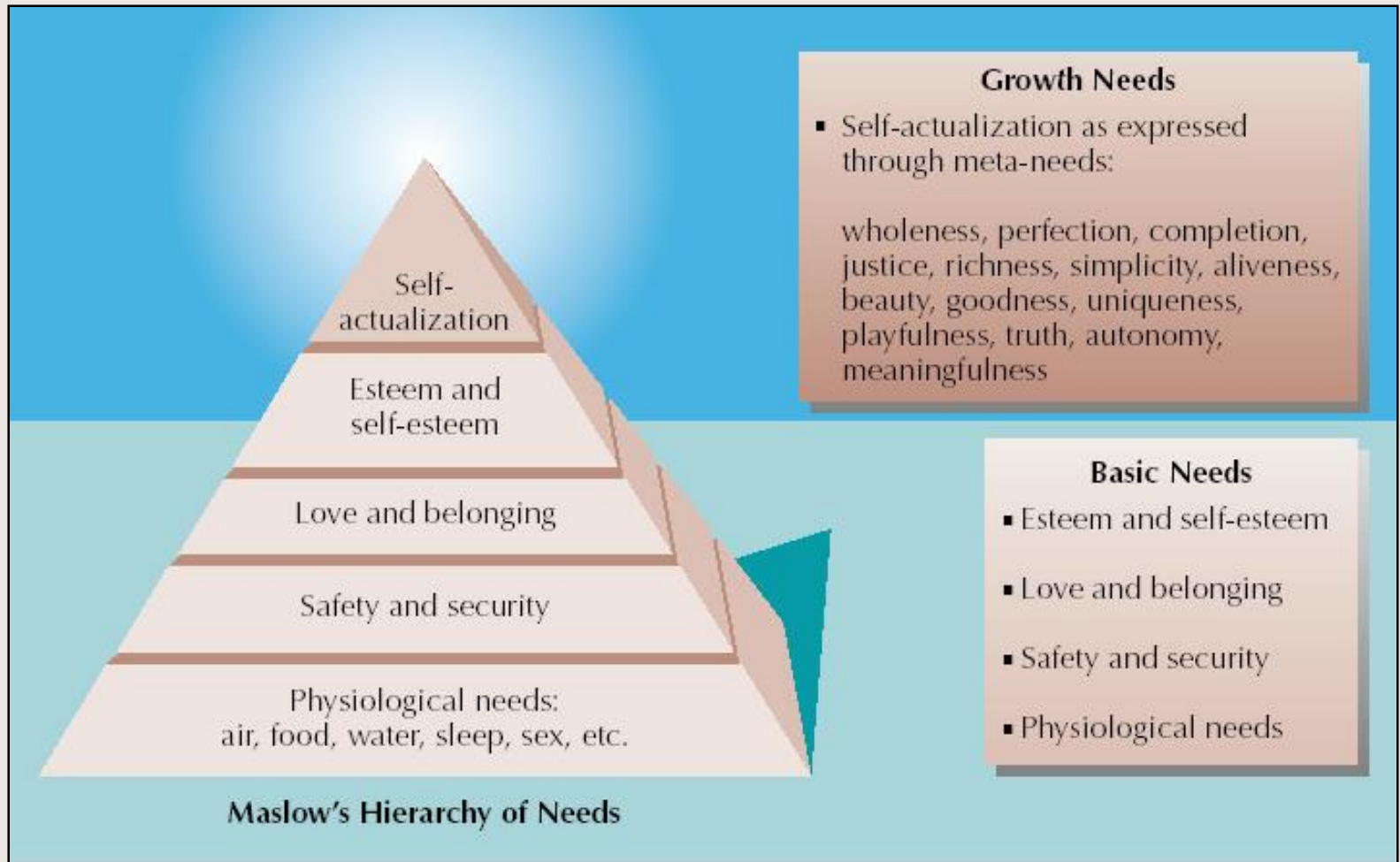
Maslow's Theory

- Abraham Maslow is considered father of the humanistic movement. He observed the lives of (purportedly) healthy and creative people to develop his theory.
- **Hierarchy of needs:** the motivational component of Maslow's theory, in which our innate needs, which motivate our actions, are hierarchically arranged.
- **Self-actualization:** the fullest realization of a person's potential

Abraham Maslow



Graphic: Hierarchy of Needs



Characteristics of Self-Actualized People

- Efficient perceptions of reality
- Comfortable acceptance of self, others, and nature
- Spontaneity
- Task Centering
- Autonomy
- Continued freshness of appreciation
- Fellowship with humanity
- Profound interpersonal relationships
- Comfort with solitude
- Non-hostile sense of humor
- Peak experiences

Some Self-Actualized People

- Albert Einstein
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- William James
- Thomas Jefferson
- Abraham Lincoln
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Albert Schweitzer
- Mahatma Gandhi

Carl Roger's Self Theory

Carl Rogers: American psychologist; believed that personality formed as a result of our strivings to reach our full human potential.

Fully Functioning Person: Lives in harmony with his/her deepest feelings and impulses

Self-Image: Total subjective perception of your body and personality

Conditions of Worth: behaviors and attitudes for which other people, starting with our parents, will give us positive regard.

Unconditional Positive Regard: Unshakable love and approval

Positive Self-Regard: Thinking of oneself as a good, lovable, worthwhile person

Carl Rogers



Evaluation of Humanistic Theories

- Many of the Humanists' claims are untestable.
- Humanists may have an overly-positive, rosy view of humankind. They do not look at the "dark side."
- For the Humanists, the cause of all our problems lies not in ourselves, but in others.
- Maslow's characterization of self-actualized individuals is very biased toward a certain philosophical position.
- Most of the people Maslow identified as self-actualized had rather serious psychological problems.

A Little Exercise

See in class!

Scoring the Briggs-Myers

See in class!

Interpreting the Briggs-Myer

Extraversion: sociability, energized by people, lonely when alone (75%)

Sensation: practical, trusts facts; learns through ex-perience; wants to deal with what's real

Thinking: prefers the objective, logical, analytical

Judging: prefers closure, wants deadlines, feels more comfortable once a decision has been made.

Intraversion: territorial, enjoys being alone, private, drained by people (25%)

Intuition: innovative, fantasizes; future more attractive than the present

Feeling: prefers the subjective, personal, values

Perceiving: resists closure, wants more & more data; values the open-ended; pressure to decide stressful