



UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF THROUGHOUT THE LIFE SPAN

LOOKING AHEAD

After completing this chapter, you will be able to

- Discuss what is meant by and known about personality.
- Describe psychological theories of personality development and explain how socialization influences behavior.
- Explain Erikson's psychosocial theory of personality development and relate it to your life.
- Discuss transactional analysis and use your understanding of ego states, life positions, scripts, and strokes.
- Understand personality typing and describe eight preferences.
- Distinguish between extraversion and introversion and note advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Define gender role, summarize how it is learned, and discuss its influences.
- Define androgyny and describe its potential benefits.
- Contrast assertiveness with aggression and nonassertiveness.

When one is a stranger to oneself, then one is estranged from others, too.

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

How well do you truly know yourself? Because self-understanding is the foundation of healthy relationships, it deserves attention throughout life. In Chapter 1 you were asked to think about yourself and your sense of self-worth. From this chapter you will gain deeper self-understanding.

Begin to describe yourself. If you are like many people, you start with physical descriptors. Some people have difficulty going further. **Personality** is the "unique you." It consists of characteristics or traits related to how one thinks, feels, and acts. The combination of these qualities that only you possess is the cornerstone of your separate identity. You have probably heard someone say, "She has no personality." This usually means that the person is extremely reserved or dull. The personality may not be projected, but one surely does exist!

How Does Personality Develop?

With a perfect memory, you could describe the numerous experiences that have influenced your personality. However, even that would not tell the entire story. Identical twin and adoptive studies seek to discover how heritable personality is. The findings vary although most agree that heredity and environment both contribute to your personality. This means that within a group of individuals, genetic differences account for about half of the variation in personality traits. Parents may wonder about their children's personalities and ask, "How can they be so different? We raised them the same." They are forgetting about other important factors such as genetics, sex, physical and mental abilities, birth order, and, most importantly, other people's influences and the unique experiences of each individual. You may have heard this referred to as the interaction between **nature and nurture**.

Influences on Personality

An early pioneer in personality development was Sigmund Freud. His theories dealt with early childhood influences, the role of the unconscious, psychosexual stages of development from birth through adolescence, and a structure of the personality made up of three parts (id, superego, and ego). Later in this chapter you will learn about ego states based on Freud's concept. The **psychodynamic** perspective and its theorists continue to contribute to the ongoing study of personality, emphasizing the influence of the unconscious on personality development and human behaviors.

Another perspective is **learning**. Divided into behaviorism and social-cognitive theory, it focuses on environmental influences, observational learning, and cognitive processes in the development of personality. B. F. Skinner (1953, 1987) showed that personality develops in response to stimuli in the environment. Rewards and punishments strengthen and weaken behavior. Any characteristic that has been **reinforced** or made stronger is probably recognizable in your personality. Social-cognitive theorist Albert Bandura (1977, 1986) credits **modeling** as a strong influence on personality. If your personality is similar to a family member's, observational learning undoubtedly played a part.

Social-cognitive theorists point out how a person's mental processes affect behavior as well as the contribution of variables within each person. **Expectancies**, one of these variables, are predictions about the outcome of behaviors. They, along with the perceived value of behavioral choices and outcomes, have an influence on personality (Rotter, 1972, 1975). For example, Binh, a recent Vietnamese immigrant to the United States and a college student, is deciding how to spend his weekend. He has an important exam on Monday. He wants to do well because of self-pride and future career opportunities along with the realization that his parents have high expectations for him. He also wants to go out with friends. He thinks, "I will feel great if I do well and terrible if I do not do well. My parents will be so disappointed if I get a low grade, and I am happiest when I please them."

Can you see that the way he is thinking about his behaviors and what he eventually decides reflect and influence his personality? Learning theory is especially useful in helping to make desired changes using behavior modification and cognitive principles.

Humanism, often combined with existentialism, is a major personality perspective. Emphasis on the development of the self-concept and the use of individual choices in improving personality are central points. Healthy personal growth includes openness to experience, responsibility, and trust in the self. Developing one's full potential is an ideal goal (Rogers, 1961). Because humanism focuses on choices and self-control, its ideas are emphasized throughout this book.

The **trait** perspective identifies key aspects of personality. A trait is a relatively stable quality. When you describe yourself as trusting or suspicious, you are making use of a trait theory. This perspective helps to describe and compare individuals as well as to predict behavior. Personality theorists generally accept the "Big Five" factor model (Wade and Tavris, 2005), which includes (1) extraversion, (2) agreeableness, (3) conscientiousness, (4) openness to experience, and (5) emotional stability. Each dimension has a wide range. For example, in emotional stability a person could be poised and calm at one extreme or anxious and excitable at the other. Cross-cultural research has identified these five dimensions throughout the world (Benet-Martinez and John, 1998).

Cultural psychology looks at how individuals develop as they participate in particular cultural contexts (Markus and Kitayama, 1998). Consider the following:

Elvira, a Mexican American, and Sarah, a Jewish American, were 21-year-old college students who lived with their parents. At 11:30 P.M. Saturday at a party, Elvira was preparing to leave because she had to be home by midnight. Sarah said, "I do not see how you stand having a curfew." Elvira replied, "I do not mind. As long as I am living at home, I do as my parents want. I do not want to worry them." How and why are their personalities different? Think of a person raised in a different society and consider aspects of personality that are different from yours because of cultural influences.

Like psychologists, sociologists are interested in personality development and emphasize **socialization**, a process of learning how to behave according to the requirements of society. Personality is developed gradually as an individual interacts with others (Mead, 1934). Various sources or **agents of socialization** such as family, education, religion, and the media teach the culture and encourage us to form basic personality characteristics. We learn to follow **norms**, those behaviors expected of us as contributing members of society. In Reflections and Applications, you can describe your own personality and compare it to family members.

Stages of Development

Personality develops in a series of stages, according to Erik Erikson, an influential theorist in the fields of psychology and human development. Using Freud's psychoanalytic theory as a basis, he emphasized social interactions and the influence of social development and believed that personality formation continued throughout one's lifetime.

Erikson (1963) described eight psychosocial stages throughout the life span. Each stage has a crisis or challenge to be resolved in order for a personality strength or virtue, as Erikson called it, to be developed. These virtues are the result of a favorable balance between two possible outcomes at each stage. Successful

resolution at each stage helps a person meet future developmental challenges and build a healthy personality. According to Erikson (1963, 1968), each item of personality is related to all others, and they all depend on proper development in a particular sequence. Think of a set of blocks and imagine trying to build a tower. Maybe the first block is not on a solid surface. Or maybe the second block is not centrally placed, so the tower teeters a bit. Another poorly placed block will surely cause the blocks to topple. Just as the tower can be rebuilt at any point, a person can later work to develop a favorable balance (Erikson, 1963).

The stages are related to chronological age, yet Erikson (1963) wrote that there could be variations in the timing and intensity of each stage. Order and timing can be affected by historical and cultural conditions. Understanding Erikson's theory can help identify your developmental stage as well as show how you can assist others in resolving the challenges. In the following descriptions, the strength or virtue that emerges is identified after the two possible outcomes. Remember that ages may vary.

I. (Birth–1 year) Trust versus Mistrust [Hope]. A newborn needs to feel secure in the environment in which he or she lives. Trust develops when a baby is loved. What are the behaviors that demonstrate love? Parents or other primary caregivers who respond to the baby's needs and express caring by holding and touching are helping the baby develop trust. A stressful, unpredictable, and unloving environment can lead to a higher degree of mistrust. Holding a newborn during this stage is of utmost importance. "Based on early good-enough holding, children reach out for experience with the expectation that the world will not let them fall" (Josselson, 1992, p. 33). If there is not a healthy balance between trust and mistrust, hope is at risk and all stages after this will be more challenging.

Jason cried often, and his parents believed that they would "spoil" him if they responded. When he was only a few months old, a sitter began to spank him for crying and when he did not respond to her requests. Jason became detached and mistrustful of people. In contrast, Kevin received loving attention on a regular basis including when he cried. He was often cuddled and felt secure and loved.

II. (1–3 years) Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt [Willpower]. A typical 2-year-old is learning about independence. The toddler has developed a measure of control over the environment, and a show of defiance is common. The "terrible twos" are normal! Yet parents who do not realize this often respond with force and a suppression of any attempt at autonomy. A constant barrage of "No," "You cannot do that," and "You are naughty" upsets the balance between autonomy and shame and doubt.

Kristen was a clinging toddler. Her mother bragged about how much the little girl depended on her. She was so attached to her mother that she cried whenever she was left with a relative or sitter. An interesting addendum to this story is that when Kristen was 13 years old, her parents divorced, and she chose to live with her father. She had finally achieved independence from her mother! One of her playmates, Lisa, was encouraged to play by herself and praised for certain independent behaviors. She enjoyed the attention of others but did not require it (Fig. 2-1).



Figure 2-1 Life can be fearful as a young child develops autonomy.

III. (3–6 years) Initiative versus Guilt [Purpose]. Initiative is developed when a child undertakes, plans, and proceeds with a task or uses creativity. Children at this stage often have their first experience with a nursery school or day care center. Wise parents will check to see what the facility does to encourage initiative. For example, beware of perfect artwork: it is probably the product of the staff, not the children. Adults who criticize or deprive children of opportunities to engage in appropriate activities are not contributing to a child's healthy development.

Tony was a curious child who wanted to try new things. His mother was a perfectionist who wanted the house to be immaculate. She seldom let him do anything that might make a mess. He also liked to put on his own clothes and button his coat but was rarely allowed to do so. "I am in a hurry. Let me do it for you," his mother would say. Tony struggled in trying to develop self-direction or purpose. Compared to Tony, Luis engaged in a variety of activities both at home and at his preschool. He was praised for his creativity and developed a sense of pride in what he did.

IV. (6–12 years) Industry versus Inferiority [Competence]. During this stage, children want to develop skills and complete tasks. They like to help and may even ask to stay after school to assist the teacher! At this stage, they are ready for household chores, paper routes, and various projects. Think of the eager Girl Scout selling cookies at your front door. Praise at this stage is so important. A young woman wrote, "I did not have any encouragement. I cried for attention at this time, but the only person who heard me was me."

