Filling in the Details: Characteristic Adaptations to Life Tasks

Chapter 7
Motives and Goals: What Do We Want in Life?

Chapter 8
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CHAPTER 7
Motives and Goals: What Do We Want in Life?

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Summary
When my younger daughter was about 5 years old, she asked me what my job was. I told her I was a professor of psychology.

“What is that?” Amanda asked.

“Well, I teach students about psychology,” I replied.

“What is psychology?” she wanted to know.


“Oh.” She rolled her eyes. “Well, why do they do what they do?”

“I really don’t know, sweetheart. I guess that’s why I study it.”

I know why people do what they do.”

“Oh?”

Looking at me with a mixture of pity and disgust, Amanda proclaimed: “Because they want to, that’s why.”

She marched out of the room, no doubt wondering how her father could be so stupid. It is a basic fact of life: People do what they want to do. Even at age 5, Amanda knew something very important about human behavior. With no graduate training in psychology, she had developed her own implicit theory of human motivation. People have inside of them wants, desires, aims, and intentions. People get upon these wants, prodding behavior. At its root, the word motivation refers to “movement.” What gets people moving? What energizes and directs human behavior? Like Amanda, theorists of human motivation going back more than 2,000 years have suggested that people want things, that they are motivated to get what they want (and to avoid what they don’t want), that they develop goals to obtain those things they want, and that they act upon those goals. Furthermore, many have suggested that what we want is often derived directly from what we need (Lewin, 1935; Murray, 1938). Motivational psychologist Eric Klinger (1987) expands Amanda’s theory of human motivation and gives it a Darwinian spin so that it even applies to animals:

We animals have our drastic differences, but almost all of us—from amoebas to humans—have at least one behavioral imperative in common. We almost all have to go out and get the things we need in order to survive and procreate. We have to identify them, reach out or ambulate toward them, and bring them to those of our organs that can make use of them. Our morphology, our physiology, and our behavioral organization are all arranged so as to satisfy this imperative. This means that, from the beginning, animals have necessarily been constructed to pursue necessary goals, which means in turn that they have been shaped by the requirements of goal pursuit. Goal-seeking, and therefore motivation in the larger sense, are integral facets of life as an animal.

(p. 337)

With its focus on motives and goals, this chapter takes us beyond the important individual differences in behavior typically associated with personality traits to a second level of personality description. In Chapters 4-6, I showed that dispositional traits (Level 1 in personality) help to provide an initial sketch of psychological individuality. It is now time, however, to fill in some of the details in that sketch. To begin filling in the details, we need to move beyond dispositional traits and consider the various kinds of characteristic adaptations that define a particular human life. Characteristic adaptations are more specific and particular aspects of psychological individuality that are contextualized in time, place, or social role. Characteristic adaptations make up Level 2 of personality. Motives and goals are one class of characteristic adaptations. They are those aspects of personality that speak directly to what Amanda considers to be a basic fact of human behavior—that people want things and they act upon those wants.

But what do people want?

The Psychoanalytic View

The most influential psychologist of the 20th century was Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Freud was the prime inventor of a particular kind of psychology—usually called psychoanalysis. Drawing
on extensive case studies of therapy patients seen in medical settings, Freud and his followers developed psychoanalysis outside the mainstream of scientific psychology. But psychoanalysis has had a substantial impact on personality psychology proper, to say nothing of its pervasive cultural influence in the 20th-century West. Anthropology, political science, literature, literary criticism, art, and the cinema all acknowledge certain Freudian underpinnings and influences. Psychoanalytic theories, valid or not, have even crept into our everyday parlance, as we speak knowingly today of inhibitions, repressed memories, the Oedipus complex, and Freudian slips.

At the heart of the psychoanalytic view of personality is Freud’s theory of motivation. The theory can be boiled down to four basic propositions. I call them the principles of (1) determinism, (2) drive, (3) conflict, and (4) the unconscious. First, forces over which we have little control determine all human behavior and experience. We are not the masters of our fate, Freud insisted. We are more like pawns in life’s chess game. Somebody else is making the moves. Second, these powerful forces exist within us, for the most part, and they can typically be traced back to primitive drives or instincts. Most important are our drives for sexuality and aggression. What do people want? According to Freud, we want sexual satisfaction and suitable outlets for our aggression. Third, the forces that determine all our behavior and experience are in perpetual conflict with one another, which causes us anxiety. There is no avoiding conflict and anxiety in life—conflict between our primitive urges and societal constraints certainly, but also conflicts deep within ourselves. We want too much that we can never have; we are destined, therefore, to be miserable. Fourth (and arguably worst), we do not even know what those forces that determine our behavior and those conflicts that precipitate our anxiety are—in other words, the most important determinants of and conflicts in our lives are outside of our consciousness. They are unconscious to us. We are unconscious to them. We have virtually no control over our lives. We are conflicted and anxious. And we do not know why.

For Freud, sexuality and aggression are the ultimate wellspring of human motivation. They provide the motive force, the drive, the thrust for all of our behavior. Quite literally, as Freud saw it, sexuality and aggression serve as the primal energy sources for psychological life. Influenced by 19th-century models of energy mechanisms, Freud conceived of the human mind as a machine that uses energy, and he believed that this psychic energy was drawn from biological instincts. Freud eventually settled on the idea that there exist two sets of instincts or drives: (1) sexuality and all other life instincts (this group of instincts is sometimes termed “Eros”) and (2) aggression and all other death instincts (sometimes grouped under the name of “Thanatos”) (Freud, 1920/1955). Life and death instincts are usually expressed in indirect and complex ways. Even 17-year-old boys do not spend all of their time fantasizing about sex and conquest and running around looking for opportunities for direct instinctual gratification. Instead, our instincts get played out in fantasies and dreams, and they get expressed in very subtle and sublimated ways in everyday behavior. So subtle, in fact, that we are likely not even to notice. But, of course, that is precisely the psychoanalytic point.

THE UNCONSCIOUS

In Notes from Underground, Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote:

Every man has some reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone, but only to his friends.
He has others which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret.

But finally there are others which a man is even afraid to tell himself, and every decent man has a considerable number of such things stored away. (1864/1960, p.35)

Those fearsome things that Dostoevsky said were “stored away” by every “decent man” (or woman) constitute what Freud called the unconscious. A fundamental proposition of psychoanalytic approach to personality is that much of what we know and feel is outside our every conscious awareness. Our lives are driven by intrapsychic mysteries that transpire at an unconscious level.
This painting, by Salvador Dali (1938), evokes images of primary process thought and the Freudian unconscious. Freud imagined the unconscious realm of human thought to be a vast and mysterious storehouse of instinctual urges, repressed images, and long-forgotten memories, devoid of rationality and crying out for immediate gratification. (SOURCE: Erich Lessing/Art Resource. Reproduced with permission of Artist Rights Society)

buried deep beneath the manifest surface of everyday waking consciousness. We do not, and typically cannot, know what the “real” reasons are for what we do because the prime determinants of human behavior are split off from what we typically can grasp in conscious everyday experience. Freud’s earliest clinical cases convinced him that the neurotic symptoms from which his patients suffered stemmed from personal conflicts and fantasies, often sexual and aggressive in nature, that had been actively pushed out of consciousness (Breuer & Freud, 1895). For example, an intensely negative experience from the past may no longer be consciously remembered, but the event lives on in the unconscious and plays itself out in conscious experience through debilitating symptoms, anxiety, and dread. The patient is clueless about the causes of his or her suffering, for the original event can no longer be recalled. In Freud’s view, conscious experience is but the tip of the iceberg in human life. Most of the iceberg is underwater—that is, most of what is really important in human life lies beneath the surface of consciousness.

The idea that much of who we are is outside of our awareness, residing in a shadowy unconscious realm, is not original with Freud. The notion that behavior is shaped by unconscious determinants was clearly in evidence some 100 years prior to Freud’s theorizing (Ellenberger, 1970). For instance, the philosophies of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) emphasized aspects of human functioning that are outside of consciousness, typically emotional and irrational urges that are antagonistic to conscious reason. Nineteenth-century Romantics, such as poets William Wordsworth and John Keats, generally placed the person’s heroic and creative powers in an unconscious, though sometimes accessible, realm. Hypnotism was used to gain access to the unconscious mind as early as 1784, and one of Freud’s teachers, Jean Martin Charcot, employed the method with legendary effectiveness. Baumeister (1986) and Gay (1986) argue that middle-class adults in 19th-century Europe accepted the general idea of an inner world unknowable to the conscious self. Baumeister even asserts that
Sigmund Freud came of age in a world very different from ours. It was a world of kings and queens and empires—a 19th-century European “old world” that was still highly aristocratic and, by our standards today, extremely oppressive. It was a world yet to experience a major global war or the threat of nuclear annihilation. It was a world that would have found unthinkable our contemporary belief that, for instance, women should be allowed to vote or that the child of a poor black mother might someday become a great leader, writer, or scientist. The first-born son in a struggling Jewish family, Freud dreamed of being a great scientist from the age of 5 onward. As Napoleon conquered lands and peoples, young Sigmund dreamed of conquering the mind, exploring new territories of knowledge and becoming their lord and master. Referring to his own childhood and his unalloyed love for his mother, Freud later wrote: “A man who has been the indisputable favorite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a conqueror, the confidence of success that often induces real success” (quoted in Jones, 1961, p. 6).

The heroes of Freud’s youth were the great Romantics of the early 19th century, such as Napoleon, the conqueror, and Goethe, the German writer and philosopher. Flourishing between approximately 1790 and 1850, Romanticism was a European intellectual movement that rejected classical teachings emphasizing reason, order, and the common good and celebrated instead the vigorous and passionate life of the individual (Cantor, 1971; Russell, 1945). As an adult, Freud fashioned a revolutionary theory of the mind that reflected his Romantic heritage. From Romanticism he adopted the idea that the individual person and society are destined to live in constant conflict. Romantics such as Goethe and the poets William Blake and Lord Byron saw society as inherently oppressive in that it demands conformity to ensure social order. The Romantic self rebels against oppression to seek freedom and transcendence, often through the passionate pursuit of art or love. Romanticism taught Freud to focus on the uniqueness of the inner self and its development over time. For the Romantics, the development of the inner self was virtually a moral duty (Jay, 1984; Langbaum, 1982). In the famous Romantic drama, Goethe’s Faust seeks self-fulfillment at all costs, going so far as to sell his soul to the devil to guarantee the full experiencing of his inner, unique being. Of psychoanalysis and the devil, one scholar writes, “To experience Freud is to partake a second time of the forbidden fruit” (Brown, 1959, pp. xi–xii). The Romantics glorified the emotional and irrational aspects of human nature. Freud, too, came to see human beings as irrational by nature, but unlike his Romantic heroes, Freud was never able to celebrate that irrationality. Freud eventually taught that unconscious and irrational wishes concerning sexuality and aggression are the most basic motivators of the person’s behavior, but that these wishes must be channeled into indirect and disguised expressions within an orderly society if the human being is to adapt to society and to survive. Despite his Romantic heritage, Freud was too much the rational scientist himself, and an upstanding member of conservative middle-class society, to endorse the free reign of sex and passion.

In 1873, Freud enrolled in the University of Vienna to study natural science. There he met eminent physiologist Ernst Brücke. Working under Brücke’s tutelage for 3 years, Freud learned that all natural phenomena must be explained in physical and chemical terms. From the
The psychoanalytic tradition was launched when Breuer and Freud collaborated to investigate the psychological underpinnings of hysteria. Their work culminated in the publication of Studies in Hysteria (1893–1895/1955), wherein they wrote that “hystéric[s] suffer mainly from reminiscences” (p. 7). In other works, the bodily symptoms of hysteria are caused by problems in the memory of emotionally charged events. Freud was almost 40 years old when he and Breuer published their discoveries. But the two physicians/scientists had a major falling out over the interpretation of their clinical cases, with Breuer objecting to Freud’s insistence that hysterical symptoms typically have sexual meanings. They parted, bitter enemies, and Freud entered a very difficult but ultimately productive period in his life, a time he later romanticized as that “glorious heroic age” of “splendid isolation” (Freud, 1914/1957, p. 22). During this time, Freud began a self-analysis wherein he subjected his own thoughts, fantasies, feelings, and dreams to an intensive scrutiny and from which, he later argued, he derived his greatest psychological insights. The next 10 years (between 1895 and 1905) were to witness the maturation of Freud’s most important ideas concerning the interpretation of dreams, the psychopathology of everyday life, the role of the sexual instinct in human development, and the workings of the unconscious.

From about 1905 until his death in 1939, Freud established himself as the father of the psychoanalytic movement. A gifted writer who won the coveted Goethe Prize for literature in 1930, Freud filled 24 volumes on psychoanalysis, including wide-ranging essays and monographs on theory and clinical practice as well as special papers addressing religious, cultural, and artistic questions. Table 7.1 lists a few of his most important writings with capsule summaries of their contents. Attracting a large number of intellectual followers, Freud founded the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. The group held regular meetings and published a journal. In 1909, American psychologist G. Stanley Hall invited Freud to Clark University, in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he delivered a famous series of lectures. Freud’s writings were eventually translated into English and other languages as psychoanalysis became an international movement. By the time of his death, on the eve of World War II, Sigmund Freud was easily the most venerated psychologist in the world, but also the most maligned, for his ideas have always been viewed as extremely controversial.
Table 7.1: Selected Writings of Sigmund Freud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Studies in Hysteria (with J. Breuer)</td>
<td>Neurotic symptoms are the result of “reminiscences” and can be relieved through a psychological talking cure. Neurotic disturbances are creative solutions to unconscious conflicts, usually concerning sexuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>The Interpretation of Dreams</td>
<td>Dreams are compromises in wish fulfillments and must be understood as creative products of unconscious processes such as condensation, displacement, and symbolism. All dreams can be interpreted by employing free association to trace the latent undercurrents of manifest content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>The Psychopathology of Everyday Life</td>
<td>Like neurotic symptoms and dreams, many accidents and mistakes we make in daily life have important psychological meaning and can be traced back to unconscious conflicts and instinctual urges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality</td>
<td>The sexual instinct develops through childhood stages designated as oral, anal, and phallic, before reaching maturity in adolescence. Children are overtly sexual beings whose pregenital manifestations of sex are similar to what polite society calls “perversions” in adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Totem and Taboo</td>
<td>The Oedipus complex in children involves unconscious desires to make love to the parent of the opposite sex while killing the parent of the same sex. Freud speculates that social institutions such as government and religion have their historical origins in a prehistoric real-life enactment of the Oedipal complex, whereby the patriarch of a primal horde was overthrown by younger men and killed and eaten. The new younger leaders then prescribed laws and rules to inhibit sex and aggression and assuage their guilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</td>
<td>Two basic instinctual urges are the underlying motivators of all behavior and experience: life instincts, expressed directly in sexuality; and death instincts, expressed in aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>The Ego and the Id</td>
<td>The human mind is structured into three compartments: the id, wherein reside unconscious impulses and thoughts; the ego, which serves the id by channeling the id’s energy into realistic pursuits; and the superego, which is an internal representation of the parents exerting a moral force. The id operates according to the pleasure principle, and the ego operates according to the reality principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Civilization and Its Discontents</td>
<td>Human beings and societies are in constant conflict. Whereas the individual is motivated by unconscious sexual and aggressive impulses, society is built on the repression of sex and aggression. As a result, humans are generally anxious, miserable, and often neurotic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: There is no substitute for reading Freud in the original. Indeed, part of his power as a theorist is the beauty of his writing, captured wonderfully in James Strachey’s authoritative English translations of the original German. Unfortunately, many secondary sources on Freud are rather dry and technical compared with the rich original work.

Victorian men and women were preoccupied with the involuntary revelation of this inner self to others. While you might not be able to attain conscious insight into the deep secrets of your own mind, the Victorians believed there was always the danger of inadvertently disclosing the nature of your own unconscious to others, who as objective outside observers might even come to know you better than you know yourself!