Jodi wanted to help her dad with yard work. She was 8 years old and so enthusiastic. Her dad was in a hurry and thought she would just be in the way. He told her to go inside and watch television. Seven years later Jodi was lying in front of the television when her dad asked her to help him outside. She said she did not want to miss her favorite program. "When you were young, you wanted to help, and now that you are old enough, you will not. I do not understand." No, Dad did not understand!

V. (12–19 years): Identity versus Ego Diffusion [Fidelity]. The critical task of this stage is to determine one's ego identity. Calling this a formidable task, Erikson (1968) conceptualized **optimal identity** as a sense of psychosocial well-being,



Figure 2-2 Peer influence is great at this age.

Source: www.indexopen.com

which includes “a feeling of being at home in one’s body, a sense of knowing where one is going, and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count” (p. 165). As adolescents seek identity, they will “try on many hats” and probably take risks. Extremely influential is the peer group. Can you think of some crazy things you did during these years? This can be an exasperating time for both teenagers and parents as separation begins to occur. The trauma of this stage is influenced by successful development of earlier strengths (Fig. 2-2).

Chris had been a passive child who seemed to change dramatically after puberty. His parents divorced when he was 14, and he and his mother moved to a different city. Chris started running around with a gang that had a reputation for drug use. He became surly and quiet. When he was home, which was not often, he stayed in his room and played loud music. Inwardly, he struggled with mixed feelings of rebellion versus love for his mother. He felt conflicted and was not sure who he really was. His older sister Jessica’s story was quite different. She seemed to handle her teen years without a great deal of turmoil. At each stage she had seemingly developed the strengths required to help her adjust to adolescence.

VI. (20–40 Years) Intimacy versus Isolation [Love]. After a successful resolution between identity and ego diffusion, which may or may not be completed during adolescence, an individual can strike a balance between intimacy and isolation. This means developing a close, meaningful, and stable relationship with another person while continuing to feel inwardly secure. In most societies this type of relationship leads to marriage. Erikson’s theory can explain why teenage marriages are much more likely to end in divorce (Strong, DeVault, and Sayad, 1998). Tammy wrote, “I married too young and never developed my own identity. I had children while I was still a child myself. Instead of growing and learning about myself, I became Mommy and nothing else. My divorce has brought me to college. I need to learn professional skills and, most importantly, about myself. Losing a husband is hard, but finding myself is wonderful.”

Eric was 19 years old when he entered the U.S. Army. He had been struggling with identity questions for years. He had not successfully completed several of the earlier psychosocial stages, and his adolescence was troubled. The army was helping him find who he really was. He received orders to go overseas, which prompted a threat from his 17-year-old girlfriend. “Marry me so I can go with you, or I will not be here when you return.” Against the wishes of family, Eric and Teresa married. They had numerous disagreements and power struggles. Their relationship was a classic example of a union between two people who had not resolved their identity crises and were not ready for intimacy. Within a year they divorced.

Many individuals remain within a marriage for years unable to achieve intimacy; instead, they feel isolated. The importance of finding out who you are is

illustrated in Linda's story. She recalled that the identity stage was extremely difficult for her. She had come through the earlier stages feeling inferior for being "the kid with red hair, freckles, buck teeth, and used clothes." She used alcohol and drugs excessively, engaged in promiscuous sex, had a horrible relationship with her mother, and quit school at 16. At 17 she ended up in a disastrous marriage. Several years later she realized that she wanted to grow. Counseling and college helped her discover who she truly was and, as she puts it, "I am rebuilding my block tower, it is going well, and I feel great!"

VII. (40–65 Years) Generativity versus Stagnation [Caring]. Looking beyond one's self rather than remaining inwardly focused is one way to describe what is needed at this stage. Erikson (1963, 1968) viewed it as a desire to guide the next generation and identified parenthood as a common avenue. He did acknowledge that not everybody progressed through this stage by raising children and included the possibilities of productivity and creativity in other realms. For most parents, this time of life includes children leaving home, which can result in what is called the *empty nest syndrome*. Pursuing a purpose beyond self and family would likely diminish any sense of emptiness.

Margaret's marriage was an unhappy one. She tried to compensate by devoting her time and energy to her two children. After her younger daughter was married, Margaret lapsed into a severe depression; she felt worthless. She became preoccupied with her health and was frequently ill. She described herself as "stagnant and bored." Quite different was Susan's generativity stage. Feeling secure in herself, she had a satisfying relationship with her partner. She held a top position with an accounting firm and involved herself in meaningful volunteer activities. She felt she was making a difference in the world.

VIII. (65 years–death) Integrity versus Despair [Wisdom]. The last stage of life is one of acceptance and satisfaction. If all the preceding crises have been successfully resolved, Erikson (1968) believed that in this person "the fruit of the seven stages gradually ripens" (p. 139). Acceptance of one's life and others in it and acknowledgment that no other path would have served one as well are hallmarks of integrity. Contentment and peace are possible if memories are meaningful and fulfilling. Strength at this stage takes the form of wisdom.

Harvey, a 70-year-old man, had periods of irritability and bitter nostalgia. He often spoke of what he wished he had done and of how life had cheated him. He had retired from a long career and had developed no hobbies. He spent many hours alone watching television. In contrast to Harvey and his despair is a dear friend, Marilyn. A wonderful parent and grandparent who does so much for others in her work as a therapist and volunteer, Marilyn believes that it is vitally important that she contributes something of value to the world. Describing herself as somewhere between generatively and integrity, she says:

I love stumbling upon new insights. If I am lucky, I will be looking and learning until my last breath. I think beauty is innate, that somewhere within each of us lays the ability to discover beauty, and that truth is what we search for all our lives. My world is made up of many truths and each one holds a special beauty of its own. I feel more connected with life each time I share what I have discovered.

Think about your life up to this point. Answer the questions about your developmental stages in Reflections and Applications. You can concentrate on working through unresolved stages, keeping in mind that neither of the extremes (e.g., trust versus mistrust) is ever totally developed and that the conflicts are present throughout life. For example, what could happen that would cause a weakened sense of identity? Any dramatic change may necessitate a new struggle. Familiarity with the psychosocial stages is like a road map for your life as long as you realize there may be detours. This book can help you discover what is missing and give you the tools to develop the virtues Erikson deemed important.

Challenges to Personality Development

At any stage of life, dysfunctional family experiences and psychological trauma will likely hinder positive growth. Low self-esteem and depression can block substantial progress at any stage.

Challenges can also stem from issues related to adoption and minority status. For example, an adopted child often feels a need to locate biological parents or at least learn about them. Racial and ethnic minorities can go through a period of questioning their “roots.” Kaili, a biracial student, said, “I have struggled with the difficult identity question of being a part of two racial groups. I would be happy with a biracial identity if society would be more accepting.”

Sexual orientation also poses a challenge. U.S. society is predominantly heterosexual. The popular press assumes a homosexuality rate of 10 percent of the U.S. population. A 2002 Gallup survey estimated that 21 percent of men are gay and 22 percent of women are lesbian (Meyers, 2006). The U.S. census for 2004 included approximately 295 million people. On the basis of 2004 census data, if only 10 percent of the population is homosexual that would total 29.5 million gays and lesbians in the United States. What causes sexual orientation has not been determined for either heterosexuals or homosexuals. Most scientists believe that there is no single cause for sexual orientation and these causes may vary among individuals. Biology, cultural influences, and experiences are just a few of the factors identified (Wade and Tavris, 2002; Yeoman, 1999). Professionals including members of the American Psychological Association do not consider same-sex orientation to be a deviance, illness, or psychological disorder.

Most lesbians and gay males begin to realize their sexual orientation during or shortly after puberty, although hints of it may appear earlier. When gay males and lesbians discover this uniqueness, choices have to be made. Most feel forced to hide an important part of themselves out of fear. They feel “different” and in a heterosexist society are condemned solely on the basis of sexual orientation. Self-esteem can be a major help. Even though the researchers acknowledged that gay and lesbian young people often experience isolation and emotional stressors related to harassment and abuse, self-esteem was strengthening, especially for females (Grossman and Kerner, 1998).

Gays and lesbians who are hiding their identity may feel unauthentic. They live a lie, fearing that they will not be accepted if people know the truth (Herek, 1996). Risk of negative reactions by parents is a major concern. Mike, a young

male student, talked candidly about his pain at keeping his sexual orientation hidden from his parents. "I think they suspect because they make remarks. Dad said once, 'If I ever found out you were queer, I would kill you.' It really hurts to not be able to be who I am with people I love." Hopefully, Mike and others can be helped by the book *Mom, Dad, I'm Gay: How Families Negotiate Coming Out* (Savin-Williams, 2001), designed to help bridge the gap between gay and lesbian youth and their parents.

Gay male or lesbian sexual orientation, like a heterosexual orientation, is not a matter of wanting only a sexual relationship. Just like heterosexuals, gays and lesbians are also attracted to a special person with whom they can spend time, have fun, and share deepest thoughts and feelings. Close relationships between two gays or two lesbians are as loving, close, healthy, and nourishing as those developed by heterosexuals (Peplau, Cochran, and Mays, 1997).

One young man explained that sexual orientation is not a choice any more than race or sex is and added, "Think about it folks, with homophobia, AIDS, discrimination, hate crimes, what sensible teenager would make a choice like that?" (Minton, 1993). During a discussion of sexual orientation, one student suggested that being gay or lesbian may not be a choice, but acting on it was. She thought a gay male or a lesbian *should not* act like one. A simple question is an effective response: "Would you want to be told you could not act on your sexual orientation?"

According to Jim, a gay adult, the decision to "come out" or stay closeted is an extremely difficult one for most because of the risks involved with family, other relationships, and career. Extreme courage is required if gay individuals want to live open and truthful lives. One such person is Amy, who wrote a wonderful and motivating note at the end of an interpersonal relations course concerning the first edition of this book.

I think this book is wonderful. As I read it, I noticed that it is very heterosexually focused as are most textbooks. I have to switch things around to make them apply to me. Can you imagine how it feels to read and read and never see yourself in words? I had such a hard time dealing with my sexuality when I was younger. I thought I was the only one who was having these feelings, and I found nothing to validate that what I was feeling even existed. I remember my feelings the first time I read a book that dealt with a homosexual relationship. It was only a brief mention, but my feelings were so intense, I almost cried. I know that human relationships are all basically the same, yet I think there are enough differences to at least warrant a mention. I think if non-gay people had to read chapter after chapter about relationships from a gay point of view, they would have a hard time relating. I do not want to sound as if I am jumping on my soapbox, but I get so frustrated at never being validated or placed first. I know some people are very open-minded and understanding, but I would like people to at least give thought to what I have said. Maybe sometime in the future you can make a difference to someone like me who wanted to kill myself because I never had any positive reinforcement or situations I could relate to about the way I was feeling.