In his topographical model of human functioning, Freud distinguished among conscious, preconscious, and unconscious regions of the mind. The conscious region contains what a person is currently aware of. People typically can verbalize their conscious experience and can think about it in a logical way. The preconscious region contains material about which the person is not currently aware but which could readily enter awareness should the person decide to retrieve the material. Therefore, the preconscious region may be seen as corresponding to what most of us think of as...
ordinary memory. I may not currently be aware of the color of my daughter’s bicycle but I can easily remember what the color is if I decide to move my thinking in that direction, thereby bringing up material from the preconscious to the conscious region. The preconscious contains a vast storehouse of important as well as trivial information that is reliably at our disposal.

By contrast, material residing in the unconscious region of the mind cannot be readily retrieved. Rather, the unconscious contains elements of experience that have been actively repressed. In part, the unconscious is a repository for ideas, images, urges, and feelings that are associated with conflict, pain, fear, guilt, and so on. Therefore, unconscious material is unconscious for a reason. The mind is topographically organized such that material that is incompatible with the dominant self-protective mask of consciousness is cast into an unconscious abyss. We cannot bear to know certain things about ourselves. Therefore, we do not (consciously) know them. Yet what resides in the unconscious profoundly affects our behavior and experience, even though we do not know we are being affected. Repressed unconscious material is expressed in disguised or symbolic form, as in neurotic symptoms or when unconscious instinctual urges are indirectly satisfied in dreams, fantasy, play, art, work, or virtually any other arena of meaningful human intercourse.

REPRESSION AND REPRESSORS

Research in cognitive science has shown conclusively that a great deal of everyday mental life is outside of conscious awareness. People perceive, learn, and remember many things without being consciously aware of doing so (Kihlstrom, 1990; Schacter, 1996). These kinds of nonconscious cognitive operations are manifestations of implicit information processing in human beings. Furthermore, much of what we feel and think about people and social situations appears to be driven by nonconscious, automatic mental processes (Bargh, 1997). The mind has evolved to take in highly familiar and routine information in an effortless and automatic fashion in order to free up conscious and explicit mental processes to focus on the immediate problems at hand. In a sense, then, scientific evidence documenting the many ways in which the human mind operates in an implicit, automatic, and nonconscious manner supports Freud’s general view that mental life is largely outside conscious awareness (Westen, 1998).

Recent theory and research, furthermore, suggests that unconscious thinking may sometimes be superior to conscious thought in reaching correct solutions to complex problems. In a series of intriguing experiments, Ap Dijksterhuis (2004; Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006) provided students with a large amount of information on different apartments in a city and asked them to decide which apartment they might choose to live in. One of the apartments was objectively superior to the others, but determining its superiority was difficult because the students were presented with so much information so quickly and then given relatively little time to make their decisions. After the information was presented, one group of students was asked to arrive at a decision by thinking consciously about the different apartments for 3 minutes. A second group was distracted for 3 minutes by a task that kept them from thinking consciously about the information they had just received on the apartments and then immediately asked to make the decision. Perhaps surprisingly, the second group ended up making better decisions; they chose the correct apartment more often than did the group that was able to weigh evidence and think consciously about the options. The researchers concluded that participants in the second group relied on unconscious thinking, which must have occurred during the 3 minutes when they were distracted. From these and other experiments, Dijksterhuis concludes that unconscious thought is often better able than consciousness to process large amounts of information in an efficient and effective manner. The argument is consistent with a great deal of anecdotal evidence suggesting that people sometimes attain good insights and arrive at satisfying conclusions when they put conscious thought aside and go with their gut intuitions.

The growing body of evidence showing that people often engage in unconscious thought and that such thought can be highly effective and even superior to conscious thinking in certain...
circumstances is consistent with Freud’s overall understanding of how the mind works. But Freud was mainly concerned with thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories that may be stored away in an inaccessible, unconscious realm because they threaten the person’s well-being. These thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories are actively rejected or repressed. In the psychoanalytic view, repression is an inescapable fact of daily life. “The essence of repression lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness,” Freud wrote (1915/1957, p. 105). To protect themselves from psychological harm, human beings repress certain mental processes and the threatening content associated with them. Everybody represses. But do some people repress more than others? Some psychoanalytically oriented researchers argue that individual differences in repressiveness constitute an important feature of personality. Weinberger, Schwartz, and Davidson (1979) described repressors as persons who experience little anxiety on a conscious level and who adopt a highly defensive approach to life. The researchers were able to classify certain individuals as exhibiting an especially repressive coping style by virtue of their scores on two self-report, paper-and-pencil questionnaires—one measuring anxiety (the Manifest Anxiety Scale; Taylor, 1953) and the other defensiveness, or “social desirability” (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), which indicates the extent to which a person will describe the self in socially acceptable and overly “nice” ways. In an experiment in which people were exposed to verbal phrases containing sexual and aggressive content, repressors reported very low levels of subjective distress compared with “low-anxious” (low anxiety, low defensiveness) and “defensive-high-anxious” (high anxiety, high defensiveness) individuals. At the same time, however, physiological measures indicated that the repressors experienced significantly higher levels of internal arousal than did the low-anxious and defensive-high-anxious subjects. In other words, whereas the repressors claimed that the sexual and aggressive content did not make them anxious, their bodily processes suggested otherwise. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the repressors did not consciously perceive the drive-related stimuli as threatening. Their heightened physiological arousal, however, indicated that the threat may have instead been perceived at an unconscious level.

Penelope Davis conducted a series of interesting studies examining how repressors recall emotional experiences in their lives. In one study, female college students were asked to recall six kinds of personal experiences from childhood: general memories, experiences of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and wonder (Davis & Schwartz, 1987). As Figure 7.1 shows, repressors (low anxiety, high defensiveness) recalled significantly fewer negative memories than did low-anxious (low anxiety, low defensiveness) and high-anxious (high anxiety, low defensiveness) individuals. The results are consistent with the psychoanalytic hypothesis that repression involves inaccessibility to negative memories. However, the results also indicate, as can be seen in Figure 7.1, that repressors tended to report somewhat fewer positive memories as well, suggesting that repression may also involve a more general failure to retrieve emotional memories of various kinds.

In a second study, Davis (1987) found that repressors recalled fewer childhood experiences in which they felt happy, sad, angry, fearful, guilty, and self-conscious compared with other individuals. The inhibition was especially pronounced for fear and self-consciousness experiences. But she also showed that when recalling memories in which someone else felt happy, sad, angry, or fearful, repressors actually reported substantially more experiences. The findings suggest that repression is not simply a general memory deficit. Repressors actually report a greater number of memories involving emotional experiences of other people. But when it comes to recalling events in which the strong emotions experienced are their own, and especially when those emotions entail painful states of fear and self-consciousness, repressors seem to have difficulty summoning such memories into awareness. Fear and self-consciousness occur in situations in which attention is focused on the self in an evaluative and especially threatening way. What may make these kinds of experiences the most suitable grist for the repression mill is that they directly threaten the self with a negative evaluation, more so even than experiences of sadness, anger, and other negative emotions. Repression may operate most powerfully in the domain of self-evaluation.
Repressors show significantly fewer memories of sadness, anger, and fear compared with high-anxious and low-anxious individuals.


We may be most prone to repress those experiences in which the self is judged in a negative manner.

Why is it that some people have such a difficult time recalling and articulating negative emotional memories? What makes repressors different from other people? Hansen and Hansen (1988) explored what they called “the architecture of repression,” described as the mechanisms whereby emotionally tagged memories, especially unpleasant memories, are left inaccessible. They argued that repressors have an “associative network” for negative emotional experiences that is substantially less complex and more discrete than that found for negative memories experienced by other people. For repressors, negative recollections have a characteristically simple structure, and these memories are split off from other memories, isolated outside the main network of interrelated autobiographical recollections. Repressors and nonrepressors organize their episodic memories in different ways. Repressors simplify negative memories to emphasize a single dominant feeling, as a way of keeping these memories from connecting in their minds to other autobiographical memories containing other feelings. By contrast, nonrepressors tend to describe their negative memories in more complex terms, emphasizing a number of different emotional states in the same memory and integrating the negative memory with the main lines of their autobiographical self.

Hansen and Hansen (1988) obtained evidence for their interpretation in a study of 433 undergraduate women and men, each of whom was assigned to recall, describe, and evaluate either an angering, embarrassing, sad, or fearful event from the past. For the particular event to be recalled,
the participants were told to picture the situation in their minds and to remember as vividly as they could how it felt (to be angry, embarrassed, sad, or fearful) at that particular moment. After writing a description of the experience on a sheet of paper, the participants were asked to rate how they felt in the situation according to 10 different emotion dimensions: angry, embarrassed, sad, fearful, anxious, disgusted, ashamed, depressed, surprised, and happy. The results showed that each negative memory elicited a montage of different emotional reactions. For example, when subjects were asked to recall memories of sadness, they rated their feelings in these memories as very sad, but they also tended to rate highly feelings of depression, anger, and fear. By contrast, sad memories did not tend to elicit feelings of shame or embarrassment. For sad memories, then, the researchers determined that sadness was the dominant emotion but that other nondominant emotions of depression, anger, and fear could also be identified. Similarly, embarrassing memories showed the dominant emotion of embarrassment but were also tagged with the nondominant emotion of shame. Each category of emotion memory (angering, embarrassing, sad, and fearful), therefore, specified a corresponding dominant emotion and a set of nondominant emotions.

Differences between repressors and other individuals were revealed in the nondominant emotions, but not in the dominant ones. For any given negative event, repressors and nonrepressors reported comparable levels of dominant emotion intensity. For example, embarrassing memories were rated just as emotionally embarrassing by repressors as by nonrepressors. But repressors tended to rate the nondominant emotions associated with the given memory at less intense levels. Embarrassing memories, therefore, produced less shame for repressors than for nonrepressors. Sad memories produced less depression, anger, and fear for repressors than for nonrepressors. And so on. In purifying their particular memories to underscore a dominant emotional reaction rather than a host of related but nondominant emotions, repressors cordoned off the negativity associated with any given memory, keeping it from spreading to other recollections of the past. Write Hansen and Hansen (1988), "repression is fundamentally a phenomenon of the relatively impoverished structure of the repressor’s memory linked to the less elaborate, more discrete emotional tags with which the repressor’s memorial representations are associated" (p. 816). To protect the self from threat, repression works to keep negative memories from connecting to each other, rendering each a simple monad unto itself.

Moving on to more recent studies of repression, Myers and Brewin (1994) showed that while repressors report fewer negative memories from childhood, they nonetheless tend to recall their parents as being especially indifferent or neglecting. In other words, repressors may keep out of awareness especially negative emotional experiences, but negativity in general manages to seep into their accounts of their lives, couched in more general, abstract, and less threatening terms. Cutler, Larsen, and Bunce (1996) examined daily diaries to find that repressors not only recall fewer memories of unpleasant emotions, but they also appear to experience less intense negative emotion in daily life. Bonanno, Davis, Singer, and Schwartz (1991) showed that repressors are especially skilled at shifting their attention away from material that they wish to ignore. But the attentional shift may come with a price. Having a repressive coping style has also been associated with a variety of health problems, including asthma, cancer, hypertension, and suppressed immune function (Schwartz, 1990; Weinberger, 1990).

Repression, however, can sometimes be a very good thing. George Bonanno and his colleagues have conducted a series of studies to show that in periods of extreme stress repressive coping styles can lead to resilience (Bonanno, 2004; Coifman, Bonanno, Ray, & Gross, 2007). Many psychologists use the term resilience to refer to the ability to overcome difficult obstacles in life and to thrive amidst adversity. Among the most difficult stresses human beings face is the loss of loved ones, such as the death of one's spouse or one's child. In one longitudinal study, Bonanno and colleagues asked bereaved spouses and parents to talk about their loss. During the conversation, researchers assessed the participants' skin conductance response, which is a physiological measure of autonomic arousal. After the conversation, the participants reported the amount of negative emotion they
experienced in talking about their loss. The researchers reasoned that people who reported low levels of negative emotion during the conversation about their loss but who also showed high levels of autonomic responding exhibited a repressive coping style. Therefore, repressors felt relatively little conscious distress in the conversation but high physiological arousal, indicating a strong stress response beneath the conscious surface.

The researchers recontacted the bereaved spouses and parents 18 months later. For the follow-up, they administered health and psychological symptom questionnaires and a psychiatric interview, and they obtained ratings of overall functioning from friends of the bereaved individuals. They then correlated measures of repressive coping, calculated as the discrepancy between self-report and physiological measures of stress, with measures of psychological adjustment obtained from self-reports, friend ratings, and psychiatric interviews. The researchers found that those bereaved individuals who exhibited a repressive coping style at the first session tended to show better physical health and better psychological adjustment 18 months later. By contrast, nonrepressors tended to show poorer health and worst adjustment, as indexed by poorer self-ratings and friend ratings and higher levels of psychiatric symptoms. Based on this and related studies, Bonanno (2004) has argued that repression is sometimes the best strategy to employ when faced with traumatic events in life. Under the most stressful conditions, it may be psychologically wise to turn consciousness away from the pain. Rather than consciously working through one’s negative feelings about devastating life events, it is sometimes better to shut those feelings off, Bonanno suggests. In some instances, then, repression may protect the person from debilitating pain and enable him or her to get through the most difficult periods in life, so that time can heal the wound.

In sum, research on repressors has identified an important individual difference variable that appears to capture some of Freud’s fundamental concept of repression. Some people do seem to employ repression as a coping strategy more so than do others, and this difference in people is associated with measurable outcomes with respect to everyday information processing, autobiographical memory, and even physical health. However, the research leaves open the question of just how common and important repression is for everybody. While Freud argued that repression is a universal fact of psychic life, research on repressors suggests that people differ rather substantially with respect to how extensively they employ repression as a way of dealing with anxiety and stress.

THE EGO’S DEFENSES

In one of his last theoretical innovations, Freud (1923/1961) proposed an integrative model of how the mind is organized. Figure 7.2 presents a picture of the model. Freud concluded that the mind can be broken down into three independent structures: id, ego, and superego. Each of the three exists for a different purpose. The major conflicts that produce anxiety in adults’ lives are often the result of disagreements among these three different agents of the mind. Resolving conflicts, therefore, involves forging creative agreements that enable the three to coexist with one another and with the outside world in relative, if short-lived, tranquility.

The most primitive structure is the id (German: das Es, or “the it”). Completely submerged in the unconscious, the id is the home of the instinctual impulses of sex and aggression and their derivative wishes, fantasies, and inclinations. The id is a chaotic, seething cauldron that provides all the instinctual energy for mental life. The id knows no inhibitions; it obeys no logical or moral constraints; it is completely out of touch with the outside world of reality, and will remain so always. The activity of the id is dictated solely by the pleasure principle: Pleasure derives from the reduction of tension in the immediate gratification of impulses. The id, furthermore, is the driving force behind primary process thinking—the loose, fluid, and irrational kind of thinking that we associate with dreaming. Primary process thought is motivated by the sexual and aggressive instincts.

If the mind remained “all id,” the human being would quickly encounter very serious trouble. Though the id finds satisfaction in hallucinatory wish fulfillment, the organism cannot function for
The id, ego, and superego are the three main regions in Freud’s model of the human mind. The id, long on wish and fantasy alone, begins in infancy, therefore, a second structure of the mind emerges out of the id. This is the ego (German: das Ich or "the I"). Borrowing its energy from the id instincts, the ego exists as the "handmaiden" to the id, working tirelessly to mediate between the blind demands of its master and the constraints imposed by logic and the external world. The ego thus helps ensure the safety and self-preservation of the organism by adopting the reality principle in conducting its affairs and by relying on the power of rational thought. The reality principle enables the individual to suspend immediate instinctual gratification until either an appropriate object or environmental condition arises that will satisfy the instinct. The ego is able to weigh the demands of the outside world and balance them with the needs and impulses expressed by the id, so to produce behaviors and modes of experience that best use the id’s raw energy. In order to accomplish this task, the ego is manifested as secondary process thinking, which is conscious, deliberate, and geared toward solving problems in a rational and realistic manner.