Acknowledging that misunderstanding, prejudice, and social stigma regarding sexual orientation create major developmental challenges for most gay and lesbian adolescents; researchers offer a heartening note that most sexual minority youth lead healthy, productive lives (Tharinger and Wells, 2000).

Predictions about Personality

What will you be like in 20 or 30 years? Those who believe that there is consistency of personality over a lifetime point out that even though there is likely to be some change, especially in those traits identified in the “Big Five” factor model, personality is stable in most people (Costa and McCrae, 1997). Changes in single traits are more likely; after age 30, women’s personalities seem to change more than men’s (Ardelt, 2000). Benefits of having a good idea of what you will be like in the future are predictability and reassurance in who you are.

Understanding Through Transactional Analysis

Transactional analysis (TA) is helping people comprehend why they would feel compelled to hide their true personalities. Described as a system for understanding human behavior and as a personality theory, it provides insight into self-awareness and personal growth (Clarkson, 1992).

Eric Berne, a psychiatrist who developed TA, used it to help his clients. The general public learned about the theory and methods when the book *I’m OK, You’re OK* (Harris, 1969) became a best-seller. Other books, seminars, and classes teach practical applications. This section will describe the basics of TA and show how to use them in your own life.

Ego States

Basic to TA are **ego states**, which are facets of personality and related patterns of behavior. Serving as the model for ego states was Freud’s personality structure of id, ego, and superego. Berne’s names for them are related to actual life figures, and personality consists of all three.

Impulsive, spontaneous, emotional, and creative are words that describe the **child ego state**. It was so named because this part is childlike (like a child between the ages of 2 and 5, according to Berne) and acts on feelings. In the “child” are “the countless, grand ‘a-ha’ experiences and feelings of delight” (Harris, 1969, p. 27). People of all ages have a child ego state, although it varies in how noticeable and freely expressive it is. Your “child” is the part of you that loves and hates, feels exhilarated or completely miserable, relishes ice cream and pizza, laughs and cries, and can enjoy life (Fig. 2-3).

The child ego state did not develop freely. As soon as you were able to understand parental figures in the environment, another ego state began to develop. This part consists of verbal and nonverbal messages you received. Think of it as a collection of recordings in the brain that functions as a conscience. This ego state contains rights and wrongs, “shoulds,” “oughts,” and strong ideas of what to do and not to do.

The messages poured in during your early years and were largely unedited; that is, you did not question or reject them (Harris, 1969). And no matter how old you are, you continue to receive directive messages that can sound like commands. These opinions, judgments, values, and attitudes are recorded and automatically play back in your mind. Or you have a visual image of a nonverbal message. A good

example came from Lisa: “When my mother was watching television, she usually ignored me when I would ask her a question. As a kid, I would always feel as if I had done something wrong. And when I am ignored today, I tend to feel that way, too.” Even though these messages can come from a variety of sources, because so many come from actual parents, this is called the **parent ego state**.

Remember that the messages originally came from an external source and are now internalized. A partial list of some ridiculous messages contributed by students follows. Can you think of any of your own that strike you as silly?

- Benjamin Franklin took a bath every day of his life, and he was never sick. So be sure to bathe daily.
- Lift your feet off the floor of the car when you cross over railroad tracks.
- Swallowed gum will stick to your spine, and you will not be able to stand up straight.
- Nice girls do not wear red fingernail polish or pierce their ears.
- Masturbation will cause blindness.
- Clean the house before you leave in case of a fire.

Incidentally, wise and useful “parent” messages such as, “Look both ways before you cross the street” and “Do not drive if you have been drinking” also exist and are worthy of attention!

Often, when you are in your parent ego state, you feel, think, and act like one of your own parents. If this has not yet happened, you will probably have the experience of saying something to one of your own children that has a familiar ring to it. Even though “parent” messages affect your parenting behavior, ideally you will parent from all ego states.

Before we discuss the third ego state, imagine this scenario. It is 7:00 on a cool, rainy morning. The alarm clock rings, and you hit the snooze button. You feel warm and happy lying in bed and your child ego state is enjoying it immensely. “Oh, to just stay here and sleep, skip class. This feels so good.” Then another voice penetrates your relaxed state. “Get up! You should not miss school! Do not be so lazy!” It sounds like Mom or Dad, but it is not because you do not live at home anymore. You are hearing your own parent ego state. What a dilemma—the struggle between “child” and “parent” continues in your mind.



Figure 2-3 The child ego state can be alive and well at any age!

How fortunate that you have another ego state that can enter the picture at this point. “Let me think—I have not missed that class yet, and I remember the instructor saying there was going to be a film. I could watch that at another time. I have not been getting enough rest lately. I think I will sleep this morning.” This is one possible resolution. A second one is, “I have missed that class several times, and I do not think it is wise to be absent that much. Besides, the lecture is always full of important material! I think I will go to class.” This part of the personality thinks and is able to logically and objectively analyze. It sees alternatives

and acts as a decision maker using facts in a cool, calm way. The name **adult ego state** is quite appropriate. Like a computer, the “adult” gathers information from the three sources of “parent,” “child,” and stored “adult” data as well as new evidence in the present (Harris, 1969). The “adult” can find either the “child” feelings or the “parent” messages appropriate and allow them to prevail. Also possible is to strike a balance between the two or gather additional information and make an original decision. The “adult” begins to develop at about 10 months of age (Harris, 1969) as an infant assumes some control over the environment; choices are then possible!

Each ego state has its positive and negative qualities. The “child” is exuberant, enjoys life, and readily expresses affection; yet, it also can be depressed, fearful, wounded, and defeated. The “parent” has useful knowledge and reacts quickly. How fortunate we are that our parent ego state tells us to be on time for work. Unfortunately, the “parent” contains some outdated and negative information, can be close-minded, and passes on potentially damaging messages. The “adult” is a necessity in most situations; however, it can be programmed with detrimental or inaccurate information and be a stranger to emotionality.

A well-adjusted individual uses all three ego states. In some cases, an ego state is more powerful and overwhelms or contaminates the others. An overpowering “child” is what Kushner (1986) cautioned against: “Fun can be the dessert of our lives but never its main course. It can be a very welcome change of pace from the things we do every day, but should it ever become what we do every day, we will find it too frivolous a base to build a life on” (pp. 69–70).

Which of the three ego states is dominant in the following examples?

- Joan is aloof and reserved. She does well at her accounting job and finds it easy to analyze data. She is a calm person who rarely shows emotions.
- Kim is a 12-year-old who has strong convictions about many issues. She tends to be domineering and judgmental.
- Paul is a twinkle-eyed 80-year-old. He is witty, enthusiastic, and readily shows his feelings. However, he often acts on impulse and can be moody.

If you named “adult” for Joan, “parent” for Kim, and “child” for Paul, you are correct. An imbalance can occur regardless of age. Even a 4-year-old can exhibit an expanded “parent” ego state.

Adults are wise to ask themselves if they have a healthy child ego state. Do you ever act on impulse? When were you last spontaneous? Can you wonder and dream? Do you truly feel your emotions, and do you express them? When did you last really laugh? Are you a hugger; do you enjoy being hugged?

Leo Buscaglia, who was widely known as a big hugger, encouraged people to “let down their hair” and be a little crazy once in a while. He told of coming home from Wisconsin on a late-night flight. He carried gifts he could not check in as luggage: a large pumpkin, leaves (which he loved), cheese, and homemade bread. When airborne, he impulsively spread the gifts across several seats and pushed the call button. The tired flight attendant was quite surprised and, amazingly, reenergized by the craziness. She called the other attendants; they brought wine and had a party! A potentially boring flight was special because of

someone's "child." Some do not notice that they are not using their child ego state until it is too late. In a live presentation, Leo Buscaglia described an 85-year-old reflecting on life.

If I had my life to live over again, I would dare to make more mistakes next time. I would relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I would take more chances. I would take more trips. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and fewer beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I would have fewer imaginary ones. You see, I am one of those people who lived seriously and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I have had my moments, and if I had to do it over again, I would have more of them. In fact, I would try to have nothing else, just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I have been one of those people who never went anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat, and a parachute. If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter. If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies. If I had my life to live over again, but I do not.

Think of all the "parent" messages that restricted her "child." Can you think of any "child" wants and wishes you are denying yourself? If you were 85 years old, what would you wish for yourself? What can you do about it now? Remember, an 85-year-old does not have life to live over, and neither will you.

A problem lies with receiving inconsistent messages. Did you have a parental figure who said one thing and did just the opposite? Did anyone say, "Do not drink and drive," and then proceed to do exactly that, or say, "Religion is important, so go to Sunday School," yet who rarely went to church, or a significant person who maintained, "All people are equal," but then said, "I do not welcome one of those people in this house"? A sad "parent" message is, "Do as I say, not as I do."

"Parent" messages can be retrieved by thinking about why you do what you do, why you have certain beliefs and ideas, and where they came from originally. A major task of healthy adulthood is to process "parent" messages through the adult ego state. Getting rid of extremely harmful and hateful messages is highly recommended. Buscaglia (1982) revealed that he has been more involved in unlearning than in learning during various stages of his life. "I have to unlearn all the garbage that people have laid upon me" (p. 147). That "garbage" consists of "parent" messages. With each discarded piece he became freer. As you process messages through your "adult," you become more your own person. Use Reflections and Applications to describe your ego states. Recognizing your own ego states can be beneficial in making decisions.

Ryan is a 36-year-old factory worker who quit high school to marry and get a job.

He realizes he is going nowhere with a career and is considering quitting and going back to school. Of value to Ryan would be awareness of the role of each ego state. His "parent" has such messages as, "A man is supposed to support his family," "You are too old to go back to school," "Everyone will think you are dodging responsibility." The "child" in him is frightened by risk yet somewhat excited at the prospect of a new experience. Ryan will benefit from

“plugging into” his adult ego state. This ego state will gather more information about costs, management of the family’s financial situation, and benefits compared to losses.

A goal of TA is to encourage freedom of choice—the freedom to change (Harris, 1969). This can happen if you, like Ryan, become aware of each ego state and use your “adult” in the decision process.

Life Positions

The book title *I’m OK, You’re OK* (Harris, 1969) came from the preferred life position in the TA framework. A **life position** is a perspective on the world based on feelings about self and others. Berne (1962) identified four positions. The preferred, or healthy, position, **I’m OK, you’re OK**, is based on equality and positiveness. In one’s initial approach to people and situations, hope and optimism are present. “Persons in this position are winners. They reflect an optimistic and healthy outlook on life and freely relate with others” (Woollams and Brown, 1979, p. 107). This position requires self-love and esteem. The “I’m OK” belief is followed by tolerance, equality, and acceptance of others.

The **I’m not OK, you’re OK** position is not unusual. In fact, some consider it to be the most common one (Woollams and Brown, 1979). Self-esteem is low; the individual feels inferior. “I am unworthy, and everyone else has it together” would be a typical thought. These people appear defeated; they usually have difficulty accepting compliments or communicating positive self-talk.

Several years ago a man by the name of Patrick Sherrill committed a violent crime; he killed several coworkers and then himself. The headline read, “Gunman Hated the World and Himself.” This is an extreme example of the position **I’m not OK, you’re not OK**. The position reflects an extremely negative, pessimistic attitude. These people seem to hate themselves and the world. They can behave in various ways, and most are not criminals. Some retreat from the world and become loners, and others simply give up and just manage to survive. The frightening ones are those, like Pat Sherrill, who take out their self-hatred on others.

An annoying and potentially damaging position is **I’m OK, you’re not OK**. People in this position feel superior to others. They show it in annoying ways by maintaining that they are always right, judging or patronizing others, and telling others what to do.

What position are you occupying? The question is frequently asked, “Can you be in more than one?” You may have characteristics that fit more than one position; however, view yourself in a general way. What orientation do you usually take toward others and the world? If it is not **I’m OK, you’re OK**, decide to work toward it!

Life Script

A **script** is an ongoing program, first developed in early childhood, that directs behavior (Berne, 1972). The TA framework does not suggest that your life is predetermined or that you simply read lines and play a role. Unless you become

aware of your life script, you may be playing it out without realizing it. Self-fulfilling prophecies serve as powerful directions within your script. Julie could be counted on to be late to class. She explained, “I am late to everything, including work. I have always been this way. Mom told me I was not organized, and Dad said I had no concept of time. My friends just expect me to be late and would not believe it if I were ever on time. I am just a ‘flake.’” Julie played the part of the always-late, disorganized “flake,” and she played it well.

Does Julie have to continue playing this part? The TA framework provides a technique called **script analysis**, a way of becoming aware of how your script developed. You then can decide to take different courses of action. Julie did not have to continue in her role, but the decision to change had to be hers. After college she landed a job. A few months later she was fired for chronic tardiness. She rationalized that it was not her dream job anyway. Within a short period of time she was hired as a fashion buyer—an ideal position for her! When she was warned about lateness during her first evaluation session, she made an attempt to be on time, yet it was short-lived. Losing that job was depressing for Julie, yet it proved to be the jolt she needed. She resolved to change her script and, with the help of a counselor, set up a behavior modification program. She rewarded herself for each on-time experience and relished the praise of others. The always-late, disorganized Julie is different, and part of her new script is, “I can make positive changes if I really want to!” She proved what Nathaniel Branden (1992) wrote, “We need never be the prisoner of yesterday’s choices” (p. 73).

Scripts are based on the past. Even though you cannot change your past, learning from past experiences is invaluable. Ask yourself, “Is my past illuminating my present or contaminating it?” (Satir, 1976). The present is where change is possible, and you can rewrite your future script if you choose to do so. Can you think of some changes you would like to make in your script? Taking charge of your own life and destiny is not necessarily easy, but being your own scriptwriter is very rewarding!

We are not prisoners of the past. We are pioneers of an exciting future.

—John Powell

Strokes

“I enjoy having you in class.” “I like you.” “You did a great job.” These phrases, along with a smile, a hug, and a friendly wave, are special verbal or nonverbal behaviors called **strokes**. The strokes that feel good to the receiver are positive strokes. Negative strokes do not feel good and are generally meant to be hurtful. Think of some negative verbal and nonverbal strokes. See Table 2-1 for examples of each type. Human beings need recognition, and positive stroking is effective in letting people know that they count. Strokes can be *conditional* (based on certain behaviors or conditions) or *unconditional* (given simply because the receiver is alive). A mother commented, “I realize that I have been giving positive strokes but only under set conditions. I decided to tell my son that I appreciated him simply for being here—to stroke his person.” She had realized the beauty of unconditional strokes! Can you add others to the lists in Table 2-1?

TABLE 2-1 Strokes	
<i>Verbal Positive</i>	<i>Verbal Negative</i>
"I love you."	"I don't like you."
"I like your smile."	"Get lost!"
"You're a great employee."	"You're so lazy."
"Hello, how are you?"	"You look awful!"
<i>Nonverbal Positive</i>	<i>Nonverbal Negative</i>
A pat on the back	A shake of the fist
A wink (if it feels good!)	A hit or a slap
A back rub	A frown
A special card or gift	Inattention
A hug or kiss	Laughter at someone

Young children definitely can learn about the nature of strokes. A director of an early childhood center used the program "TA for Tots." Positive strokes were called "warm fuzzies," whereas negative ones were "cold prickles." The children soon recognized how much more comfortable the atmosphere was when "warm fuzzies" were being given and received. In the "warm fuzzy" circle, the children gave and received positive strokes. In the beginning, several were hesitant—an indication that "warm fuzzies" were not too familiar to them. Gradually, verbal strokes seemed easier. Two boys interacted during this time. Danny was a spontaneous and expressive boy with a healthy child ego state. Tim was reserved and unexpressive. On this particular day, when it was Danny's turn, he did something out of the ordinary. He gave Tim a big hug and kiss on the cheek. The others seemed embarrassed, and the director quickly said, "I really like that warm fuzzy. I would like to have more of those!" Because young children regard teachers as the final authority, they reacted in a positive way—all except Tim. The director was saddened that this boy, at the age of only 4, recoiled from his friend's gesture. For whatever reason his script included, "I do not want to be touched." During the course of the year he became more open to expressiveness.

Strokes, or lack of them, influence scripts and life positions. An all too common scenario goes like this: A child makes the bed and completes assigned tasks each day but receives no recognition, no positive stroke. One day the bed is not made! What happens? A negative stroke is delivered immediately: "You are irresponsible and lazy!" This scenario is played out frequently in the home, at school, and even at work. Even though evidence shows that positive strokes are powerful motivators, negatives are more common (Fig. 2-4).

When people do not receive positive strokes, they tend to settle for negative ones. "Taking negative strokes is like drinking polluted water; extreme need will cause us to overlook the harmful qualities of what we require to survive" (Steiner, 1974, p. 127). A child who is misbehaving or an adolescent who "acts out" may be deprived of positive strokes and willing to settle for any kind. One student remarked that we give pets more pats than we do human beings. Positive strokes can also be lacking in marriages. A young married female wrote:

For Better or For Worse

by Lynn Johnston

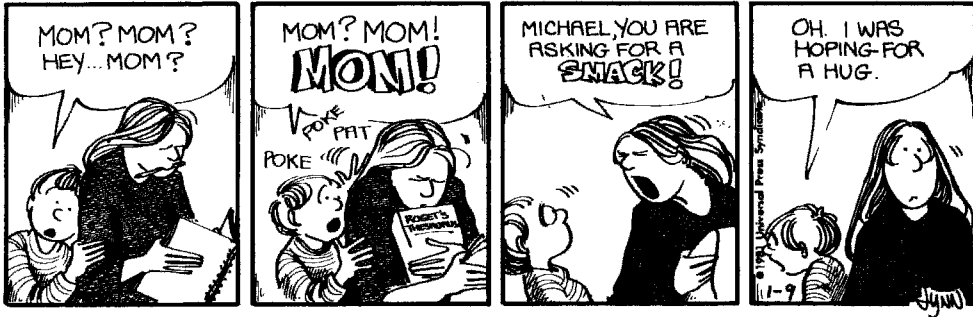


Figure 2-4

Sometimes I feel as if I am dying of lack of attention. We have been married only five years, and the only time he touches me is in bed. I have not heard a positive word from him in a long time. I feel dried up and starved for affection, and I do not know what to do.

In your life, monitor the strokes you receive and record them in the personality activity in Reflections and Applications. Ask, “Whom do I receive them from? What kind are they? Under what conditions do I receive them? What do I want?” Also become aware of the strokes you give by asking the same questions. The TA framework has much to offer. Only the basics have been presented here. If you want to learn more, read any of the books cited in this section. Transactional analysis can be used to enrich your life.

What is Your Personality Like?

Carlos is miserable at work. He enjoys being around people, yet his job demands that he analyze data in a back office. Connie is frustrated in a certain classroom situation. The instructor does not seem to be organized, and the class discussions focus more on possibilities than on realities. Rich and Jamie were so happy when they first married. Three years later, they both feel dissatisfied. Rich does not like the way Jamie seems to make irrational decisions, and she finds him too analytical and inconsiderate of others’ feelings.

An understanding of personality types can help each of these individuals. Psychological typing categorizes several related personality traits. Carl Jung (1921), an early psychologist, believed that behavioral differences are based on the ways people prefer to approach life (Jung, 1968). Based on Jung’s typology with some of their own refinements, Isabel Myers and her mother, Katharine C. Briggs, developed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). It achieved widespread acceptance in the 1970s and has remained a popular instrument useful in career selection and satisfaction, education and learning preferences, and interpersonal relationships. A study confirmed that the MBTI reliably measures personality characteristics associated with Jungian theory (Wheeler, 2001). Intended for use

with “well” people, the indicator focuses on positive aspects. You can use it to make life decisions, gain personal insight, understand differences, and learn how to work well with others.

Originally published in 1980s, the book *Gifts Differing* (Myers and Myers, 1995) describes personality preferences as well as ways in which people can use their own strengths and understand the differences of others. The author explains:

All too often, others with whom we come in contact do not reason as we reason, or do not value the things we value, or are not interested in what interests us. The merit of the theory is that it enables us to expect specific personality differences in particular people and to cope with the people and the differences in a constructive way. (p. 1)

Personality Preferences

Following is a brief summary of the four pairs of personality preferences. The MBTI will show your inclination for one or the other.