While the id is completely submerged within the unconscious, the ego manifests itself partly in certain conscious ways. When a person functions as a rational and self-reflective decision maker in the face of life’s many challenges, he or she is displaying the ego’s conscious powers. But significant aspects of the ego are unconscious, as well. A good deal of coping with the inevitable conflicts that arise in daily life is carried out unconsciously by the ego through defense mechanisms. A defense mechanism is an unconscious strategy of the ego that distorts reality in order to lessen anxiety. In the
### Table 7.2 Some Defense Mechanisms of the Ego

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Simple Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repression</td>
<td>A dangerous impulse is actively and totally excluded from consciousness.</td>
<td>An aging father fails to recognize his own feelings of hostility toward his strong, athletic son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>Attributing one’s own unacceptable and disturbing thoughts and impulses to someone else.</td>
<td>A man preoccupied with doubts about his own heterosexuality frequently accuses others of being homosexual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Formation</td>
<td>Warding off an unacceptable impulse by over-emphasizing its opposite in thought and behavior.</td>
<td>A man threatened by his desire to dominate others and to be aggressive thinks of himself as a passive sort of person and acts accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>Devising an extremely “reasonable” explanation or excuse for an event or behavior that threatens the person’s esteem.</td>
<td>A wife explains her husband’s repeated infidelity as a product of his unfortunate upbringing or an overly seductive environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>Retreating to an earlier and more primitive stage or mode of behavior in order to avoid pain, threat, or anxiety.</td>
<td>A mother lapses into diversionary “baby talk” with her daughter whenever she confronts a tough decision or threatening situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Shifting an impulse from a threatening to a non-threatening object.</td>
<td>Angry at his boss because of a demotion, the businessman goes home and argues with his wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublimation</td>
<td>Channeling socially unacceptable impulses into acceptable, even admirable, behavior.</td>
<td>A surgeon channels aggressive energy into constructive medical work; an artist employs the libido to produce a masterpiece.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A defense mechanism of projection, for instance, the person unconsciously attributes to other people certain of his or her own characteristics, the existence of which within the self provokes unacceptable levels of anxiety. Therefore, a man who harbors strong unconscious uncertainties about his own masculinity may be more likely than most people to accuse other men of being homosexual. This is not a conscious deceit but rather a subtle and unconscious strategy of the ego to ward off anxiety by distorting, to a certain extent, objective reality. Table 7.2 describes some other defense mechanisms commonly employed by the ego.

Emerging later in childhood, the superego (German: Überich, or “the over-I”) is a primitive internalized representation of the norms and values of society as acquired through identification with the parents. As such, the superego is akin to an internalized authority that repeatedly tells the person what he or she should and should not be doing, as if the parents had been consumed and become personified inside the self. The superego is typically a strict and inflexible agent who insists on the renunciation or repression of the id’s instinctual demands. Whereas the id yells out, “Yes! Go for it—now!” the superego sternly replies, “No! Not in a million years!” Despite the opposing points of view, however, the id and superego share a number of characteristics. Both, for instance, are demanding and inflexible, blind to the constraints and demands of the outside world. Only the ego engages in secondary-process thinking and operates according to the reality principle.

With the establishment of the superego, the ego now faces a third taskmaster and powerful source of conflict. The first, the reality of the outside world, poses objective dangers that produce realistic anxiety; the second, the id, threatens the ego with neurotic anxiety about the ever-present possibility of an uncontrollable release of instinctual energy; now the third source of conflict, the superego, adds the problem of moral anxiety, which may take the form of feelings of guilt over moral transgressions or regret in failing to live up to perfect ideals. The ego is a lonely agent of reasonableness amidst a host of uncompromising and relentless forces and factors. Dependent on
the id for its energy, beholden to the superego as the lowly child to an omnipotent parent, and faced with almost impossible demands from the real world, the ego is perennially beleaguered, and occasionally it may even break down, resulting in neurotic symptoms. No wonder that Freud was pessimistic about the possibilities of human happiness.

But many psychoanalytically oriented theorists who followed Freud—beginning with Anna Freud (1946) and including Heinz Hartmann (1939), Erik Erikson (1950), and Robert White (1959, 1963a)—were much more optimistic about the potential of the ego. According to these ego psychologists, the ego promotes healthy adaptation to life through the functions of learning, memory, perception, and synthesis. More than a hapless defender, the ego is a master integrator. It organizes experience so that the organism can become an effective and competent member of society. Furthermore, in its efforts to cope with anxiety the ego has at its disposal a formidable arsenal of weapons, including a wide range of defense mechanisms (Cramer, 1991, 2002; A. Freud, 1946; Schaefer, 1968; Vaillant, 1977). The working of defense mechanisms is a topic that has attracted a considerable body of empirical research in personality (Paulhus, Fridhandler, & Hayes, 1997) and social psychology (Baumeister, Dale, & Sommer, 1998). The research suggests that people do consistently employ effective defensive strategies in dealing with anxiety and stress.

There is considerable consensus among psychoanalysts that some defense mechanisms are relatively primitive and immature (such as denial) whereas others are more complex and mature (such as sublimation) (Anthony, 1970; A. Freud, 1946). The most significant empirical research on the development of defense mechanisms has been conducted by Thebe Cramer (1991, 2002; Cramer & Brilliant, 2001). Cramer has tested the hypothesis that immature defense mechanisms should arise early in life and then taper off, while mature mechanisms should develop somewhat later. She has focused on three defense mechanisms. The most primitive of the three is denial, in which the person baldly refuses to acknowledge an anxiety-provoking event. For instance, a young child visiting the doctor may insist that he is not afraid of a shot, or a recently widowed woman may claim she feels no grief. Denial may be employed by people of all ages, argue psychoanalysts, but it tends to be most common among the very young. Adults tend to use denial only in the most upsetting and threatening situations. More mature than denial is projection, in which the person attributes unacceptable internal states and qualities to external others. For instance, an adolescent girl who doubts her own religious values may accuse others of being “sinful,” or a businessman insecure about his own marriage may suspect that many of his colleagues are having extramarital affairs. Projection requires that standards of “good” and “bad” be internalized such that the “bad” can be projected outward. Therefore, the use of projection should await the development of conscience (Freud’s superego) in middle childhood. The most mature defense mechanism studied by Cramer is identification, whereby the person forms an enduring mental representation of significant others. The person replicates the behavioral traits of others as a way of coping. Requiring the clear differentiation of self and others and a complex understanding of differences among various people, identification becomes an effective defense in adolescence and should remain so throughout life (Blos, 1979).

In one study Cramer analyzed the creative stories told or written by 320 children representing four age groups: young children (ages 4–7), intermediate (ages 8–11), early adolescent (9th and 10th grades), and late adolescent (11th and 12th grades). Each child was asked to look at two specially chosen pictures and make up an imaginative story about each. The stories were analyzed for examples of defense mechanisms. As Figure 7.3 shows, the stories told by the youngest children contained a preponderance of denial themes, whereas those written or told by the children in the older three groups showed little denial. Projection and identification, on the other hand, were relatively low among the young children and increased markedly thereafter. Similar age trends have been found in a longitudinal study (Cramer, 2007). The findings support the psychoanalytic hypothesis that these three defense mechanisms differ in relative maturity, with denial most prominent in the youngest children and projection and identification more evident in older children and adolescents.
FIGURE 7.3 DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN FOUR AGE GROUPS

From primary school age (Pri), through intermediate school age (Int) and early adolescence (EA), into late adolescence (LA), scores on the primitive defense mechanisms of denial decrease, whereas scores on more mature defense mechanisms (projection and identification) increase.


The power of defense mechanisms is most apparent during times of great stress. Dollinger and Cramer (1990) described an unusual study of the use of ego defenses among children who witnessed a traumatic event. Preadolescent boys from two rural Illinois towns were playing a league soccer game when a thunderstorm necessitated a delay in the action. The children retreated to their parents’ cars to wait out the storm. Shortly after the game resumed, a lightning bolt struck the field and knocked down all participants and most of the children and adults on the sidelines. One boy was hit directly by the bolt. Never regaining consciousness, he died 1 week after the incident.

Clinical psychologists and counselors met regularly with the children who witnessed the tragedy and with their families. As part of their counseling efforts, the professionals took a number of measures of psychological variables during the course of the treatment. An especially useful index was an upset rating made by psychologists to gauge the overall level of emotional distress experienced by each child. The upset rating proved to be strongly related to parents’ reports of children’s sleep disturbances and somatic complaints after the event and to children’s reports of fears (e.g., fears of
storms, of dying, of bodily penetration, and of separation anxiety). In addition, children who scored high on emotional upset tended to avoid soccer in the subsequent 2-year interval.

Children’s imaginative stories told in response to pictures were also obtained. The pictures depicted scenes with lightning present. Examining the stories written by 27 10- to 13-year-old boys, Dollinger and Cramer (1990) found that denial was used as a defense at significantly higher levels in this sample than is typical in children of this age, probably because of the severity of the trauma. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that primitive defenses are more likely to appear during the most stressful points of a person’s life. In addition, younger boys used significantly more denial than older boys, in keeping with previous research. Most interesting, however, was the relation between defense mechanisms and emotional upset. The stories written by those boys who showed the lowest levels of emotional upset tended to display the highest levels of projection. The authors point out that in boys of this age, projection is the most age-appropriate defense; denial is somewhat too primitive and identification too mature. It would appear that projection served these preadolescent boys quite well in their attempts to cope with the anxiety, fear, and sadness they experienced in the wake of the lightning incident. Those boys who showed low levels of projection exhibited high levels of emotional upset. For the most part, denial and identification were not effective defenses for coping with the upset. Only projection was negatively associated with upset. It would be expected, however, that denial would have been most effective among children at much younger ages than those in this sample and that identification would have proven most effective for adults. The lightning study underscores the psychoanalytic-developmental hypothesis that age-appropriate defense mechanisms may be most effective in warding off anxiety and helping people cope.

Like children, adults differ markedly with respect to the kinds of defense mechanisms they regularly employ. While some adults, like children, consistently use relatively immature mechanisms such as denial, others regularly adopt the more mature and complex strategies for dealing with anxiety and stress, such as identification, sublimation, and humor. George Vaillant (1971, 1977) has investigated the relationship between these characteristic defensive styles and overall adult adjustment. In a small sample of well-educated men studied over a 25-year period, Vaillant found that men’s consistent use of mature defenses was positively associated with an overall index of adjustment, including physical health, career advancement, and marital enjoyment. Similarly, Vaillant and Drake (1985) found that the use of mature defenses predicted greater levels of interpersonal intimacy and meaningful and productive work in a large sample of working-class men. In a sample of 91 young adults, Cramer (2002) found that use of more primitive defense mechanisms was associated with higher levels of anxiety. Young adults who relied on denial showed multiple signs of behavioral immaturity. Among men, furthermore, projection was associated with a suspicious and hyperalert style of interacting with other people.

To sum up, the psychoanalytic view of human motivation suggests that our behavior, thought, and feelings are energized and directed by unconscious desires that ultimately stem from sexual and aggressive instincts. The many desires we have conflict with each other, with our internalized moral standards, and with the constraints of the outside world. Such conflict leads to anxiety. From the psychoanalytic perspective, characteristic adaptations in personality refer to specific ways in which individuals express sexual and aggressive drives and cope with motivational conflicts. Repressors deflect away stimuli that might lead to excessive anxiety, and they subsequently recall fewer emotionally negative events. Different defense mechanisms specify characteristic ways in which people cope with anxiety and intrapsychic conflict. Empirical research suggests that children and adults regularly use defense mechanisms to ward off anxiety and cope with stress. In keeping with hypotheses derived from Freud and the ego psychologists, defense mechanisms may be arranged in a developmental hierarchy, ranging from primitive defenses employed by young children to mature mechanisms shown by adults. Older children use more mature defenses than younger children, and defenses that are especially age-appropriate may be the most effective in dealing with stress.
Among adults, the use of mature defense mechanisms is associated with greater social adjustment and occupational achievement.

The Humanistic View

In the middle years of the 20th century, psychoanalysis vied with behaviorism for preeminence among American psychologists. Indeed, the two most famous names in 20th-century psychology were probably Freud and Skinner. For all their differences, psychoanalytic and behaviorist theories had one thing in common. Both believed that human behavior is motivated by forces over which the individual has little control. While Freud argued that human beings act in response to unconscious drives for sexuality and aggression, different behaviorist accounts identified biological drives such as hunger and thirst (Hull, 1943) and/or environmental contingencies of reinforcement (Skinner, 1938) as the fundamental motivators for behavior, as described in Chapter 3 of this book. Neither tradition put much stock in conscious thought and reason or in the higher and nobler aspirations of men and women. In response to the mechanistic and deterministic theories offered in psychoanalytic and behaviorist circles, therefore, a group of psychologists developed what eventually came to be seen as a third wave in American psychology. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, humanistic theorists offered a more optimistic and self-determining vision for American psychology. Humanistic theorists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow argued that human beings are motivated by higher purposes that distinguish them from the rest of the animal kingdom. From the humanistic perspective, the supreme motivator is the striving to actualize and perfect the self.

CARL ROGERS’S THEORY

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1902, Carl Rogers grew up in a deeply religious and financially secure family. After receiving a degree in history and attending the Union Theological Seminary in New York, Rogers moved to clinical psychology and earned a PhD in 1931. He worked as a staff psychologist in a child-guidance center before moving to Ohio State University and then the University of Chicago, where he directed the Counseling Center. It was at Chicago in the 1950s that his point of view became a major force in psychological theory and practice, following the publication of his major work, Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory (Rogers, 1951). Rogers’s developing humanistic perspective contrasted markedly with the prevalent psychoanalytic approaches to therapy and with popular behavioral approaches, such as behavior modification. Many of the hallmarks of Rogers’s client-centered therapy—his emphasis on the therapist’s warmth and sincerity, empathy, acceptance, role playing, and the dignity of the client—have become mainstays of a wide variety of therapeutic and educational approaches employed by clinicians, social workers, teachers, child-care workers, and other helping professionals today. It is difficult to overestimate Rogers’s profound influence on clinical practice and education.

Rogers offered a simple and elegant theory of personality and motivation. In Rogers’s view, the person must be understood from the perspective of his or her phenomenal field. The phenomenal field is the entire panorama of a person’s experience, the person’s subjective apprehension of reality. It is the individual’s overall frame of reference. To learn about another person’s phenomenal field, the psychologist must listen carefully to the person’s subjective report of experience, thereby achieving empathy with the other. The roots of behavior are in the phenomenal field, Rogers claimed.

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Unconscious conflicts, biological needs, environmental influences, and all other forces impinging on the experiencing person are rendered meaningful or irrelevant through—and only through—the phenomenal field.

Human behavior and experience are guided by one basic striving in life. Writes Rogers, “The organism has one basic tendency and striving—to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism” (1951, p. 487). There is “an inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the person” (1959, p. 196). All urges, desires, wants, goals, values, and motives may be subsumed under the general umbrella of organismic enhancement.

Each person’s fundamental mandate in life is to become all that he or she can become, to fulfill one’s inner potential. In doing so, the person advances toward greater differentiation, independence, and social responsibility over the lifespan. People change through conscious, goal-directed choices. Choices must be clearly perceived if the person is to continue becoming, to continue moving toward full actualization of inner potential.

The person who is able to fulfill his or her potential is described as the fully functioning person. For the fully functioning person, the self has expanded to encompass the lion’s share of the phenomenal field. The person is, therefore, consciously aware of the many different facets of his or her life, is able to integrate seemingly inconsistent aspects of experience into a coherent whole. Such a person leads a life that is rich in emotional experience and self-discovery. He or she is reflective, spontaneous, flexible, adaptable, confident, trusting, creative, and self-reliant. The fully functioning person operates according to the organismic valuing process. This means that those experiences in accord with the basic organismic-actualizing tendency are viewed as satisfying and therefore are approached and maintained. Those that are contrary to actualization—those experiences that do not promote growth and fulfillment—are avoided or minimized. All people experience a need for positive regard, or the desire to be loved and accepted by others. The fully functioning person is likely to have experienced a great deal of unconditional positive regard. This means that he or she has been loved and accepted by others in an unadulterated and noncontingent manner. People need to be loved for their very existence as persons, through the kind of unconditional love that the ancient Greeks and the Christian church have called agape. Regard from others promotes basic self-regard. Every person needs to be regarded positively both by others and by him- or herself.