- **Extraversion-Introversion (type E or I).** Relates to an inward or outward orientation and to life energy sources. (*Note:* The spelling *extraversion* is used in this book to correspond to the MBTI. The spelling *extroversion* is also common.)
- **Sensing-Intuition (type S or N).** Pertains to the preferred ways of taking in information as well as what is of interest.
- **Thinking-Feeling (type T or F).** Indicates whether one prefers to use thought or personal values in decision making and judgments.
- **Judgment-Perception (type J or P).** Shows how one deals with the outer world and the type of environment that is preferred.

Understanding their meanings and knowing that we do not have absolute preferences are important. A common misconception is that an extraversion preference means being totally extraverted. Instead, individuals are both extraverted and introverted, yet in differing degrees.

The meanings of extraversion and introversion are typically misunderstood. This confusion has led to an assumption that a person needs to be extraverted in order to be successful and happy. Western culture seems to more strongly reward the outgoing, sociable person (Keirsey and Bates, 1978). Although introversion is often associated with such descriptors as shy, lonely, and snobbish, these do not define introversion. This inaccuracy is unfair, and a true understanding can correct these misconceptions.

Let’s look at what these preferences really are. Think in terms of life energy or force. What charges your battery? If your preference is **extraversion**, you get much of this force from external sources, including other people, and you probably project energy outward. Extraverted behavior is outgoing, showing an outward orientation and a preference to operate in the outer world of people and things. **Introversion** means an inner orientation and having an interest in the inner world of concepts and ideas. If there were such a word as “ingoining,” it would describe an introverted preference well. The source of energy is within and

comes from solitary experiences. Those with a preference for introversion can reenergize themselves and do not rely on external stimuli. In fact, interaction drains their energy, and they need to spend time recharging themselves.

People who prefer extraversion will usually behave in a friendly fashion, and they appear to be open to interaction with others. They are not necessarily any more emotional, caring, or loving than those who prefer introversion. Those with an introversion preference will generally be more reserved in a social setting, and they do not usually seek out others. This does not mean that they are uncaring, snobbish, lonely, or shy. They are often skilled in working with people but their preference is for smaller numbers and an opportunity to know people well. People who are described as shy, lonely, and uncaring are lacking in social skills and may be either introverted or extraverted.

Another difference is that extraverts will usually respond more quickly than introverts. Introverts think about what they are going to say; extraverts tend to think out loud. In fact, extraverts commonly talk their thoughts! If you often “put your foot in your mouth,” extraversion could be partially to blame. Talkativeness is not necessarily an exclusive characteristic of either extraversion or introversion. Because introverts prefer smaller groups, you could be sitting next to a person on a bus or airplane who talks and talks in a one-on-one situation and be surprised to know he or she has an introverted preference. In classrooms introverts may participate often and surprise their classmates when their personality preference is identified.

Both preferences have advantages. Extraverts frequently report greater happiness and satisfaction with life. Reasons could be the experience of more potentially positive interactions, ease with affectionate behaviors, greater acceptance by society, and greater social support (Myers and Diener, 1995). Extraverts are usually eager to interact. Does it surprise you to know that extraverts can behave in a shy manner? **Shyness** is timidity and a feeling of unease in a social situation. As an extravert, you may have felt and acted shyly at some social activities because you did not feel at ease or were not in the mood to talk. The dissatisfaction you felt after the event came from not using your extraverted preference. If you were an introvert, you probably would not have been bothered. That leads to one distinct advantage for introverts. They do not require social exchange and can get along just fine alone for long periods of time. In addition, introverts are often thought of as sincere people and good listeners even though they may be neither. Can you think of other advantages for each preference?

What about disadvantages? Extraverts can be overwhelming in social settings and be perceived as obnoxious loudmouths. If extreme in their extraversion, others may see them as superficial or phony. Another potential problem for an extraverted person was expressed by Jodi.

I am quite extraverted, but there are still times when I am quiet. If that happens around friends, they act upset with me and ask, “What is wrong with you anyway?” I find it hard to have any quiet time when I am around others. They expect me to be the life of the party.

Introverts are frequently criticized for their lack of conversation and what is often interpreted as aloofness. They may be perceived as uncaring or uninterested. If an extreme introvert does go to a party, the stay will likely be short.

The accusation of “party pooper” is inaccurate; in actuality, the party “pooped” the introvert (Keirsey and Bates, 1978). How might a person with an extraverted preference (E) and one with an introverted preference (I) seem to each other? Without understanding their differences, an E can seem shallow to an I, and a I may seem withdrawn to an E. After a program I gave on preferences, a woman in her sixties approached me and laughingly asked, “Where were you three years ago when I got divorced? I thought I was married to a dud, someone who just did not know how to have fun. Now I realize he was just introverted, which to me seemed terrible. This could have saved my marriage!”

Carl Jung looked at extraversion and introversion as valuable opposites. He believed that most individuals use both preferences but not with equal ease (Myers, 1980). The most important points are that both extraversion and introversion include positive behaviors and advantages, and we have preferences in varying degrees for both.

All categories and preferences are important, and if their meanings are not clarified, confusion and misunderstanding are probable. The other three pairs of preferences can be understood as follows:

- **Sensing and Intuition:** When you want to find out something, your preference may be **sensing** (S), which means a preference for gathering facts through the senses. “You tend to be realistic, practical, observant, and good at remembering a great number of facts and working with them” (Myers, 1980, p. 2). If you prefer **intuition** (N), “you tend to value imagination and inspirations, and to be good at new ideas, projects, and problem solving” (Myers, 1980, p. 2). In perceiving reality differently, sensors are concrete and attuned to details, and intuitives are visionary and ablaze with possibilities and ideas. Any successful business needs people with both preferences. When working on a task, sensors prefer a systematic step-by-step procedure and do not seem to be bothered by repetition. Intuitivists often devise their own methods, will work on several steps or projects at once, and prefer variety. An intuitive preference gets restless with “sameness,” has an appreciation of new and different experiences, and wants to modify life.

Can you see how these preferences can affect job satisfaction? Think of jobs that a intuitive would dislike. What would bother a sensor in a work situation?

- **Thinking and Feeling:** Once you have found what you want to know, you may have a decision to make. If your preference is for **thinking** (T), you will predict the logical results of your actions and decide impersonally. The other way to decide is through **feeling** (F). You will consider anything that matters or is important to you or to other people (logic is not required) and decide according to personal values (Myers, 1980). Those who have a clear thinking preference view emotions as more of a problem than as part of a solution (Keating, 1984). This person can be oblivious to other people’s feelings, whereas the opposite (a strong feeling person) can bend over backward to avoid hurting anyone. Either can become a problem. In one study (Shermis and Lombard, 1998), thinkers

had lower test anxiety scores than feelers. Can you see why? Both preferences can care a great deal about people and believe that their decisions are based on the “right” motives. Caring from a thinker is more apt to be sympathy and from the feeler empathy (Jeffries, 1991). The two preferences can clash or complement each other. Clashing is probably more common.

A crucial difference between a thinker and a feeler that isn’t easily bridged is how issues are perceived. A thinker prefers to deal with them in a detached manner outside of the self, whereas a feeler takes them to heart and thinks in terms of everyone involved.

- **Judgment and Perception:** The descriptors judgment (j) and perception (P) reflect one’s orientation toward the outer world. **Judgment** means that you prefer living in a “planned, decided, orderly way, wanting to regulate life and control it” (Myers, 1980, p. 6). Planning and preparation are typical behaviors. A judging person seeks closure and prefers to reach a decision or judgment quickly. If instead you like living in a “flexible, spontaneous way, wanting to understand life and adapt to it,” (Myers, 1980, p. 6), your preference is **perception**. You often “go with the flow” and prefer to delay closure and continue perceiving. Key words are *organization* and *order* for the judging preference and *flexibility* and *adaptability* for perceivers. Paul is a strong judger and stated, “I like the idea of someone throwing me a surprise party, but I want to be prepared for it.” He also wrote, “I live by my planner. I take it everywhere, even parties.” In contrast to Paul, a perceiver probably would not have a planner or would be like Kari, who said, “I bought a calendar diary but just do not bother to use it!” In the workplace, colleagues of these two extremes can have difficulty getting along. The judging person would probably view the perceptive individual as disorganized or flighty, whereas the perceptive one could become frustrated with a perception of an overly organized and inflexible coworker. An appreciation of both in the classroom can be made. Judgers give reminders of due dates, times, and schedules, and perceivers readily adjust to any deviation!

Think about which of the preferences in each of the four categories sound most like you and then elaborate on these in Reflections and Applications. Combining two or more preferences provides even more insight. For example, you can come up with your temperament type (Keirsey and Bates, 1978) by doing the following.

1. Determine your preference in the second category (either S for sensing or N for intuition.)
2. If it is S, pair it with your preference in the fourth category (either J for judgment or P for perception). Your temperament type is either SJ or SP.
3. If it is N, pair it with your preference in the third category (either T for thinking or F for feeling). Your temperament type is either NT or NF.

See if the following description of your temperament type is accurate.

- SJ is orderly, dependable, and realistic; expects others to be realistic; strives to belong and contribute; is conservative, well-organized, and can easily be critical of mistakes.
- SP is flexible, open-minded, willing to take risks, highly negotiable, hungers for freedom and action, can be indecisive, lives for the moment, and does not like to plan or be hemmed into a definite plan.
- NF is empathic, highly responsive to interpersonal relations, keeps in close contact with others, sees possibilities, searches for meaning and authenticity, gives and needs praise, and may be overly swayed by feeling.
- NT is responsive to new ideas, hungers for competency and knowledge, works well with ideas and concepts, is not always aware of others' feelings, and likes to start projects but may not follow through.

Learning styles can also be examined using other combinations (McClanaghan, 2000). Which style seems most like you?

- ST wants specific information, knowledge of what's right and wrong; does better in a structured environment and learns best from repetition, drill, memorization, and actual experience.
- NT wants solid evidence and reason; does better when challenged and allowed to be creative; is skeptical, analytical, and logical and learns best when allowed to be independent.
- SF wants material to have personal relevance; does better in a harmonious setting where there is cooperative learning; learns best by talking and being involved in group activities.
- NF wants to see the "big picture" as well as possibilities, patterns, and connections; does better in a flexible, innovative setting; is bored by routine and established learning procedures.

How strong your preference is will affect how closely you match any of the preceding descriptions. For example, if you have a strong preference for both sensing and thinking, the ST learning style will likely sound just like you.

Interesting research is conducted with the MBTI. A study revealed that even though women in the general population tend to be feelers, women in executive-level positions often have a thinking preference usually combined with intuition; however, NFs made up 31 percent of the group (Daugherty, Randall, and Globetti, 1997). Can you think of reasons why an N preference would be useful?

A college library or counseling service may have a version of the MBTI you can take, or you may have an opportunity in a class or workshop. The book *Please Understand Me* (Keirseey and Bates, 1978) offers a questionnaire that yields scores in the four categories. Remember that with any measurement the results may vary for a number of reasons. Taking the test more than once and being honest in answering the questions will give you a more reliable profile. The four preferences together become a **psychological type**. Remember that being an ENFP does not mean you do not have and will not use the other preferences of ISTJ. For example, you may have a strong preference for using your right hand, yet you can also use your left.

Personality typing indicates your strengths and comfort zones; in certain situations, you are wise to use the lesser preference. For example, in the world of work, you will likely use more thinking and judgment, and in your personal life, the feeling and perceiving preferences lend themselves to warmth and enjoyment. The extent of the difference between the two will influence your degree of ease in various personal and professional situations. If the two preferences are close, you probably are comfortable using either one. In some cases, all four preferences will be extremely strong as in the case of Chad, a definite ISTJ. He agreed to share the following.

All clothes in my closet hang in a particular order on white plastic hangers. Dress pants, because they are worn the least, hang together followed by sweat pants, then jeans. In the center of the bar are empty hangers separating the pants from the shirts. I have exactly as many hangers as I do articles of clothing. There would be no point in having extra hangers in my closet. Next to the empty hangers are white T-shirts, then casual shirts and dress shirts. At the bottom of the closet are two laundry baskets; one is for colors, and the other is for whites. I also have a system for clothes that are not in my closet. All my boxer shorts are numbered on the inside tag. I wear them in the right order so they will wear out evenly and can be replaced at the same time.

Even if this sounds unlike you, what thoughts and behaviors are indicative of strong sensing, thinking, and judging preferences? Chad also said that he cannot believe many of the “stupid” things people do and then added, “It is a good thing I am so introverted because I just think this and do not say it!”

Remember that the MBTI is not intended to pigeonhole people or arm them with excuses for certain behaviors (e.g., “I cannot help that I am disorganized. I am a P” to which I would respond, “You also have a J preference into which you can shift”). Reading books on the subject will give further ideas for using this understanding in career, marriage, parenting, and leadership situations. Can you recognize how personality was creating hardships for the individuals in the examples at the beginning of this section? Carlos is extraverted, and his job does not allow him to be in contact with people. Connie is more sensing, whereas her instructor appears to be intuitive. The marriage is in trouble because Rich, who has a thinking preference, and Jamie, who prefers feeling, do not understand each other. Knowing more about your personality can help you make wiser choices and maximize your potential. By understanding your own personality type and that of others, you can draw on your strengths and appreciate and grow from the differing gifts of others. Remaining open to and understanding differences will lead to enrichment.

How Does Gender Influence Your Life?

How would your life be different if you had been born the opposite sex? This may be difficult to imagine and possibly even distasteful. Years ago when I asked students to react to this, I received a quick, loud response from a 37-year-old man: “It makes me sick to think about it!” His reply demonstrated an attitude I was planning to discuss later with the class and made a salient point more dramatically

REFLECT AND APPLY**Reflect**

- ◆ *How is your personality similar and/or different from five years ago?*
- ◆ *Recall two “parent” messages, a time when you acted from your “child,” and a decision you made through your “adult.”*
- ◆ *Think of an acquaintance, friend, or family member who has a personality different from yours. Does it bother you? If so, can you relate it to the personality preferences identified in this chapter?*

Apply

- ◆ *Ask a friend or family member to describe your personality. See how it compares to your description of yourself.*
- ◆ *Give two positive strokes to someone within the next 24 hours.*
- ◆ *Shake hands with your less preferred hand. How does it feel? The feeling is somewhat like you probably feel when behaving according to a weaker personality preference.*
- ◆ *Try to think or act in an opposite way from one of your personality preferences.*

than I could have otherwise that a perception exists that being male is preferable to being female (Reflect and Apply).

Gender Differences

Over several years, more than 3,000 students have been asked the question, “How would your life be different if you had been born the opposite sex?” (Hanna, 2003). Following are the categories most often mentioned with a general explanation of the differences imagined by the men and women.

Career choice. This area was by far the most commonly mentioned. When considering being raised male, women would have made a different career choice, had an earlier pursuit of career, put more emphasis on career, and realized a definite increase in financial assets. Some felt they would be more restricted: “I would have been forced to take over the family farm or business.” Men indicated that, as women, they would either have a different, stereotypic female career, slow advancement, or no career at all! “I would be more sheltered and let others take care of me” and “I would just go out and trap a rich guy!” were two male observations. One man said, “Maybe I would really do something different and be a doctor!”

Education. Women said they would have gone to college earlier, finished earlier, attended a more prestigious college, and planned their education on the basis of future earning power. One woman said, “I would have been forced to achieve more from my education all the way through because I would need it to earn a living.” Men mentioned the option of not going to college, and a few said that, if female, they could not have afforded further education.

Sports and other activities. Although opportunities in women's athletics have increased since legislation passed in the 1970s, women still maintained that they would have been involved in a wider variety of sports. Men, conversely, would have been less involved. One outstanding female basketball player remarked, "I may have taken a shot at playing professionally. As a female, there was not much of an opportunity for that." Another woman said that, as a boy, she would not have been a cheerleader. She added, "But I would have had to really be into sports." A distinct difference was mechanical. Women were sure that they would know more about automobiles and other machines. And a young man said, "As a female I would not know anything about a car. I would just expect a man to handle it!"

Household tasks. A definite difference was clear in this category. Males, if raised female, would do more housework and cooking and no outside chores. Women would move out of the kitchen and into the garage and yard. Most females said that they would be paid more for allowances. One man stated, "I got more money for mowing the yard than my sister did for doing dishes."

Marriage and child raising. Several women said that they would have married later or not at all if they had been men. The men envisioned being married, having the role of housewife, and being the primary parent. One male reply was, "I would probably have married young, been married two or three times, have lots of kids, and be looking again for someone to support us!" "If male, I would not have custody of my children," said a divorced woman.

Self-esteem and self-efficacy. Both sexes viewed women as placing a lower value on themselves and having less confidence. An older female student said that she would have had higher self-esteem earlier in life and would not have wasted her talent. Another woman reported that her family favors boys: "Boys are very special, and they know it." However, a disadvantage to men was also noted. A woman said, "I would be under a lot more pressure and have more stress. I would probably die younger thinking I had to handle everything."

Independence and assertiveness. Both sexes perceived men as more independent, self-sufficient, assertive, and in control of their lives. One woman said, "I would have more guts." Two other comments from women were, "I would not be taken advantage of" and "My needs would come first." A female with disabilities said, "I would have a harder time being handicapped because as a female, it is easier to ask for help." More evidence of the stereotype of the nonassertive female is found in a book first published in 1975, *The Assertive Woman* (Phelps and Austin, 2000). Can you imagine a similar book written for men? As you will learn later, both sexes can benefit from assertiveness; yet, the attention is usually on women.

Emotions. The stereotype of men as unemotional, unfeeling, and in control came through repeatedly. Both sexes mentioned that being female meant being more sensitive, aware of feelings, and expressive. One man said, "I would not have gotten spanked for crying when I was young." Women were seen as more fearful by both sexes.

Gender-Role Stereotypes and Development

If a woman has difficulty imagining any difference in her life, I ask, “Do you plan to marry?” Most say they do. “Will he take your name?” I have yet to hear a “yes.” Most individuals have not given the question much thought; after they do, this difference is apparent. Because of a desire to keep a family name alive, for professional reasons, or simply because of personal preference, women may want to keep their birth name, yet few do. In a national sample of married persons and of their married offspring, only 1.4 percent in the main group and 4.6 percent of the offspring made a nonconventional last name choice. Those who did were ones who married later in life, were better educated, were more career oriented, and held more liberal gender-role values. Additionally, the marital naming choice of the mother had a strong effect on her daughter’s choice of names (Johnson and Scheuble, 1995). Whether female or male, if you were the opposite sex; would name changing make your life different?

Name changing came up in a sociology class. Impatiently, a young man asked, “What is the big deal anyway? It is just a name.” Yet, when asked, “Then would you take your wife’s name?” he quickly shook his head and said a definite, “NO.” Another student interjected, “Then it *is* a big deal, isn’t it?” Calling the name problem for married women a clumsy mess, Lance Morrow (1993) noted that if men were to wake up one morning and find themselves transformed into married women, most would insist on continuation of their name. Hyphenation maintains both names; however, men do not usually use a hyphenated name. Gloria Steinem (1992) comments on the path from “Mrs. John Smith” to “Mary Smith” to perhaps “Mary Jones” as becoming independent much like slaves became free and gradually assumed different names from their masters. The practice of women taking the husband’s name does come from a **patriarchal** (male-dominated) marital history. The tradition is still strongly supported in actuality, although attitudes are more flexible. One can question whether the sexes are equal until couples at least seriously consider this issue.

Other differences are in the areas of finding an intimate partner and physical attractiveness. Women pay far more attention to both. Romance novel readers are predominantly women. Magazines for teenage girls have almost no articles on career success and financial independence; instead, the themes are beauty and dating. In a study, half of the fourth-grade girls said they were dieting. One girl said, “We do not expect boys to be that handsome. We take them as they are.” Another added, “But boys expect girls to be perfect and beautiful. And skinny” (Kilbourne, 1995, p. 395). An observational question regarding a difference: “Have you ever seen two heterosexual females dancing together? What about heterosexual males?” We do tend to make distinctions in appropriate behavior on the basis of biology alone. A logical “why” remains a mystery.

Avenues to Prestige—Does Biological Sex Matter?

What are the leading avenues for prestige? Significant gender differences emerged for 14 out of 15 respondents (Suitor and Carter, 1999). The main findings were:

- **Males:** Sports, grades, intelligence
- **Females:** Physical attractiveness, grades, intelligence

Turn to the personality activity in Reflections and Applications and answer the questions related to gender role. You may be surprised that your life, too, would have been different.