But love and acceptance are often conditional. We are praised, rewarded, liked, admired, and blessed for particular things that we do, say, think, and feel. Such conditional positive regard from others leads to the apprehension of conditions of worth. We come to believe that certain aspects of our experience are worthy and others are not worthy. A young boy who is repeatedly praised for good school performance may introject this condition of worth and make it a positive part of the self-structure. The person builds a self-image commensurate with what other important people, who provide the person with positive regard, urge him or her to adopt.

Those aspects of self that are viewed by others as not worthy may ultimately be denied or distorted, for they engender no positive regard and may, instead, be the harbingers of punishment. For instance, a young girl who enjoys vigorous sports may be criticized by her parents or peers for playing basketball with the boys. Their regard for her becomes conditional: dependent on her adherence to appropriate feminine roles. As a result, she may revise her self-image to deny that she enjoys playing vigorous sports. Her conscious denial hides an inner truth, which results in inner conflict and distress.

Like Freud, Rogers believed that people suffer from important conflicts, many of which involve unconscious issues in their lives. But the conflicts derive from conflicts between the self and apprehended conditions of worth rather than between instinctual forces and superego demands. Rogers was much more optimistic than Freud about the possibility of living without conflict, of transcending conditions of worth to accept the self unconditionally. If we attain the fully functioning status, Rogers argued, we no longer impose conditions of worth on our experience but accept our entire organismic experience as good and fulfilling.
ABRAHAM MASLOW’S PSYCHOLOGY OF BEING

Abraham Maslow was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1908, the son of Jewish parents who had emigrated from Russia. In contrast to Rogers, Maslow grew up isolated and very unhappy in a socially and economically deprived family. He earned his PhD in psychology from the University of Wisconsin in 1934 under the tutelage of Harry Harlow, completing a dissertation on the sexual behavior of monkeys. At first an ardent behaviorist, Maslow’s firsthand experience with his own children convinced him that this mechanistic approach to the person was not for him. Sometime around the beginning of World War II, Maslow experienced a profound personal conversion that eventually led to his formulation of a humanistic alternative in psychology. According to his own reports, he witnessed a pathetic and beggarly civilian parade designed to drum up support for the war, shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In Maslow’s eyes, the parade only underscored the futility and tragic waste of war. With tears streaming down his face, he made a firm vow: to prove that human beings were capable of achievements grander than hate and destructiveness, and to do so by studying the people in the world who seemed to be the psychologically healthiest (Hall, 1968). In 1951, Maslow became a professor at Brandeis University where he gained international fame as the foremost spokesman for humanistic personality theory.

Maslow shared Rogers’s view that human beings strive to actualize their inner potential. His term for this fundamental human striving is self-actualization. But Maslow (1954, 1968) suggested that the need for self-actualization is undergirded by at least four other kinds of needs, forming a need hierarchy (Figure 7.4). At the base of the hierarchy are physiological needs, such as the needs for food, water, and sleep. Above them are safety needs: the needs for structure, security, order, avoidance of pain, and protection. Belongingness and love needs are the third level. People desire to be accepted and loved by others and to form affiliative, loving, and intimate unions. Next are the esteem needs, which refer to needs for self-respect and esteem from others, the desire to be seen by others and by the self as a competent and effective organism. Finally, there are the needs for self-actualization, which motivate the person to fulfill his or her own potential above and beyond the lower needs.

The key notion in Maslow’s need hierarchy is that higher needs cannot generally be addressed until the lower needs are satisfied. For instance, a starving man will not act in accord with his needs for belongingness until he has secured food (physiological needs) and a safe position in life (security needs). A lonely woman will not be able to fulfill her needs for esteem until she finds belongingness and love. Self-actualization sits at the pinnacle of the hierarchy. We cannot expect people to fulfill their innate potential, says Maslow, until they have taken care of business at the lower and more basic levels of the hierarchy.

While many theories of personality derive from clinicians’ work with neurotics and other people suffering psychological pain, Maslow is especially refreshing for his opposite point of view. Though he was aclinician, Maslow’s theory of motivation was most heavily influenced by his understanding of the healthiest people, the most mature and actualized people among us. From interviewing friends and clients, reading biographies, and conducting structured research, Maslow sketched a personological portrait of the “self-actualizing” person, or “self-actualizer” (SA). Table 7.3 lists some of the characteristics Maslow identified as common in SAs.

An important characteristic of the SA is his or her proclivity for peak experiences. Peak experiences are just what they sound like: wonderful moments of happiness, ecstasy, transcendence. Put simply, SAs have
more of these than do the rest of humankind. Yet virtually anyone can have a peak experience. Maslow sampled peak experiences among his friends and some of his college students by asking them to respond to this request:

I would like you to think of the most wonderful experience or experiences in your life; happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music or suddenly “being hit” by a book or a painting, or from some great creative moment. First list these. And then try to tell me how you feel in such acute moments, how you feel differently from the way you feel at other times, how you are at the moment a different person in some ways.

(1968, p. 71)

Maslow’s admittedly impressionistic analysis of the responses to his request suggested that in peak experiences people perceive and understand their world from the standpoint of being cognition (B-cognition). In B-cognition, the “experience or the object tends to be seen as a whole, as a complete unit, detached from relations from possible usefulness, from expediency and from purpose” (Maslow, 1968, p. 74). The “percept is exclusively and fully attended to” (p. 74), and “perception can be relatively ego-transcending, self-forgetful, egoless” (p. 79). There may even be a “disorientation in time and space” (p. 80), through which the person loses the subjective sense of
### Table 7.3
**Some Characteristics of Self-Actualizing Persons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior perception of reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased acceptance of self, of others, and of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased spontaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased detachment and desire for privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater freshness of appreciation and richness of emotional reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased autonomy and resistance to conformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher frequency of peak experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased identification with the human species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More democratic character structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>High levels of creativity</td>
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INTRANSLIC MOTIVATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

We value peak experiences for the intensely positive feelings they provide and for their ability to involve us so fully in the best that life has to offer. These kinds of experiences are so good that they almost render the question of motivation meaningless. What I mean is that you don’t typically have to explain to people why you would like to feel ecstasy, excitement, vitality, or any of the B-cognitions that Maslow suggests may accompany the most wonderful moments in our lives. It is patently obvious that virtually anybody would want to feel these things, I, for one, can’t think of anybody I’ve ever met who would say that he or she is not interested in feeling utter joy. In other words, peak experiences seem to be self-reinforcing experiences. We are likely to value them in and of themselves—not because they lead to any other goal but because the good feelings that accompany them are themselves the “goal.” Put differently, especially positive experiences in our lives may be intrinsically motivating. No outside motivation or incentive is needed. Indeed, providing a reward might have the paradoxical effect, some would say, of robbing the experience of its value and worth.

Research on **intrinsic motivation** suggests that providing rewards and incentives for intrinsically enjoyable behaviors may work not to reinforce but rather to undermine these behaviors. Research on intrinsic motivation began in the early 1970s with the observation that in certain situations material rewards produce surprising decreases in human performance (Deci, 1975; Lepper & Greene, 1978). While traditional theories of reinforcement, such as Skinner’s behaviorism (Chapter 3), tell us that people learn and perform best when they are rewarded for what they do, numerous studies show...
that receiving an extrinsic reward has its costs in certain situations. Extrinsic rewards may undermine the intrinsic value of certain behaviors and reduce the person’s perceived freedom to do what he or she wants to do.

Consider these simple experiments conducted by Deci (1971). College students were typically asked to solve a series of interesting mechanical puzzles. In the experimental condition, the students were told that they would be paid $1 for each puzzle solved during a specified period of time. In the control condition, the students were given no information about monetary rewards. After the time period had elapsed, the students were given an opportunity to choose from a number of different activities available to them. Their behavior during this free-choice period was observed through a one-way mirror. Deci found that those students who had been promised payment for their puzzle performance (the experimental group) spent significantly less time playing with the puzzle during the free-choice period than did the students who were not promised payment (control group). Furthermore, the students who were paid for their performance reported that they enjoyed the puzzle task less and found it less interesting than did the students who were not paid.

What do these differences mean? Deci (1971) concluded that the students who received an extrinsic reward for their performance experienced a decrease in intrinsic motivation. The reward undermined their interest in the puzzles. Now that they were no longer being paid for their performance, they saw little reason to continue playing with the puzzles. Similar studies have produced parallel results. For instance, Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973) found a decrease in children’s intrinsic motivation when they were rewarded for their artwork. Children who had received rewards for using certain highly desirable materials in their artwork were less motivated to use those same art materials days later than were those children whose use of the materials had not been rewarded before. College students working on interesting word games became less intrinsically motivated when external deadlines were imposed than when none were applied (Amabile, De Jong, & Lepper, 1976). The external contingency of a deadline, like an external reward, shifts the person’s perceived reason for undertaking a task from the intrinsic qualities of the task itself to extrinsic factors. The person loses interest in the task when he or she comes to see the motivation for doing the task as prompted from the outside.

Rewards, however, do not always undermine intrinsic motivation (Eisenberger & Cameron, 1996; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999). First, a task must be intrinsically interesting if the costs of reward are to be seen. In boring routine tasks, the introduction of a reward may increase a person’s interest in the task and improve performance (Gailer & Staw, 1975). Second, not all rewards in all situations are equal. While money, grades, and other more-or-less material rewards that are clearly contingent on performance may undermine intrinsic motivation in certain situations, such social reinforcers as verbal praise and encouragement are likely to increase intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, it depends on exactly what aspect of behavior is being rewarded. Rewards for effort (trying hard) are perceived differently from rewards for ability (doing well).

In an important theoretical development, Edward Deci and Richard Ryan integrated research on intrinsic motivation into the broader framework of what they call self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1980, 1985, 1991; Ryan, 1991, 1995). According to their view, intrinsic motivation is “the energizing basis for natural organismic activity” (Deci & Ryan, 1991, p. 244). Human beings are endowed with a natural tendency to encounter new challenges that will promote their self-development. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are experienced with “a full sense of choice, with the experience of doing what one wants, and without the feeling of coercion or compulsion” (p. 253), such that the person spontaneously engages in activity that appears inherently interesting and enjoyable. Such activity “emanates from oneself, and is thus self-determined” (p. 253). Intrinsically motivated behavior, therefore, is self-determined. By contrast, behavior that is not self-determined may be perceived by the actor as controlled or amotivated. Controlled behavior occurs when a person acts to meet the demands of some internal or external force; even though controlled behaviors may be “intentional,” they feel as if they are things that the person does not truly want to do. Amotivated
behaviors are unintentional and often disorganized because the person cannot regulate his or her own actions. For example, under the stress of an imminent writing deadline, a newspaper reporter may wander around her office in a daze. She cannot bring herself to do what she wants to do. She feels that she cannot possibly complete her project in the short time period allotted, so her behavior becomes random and amotivated.

Self-determination begins at birth. Deci and Ryan write:

According to our perspective, a central feature of human nature is an active agency and a synthetic tendency that we ascribe to the self. From the time of birth, human beings are oriented toward the active exercise of their capacities and interests. They seek out optimal challenges, and they attempt to master and integrate new experiences. In other words, they are engaged in a developmental process that is intrinsic to their nature and is characterized by the tendency toward a more elaborate and extensive organization. (1991, pp. 238–239)

The infant is endowed with a nascent self—a vital core of personality that contains the potential for tremendous expansion. As Deci and Ryan (1991) put it, "the nature of life is to overtake itself" (p. 239). The self seeks to overtake its initial boundaries and limitations, to grow, to master its surroundings, to appropriate things, people, ideas, and environments, to make that which is nonself part of the self. As the infant masters and synthesizes new experiences, the self becomes more encompassing (it takes in more things) and more integrated (it organizes its contents into meaningful systems). Over time, self-determined behavior enhances the development of self, and as the self develops, more and more of the person's behavior may become self-determined. An expanded self makes for a greater degree of self-involvement in behavior. The person's experience of life becomes akin to that of the "author" or "owner" of his or her own behavior. Behavior becomes less controlled and amotivated. Action becomes incorporated within and guided by the self.

Deci and Ryan argue that self-determined behavior stems from three basic psychological needs (see also Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001). First, the need for competence encompasses the person's strivings to control the outcomes of events and to experience a sense of mastery and effectiveness in dealing with the environment. Second, the need for autonomy involves the desire to feel that one is independent of external pressures and able to relate to the world as an origin rather than a pawn. Third, the need for relatedness encompasses a person's strivings to care for others, to feel that others are relating to the self in authentic and mutually supportive ways, and to feel a satisfying and coherent involvement with the social world more generally. The three needs generate self-determined behavior, and self-determined behavior promotes development, or what Deci and Ryan call organismic integration. Organismic integration has two facets—unity of the self and integration into the social order. Over time, self-determined behavior helps the person experience his or her inner life in a more cohesive and unified manner, and it helps involve the person in coherent and meaningful interactions with other people.

Sheldon and Kasser (1995) distinguish between the self-determination theory concept of organismic integration on the one hand and the more common notion of personality congruence on the...
Personality congruence refers to the extent to which a person’s goals are consistent with one another and, therefore, work well together. For example, a successful entrepreneur’s goals of (a) becoming rich and (b) traveling around the world may be consistent with each other in that his success in making money will enable him to pay for expensive vacations. These two goals suggest some personality congruence. However, these goals do not make a strong case for organismic integration. Organismic integration concerns the extent to which a person’s goals are self-determined and consistent with organismic needs. In the case of the entrepreneur, getting rich is viewed as an extrinsic rather than intrinsic goal. Extrinsic goals include such things as financial success, social recognition, and physical attractiveness. When goals are linked to needs for autonomy, competence, or interpersonal relatedness, organismic integration is enhanced. In two research studies, Sheldon and Kasser show that students scoring high on measures of organismic integration tend to report more positive daily moods, heightened vitality, and engagement in meaningful daily activities. Other studies have shown that as people make significant progress in the attainment of goals that contribute to the needs for autonomy, competence, and interpersonal relatedness, they experience higher levels of mental health and adjustment, self-actualization, and psychological well-being (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998).

Not only should developing goals that meet organismic needs be associated with positive feelings and behaviors, but self-determination theory suggests that pursuing extrinsic goals that do not promote organismic integration should be associated with lower levels of psychological well-being. Kasser and Ryan (1996) argue that the classic “American dream” is a story of financial success and material well-being. Yet, these extrinsic goals may do little to promote feelings of autonomy, competence, and interpersonal relatedness. In samples of both college students and adults, Kasser and Ryan found that the relative importance and efficacy of extrinsic aspirations for financial success, an appealing appearance, and social recognition were associated with lower vitality and self-actualization and more physical symptoms. Conversely, the relative importance and efficacy of intrinsic aspirations for self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling, and physical health were associated with higher well-being and less distress. According to Kasser and Ryan, there is a dark side to the classic American dream. Americans’ obsession with material wealth may undermine the pursuit of intrinsic goals that promote organismic integration. As they get richer and live yet more comfortable lives, Americans may be losing sight of the goals in life most able to give them a sense of deep happiness and meaning.

The development of the self is a product of an intricate dialectic between the person and the social world. Deci and Ryan view the social world in terms of the opportunities and constraints it may provide for self-determined behavior. Three social dimensions are particularly important. First, the social environment may offer autonomy support. In other words, it may be encouraging of choice and innovation in behavior. Environments that discourage choice function to control a person’s behavior. A large body of research shows that parents and other socializing agents who provide autonomy support tend to promote psychological adjustment and mental health in children (Ryan & Deci, 2006; Soenens et al., 2007). Second, the social environment may provide structure for behavior. Highly structured environments provide clear guidelines about what kinds of behaviors lead to what kinds of outcomes, and they give the actor explicit feedback concerning how “well” he or she is doing in the environment. Third, the social environment may offer interpersonal involvement. Involvement describes the degree to which significant others (e.g., parents, teachers, friends, spouse) are interested in and devote time and energy to a relationship. All in all, social contexts that provide high levels of autonomy support, moderate structure, and that contain involved others are optimal for encouraging self-determined behavior and organismic integration.

In sum, intrinsically motivated behavior is inherently interesting and enjoyable, involves optimally challenging tasks and activities, and is often performed in the absence of external rewards. Such behavior is self-determined. Self-determined behavior serves the basic needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Self-determined behavior flourishes in environments that other. Personality congruence refers to the extent to which a person’s goals are consistent with one another and, therefore, work well together. For example, a successful entrepreneur’s goals of (a) becoming rich and (b) traveling around the world may be consistent with each other in that his success in making money will enable him to pay for expensive vacations. These two goals suggest some personality congruence. However, these goals do not make a strong case for organismic integration. Organismic integration concerns the extent to which a person’s goals are self-determined and consistent with organismic needs. In the case of the entrepreneur, getting rich is viewed as an extrinsic rather than intrinsic goal. Extrinsic goals include such things as financial success, social recognition, and physical attractiveness. When goals are linked to needs for autonomy, competence, or interpersonal relatedness, organismic integration is enhanced. In two research studies, Sheldon and Kasser show that students scoring high on measures of organismic integration tend to report more positive daily moods, heightened vitality, and engagement in meaningful daily activities. Other studies have shown that as people make significant progress in the attainment of goals that contribute to the needs for autonomy, competence, and interpersonal relatedness, they experience higher levels of mental health and adjustment, self-actualization, and psychological well-being (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998).

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support autonomy, provide moderate structure, and involve people who care about the person and are invested in the person’s life. Self-determined behavior makes for organismic integration, by promoting unity of one’s inner life and integration into a social order. In keeping with the humanistic views of Rogers and Maslow, Deci and Ryan argue that self-determination ultimately enables the person to experience the “true self,” so that he or she may lead an “authentic” life.

THE DIVERSITY VIEW

The psychoanalytic view suggests that basic drives for sexuality and aggression are the wellsprings of human behavior. The humanistic view contends that all people strive to become self-determining and self-actualized organisms. Yet another view of motivation argues that human beings are motivated by many different things. Some people are motivated by certain classes of goals and incentives; other people are motivated by other goals and incentives. John may be strongly motivated by achievement needs; Sara has devoted her life to helping others; Brian wants to get into graduate school in anthropology; Maria is strongly driven by contrasting motives for intimacy and power, and the conflict makes her anxious; Maria’s brother, Miguel, has never known this conflict, for his main drive in life is to make money. The diversity view rejects the idea that human behavior and experience can be reduced to a small set of basic drives or needs. Instead, it puts forth the common-sense proposition that when it comes to motives and goals, everybody is different.

HENRY MURRAY’S THEORY OF NEEDS

The most well-known representative of the diversity tradition in the study of human motivation is Henry Murray’s theory of needs. Murray was a monumental figure in the history of personality psychology whose contributions to the biographical study of lives will be examined in Chapter 12 of this book. For now, what is important is Murray’s (1938) conception of needs. Murray argued that human lives must always be understood in the context of time. People live both in response to the past and in anticipation of the future. As we move through our daily lives, we bind together our remembrances of things past and our expectations about what is to come. The directedness of human lives becomes apparent over time. A given momentary behavior may seem meaningless in light of the current situation in which it is displayed. But with respect to the person’s life over time, the behavior may be seen as part of a purposeful sequence of actions. Time-binding provides lives with their characteristic direction and purpose. But what forces direct and select the ways in which human beings organize their lives and bind their time? Such forces, according to Murray, reside both within the organism and in the organism’s environment. Within the organism are located the basic physiological and psychological needs. In the environment are located the various situational constraints and opportunities for need expression, or what Murray called press (plural = presses). When a particular need repeatedly interacts with a particular press over an extended period of time, you have what Murray called a thema. Therefore, human motivation must be understood in terms of the interaction of needs and press to produce themas.

Murray defined a need as a construct (convenient fiction or hypothetical concept) which stands for a force (the physico-chemical nature of which is unknown) in the brain region, a force which organizes perception, apperception, interpreting perceptions, intellection (thinking), conation (striving), and action in such a way as to transform in a certain direction an existing unsatisfying situation. (1938, pp. 123–124)

Therefore, a need is the representation of a brain force that energizes, directs, selects, and organizes human perceiving, thinking, feeling, and striving. It operates to transform an unsatisfying situation into a more satisfying one. In this last regard, Murray’s view of needs is similar to Freud’s in that both hold to the doctrine of tension-reduction. The tension for a particular need...
TABLE 7.4 SELECTED PSYCHOGENIC NEEDS FROM MURRAY (1938)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Brief Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>To accomplish something difficult. To master, manipulate, or organize physical objects, human beings, or ideas. To do this as rapidly and as independently as possible. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel oneself. To rival and surpass others. To increase self-regard by the successful exercise of talent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>To draw near and enjoyably cooperate or reciprocate with an allied other (an other who resembles the subject or who likes the subject). To please and win affection of a cathexed object. To adhere and remain loyal to a friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>To overcome opposition forcefully. To fight. To revenge an injury. To attack, injure, or kill another. To oppose forcefully or punish another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>To get free, shake off restraint, break out of confinement. To resist coercion and restriction. To avoid or quit activities prescribed by domineering authorities. To be independent and free to act according to impulse. To be unattached, irresponsible, to defy convention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>To control one's human environment. To influence or direct the behavior of others by suggestion, seduction, persuasion, or command. To dissuade, restrain, or prohibit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition</td>
<td>To make an impression. To be seen and heard. To excite, amaze, fascinate, entertain, shock, intrigue, amuse, or entice others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm avoidance</td>
<td>To avoid pain, physical injury, illness, and death. To escape from a dangerous situation. To take precautionary measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>To give sympathy to, and gratify the needs of a helpless object: an infant or any object that is weak, disabled, tired, inexperienced, infirm, deflected, humiliated, lonely, rejected, sick, mentally confused. To assist an object in danger. To feed, help, support, console, protect, comfort, nurse, heal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>To put things in order. To achieve cleanliness, arrangement, balance, neatness, tidiness, and precision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>To act for “fun” without further purpose. To like to laugh and make jokes. To seek enjoyable relaxation of stress. To participate in games, sports, dancing, drinking, cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentience</td>
<td>To seek and enjoy sensuous impressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>To form and further an erotic relationship. To have sexual intercourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succorance</td>
<td>To have one's needs gratified by the sympathetic aid of an allied object. To be nursed, supported, sustained, surrounded, protected, loved, advised, guided, forgiven, consoled. To remain close to a devoted protector. To always have a supporter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>To ask or answer general questions. To be interested in theory. To speculate, formulate, analyze, and generalize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

thereby working together to attain the same behavioral end. Playing softball with one's friends may, for example, satisfy the needs for affiliation, dominance, and play. Another important kind of relation among needs is *subsidiation*. A subsidiary need is one that operates in service of another. For example, a person may act in an aggressive way (revealing a strong aggressive need) in order to avoid pain (the need for harm avoidance). In this instance, the aggressive need serves the more encompassing need to avoid pain. The only reason the person desires to be aggressive is in order to remain safe.

Needs also interact with dispositional traits. In general, the way in which a person achieves a goal may be partly determined by traits, such as extraversion–introversion. But the nature of the goal itself is more likely determined by needs. Traits and needs, therefore, fulfill different functions in the personality: needs establish goals; traits describe behavioral means whereby goals are met (McClelland, 1981; Winter, John, Stewart, Klohnen, & Duncan, 1998). In a sense, needs tell us why a person does what he does; traits tell us how.

Just as the concept of "need" represents the significant determinants of behavior within the person, so the concept of "press" represents the effective or significant determinants of behavior in the environmental situation. A press is a tendency in the environment to facilitate or obstruct the expression of a need. Wrote Murray, "the press of an object is what it can do to the subject or for the subject—the power that it has to affect the well-being of the subject in one way or another" (1938, p. 121). Such an "object" may indeed be a person or some feature of an interpersonal situation. Murray distinguished between alpha and beta press. An alpha press is made up of characteristics in the environment as they exist in reality or as objective inquiry discloses them. By contrast, a beta press is the person's subjective impression of those characteristics in the environment. Beta press, therefore, is always a matter of interpretation.

The full dynamics of human behavior are revealed in the interaction of needs and press, producing a *thema*. Imagine this example. A college student's strong need for order cannot be well expressed in her ceramics class, in which she is forced to work with materials that are sloppy and difficult to control. A thema develops whereby her inability to act in an orderly fashion initially produces a great deal of anxiety, which quickly gives way to an attitude of "don't worry about it, you don't have to be neat." The thema is the entire pattern of need/press interaction. In these kinds of unruly experiences (press), she feels anxiety because her need for order cannot be expressed. But the anxiety eventually gives way to relaxation. Indeed, the relaxation response may be a function of the arousal of her need for play. Themas sometimes involve multiple needs and press.

**THE TAT AND THE PSE**

Murray (1938) developed many methods for the study of personality, but the most popular and influential has probably been the Thematic Apperception Test, or TAT (Morgan & Murray, 1935; Murray, 1943). In the TAT, a person is presented with a series of ambiguous picture cues and is asked to compose, either verbally or in writing, a story in response to each. The TAT is considered a "projective test," in that the person assumesly projects his or her own needs, wishes, conflicts, and so forth onto the ambiguous picture cue. The ambiguous picture cue is merely a stimulus designed to put into motion the process of constructing an imaginative narrative response (Lindzey, 1959). In Murray's view, such narrative responding reveals partially hidden themes of the personality, especially those concerning basic needs, conflicts, and complexes.

Murray (1943) provided rough guidelines for interpreting the stories told in response to TAT pictures. He believed that the psychologist should first identify the hero in the story—usually the main character or the character who most resembles the storywriter. Second, the psychologist should consider the hero’s motives, trends, and feelings. Careful attention should be paid to story content that indicates psychogenic needs; a story in which the main character is trying to succeed in a difficult task would indicate a strong *n* Achievement; another story in which the character seeks friendship...
with others would suggest the affiliation motive. Third, the psychologist should note the forces in the hero’s environment that impinge upon or provide opportunities for need-expression. Murray believed that a TAT story may reveal as much about how a person perceives the world as it does about internal needs. Fourth, the outcomes of stories may indicate the extent to which the storyteller believes that his or her own needs can be fulfilled in daily life. In this regard, Murray suggested that the psychologist keep track of the ratio of happy to unhappy story endings. Fifth, the psychologist should document the recurrent combinations of particular needs and particular environmental situations (what Murray termed press) across the stories. A need/press combination constitutes a simple theme. Sixth, interests and sentiments may appear in the story content. The psychologist may be able to obtain information on the storyteller’s feelings about particular kinds of people (e.g., authority figures, older women, children) or about particular aspects of the environment (e.g., politics, religion, the natural world). Regardless of how the psychologist interprets the TAT, Murray emphasized that “the conclusions that are reached by an analysis of TAT stories must be regarded as good ‘leads’ or working hypotheses to be verified by other methods, rather than as proved facts” (1943, p. 14).

The TAT remains a popular assessment device for clinical psychologists (Rossini & Moretti, 1997). In the typical clinical setting, a client sits down with a therapist and provides extended narrative responses to a series of cards. For research purposes, however, the procedure has been modified extensively and standardized for group administration. Rather than employing Murray’s original pictures, researchers choose more contemporary cues that are aimed to assess particular personality constructs. Participants gather in groups to view the pictures on a screen, or else they write narrative responses to pictures presented on a computer. Typically, research participants are given 5 minutes to write a story in response to each of five or six picture cues, requiring, then, about a half-hour of research time. The written responses are then content-analyzed according to rigorously designed and validated scoring systems, each pegged to a particular personality construct. Although based loosely on the rationale for the original TAT, the research procedure employed by many psychologists today is so different from Murray’s clinically oriented regime that it has come to assume a new name. Psychologists who employ TAT-like procedures in research today often call their method the Picture Story Exercise, or PSE (Pang & Schultheiss, 2005; Schultheiss & Pang, 2007).

The most profitable use of the PSE is to view it as an indicator of psychogenic needs, or motives. Three such motives have been studied in great detail: achievement, power, and intimacy. In considering each of these three motives, we will focus on the research tradition fathered by personality psychologist David C. McClelland. Reconceptualizing Murray’s notion of “need,” McClelland defined a motive as a recurrent preference or readiness for a particular quality of experience, which energizes, directs, and selects behavior in certain situations. The achievement motive, therefore, refers to the quality of human experience entailed in doing better; the power motive refers to having impact; and the intimacy motive denotes feeling close to other people. McClelland (1980) argued that motives lie outside a person’s conscious awareness and cannot, therefore, be accurately assessed through conscious self-report. By sampling the everyday stream of imaginative thought, the PSE enables the researcher to find central themes that may indicate unconscious motives.

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

David McClelland and John Atkinson pioneered the use of the PSE to assess individual differences in achievement motivation (Atkinson, 1958; Atkinson & Birch, 1978; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). The most important innovation of their approach was the derivation and validation of an objective, reliable, and quantitative system to score PSE stories for achievement motivation. In their original derivation studies, McClelland and Atkinson asked college students to write short PSE stories under various laboratory conditions. In one condition, the students were first administered a series of cognitive tasks (such as unscrambling words) and then were told that their performance...
on the tasks would be an indication of their general intelligence and leadership ability. It was assumed that such instructions would temporarily arouse achievement thoughts and feelings in these participants, and that these thoughts and feelings would be projected onto the stories written on the PSE, administered immediately following the task. In another (neutral) condition, students were administered the same tasks but were told that the tasks were newly developed and not likely to be valid measures of much of anything. It was assumed that these participants would be less aroused with respect to achievement strivings than the subjects in the first group.

McClelland and his colleagues detected a number of consistent content differences between the groups. Students in the arousal group tended to write more stories involving characters striving to do better, compared with students in the neutral group. Subsequent comparisons from different studies and various refinements produced a content scoring system for the PSE. The system is made up of the particular content themes that consistently differentiated between stories written under achievement arousal and under neutral conditions. The themes involve the story characters’ behaviors, attitudes, and feelings about task performance.

Although the achievement-motive scoring system was derived by examining group differences in narrative content, the system has proven extremely sensitive and valuable as an index of individual differences within groups. In a typical individual-differences study, a large number of people are administered the PSE under standardized neutral conditions. The subjects’ PSE stories are then scored by trained coders according to the standard system developed by McClelland and Atkinson. Motive scores fall into a distribution, ranging from high to low. It is assumed that each person’s “natural” level of achievement motivation will be expressed in PSE stories written under such neutral, nonarousing conditions.

Substantial empirical literature suggests that people who score high on PSE achievement motivation behave in different ways than people who score low, supporting the construct validity of the PSE measure. For instance, people high in achievement motivation tend to prefer and show high performance in tasks of moderate challenge that provide immediate feedback concerning success and failure; they tend to be persistent and highly efficient in many kinds of performance, sometimes cutting corners or cheating in order to maximize productivity; they tend to exhibit high self-control and a future time perspective; they thrive on personal challenge; and they tend to be restless, innovative, and drawn toward change and movement (Atkinson, 1957; Atkinson & Raynor, 1978; Crockett, 1962; Feather, 1961; Fodor & Carver, 2000; Heckhausen, 1967; McClelland, 1961, 1985; Mischel, 1961; Mischel & Gilligan, 1964; Schultheiss & Pang, 2007; Spangler, 1992; Winter & Carlson, 1988; Zurbriggen & Sturman, 2002). Some of the best-established findings in this regard are summarized in Table 7.5.

Young adults who are high in achievement motivation tend to be drawn to careers in business. In one study, for example, men with high achievement motivation in college tended to become employed in small businesses years later (McClelland, 1965). Research also suggests that high achievement motivation is associated with certain indices of success in the business world (Andrews, 1967; Jenkins, 1987; Langens, 2001; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland & Franz, 1992; Tekiner, 1980). McClelland argued that business is a good match for the achievement motive, because business requires that people take moderate risks, assume personal responsibility for their own performance, pay close attention to feedback in terms of costs and profits, and find innovative ways to make products or provide services. These hallmarks of entrepreneurship precisely characterize the behavior and attitudes of people high in achievement motivation (McClelland, 1985).
TABLE 7.5 SELECTED CORRELATES OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

- High aspirations but moderate risk taking
- Preference for situations in which personal responsibility can affect results
- Tendency to take personal credit for success but blame others or the situation for failures
- Cheating and/or bending the rules in order to reach a desired goal in an efficient and expeditious manner
- Predisposition for travel
- Self-control, inhibition, and delay of gratification
- Preference for somber colors and formal fashion
- Extended future time perspective
- Upward social mobility and higher educational attainment
- Entrepreneurial activity and innovation
- Success in business
- Being reared in a family in which parents set high standards for performance
- Scheduled feeding during infancy and relatively stringent toilet training

NOTE: Much of the research on achievement motivation has focused exclusively on men. While the relatively few studies investigating correlates of achievement motivation in women are generally consistent with results for men, there are some areas (such as entrepreneurship and risk taking) in which virtually no data on women have been obtained (Stewart & Chester, 1982).