Thinking about how one's life would be different reveals a great deal about perceptions and the limitations created by stereotypes. A **stereotype** is a preconceived idea or belief, often a generalization, about an identifiable group. Stereotypical expectations and behaviors related to being female or male have influenced your life and continue to do so. Some of these are so subtle that they go unnoticed and yet have an impact.

Studies of male–female differences have been numerous in the last 30 years. A classic study (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) addressed both actual and perceived differences and encouraged researchers to explore gender, an aspect of self that had been virtually ignored. Gender-role development is covered in most introductory psychology and sociology courses and is frequently offered as a separate course in colleges and universities. **Gender** refers to the meanings that societies and individuals attach to being female and male. Even though popular and research-based usage suggests that *gender* and *sex* are synonyms, social scientists separate the two and define **sex** as the biological division of humanity. **Gender identity** is an individual's emotional and intellectual awareness of being either male or female, whereas **gender role** consists of personality characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations about femininity and masculinity. Even though our images of feminine and masculine typically are physical ones, when thinking about gender, femininity and masculinity refer to personality traits and behaviors that are culturally determined. Gender is best thought of as independent of a person's biological sex (Doyle and Paludi, 1998). This makes sense because both feminine and masculine traits make up a well-adjusted personality.

Explanations of gender differences focus on learning. Sociologists believe that **socialization**, the process by which individuals learn their culture, is instrumental. See the following "Socialization and Sex Differences" discussion, regarding two recent versions of the socialization explanation. Psychologists also credit the environment as a source of learning through observation and conditioning. Sandra Bem (1993), in explaining gender-schema theory, says that we view the world through "the lenses of gender" and develop cultural female or male scripts. As an example, in a study of professional men, Hispanics had significantly higher masculinity scores than non-Hispanics, which coincide with the Mexican and Latin American value on self-confidence, courage, and masculinity or what it means to be macho. Interestingly, the Hispanic males had self-acceptance scores that were significantly lower than other males (Long and Martinez, 1997).

Encouragement and discouragement regarding emotional behaviors and the tasks/activities of children play an important role in gender-role development. One student said her brother's only household task was to take out garbage. "My mother even cleaned his room, and now his wife does it!" Humorous or pathetic? Clearly, parental influence is of utmost importance. A recent study found that girls devote more time to household tasks while high school males spend more time on extracurricular and leisure activities. Girls work longer hours in both unpaid and paid labor (Gager, Cooney, and Call, 1999). The field of cognitive psychology emphasizes thoughts and processing of information. Young children begin to make

distinctions between what is masculine and feminine and then act on these distinctions. Years ago, I taught in a preschool language-development program and knew little about gender roles. One of the activities involved categorizing toys into a boys' pile and a girls' pile. Almost every child by the age of 3 could do so without hesitation. This grouping carried over into their actual activities. Seldom did a little boy venture into the play kitchen, and then it was usually to ask what was for dinner! Have things changed? Certainly, children are being exposed to a wider variety of toys and activities today. Yet notice how toys are categorized and even how greeting cards are displayed in stores. Gender stereotypes are reinforced in a variety of ways.

Socialization and Sex Differences . . . Two Newer Versions

Why is he less emotionally supportive than she is? Could it be?

- *Different cultures account:* Because of socialization, women and men end up in two different emotional worlds or cultures. A man may not offer emotional support in the same way; however, he and his male friends are satisfied and feel "comforted."
- *Skill specialization account:* Women and men share one culture. Because of differences in socialization, females develop emotional support skills. Males are lacking in skills that lead to emotional support (Kunkel and Burlison, 1999).

Any difference between females and males is more pronounced if children are raised stereotypically. For example, consider two young children with skinned knees. Both begin to cry. Terri is hugged and consoled, while Terry is scolded for not being brave. Learning theory emphasizes the rewards, punishments, encouragements, and discouragements that humans receive.

The Way It Was

Which of these norms described by a 50-year-old still exist?

- For school dances, the girls made the decorations while the boys got on the ladders to put them up.
- At the dance, the boys were expected to risk rejection when they requested a dance while the girls waited and tried to look appealing but uninterested.
- At church events, only women worked in the kitchen.

Controversy exists as to the influence of biology on gender. Studies of cognitive skills yield certain "on average" differences between females and males that do not point to a smarter sex or to the fact that such contrasts are permanent (Halpern and Crothers, 1997). As in all of human behavior, biology has a role. Gender behaviors are undoubtedly the result of an interplay between nature and nurture. Important to keep in mind is that studies indicate only generalities and do not take into account the variations within large groups of males and females. Differences resulting from social and cultural expectations tend to fade if individuals are not bound by stereotypic gender roles and, in fact, there are more similarities between men and women than there are differences. No matter how gender role developed, your personality, behavior, and aspirations have been influenced by it. Of value now is to become aware of your thoughts about your own gender role and that of the opposite sex. How have perceptions influenced expectations of yourself and your behaviors? How do they affect your relationships? Are you stereotypic or not?

Disadvantages of Stereotypic Gender Roles

Conforming to gender-role stereotypes has several disadvantages. Both men and women suffer from a rigid perception of roles. As evidenced by the earlier student responses, men are generally regarded in a more positive light by both sexes. Thus, many women may behave like the weaker sex and feel inferior. When asked what sex they would prefer if they could have only one child, 42 percent of Americans said a boy compared to 27 percent who indicated a girl. This preference for boys has not changed much over a 60-year period and is even stronger than it was in 1997 (Simmons, 2000). Surveys taken by students include reasons for a sex preference that follow stereotypic thinking. “I want a girl because they are so cute and cuddly” compared to a boy preference because “He would carry on the family name and be a protector to his siblings.” The book *Revising Ophelia* (Pipher, 1994) is an excellent wake-up call regarding adolescent females and our “girl-poisoning culture.”

Girls today are much more oppressed. They face incredible pressures to be beautiful and sophisticated, which in junior high means using chemicals and being sexual. America today limits girls’ development, truncates their wholeness and leaves many of them traumatized. (Pipher, 1994, p. 12)

Cases of wasted female talents are evident at all ages. Skills are not used because of lack of confidence or reluctance to move beyond the stereotype. A bright young female student disclosed that she had always wanted to become a physician. She was settling for a career as a medical assistant, she said, because her fiancé was in school too, and she needed to work to help pay his tuition. “He doesn’t really want me to go to medical school,” she reported. This reluctance to develop a self-supporting career puts women at risk during at each stage of life. Only 50 percent of working women have retirement plans, and more than 80 percent of retired women are not eligible for pensions. Is it any wonder that 75 percent of the elderly poor are women? (*Women in Business*, 2000). The **feminization of poverty**, the increase in the number of women and often their children who are poor, is a tragic result of relying on someone else to take care of them, as women have traditionally done. A woman may not end up among the poor; however, hundreds of thousands of divorced women in their sixties are forced to stay in the workforce because they cannot afford to retire, according to the *New York Times* (*Omaha World-Herald*, 2001).

- Women earn less than men—76 cents to the dollar.
- Women spend 11.5 years out of the workforce caring for children.
- Only 30 percent of women are in jobs that earn pensions.
- Women live longer.
- Women comprise most of the low-income or no-income population (Goodman, 2001).

Even when women excel, they have found it difficult to achieve top positions. In 2000, women made up only 12.5 percent of top positions in *Fortune* 500 companies. Ironically, bosses rated female managers more highly than male managers in 16 of the 20 skills areas (Choi, 2001). A male author (Farrell, 1986) warned

women: "The beauty-focused woman who depends on men to 'tow my car,' 'pick up my packages,' and 'pay for the dates' pays a high price for her dependence on men and becomes less happy the older she gets" (p. 76).

Men, too, have suffered. Pressures to achieve and to be the primary breadwinner have caused undue stress. In a tragic situation in Lincoln, Nebraska, a middle-aged man killed his family and himself. He had been depressed because of his financial difficulties and what he perceived as his inability to support his family. "Men pay dearly for the privilege of dominating" (Keen, 1991, p. 42). Depression in men often is ignored because it is perceived as unmanly; then, without treatment, it leads to extreme individual and relationship pain (Real, 1997).

Although the exact cause is unclear, men have shorter life expectancies. In the United States, a woman can expect to live about 5.7 years longer than a man (National Center for Health Statistics, 2001). Two enlightening books, *Why Women Live Longer Than Men . . . and What Men Can Learn from Them* (Croese, 1997) and *How Men Can Live as Long as Women* (Goldberg, 1993), explain reasons for this, ranging from biological theories to stereotypic behaviors. Do you know men who resist help until their symptoms or pain is acute? Women visit doctors 30 percent more often than men (Swartzlander, 1998). Stereotypic men if they view health-giving behaviors as feminine, would seemingly be at higher risk. Women tend to be more in tune with their bodies, seek more professional help, engage in more preventive health measures, have less destructive health behaviors, and take less risk (Croese, 1997). More men than women get cancer; they also more often die from cancer and adapt less favorably to a cancer diagnosis (Nicholas, 2000).

Another reason for an earlier death stems from aggression. Male violence is destructive and clearly poses a threat to physical and emotional health. The common message for "real" men is to be tough, physically aggressive, and violent when necessary damages psychological health (Brooks, 2001). "The blueprint for masculinity is a blueprint for self-destruction" (Farrell, 1986, p. 17).

Aside from health and mortality, men, like women, can be restricted and limited. In certain situations, they feel forced to behave not as they want to but to satisfy the stereotype. They go into unsatisfying careers and are deprived of certain activities for fear of ridicule. One man said that he was an excellent volleyball player and would have liked to have been on the high school team. "It never went beyond a secret desire. Volleyball was considered a girl's sport, and I would have been the laughingstock of the school." A good point to consider is that women who increasingly take on additional roles in their personal and professional lives have an advantage over a stereotypic male who lives only a provider role. Multiple roles allow us to be productive throughout our lives, which is conducive to sound health (Croese, 1997). In contrast, a stereotypic man is ill prepared for retirement because it denotes the end of productivity.