One of the more intriguing applications of McClelland’s approach to achievement motivation is the analysis of societal and historical differences. McClelland (1961) argued that entire societies and historical epochs differ in overall achievement motivation. While some societies actively promote achievement values and entrepreneurship, others appear less motivated to do so; in addition, a particular society’s preoccupation with achievement may wax and wane over time. Such societal and historical differences should correspond to economic growth and ultimately to the rise and decline of entire states, regions, or peoples.

How might a personality psychologist measure societal differences in achievement motivation? McClelland argued that the procedure is virtually identical to that used with individuals: imaginative stories should be coded for achievement themes. Selected passages from a society’s representative folktales, myths, textbooks, or even its popular literature can be coded as if they were discrete PSE stories in order to provide a rough estimate of overall achievement motivation in a society at a particular time in history. McClelland assumed that these narrative expressions reflect pervasive cultural assumptions and values.

In The Achieving Society, McClelland (1961) reported a study in which he collected second- and fourth-grade readers (elementary school textbooks) published from 1920 to 1929 from 23 different countries and scored selected passages for achievement themes. McClelland found that achievement-motive themes in children’s readers in the 1920s were positively correlated with his index of economic growth, even when other societal factors, such as differences in natural resources, were taken into consideration. In other words, economic growth between 1929 and 1950 was much more pronounced in those countries showing a strong emphasis on achievement in children’s readers in the 1920s (such as Turkey, Israel, and India) than in countries whose children’s readers showed relatively few achievement themes (such as Italy, Belgium, and Algeria). A society’s books for children mirror prevalent cultural values that are inculcated in children through various socialization processes, such as schooling and child training. Socialization for achievement encourages children to be masterful and independent, to plan for the future, to take moderate risks, and to value efficiency and gradual improvement or growth. McClelland argued that such training likely increases the
As achievement imagery in children’s school reading books increases over time, the number of patents issued in the United States also increases; as the achievement imagery decreases, patent numbers follow suit. The data are from the United States between the years 1810 and 1950.


achievement motivation of young boys and girls, who eventually develop a preference and proclivity for entrepreneurship as adults, which ultimately makes for greater economic growth.

Another index of a society’s economic vitality is the proliferation of inventions and innovations. Figure 7.5 presents the rather striking findings from a study of the relationship between achievement motivation expressed in children’s readers and the number of patents per capita issued to inventors over a period of 140 years in the United States (de Charms & Moeller, 1962). The rise and decline in the number of U.S. patents issued between the years 1810 and 1950 neatly parallels the rise and decline of achievement imagery in American children’s readers. A similar relationship was discovered between achievement imagery in English popular literature and the amount of coal
imported by England during the years 1550 to 1800. Again, changes in collective achievement motivation predicted economic growth. A positive relation between achievement motivation and economic growth can be seen in non-Western, preliterate societies, as well. Among 39 preliterate tribes, 75% of those with high achievement content in their folktales were characterized as having at least some full-time entrepreneurs, as contrasted with only 38% of the tribes with less amounts of achievement imagery in their folktales.

POWER MOTIVATION

The power motive is a recurrent preference for having an impact on other people. People high in power motivation strive to wield power and to feel stronger, more masterful, more influential than others. Like the achievement motive, this recurrent desire for power energizes, selects, and directs human behavior in predictable ways. Also like achievement motivation, individual differences in the power motive are assessed through objective content analysis of PSE stories.

Following procedures developed by McClelland and others (Uleman, 1966; Veroff, 1957), David Winter (1973) derived the coding system for power motivation through comparing stories written by people under power-arousal and neutral conditions. Power themes in PSE stories typically involve story characters’ efforts to have a strong impact on each other, through both positive (e.g., persuasion) and negative (e.g., aggression) means. People who characteristically write PSE stories containing many of these themes are deemed to be high in power motivation. Many studies attest to the construct validity of the PSE coding system for power motivation. Interestingly, empirical findings paint two very different pictures of people high in power motivation (see Table 7.6). On the one hand, power motivation is sometimes associated with aggression, exploitative interpersonal relationships, and (among men) promiscuous sexuality (Schultheiss, Durig, & Rohde, 2002; Winter, 1973; Zurnbriggen, 2008). On the other hand, power motivation has also been linked to membership in voluntary organizations, efforts to make positive contributions to groups and society, and creative problem solving (Fodor, 1990; Fodor & Greenier, 1995). It appears that power motivation can manifest itself in both destructive/immature and constructive/mature ways (McClelland, 1975).

Because people high in power motivation desire to have an impact on others, a number of researchers have explored the ways in which such impact is accomplished. Fodor and Smith (1982) investigated how students high in power motivation direct the behaviors of others in group decision making. Forty groups containing five students each met to discuss a business case study that concerned whether a company should market a new microwave oven. In each group, a leader was appointed. Based on a prior administration of the PSE, half the leaders scored extremely high on the power motive and half scored extremely low. In addition, half the groups were given the opportunity to win a group reward for superior performance (in order to build “high group cohesiveness”) and half were offered no reward (“low group cohesiveness”). Each group member was given a fact sheet containing information that could be shared with the group during discussion.

Three major dependent variables were assessed in Fodor and Smith’s (1982) study: (1) the number of facts from the sheet that each person shared with the group during discussion, (2) the number of alternative proposals for marketing the microwave considered by the group, and (3) the level of moral concern evidenced by the group, which was determined by a rating of the extent to which the group discussed such issues as the possible harmful effects of microwave radiation on people’s health and the ethical propriety of various marketing strategies. Those groups in which the leader was high in power motivation tended to offer fewer facts and proposals and to show less moral concern, compared with groups headed by a low-power leader (Table 7.7). The level of group cohesiveness, on the other hand, did not influence the results. The authors interpreted these findings to mean that leaders high in power motivation encourage diffusion of responsibility, failure to consider long-term ramifications, and the domination by
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MOTIVES AND GOALS: WHAT DO WE WANT IN LIFE?

TABLE 7.6  SELECTED CORRELATES OF HIGH POWER MOTIVATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Correlates of High Power Motivation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holding elected offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for careers in which one directs the behavior of individuals in accordance with preconceived plans and with the use of positive and negative sanctions (careers such as executive, teacher, and psychologist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career success among women in power-related occupations but not in careers emphasizing interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active, forceful, and influential in small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective organizational leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accumulation of prestige possessions, such as luxury cars and major credit cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking large risks in order to gain visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agentic, assertive style of friendship that emphasizes self-display and helping the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting into arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters to a newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat negative self-image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prone to impulsive and aggressive behavior (men only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precocious and exploitative sexual activity (men only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instability in romantic relationships (men only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being reared in a family in which parents were relatively permissive concerning sexual behavior and aggression</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A single strong leader whose opinion generally goes unchallenged. In a related vein, a study of real-life and hypothetical negotiation scenarios showed that individuals high in power motivation were much less likely than those low to offer concessions and compromises (Langner & Winter, 2001).

A large number of studies have shown that people who perennially adopt strong leadership roles and/or rise to positions of high influence tend to score relatively high in power motivation (McAdams, Rothman, & Lichter, 1982; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland & Burnham, 1976; Winter, 1973). The most intriguing line of research in this regard is probably Winter’s (1987, 1996; Donley & Winter, 1970) studies of American presidents. Winter has analyzed the published inaugural addresses of virtually all the American presidents, going back to George Washington, for achievement, power, and intimacy motivation. Winter has argued that, despite the help of speechwriters and the influences of various sociohistorical forces and events, the motivational imagery contained in these major speeches partially reflects the president’s own personality. Presidents scoring particularly high in power motivation include Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan. Winter (1987) correlated motive scores with various ratings of the presidents made by historians and political scientists. Power motivation was positively associated with ratings of “presidential greatness” ($r = +.40$) and number of historically significant decisions made ($r = +.51$). In other words, those presidents who have been rated as especially forceful and influential by political scholars tend to be the same ones whose inaugural addresses indicated especially high levels of power motivation. In addition, presidents high in power motivation were also more likely to lead the United States into war ($r = +.52$). Examining negotiation transcripts and media accounts for a number of international crises from the 20th century, Winter (2007) shows that political rhetoric aligned with the power motive is often associated with war.

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What about the personal lives of people high in power motivation? Some research suggests that men high in the need for power experience numerous difficulties in romantic relationships with women (e.g., Stewart & Rubin, 1976). At the same time, well-educated women high in power motivation tend to marry successful men (Winter, McClelland, & Stewart, 1981). Furthermore, Veroff (1982) reports that power motivation in women is positively associated with marital satisfaction. While high-power women tend to report happy marriages, men high in power motivation show a higher divorce rate (McClelland, Davis, Kalin, & Wanner, 1972) and a greater degree of marital dissatisfaction (Veroff & Feld, 1970). At the root of the high-power man’s apparent dissatisfaction with and instability in romantic heterosexual relations may be a latent fear of women and the control they may exert. Strover (1972) has shown that men high in power motivation express more themes of “feminine evil” in their fantasies than do men lower on the motive. These themes include females harming men through physical contact, females exploiting men, females rejecting men, females proving unfaithful in relationships, and females triumphing over men. In this regard, Winter and Stewart (1978) report that men high in power motivation, when asked to draw pictures of women, produce sometimes frightening and bizarre sketches with exaggerated sexual characteristics.

In the area of health, studies by McClelland and his colleagues proposed a possible association between power motivation and susceptibility to disease (McClelland, 1979; McClelland, Alexander, & Marks, 1982; McClelland, Davidson, Floor, & Saran, 1980; McClelland & Jemmott, 1980; McClelland, Ross, & Patel, 1985). However, the association seems fairly complex. McClelland (1979) has argued that a strong need for power increases a person’s vulnerability to illnesses of various sorts if the person’s need for power is inhibited, challenged, or blocked. Especially vulnerable are individuals who show all of the following characteristics: (a) high power motivation, (b) low intimacy motivation, (c) high self-control (sometimes called “activity inhibition” and suggesting a tendency to “block” or “inhibit” one’s own expression of power), and (d) high levels of power-related stresses (Jemmott, 1987).

Some evidence suggests that people high in power motivation are predisposed to show heightened activation of the sympathetic nervous system when faced with obstacles to or frustrations in the experience of having impact and feeling strong (Fodor, 1984, 1985). If power motivation is associated with heightened sympathetic activity, then one might expect it also to be associated with elevated blood pressure. In three different samples of German and American men, McClelland (1979) documented just such an association. In one sample followed longitudinally, 61% of the men scoring above average on a PSE index of power + self-control (taken when they were in their 30s) showed elevated diastolic blood pressure 20 years later, compared with only 23% of the men scoring below average on this index.
There is empirical evidence, albeit scattered, to suggest that high power motivation may be modestly associated with small deficits in the body’s immune system. If this is true, one might expect high power motivation to be implicated indirectly in the breakdown of the body’s defenses to sickness and disease. McClelland and Jemmot (1980) administered the PSE to 95 students and obtained self-report measures of health problems and life stresses. They classified each life stress identified by a participant as either a ‘power/achievement event, an affiliation/intimacy event, or “other.” Examples of power/achievement events included troubles with an employer, a substantial academic disappointment, and participating in a major sports event. The results of the study indicated that the students with (a) relatively high power motivation, (b) relatively high activity inhibition (self-control), and (c) an above-average number of power/achievement stresses over the past year reported more physical illnesses in the previous 6 months than did other students. In addition, the illnesses they reported were more severe. Thus, the highly controlled and highly power-oriented person may “bottle up” his or her frustrations in such a way as to tax an internal physiological equilibrium. The result may be a greater number of colds, bouts of flu, and other maladies, especially during times of excessive power stress.

In an important synthesis of research on the need for power, health, and human physiology, Oliver Schultheiss (in press; Schultheiss, Campbell, & McClelland, 1999; Schultheiss & Rohde, 2002) has recently developed an integrated model of the neuroscience of power motivation. Schultheiss argues that people who are dispositionally high on power motivation tend to respond especially strongly to competitive situations in which their dominance is challenged. High-power individuals respond to power arousal or dominance challenges with increases in salivary and urine levels of the sympathetic catecholamines epinephrine and norepinephrine (and their metabolites), increased blood pressure, and enhanced muscle tone. Among high-power men, furthermore, the anticipation of dominance challenges leads to increases in testosterone levels. When high-power men suffer defeat in a dominance contest, however, they experience an increase in the stress hormone cortisol and subsequent decreases in testosterone level. In a related vein, studies have shown that when dominant men and women find themselves in situations of low status they experience excessive stress and decreases in testosterone (Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006).

People high in power motivation are drawn to situations of dominance. Over time, dominance and dominance challenge become central parts of the psychological ecology of everyday life for individuals high in power motivation. As they encounter more and more dominance challenges over time, they repeatedly experience arousal of the sympathetic nervous system. Although such arousal is not in and of itself depleting, the repeated experience of stress and defeat in dominance situations may lead to chronically high levels of cortisol and other stress hormones, which themselves have been linked to impaired immune function. In other words, as long as dominance goes unchallenged, people high in power motivation experience little stress and enjoy robust health. But when dominance is repeatedly challenged, and especially when such challenges lead to defeat, people high in power motivation experience high levels of power stress, which result in repeated activation of stress hormones such as cortisol, which may ultimately lead to compromised immune function and poorer health. Physiologically speaking, high power motivation is a high-risk/high-reward sort of thing. Experiencing the desired end state of power motivation is deeply rewarding. But repeated frustration can exact a long-term cost.
INTIMACY MOTIVATION

While our desires for achievement and power may motivate us to assert ourselves in effective and influential ways and to control, even master, our environments, our longings for close and warm relationships with other human beings pull us in a different direction, to the private life of intimate interpersonal communion (Bakan, 1966). Indeed, for some of us, the desire for intimacy is even grander and more compelling than our wishes for success, fame, and transcendence. As the novelist E. M. Forster wrote, “It is the private life that holds out the mirror to infinity; personal intercourse, and that alone, that ever hints at a personality beyond our daily vision” (1910, p. 78).

While most people doubtlessly desire to engage in close, warm, and communicative interaction with other people, some seem consistently more preoccupied with such intimate experience than others. **Intimacy motivation** is a recurrent preference for experiences of warm, close, and communicative interaction with others (McAdams, 1980, 1982b). Like the achievement and power motives, individual differences in intimacy motivation are assessed through content analysis of PSE stories. The coding system was originally derived by comparing stories written by individuals involved in activities and events designed to elicit friendly and caring behavior to stories written by individuals in neutral conditions (McAdams, 1980).

Research supports the construct validity of the intimacy motive as assessed on the PSE. People who are characteristically high in intimacy motivation spend more time, over the course of a normal day, thinking about relationships with others than do people scoring lower in intimacy motivation (McAdams & Constantian, 1983). People high in intimacy motivation partake in a greater number of friendly conversations over the course of a normal day, and they laugh, smile, and make more eye contact when conversing, compared with people low in intimacy motivation (McAdams & Constantian, 1983). McAdams, Jackson, & Kirshnit, 1984). The high-intimacy person is likely to value close, one-on-one exchanges over boisterous group activities. When confronted with a large group, he or she is likely to promote group harmony and cohesiveness, viewing group activities as opportunities for everybody to get involved rather than for one or two people to dominate the action (McAdams & Powers, 1981). Partly for this reason, people high in intimacy motivation are rated by their friends and acquaintances as especially “sincere,” “natural,” “loving,” “not dominant,” and “not self-centered” (McAdams, 1980).