In addition, men generally are not raised to be nurturing and expressive, which can lead to physical and psychological problems and deprive them of close relationships with others. A stereotypic man is much less likely to be comforting, to value comforting skills, or to be emotionally supportive (Kunkel and Burleson, 1999). Men generally do not create adequate emotional intimacy when they are not in partnership with a significant other; because of this, they can suffer from lack of social support (Vandervoort, 2000). One woman shared her greatest wish

as wanting to be close to her dad and to have him verbalize and show his love. "He keeps saying that he just can't show it. He does not know how because men aren't like that." The belief that "men aren't like that" plays itself out in repressive behaviors that can be destructive. Anger and despair that build up in men can result in both homicide and suicide. Men who cling to macho images of invulnerability, power, violence, and dominance are at risk (Croese, 1997). The typical male way of coping with stressful events appears to increase men's risk for coronary heart disease (Weidner, 2000).

Because men have long been dominant, what is considered masculine is viewed as worthy. In higher-prestige occupations, masculine personality attributes were found to be necessary (Cejka and Eagly, 1999). By contrast, feminine traits are devalued. For example, women who develop stereotypic masculine personality traits such as independence are praised; not so for men who reflect the softer feminine side of nurturance and warmth. This leads to a devaluation of what is considered female. Wendy wrote in a paper on gender: "As a girl, at times it was "cool" to be a tomboy; other times we learned it was better to dress up. We could show both sides and be accepted; that was not the case for boys."

Her point that males have fewer socially approved gender-role choices is well taken. In addition, as times have changed, men have become targets of negative stereotyping and "male bashing." One young man commented, "It is considered out-of-line to put women down but really funny to degrade men." Although "turning the tables" may please some, such behavior only polarizes the sexes and will not bring about gender equity. William Pollack, author and faculty member of Harvard Medical School, stated, "The stereotype of men as bad without any virtuous pieces is not right. It is time to stop arguing about which is the better half and to look for what is good in both" (Rios, 1993, p. 6).

Does it seem reasonable to continue gender stereotyping? The answer would seem to be a resounding "no." Assigning people to roles because of their sex makes no more sense than assigning them to play positions on a football team based on their shoe size (Worchel and Shebilske, 1989). Because bipolarity and stereotyping ultimately hurt everyone, what is fair and reasonable is to recognize that, psychologically, we are much more similar than dissimilar and to proclaim and live out our full human potential.

Benefits of Androgyny

Androgyny, a blend of positive masculine and feminine personality traits, will result in a better balanced individual. Sandra Bem (1974) challenged the idea that a person has to be either masculine or feminine in personality traits and behaviors and suggested that strongly sex-typed individuals might be seriously limited. Her research indicated that stereotypically feminine women were limited by being less independent and assertive, whereas masculine men were less playful, warm, and responsive. Even though stereotypic individuals would have benefited from different behaviors, they resisted. In contrast, androgynous men and women coped more effectively with diverse situations (Bem, 1975). Androgynous (from *andro*, "male," and *gyne*, "female") behavior allows for flexibility. Responding to the demands of a situation is more practical than adhering to the restrictive behaviors of a stereotype, and valuing all

positive behaviors regardless of their appropriateness for one sex or the other is advantageous to society (Doyle and Paludi, 1998).

Androgyny in early research was found to be related to a number of positive qualities and outcomes. For example, in love relationships, androgynous individuals scored higher on verbal expressions of love and nonmaterial evidence of love and were more tolerant of their loved ones' faults and more likely to express their feelings than feminine or masculine individuals (Coleman and Ganong, 1985). "It is not macho men and feminine women who make the best lovers, at least not as love is measured in this study" (p. 174). Families with one or more androgynous parents scored highest in parental warmth and support, and the researcher (Witt, 1997) maintained that parents who wish to be gender-fair and encourage the best in both their sons and daughters would benefit from an androgynous personality.

In recent years, androgyny and how it is measured have been challenged, mainly because naming polar opposites as masculine and feminine may defeat androgyny's original purpose, which was to promote a blend of characteristics (Hoffman and Borders, 2001). Instead, researchers are now focusing on concepts of **instrumentality**—traits related to competence, accomplishment and self-sufficiency—and **expressiveness**—traits associated with warmth, nurturance, and communication. A cross-cultural study conducted in Singapore supported the value of both instrumentality and expressiveness in human beings (Ward, 2000). Another study demonstrated that the use of qualities associated with both reported more positive outcomes (Stake, 2000).

A female student described her own path to androgyny.

Self-doubt came from years of my mother's coaching: "Stephanie, get a job in a hospital so you can marry a doctor" or "Stephanie, become a stewardess so you can find a pilot to marry," or "Stephanie, put on your makeup because your looks are all that count." My response today: Well, Mom, I am going to be the doctor or the pilot. I'm not going to watch others achieve while I sit on the sidelines and put on makeup!

Good news for androgyny is a study in which 60 percent of the males and 63 percent of the females identified with nontraditional gender roles (Dawson-Threat, and Huba, 1996). To make positive changes, a person needs to realize how stereotypic or androgynous she or he is. Check yourself by responding to the personality questions in Reflections and Applications. "We are all pioneers in this era of loosening and changing gender definitions to fit human needs rather than to reinforce masculine and feminine stereotypes. It is both an exciting and a threatening time" (Goldberg, 1979, p. 275).

Becoming Assertive

Because nobody is born assertive, we all share the challenge of developing a learned set of behaviors. **Assertiveness** includes maintaining one's legitimate rights, choosing for self, and expressing genuine thoughts and feelings in non-threatening ways. Assertive behavior promotes equality, and people can exercise their personal rights without denying the rights of others (Alberti and Emmons, 1995). In contrast, **nonassertive** or **passive behaviors** allow others to be in control

and always choose. Essentially one denies the self. Also opposite of assertive are **aggressive behaviors** when a person tries to control and choose for others. An aggressor enhances the self at another's expense.

How does one develop assertiveness? You can begin with attention to body language. Do you sit, stand, and walk with assurance? The way that you listen and speak indicates a great deal about your level of assertiveness. You will learn communication skills in later chapters of this book. Deciding that saying no is healthy is a primary step. Other cognitive techniques are also helpful. Ask yourself, "What is the worst thing that will happen if I say no? How does that compare to what happens to me when I say yes and resent it?" Then continue to think, "What if the person is angry with me because I say no? How bad will that be?" Keep telling yourself that you have the right to say no. Once you have decided to learn to say no, behavioral techniques are useful. Practice how you will say it. Of course, you can just say the two-letter word, but most people feel more comfortable with other kinds of statements, such as these.

- I have decided not to take on any more obligations.
- I would like to say yes; however, this time I am not going to.
- I want to spend more time with my family, so I'm not going to get involved with any more outside activities right now.
- I have been doing some time management work and prioritizing, and right now other things are more important to me.
- Thanks for asking; however, I am not going to participate now.
- Believe it or not, I am really going to say no.

Note that you are not using the word "cannot," which is usually inaccurate. Making up an excuse is generally not as convincing as the truth. It is your choice as to how much to explain. You do not owe anyone a reason, although offering a statement of fact can make saying no easier. "I have not felt well lately, and I am not taking on any additional responsibilities" is brief and clear. By speaking the truth and saying that you do not want to or you will not, you are being assertive. A primary key to assertiveness is the use of "I" statements. Do you see how each way of saying no clearly speaks for itself and is not hostile or aggressive? Effective assertiveness is usually courteous, kind, and gentle. At times saying no can be the greatest act of love (Buscaglia, 1992).

You can decide to give an indefinite or a limited no by saying no now and indicating that you might reconsider in the future. "I do not want to have any responsibility in the fall fund-raiser; however, I may help out next spring." If possible, anticipate the other person's response. You probably know some people who will accept your reason without argument. On the other hand, you may have relationships with people who have a hard time accepting no for an answer. With this latter group, you are wise to fortify yourself. One idea is to acknowledge their persuasive abilities and still be firm. "I know you are a hard person to say no to, yet I am going to do it this time."

Check your own assertive behavior by responding on the personality activity in Reflections and Applications. Assertiveness may not be one of your needed changes, although professionals agree that because no one is born assertive, almost everyone can benefit from skills training. Whatever you desire, within

REFLECT AND APPLY**Reflect**

- ◆ *How would your life be different if you had been born a person of the opposite sex?*
- ◆ *What is the first stereotype that comes to your mind for females? Males? Come up with an example of a female and a male who do not fit these stereotypes.*
- ◆ *Do you possess any androgynous behaviors? If yes, what are these?*
- ◆ *Are you generally aggressive, nonassertive, or assertive? In what ways?*

Apply

- ◆ *Observe examples of stereotypic and nonstereotypic gender-role behaviors.*
- ◆ *Ask some engaged couples if they have discussed name changing after marriage. Whether they have or have not, ask what they plan to do in this regard.*
- ◆ *Behave assertively in a personal or professional situation.*

reasonable parameters, can be accomplished. Understanding what you are all about, how you developed to this point, and what you can do to improve can turn a desire into reality. The choice is yours! (Reflect and Apply).

LOOKING BACK

- The core of self is your personality, the unique combination of qualities and behaviors that only you possess.
- Personality is influenced by both heredity and environment.
- Major theories in both psychology and sociology explain personality development.
- Erik Erikson linked personality to social development and identified eight psychosocial stages.
- Challenges to personality development are possible for a number of reasons that include being a racial/ethnic minority or an adopted child. Especially challenging because of heterosexism is forging one's identity as a gay male or lesbian.
- Personality over a life span is marked by both consistency and variation.
- The TA framework can help to understand yourself, others, and your interactions. Three ego states compose the personality. The four life positions are perspectives on life, with the preferred I'm OK, you're OK seen as a healthy orientation. A script is a personal design of life. Strokes are positive or negative, verbal or nonverbal behaviors. Types of strokes influence one's script and life position.
- The MBTI can be used to understand personality by identifying preferences in four areas. One deals with extraversion and introversion, which are important in social interaction. The other areas are related

to gathering information, making decisions, and dealing with the world. The four combine to form a personality type.

- A perception of your gender role and how you view the opposite sex are valuable. Masculinity and femininity are learned as part of one's culture. One's gender role influences personality, behavior, and expectations. Stereotypic behaviors are disadvantageous for both sexes.
- Androgyny, a blend of positive feminine and masculine traits and behaviors, has positive effects. Instrumentality and expressiveness are especially useful to well-adjusted human beings.
- Assertiveness is a set of learned behaviors that helps people maintain their legitimate rights and express thoughts and feelings in nonthreatening ways. Being assertive can improve self and relationships.