McAdams, Healy, and Krause (1984) investigated the relation between intimacy and power motivation on the one hand and patterns of friendship on the other. In this study, 105 college students wrote PSE stories, subsequently scored for intimacy and power motivation, and then described in some detail 10 friendship episodes that had occurred in their lives in the previous 2 weeks. A friendship episode was defined as any interaction with a friend that lasted at least 15–20 minutes. For each episode, the student provided information on how many friends were involved in the episode, what activity was undertaken, what the friends talked about, what role the person played in the episode, and what emotions were experienced.

Table 7.8 shows the main results of the study. Students high in intimacy motivation tended to report friendship episodes involving one-on-one interaction with a single other friend (“dyads”) rather than “large-group” interactions (friendship episodes involving five or more people) and to describe conversations in which the participants in the episode disclosed personal information about themselves (“self-disclosure”). Therefore, when they got together with their friends, high-intimacy students were more likely than low-intimacy students to talk about, and listen to their friends talk about, their own fears, hopes, feelings, fantasies, and other highly intimate topics. Power motivation, on the other hand, was associated with large-group interactions and assertive friendship activities, such as making plans, initiating conversations, and helping others. In general, intimacy motivation is associated with a communal friendship style that places prime importance on being together and sharing secrets with others, while power motivation is associated with an agentic friendship style that emphasizes doing things and helping others (McAdams, 1984a, 1988a). In another study, students high in intimacy motivation engaged in a greater number of dyadic interactions.
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TABLE 7.8  CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MOTIVES AND FRIENDSHIP PATTERNS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVE</th>
<th>Intimacy</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyads (two friends)</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large groups (five or more)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening role</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive role</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.43***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>.49***</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Total number of subjects was 101 (70 female and 35 male).
*These measures were based on students' descriptions of 10 friendship episodes that occurred in their lives in the previous 2 weeks.
*p < .05; ***p < .001.

over a 1-week period of time, reported higher levels of self-disclosure with close friends, and experienced more positive emotion in their relationships, compared with students low in intimacy motivation (Craig, Koestner, & Zuroff, 1994). High intimacy motivation appears to sensitize people to opportunities for caring and empathic behavior. Not surprisingly, therefore, people who express callousness and contempt for others tend to score extremely low on intimacy motivation (Smith, 1985).

Because so many psychologists, novelists, and poets have told us that loving relationships with others are the key to happiness and well-being, we are certainly justified in asking whether high intimacy motivation leads to health, happiness, and overall life satisfaction. A few studies have examined the question directly. In one, McAdams and Vaillant (1982) found that high intimacy motivation at age 30 among male graduates of Harvard College significantly predicted overall psychosocial adjustment 17 years later, when the men were in their mid-40s. Men high in intimacy motivation in early adulthood reported greater marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and even a marginally higher income at midlife, compared with men scoring low in intimacy motivation.

In a second study, McAdams and Bryant (1987) drew upon a nationwide sample of more than 1,200 U.S. adults who were administered the PSE and a structured interview (Veroff, Douvan, & Kulka, 1981). The researchers found that, though intimacy motivation appears to bring certain benefits for both men and women, the benefits do not seem to be exactly the same for both sexes. High-intimacy women are relatively happy and satisfied, compared with low-intimacy women. On the other hand, high-intimacy men are not necessarily happier and more satisfied than low-intimacy men, but they do report less strain in life and less uncertainty.

Zeldow, Daugherty, and McAdams (1988) examined the relation between social motives assessed on the PSE and students' adjustment to medical school. Students high in intimacy motivation and low in power motivation showed the highest levels of well-being. However, those high in intimacy motivation and high in power motivation were more depressed, neurotic, fatalistic, and self-doubting in their first years of medical school, a relationship that was significant for both males and females. The authors suggested that the rigors of medical school make it extremely difficult for students with strong needs to feel close to others and to feel powerful and agentic to find satisfaction for their competing desires. By the time the students had finished their first 2 years and entered their clerkships, however, the negative effects of the high-intimacy/high-power pattern were no longer evident. A later study of this same cohort showed that those medical students high in intimacy...
motivation were more likely to choose pediatrics as a medical specialty than were students scoring low in intimacy motivation (Zeldow & Daugherty, 1991).

A major sex difference has been found in research on intimacy motivation. Analysis of thousands of PSE stories, written mostly by college undergraduates in the United States, suggests that women tend to score higher than men on intimacy motivation (McAdams, Lester, Brand, McNamara, & Lensky, 1988; Pang & Schultheiss, 2005; Smith, 1985). The difference is small but relatively consistent, and it is in keeping with the generally accepted view in American society that women tend to be more concerned with interpersonal relationships than are men (Bakan, 1966; Gilligan, 1982; Lewis, 1985). Even among fourth and sixth graders, girls score higher on intimacy motivation than boys (McAdams & Lusoff, 1984). Interestingly, consistent sex differences in overall levels of achievement and power motivation have not been observed (Stewart & Chester, 1982).

A motive that bears resemblance to intimacy motivation and that is also assessed via the PSE is the affiliation motive (Atkinson, Heyns, & Veroff, 1954; Boyatzis, 1973). Drawn from Murray's (1938) original list of psychogenic needs, affiliation motivation is the desire to establish, maintain, or restore positive-affect relations with others. PSE stories in which characters actively strive to improve or restore their relationships with others tend to score high on affiliation themes. McClelland (1975) has combined affiliation motive scores with scores on achievement and power to yield interesting motivational profiles linked to behavior and attitudes. Affiliation motivation tends to be positively correlated with intimacy motivation. To the extent that the two motive systems differ, the intimacy motive appears to emphasize the qualities of being in a warm and close relationship, whereas the affiliation motive emphasizes doing, or striving to achieve relationships.

In recent years, researchers have focused attention on the physiological underpinnings of intimacy and affiliation motivation. For purposes of these studies, the two motives, which are highly intercorrelated, may be considered as one. Schultheiss and colleagues have found that women who take birth control pills (which contain the steroid hormone progesterone) tend to score higher on intimacy/affiliation motivation than do women who do not take birth control pills (Schultheiss, Dargel, & Rohde, 2003). Also, increases in progesterone levels in women's menstrual cycles tend to correlate with increases in intimacy/affiliation motivation measured on the PSE. In one laboratory study, students who watched a movie designed to arouse intimacy/affiliation motivation experienced increases in progesterone levels (Schultheiss, Wirth, & Stanton, 2004).

IMPLICIT AND SELF-ATTRIBUTED MOTIVES

The research employing the PSE to assess individual differences in motives of achievement, power, and intimacy rests on one crucial assumption, an assumption that Murray and McClelland share with Freud: People are not consciously aware of their motives. If motives were directly accessible to consciousness, psychologists would not need to use projective measures like the TAT and the PSE to tap motivational themes in narrative. Instead, people could simply report the strength of their motives on self-report questionnaires, like those used to assess dispositional traits (Chapter 4). Indeed, numerous self-report questionnaires have been developed to assess such constructs as achievement motivation (e.g., Jackson, 1974). But these self-report questionnaires provide scores that rarely correlate significantly with PSE scores of purportedly the same motive. For example,
questionnaire measures of achievement motivation are typically uncorrelated with McClelland’s PSE measure of achievement motivation (Entwistle, 1972; Klinger, 1966; Niitamo, 1999). A similar lack of convergence has been demonstrated for power and intimacy motivation (King, 1995; McClelland, 1985; Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2001). But how can this be? If the two measures are assessing the same thing—say, two measures of achievement motivation—shouldn’t they be highly correlated?

McClelland and his colleagues argue that the two measures are not assessing the same thing (Koestner, Weinberger, & McClelland, 1991; McClelland, 1980; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989; Schultheiss & Brunstein, 1999; Schultheiss & Pang, 2007). Achievement motivation measured via a self-report questionnaire is different from achievement motivation measured via the PSE. Questionnaire measures of achievement tendencies are respondent measures in which the subject is limited in what kinds of responses he or she can make. For example, on a self-report assessment, the subject is asked to mark “true” or “false” for each item, or to rate an item on a Likert-type scale. By contrast, the PSE is what McClelland called an operant measure. In an operant measure, the subject is able to generate his or her own unique response. The ambiguous picture cues for the PSE provide stimuli for virtually any kind of open-ended, narrative-like response the subject wishes to reveal.

Consequently, respondent questionnaire measures tap into people’s conscious evaluations of their own achievement tendencies, or what McClelland called self-attributed motives. By contrast, the operant PSE measure samples people’s spontaneous narrative thought, revealing less-than-conscious implicit motives. Explicit, self-attributed motives are really personality traits. Assessed via respondent questionnaire, a person’s conscious evaluation of the overall extent to which he or she values, say, achievement goals is functionally an aspect of what the Big Five theorists describe as conscientiousness (C; Chapter 5 in this volume). Similarly, self-report measures of intimacy tendencies are likely to be aspects of Big Five Agreeableness (A). Like other traits, these measures are expected to predict general trends in behavior. But McClelland and his colleagues have argued that the trends they predict are rather different from those associated with individual differences in implicit motives. Because respondent measures of self-attributed motives tap into a person’s conscious image of him- or herself, these self-report questionnaires should predict what people do in situations that explicitly demand behavior that is in accord with the motive. For example, people high in self-attributed achievement should perform well in highly structured social situations in which they are expected to perform well, behaving in accord with a conscious, cognitively elaborated self-image of a high-achieving person. By contrast, operant measures of implicit motives tap into naturally occurring trends in spontaneous thought, which themselves indicate people’s deeper and less-consciously elaborated longings. Therefore, people high in PSE-based achievement motivation are likely to show long-term trends of spontaneous achievement activity. Put simply, people high on self-attributed achievement motivation seek out the social incentives of being seen (by others) as an achievement-oriented person, whereas people high on implicit (PSE-based) achievement motivation seek out activity incentives because they enjoy achievement (i.e., doing well) for achievement’s sake. Put another way, self-attributed motives connect to extrinsic rewards (“I value achievement because I am reinforced by others for doing so”), whereas implicit motives are intrinsically motivating (“I value achievement because of the enjoyment of achievement itself”) (Koestner & McClelland, 1990). Table 7.9 reviews these distinctions.

Reviews of research provide support for McClelland’s distinction between self-attributed and implicit motives (Schultheiss & Pang, 2007; Spangler, 1992; Winter et al., 1998). For example, Spangler (1992) reviewed 105 research articles on achievement motivation. He found that across all the studies, PSE-based (implicit) achievement motivation was, at best, a modest predictor of achievement behaviors. However, when Spangler divided up the studies into those assessing situations containing social incentives and those assessing situations with activity incentives, McClelland’s predictions were born out. In studies in which the dependent variable was achievement behavior in social situations that put pressure on the subject to do well, the PSE-based achievement motivation
TABLE 7.9 SELF-ATTRIBUTED MOTIVES VERSUS IMPLICIT MOTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Self-Attributed Motives</th>
<th>Implicit Motives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscious, cognitively elaborated image of self as oriented toward particular goal states</td>
<td>Recurrent, nonconscious desires for particular goal states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent: questionnaires, rating scales, and other measures in which the participant responds in a forced-choice format to a circumscribed stimulus situation</td>
<td>Operant: PSE and other methods in which the participant provides a spontaneous response to an open-ended, ambiguous stimulus, such as a PSE picture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social: The motive is related to behavior that is in keeping with social norms and expectations of a given situation</td>
<td>Activity: The motive is related to naturally occurring behavior that is valued for its own sake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality level</td>
<td>Level 1: Self-attributed motives are similar to dispositional traits, such as those comprising the Big Five clusters (Chapters 4–6 in this volume)</td>
<td>Level 2: Implicit motives are less like traits and more like the characteristic adaptations in personality, more contextualized, contingent, and less stable over time than traits (Chapters 7–9 in this volume)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

was not a strong predictor of performance, whereas self-attributed achievement motivation was. By contrast, in studies in which the dependent variable was naturally occurring achievement behavior (under conditions with few social incentives but strong activity incentives), PSE-based achievement motivation proved to be a very strong and significant predictor of performance, whereas self-attributed achievement motivation was not.

A related controversy concerning PSE-based measures of implicit motives concerns the reliability of the PSE itself. In Chapter 4, I introduced the issues of test–retest reliability and internal consistency in the measurement of traits. The same kinds of psychometric standards have been applied to PSE-based measures, though defenders of the PSE have sometimes argued that the application is not altogether appropriate (Atkinson, Bongart, & Price, 1977; Reuman, Alwin, & Veroff, 1984). Critics of the PSE maintain that the test shows low test–retest reliability and internal consistency. Although the details of these controversies are beyond the scope of this book, there are two important points to make about the limitations of PSE assessments of human motives. First, despite its potential for revealing rich narrative data for personality, the PSE is a somewhat less reliable measure than a typical well-constructed personality questionnaire, all other things being equal. Under the best conditions, test–retest correlations for PSE motives are still lower (around \( r = +.55 \)) than those for the best-established self-report traits (around \( r = +.83 \)) (Lundy, 1985; Winter & Stewart, 1977).

Ironically, this limitation stems directly from a cardinal PSE strength—the measure’s exceptional sensitivity. Because the PSE is more sensitive to factors and influences in the person and in the situation than are most questionnaires assessing personality traits, a PSE assessment of motivation will naturally “reflect” a lot of extraneous and irrelevant material, like the subject’s mood at the time of testing. There is no way to rid the PSE of this problem without undermining its essential sensitivity.

Second, the motives of achievement, power, and intimacy assessed on the PSE are probably less stable over time than are personality traits, such as extraversion and neuroticism, which are generally assessed on questionnaires. As we saw in Chapter 6, certain basic personality traits show marked longitudinal consistency. For instance, a highly extraverted person at age 16 is likely to be relatively extraverted at age 60. Part of the reason for this stability in certain traits over time may reside in their presumed biological or genetic basis, as in the case of extraversion. Although comparable PSE data do not exist, motives do not appear to be as stable over time as certain basic traits. Furthermore, there is no evidence at present to suggest a clear genetic basis for motives.
The possibility that motives may change over time to a greater extent than basic traits reflects a fundamental distinction between motives (as characteristic adaptations, Level 2 in personality) and dispositional traits (Level 1): Motives deal with goals and desires; traits refer to basic behavioral style. Whereas it seems plausible to assume that a basic personality style is established early in life, perhaps partly as a function of biological temperament, and carried forward into adulthood as a stable set of dispositional traits (Level 1), it appears equally reasonable to suggest that desires and goals (Level 2) may change markedly over the human life course. Motive scores indicate the major goal areas with which a person is concerned at a particular time in his or her life. For example, a person may experience high needs for intimacy and achievement in college, but these needs may subside somewhat in later years—in his or her 30s or 40s—to be “replaced” by high levels of power motivation. Less stable than traits but more enduring than temporary moods and states, motives appear to reflect major thematic goals, desires, and preoccupations during a given period of a particular person’s life.

PERSONALIZED GOALS

All motivational concepts are contextualized in time. Motives are defined in terms of desired or anticipated goal states, and these goal states exist in the future. If we say that you are high in power motivation, we are saying that you recurrently desire to have impact on your world, that you want power, that you will articulate more specific goals for the future through which you hope to be able to experience power. By matter of contrast, if we say that you are high on the trait of extraversion, we have said nothing about what you recurrently desire, what you want, or what your goals for the future are. Extraversion is not in and of itself a motivational concept. You do not need to talk about goals and future time to understand the meaning of extraversion. I am not saying that power motivation is a more important concept than extraversion; I am simply saying that it is different—different in kind. Both concepts are equally important in understanding personality. But they are important for different reasons. Dispositional traits (like extraversion) sketch out the broad outline of psychological individuality, which is what Level 1 of personality is all about. In focusing on the goal-directed nature of human behavior in time, by contrast, motives move us to Level 2 in personality, the level of characteristic adaptations.

Motives for achievement, power, and intimacy go beyond dispositional traits to fill in some of the details of psychological individuality, but even more detail and specificity can be observed when psychologists examine the personalized goals that people formulate and pursue in daily life and the ways in which these goals translate into behavior. Like motives, personalized goals speak to what people want in life. But personalized goals are more specific. Maria may want power in general, showing a high level of implicit power motivation. But her power motivation is likely to be expressed through some goals and not others. Among her current goals in life are (a) to be accepted into law school and (b) to win the election for senior class president. By contrast, she sets forth no goals concerning the experience of power in, say, her personal relationships or in the area of sports. If we know Maria has high power motivation, we certainly know something very important about her. But to know more of the details, we need to explore the various concerns, strivings, projects, and tasks she is currently working on—the personalized goals that speak to why Maria does what she does.

Personality psychologists have proposed a number of different terms to refer to personal goals (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990; Freund & Baltes, 2000). For example, Robert Emmons (1986, 1992) defined personal strivings as “characteristic, recurring goals that a person is trying to accomplish” (1992, p. 292). Personal strivings are typically daily concerns and goals around which people organize their behavior. They can range from such concrete goals as “I’m trying to lose weight” to abstract aims such as “I’m trying to figure out the meaning of my life.” Emmons (1999) reports that fewer than half of the personal strivings typically reported in his research fit neatly under the big
three motive categories of achievement, power, and intimacy. Other common categories include strivings for personal growth and health, self-presentation, independence, avoidance, spirituality, and generativity (helping the next generation). Emmons (1999) has found that intimacy strivings and generativity strivings are associated with independent ratings of psychological well-being. In other words, people who describe a greater number of strivings having to do with warm and close relationships (intimacy) and with making positive contributions to society and the future (generativity) are happier and more satisfied with their lives, compared with individuals who have fewer intimacy and generativity strivings. By contrast, power strivings and avoidance strivings tend to be associated with lower levels of psychological well-being and greater levels of anxiety. Spiritual strivings tend to be associated with low levels of conflict among life goals and what Emmons terms the overall integration of the personality. Emmons maintains that spiritual strivings are especially powerful carriers of life meaning for many people.

Like personal strivings, personal projects also provide a rich picture of the psychosocial ecology of everyday life. Brian Little (1989, 1998, 1999) conceives of the personal project as a series of activities coordinated to achieve a specific personal goal. Like Emmons, Little emphasizes the wide range of projects that people propose, from trivial pursuits to magnificent obsessions. Dispositional traits may have an impact on project pursuits. Research has shown that people high on the trait of Openness to Experience (O; Chapter 5) tend to propose a wider diversity of projects, compared with those scoring low on O (Little, Ecc, & Watkinson, 1992). High levels of Neuroticism (N; Chapter 5), furthermore, are associated with experiencing high levels of stress in the pursuit of projects (Little, 1999). Neuroticism is also associated with pursuing projects and goals that involve avoidance (Elliot, Sheldon, & Church, 1997). In other words, people high in N are more likely than those scoring low in N to pursue such projects as “avoiding dealing with my mother,” “staying away from obnoxious men,” and “escaping stress.” Rather than pursuing positive end states, they seek to avoid negative ones. Avoidance goals, furthermore, appear to be more common among certain cultural groups than others. For example, Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, and Sheldon (2001) found that Asian Americans adopt more avoidance goals than non-Asian Americans, and persons from South Korea and Russia adopt more avoidance goals than those in the United States.

As personal goals change over time, they reflect important developmental trends in life (Freund & Riegler, 2006; Roberts, O’Donnell, & Robins, 2004). Research suggests that among young adults goals related to education, intimacy, friendships, and careers are likely to be especially salient. Older adults, by contrast, show more goals related to health, retirement, leisure, and understanding current events in the world (Freund & Riegler, 2006). Goals in early adulthood often focus on expanding the self and gaining new information, whereas goals in later adulthood may focus more on the emotional quality of ongoing relationships (Carstensen, 1995; Helson, Soto, & Cate, 2006). The ways in which people deal with multiple goals in their lives also appear to change with age. Young adults seem to be able to tolerate relatively high levels of conflict among different life goals, but midlife and older adults manage goals in ways to minimize conflict. In trying to reconcile their goals to environmental constraints, young adults are more likely to engage in what Wrosch, Heckhausen, and Lachman (2006) call primary control strategies, which means that they try actively to change the environment to fit their goal pursuits. By contrast, midlife and older adults are more likely to employ secondary control strategies, which involve changing the self to adjust to limitations and constraints in the environment. With some exceptions, older adults seem to approach goals in a more realistic and prudent manner, realizing their limitations and conserving their resources to focus on those few goals in life they consider to be most important (Ogilvie, Rose, & Heppen, 2001; Riediger & Freund, 2006).

When you think about how well or badly your life is going or how happy or unhappy you are with the present state of your life, you are likely to make some kind of explicit or implicit assessment of the status of your goals. Are you satisfied with the goals you have set? Are you making progress toward achieving important goals? Do your goals conflict with one another? Psychologists who study goal concepts such as personal strivings and personal projects have focused a great deal of attention
on the relationships between goals and psychological well-being (e.g., Pomerantz, Saxon, & Oishi, 2000). They have found that goal-directed, purposive behavior is intimately tied up with the overall assessments people make of the quality of their lives. For example, considerable research suggests that when people feel they are making substantial progress in meeting the most important goals in their lives, they report higher levels of life satisfaction and emotional well-being (Pervin, 1989, 1996).

As another example, Palys and Little (1983) found that individuals who reported involvement in enjoyable and moderately difficult projects oriented toward short-term goals tended to be happier and more satisfied with their lives. Adults with less enjoyable and highly difficult projects oriented to the long term tended to score low on happiness and life satisfaction. In addition, relatively happy participants reported that they shared involvement in their goals with a supportive network of friends, family, and acquaintances.

In examining the relations between personal projects and well-being, Little routinely asks research participants to evaluate each of their personal projects on five dimensions: (1) meaningfulness (how worthwhile the project is, how enjoyable I find the project to be, how much the project contributes to my sense of identity), (2) manageability (how easy the project is, how much control I have over the project, how much time I have to do the project well), (3) support (to what extent other people support the project, how visible my project is for other people), (4) efficacy (how well my project is progressing, how capable I am of achieving the project), and (5) stress (how anxious or depressed the project makes me, how much I worry about the project). In constructing and living out our personal projects, Little finds, we need to strike a balance between “meaning” and “manageability.” In some cases such long-term and abstract projects as “making myself into a better human being” may prove highly meaningful but too hard to manage effectively. On the other hand, short-term and concrete projects such as “cooking delicious dinners for my spouse” may be fairly manageable but may not provide a satisfactory level of meaning in one’s life. The challenge is to organize one’s purposive behavior according to personal projects that are grand enough and humble enough to be both meaningful and manageable. The organization of purposive behavior is always accomplished in an interpersonal context. Personal projects are constantly negotiated and renegotiated with important people in one’s life and within the opportunities and constraints offered by one’s family, community, profession, and society at large. Within a complex social context, it is essential that people find effective ways to communicate their personal projects to others. Other people need to know clearly what goals you have in mind for your life if they are to facilitate the accomplishment of those goals and find creative ways to integrate their goals with yours.

Emmons has examined what happens when different personal strivings conflict with one another. For instance, your striving to “improve my relationship with my mother” may conflict with your striving to “gain independence.” Emmons (1986) administered various personal strivings measures to 40 undergraduate students who then reported their daily moods and thoughts for 3 weeks. Positive emotional experiences during that period were positively associated with reports of strivings that were highly valued and for which the person had experienced success in the past. Negative emotional experiences were associated with striving ambivalence and with greater levels of conflict between different strivings. In a similar study, Emmons and King (1988) found that conflict and ambivalence in strivings were associated with higher levels of negative affect, depression, neuroticism, and psychosomatic complaints, and with a greater number of illnesses and visits to the campus health center. In examining the connections between strivings and behavior, the researchers also found that when people reported conflicting strivings they often were unable to act upon those strivings but instead spent an inordinate amount of time thinking about the conflict itself. Riediger and Freund (2004) found that when some goals that a person pursues interfere with the pursuit of other important goals in that person’s life, low levels of psychological well-being typically result. To sum up, high levels of conflict among strivings lead to poor health, low levels of happiness, high levels of depression and anxiety, and a tendency to ponder obsessively about conflictual strivings rather than acting upon them.
Finally, research by Brunstein, Schultheiss, and Grassmann (1998) returns us to the more general motives assessed on the PSE and relates the motives to personal goals and psychological well-being. In an initial testing session, the researchers administered the PSE to a group of German college students and then asked them to list two agentic (achievement- or power-oriented) goals and two communal (intimacy- or affiliation-related) goals. For each goal, the students also evaluated how much progress they had recently made in accomplishing the goal. Over the following 2 weeks, the students each completed a series of mood checklists at regular intervals, to assess overall psychological well-being. The researchers scored the PSE stories for the standard motives developed by McClelland and his associates, classifying achievement and power motivation as “agentic” (self-oriented) motives and intimacy and affiliation motivation as “communal” (other-oriented) motives. To arrive at a single agency-communion motivational score, they simply subtracted the PSE communion score (intimacy + affiliation motives) from the PSE agency score (achievement + power motives). Consequently, the higher the overall score, the more agentic (achievement and power oriented) was a person’s overall motivational stance, whereas the lower the score the more communal (intimacy and affiliation oriented).

The results of the study showed an interaction between motivational scores and goal progress in the prediction of well-being. In a nutshell, students with highly agentic motivational profiles (high power and achievement motivations relative to affiliation and intimacy motivation on the PSE) reported greater levels of psychological well-being (as determined by the mood checklists) when they were making progress on agentic goals, relative to other students. Similarly, students with communal motivational profiles (high affiliation and intimacy motivation relative to power and achievement motivation on the PSE) reported greater levels of well-being when they were making progress on communal goals. The key thing to know here is that well-being is a function of progress and success in the pursuit of motive-congruent goals. When you are making good progress and receiving good support on daily goals that are congruent with your more general motivational tendencies, you are likely to be experiencing positive emotions and satisfaction. In general, making progress toward goals is a good thing for everybody. But some goals are more important for well-being than others. Of most importance are those most valued goals that encapsulate experiences that are congruent with what an individual most deeply wants out of life.

In conclusion, many personality psychologists and laypeople find personal goals to be such an important aspect of psychological individuality because of both their links to psychological well-being and the general belief that goals, unlike perhaps traits and more general tendencies in personality, may be relatively easy to change or work on. Personal strivings and projects are subject to change, modification, growth, and the influence of the environment. Psychotherapists and counselors of many different persuasions often spend a great deal of time working on people’s goals, helping their clients to refashion goals into more realistic terms, helping people find ways to get support from their environment for their goals, moving people in the direction of new goals that are both meaningful and manageable, helping people make their goals more congruent with their general motivational tendencies, their personality traits, and the constraints and opportunities they face in the environment. And when people work on their own lives, when they try to make changes for the better, they often begin by reevaluating their own personal goals.

**SUMMARY**

1. If dispositional traits make up a first level of personality, motives and goals are important characteristic adaptations at the second level. Motivational concepts concern the internal forces and factors that energize and direct human behavior, including those most important and recurrent human wants, needs, and desires.

2. Introduced by Sigmund Freud more than 100 years ago, the psychoanalytic view of human motivation suggests that behavior is ultimately determined
by unconscious sexual and aggressive drives and by the complex intrapsychic conflicts that arise in daily life. Unconscious processes work to repress threatening impulses, thoughts, and feelings. While repression is universal, research suggests that some individuals may use repression more than do others. Repressors report little anxiety on a conscious level, but they adopt a highly defensive approach to life. Research suggests that repressors report fewer negative memories from their past and are able to keep emotionally negative scenes separated from one another in memory.

3. Freud’s structural model divides the psyche into id, ego, and superego. The id obeys the pleasure principle; the ego operates according to the reality principle; and the superego works as a primitive moral voice, representing the internalized rules of authority. Caught in the middle of the impulsive id, harsh superego, and demanding outside world, the ego seeks to resolve motivational conflicts and reduce anxiety. Defense mechanisms are unconscious strategies that the ego employs to reduce anxiety while distorting reality in the process. Considerable research on defense mechanisms supports a developmental continuum from least to most mature. Among children, age-appropriate defenses are associated with more effective coping; among adults, more mature defenses are associated with psychosocial adaptation.

4. The humanistic view of motivation prioritizes conscious experience and self-actualizing tendencies. Carl Rogers developed a highly influential humanistic theory of personality and psychotherapy that posited one, all-encompassing motivational force—the motive to actualize or fulfill the self. Rogers’s approach urges the psychologist to explore the person’s phenomenal field of conscious experience through empathy and, ideally, unconditional positive regard. Like Rogers, Abraham Maslow developed a humanistic theory of personality that underscored the motive for self-actualization. Maslow argued that self-actualizing tendencies are built on more basic needs for physiological equilibrium, safety and security, belonging and love, and self-esteem. Highly self-actualized individuals espouse humanistic virtues and have a greater number of peak experiences in life.

5. A central idea in humanistic psychology is that intrinsically motivated behavior is valued for its own sake rather than for the rewards that may follow it. Research on intrinsic motivation suggests that material rewards can sometimes undermine people’s interest in the activities for which they are rewarded. Growing out of research on intrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory proposes that human beings are endowed with a natural motivation to encounter new challenges that will promote organismic integration. Self-determined, intrinsically motivated behavior often meets basic human needs for autonomy, competence, and interpersonal relatedness. Self-determination theory has stimulated research on how self-determined behaviors that stem from needs for autonomy, competence, and interpersonal relatedness enhance growth and well-being, whereas behaviors in the service of material wealth, seeking prestige, and other extrinsic rewards tend to undermine morale and stifle organismic growth.

6. The diversity view of human motivation posits a large number of different motives or needs. Murray’s influential motivational theory proposes a taxonomy of approximately 20 psychogenic needs that energize and direct behavior in concert with environmental forces or press. As one assessment device for the measurement of individual differences in psychogenic needs or motives, Murray developed the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). On the TAT, participants tell or write imaginative stories in response to picture cues. In the research version of the TAT, called the Picture Story Exercise (PSE), stories are coded for various content themes indicative of implicit (unconscious) motivational tendencies. Motivational research with the PSE has focused on the needs for achievement, power, and intimacy.

7. The achievement motive is a recurrent preference or readiness for experiences of doing well and being successful. People high on PSE-measured achievement motivation tend to be highly efficient in their goal-directed activity, show high achievement aspirations but moderate risk taking, show high levels of self-control and delay of gratification, and show a range of behaviors and attitudes that promote successful entrepreneurship. The extent to which a society encourages achievement motivation can be estimated by scoring folktales, children’s readers, and popular literature for achievement themes, as if these documents were PSE stories. David McClelland has shown that a society’s achievement motivation is associated with economic growth.
8. The power motive is a recurrent preference or readiness for experiences of having an impact and feeling strong. People high on PSE-measured power motivation show a mixture of characteristics associated with both aggression and leadership. They tend to be active and forceful in small groups, to accumulate prestige possessions, and to be drawn to public office and professions that involve directing the behavior of others. Among men, power motivation is associated with instability in romantic relationships. With respect to physical health, some research suggests that individuals with strong but inhibited power motivation may be susceptible to disease, especially when they experience high levels of power stress.

9. The intimacy motive is a recurrent preference for experiences of warm, close, and communicative interaction with others. People high on PSE-based intimacy motivation tend to be seen by others as especially loving and sensitive, exhibit more eye contact and smiling in friendly interactions, are more self-disclosing and intimate with their friends, and engage in a wide range of behaviors suggestive of an especially communal approach to life. Intimacy motivation is also positively associated with psychological well-being. Whereas consistent gender differences have not been shown for achievement and power motivation, women score consistently and significantly higher than men on the intimacy motive.

10. Whereas research on implicit motives for achievement, power, and intimacy examines general goal states, another line of recent research has focused on more specific personal goals themselves—variously labeled as personal strivings or personal projects. Research suggests that personal goals are intimately involved in people’s psychological well-being. People are happiest when they are making progress in pursuing their personal goals, especially when those goals are consistent with more general motivational trends in their personality. Goals for intimacy and for making positive contributions to other people tend to be associated with positive emotions, whereas goals concerning avoidance and personal power are associated with negative emotions. Goal conflict and ambivalence may undermine life satisfaction. Goal-directed activity often involves a meaning/managability tradeoff. Sometimes the most meaningful and involving goals are the most difficult to attain, so the challenge is to organize purposive behavior according to goals that are grand enough and yet humble enough to be both meaningful and manageable.