**Definitions of Personality**

* "Personality refers to individuals' characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms -- hidden or not -- behind those patterns. This definition means that among their colleagues in other subfields of psychology, those psychologists who study personality have a unique mandate: to explain whole persons."(Funder, D. C., 1997)

* "Although no single definition is acceptable to all personality theorists, we can say that personality is a pattern of relatively permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person's behavior."  
  (Feist and Feist, 2009)

### Components of Personality

So what exactly makes up a personality? As described in the definitions above, you would expect that traits and patterns of thought and emotion make up an important part. Some of the other fundamental characteristics of personality include:

* **Consistency** - There is generally a recognizable order and regularity to behaviors. Essentially, people act in the same ways or similar ways in a variety of situations.

* **Psychological and physiological** - Personality is a psychological construct, but research suggests that it is also influenced by biological processes and needs.

* **It impacts behaviors and actions** - Personality does not just influence how we move and respond in our environment; it also *causes* us to act in certain ways.

* **Multiple expressions** - Personality is displayed in more than just behavior. It can also be seen in our thoughts, feelings, close relationships and other social interactions.

### [Theories of Personality](http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/)

There are a number of different theories about how personality develops. Different schools of thought in psychology influence many of these theories. Some of these major perspectives on personality include:

* **Type theories** are the early perspectives on personality. These theories suggested that there are a limited number of "personality types" which are related to biological influences.

* [**Trait theories**](http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/trait-theory.htm) viewed personality as the result of internal characteristics that are genetically based.

* **Psychodynamic theories** of personality are heavily influenced by the work of [Sigmund Freud](http://psychology.about.com/od/profilesofmajorthinkers/p/freudprofile.htm), and emphasize the influence of the [unconscious](http://psychology.about.com/od/uindex/g/def_unconscious.htm) on personality. Psychodynamic theories include Sigmund Freud’s [psychosexual stage theory](http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/ss/psychosexualdev.htm) and Erik Erikson’s [stages of psychosocial development.](http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/psychosocial.htm)

* [**Behavioral theories**](http://psychology.about.com/od/behavioralpsychology/) suggest that personality is a result of interaction between the individual and the environment. Behavioral theorists study observable and measurable behaviors, rejecting theories that take internal thoughts and feelings into account. Behavioral theorists include [B. F. Skinner](http://psychology.about.com/od/profilesofmajorthinkers/p/bio_skinner.htm) and [John B. Watson](http://psychology.about.com/od/profilesofmajorthinkers/p/watson.htm).

* [**Humanist**](http://psychology.about.com/od/historyofpsychology/a/hist_humanistic.htm) theories emphasize the importance of free will and individual experience in the development of personality. Humanist theorists include [Carl Rogers](http://psychology.about.com/od/profilesofmajorthinkers/p/bio_rogers.htm) and Abraham Maslow.

### Personality Vs. Traits and Character

* "Having closed in on a sense of what personality is, it may be helpful to compare the concept to others with related meanings. Two concepts that quickly come to mind are 'temperament' and 'character.' In everyday language these terms are sometimes used more or less interchangeably with 'personality,' and historically they have often been used in contexts where, in more recent times, 'personality' would be employed. Within psychology, however, they have somewhat distinct meanings. Temperament usually refers to those aspects of psychological individuality that are present at birth or at least very early on in child development, are related to emotional expression, and are presumed to have a biological basis... Character, on the other hand, usually refers to those personal attributes that are relevant to moral conduct, self-mastery, will-power, and integrity."(Haslam, N., 2007)

**The Big 5 Personality Factors:**

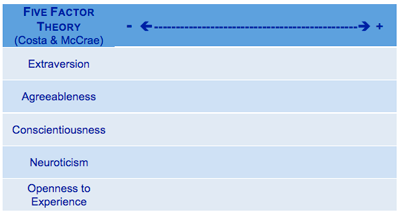
It is important to be aware that the [**personality tests**](http://www.psychometric-success.com/psychometric-tests/psychometric-tests-personality-questionnaires.htm) used in the recruitment and selection process are the intellectual property of the companies that produce them. As a result, they may use different terminology to describe the aspects of personality that they set out to measure. This usually for reasons of copyright and to differentiate themselves in a market in which there are a large number of products that do more or less the same thing in more or less the same way.

To avoid any bias and to steer clear of any copyright issues, we will use the definitions placed in the public domain by the noted psychologist Dr. John A. Johnson of Pennsylvania State University.

The [**personality traits**](http://www.psychometric-success.com/personality-tests/personality-tests-personality-traits.htm) used in the 5 factor model are Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience.

It is important to ignore the positive or negative associations that these words have in everyday language. For example, Agreeableness is obviously advantageous for achieving and maintaining popularity. Agreeable people are better liked than disagreeable people. On the other hand, agreeableness is not useful in situations that require tough or totally objective decisions.

Disagreeable people can make excellent scientists, critics, or soldiers. Remember, none of the five traits is in themselves positive or negative, they are simply characteristics that individuals exhibit to a greater or lesser extent.



Each of these 5 personality traits describes, relative to other people, the frequency or intensity of a person's feelings, thoughts, or behaviors. Everyone possesses all 5 of these traits to a greater or lesser degree. For example, two individuals could be described as ‘agreeable’ (agreeable people value getting along with others). But there could be significant variation in the degree to which they are both agreeable. In other words, all 5 personality traits exist on a continuum (see diagram) rather than as attributes that a person does or does not have.

**Extraversion**  
Extraversion is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world. Extraverts enjoy being with people, are full of energy, and often experience positive emotions. They tend to be enthusiastic, action-oriented, individuals who are likely to say "Yes!" or "Let's go!" to opportunities for excitement. In groups they like to talk, assert themselves, and draw attention to themselves.

Introverts lack the exuberance, energy, and activity levels of extraverts. They tend to be quiet, low-key, deliberate, and disengaged from the social world. Their lack of social involvement should not be interpreted as shyness or depression; the introvert simply needs less stimulation than an extravert and prefers to be alone. The independence and reserve of the introvert is sometimes mistaken as unfriendliness or arrogance. In reality, an introvert who scores high on the agreeableness dimension will not seek others out but will be quite pleasant when approached.

**Agreeableness**  
Agreeableness reflects individual differences in concern with cooperation and social harmony. Agreeable individuals value getting along with others. They are therefore considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to compromise their interests with others'. Agreeable people also have an optimistic view of human nature. They believe people are basically honest, decent, and trustworthy.

Disagreeable individuals place self-interest above getting along with others. They are generally unconcerned with others' well-being, and therefore are unlikely to extend themselves for other people. Sometimes their skepticism about others' motives causes them to be suspicious, unfriendly, and uncooperative.

Agreeableness is obviously advantageous for attaining and maintaining popularity. Agreeable people are better liked than disagreeable people. On the other hand, agreeableness is not useful in situations that require tough or absolute objective decisions. Disagreeable people can make excellent scientists, critics, or soldiers.

**Conscientiousness**  
Conscientiousness concerns the way in which we control, regulate, and direct our impulses. Impulses are not inherently bad; occasionally time constraints require a snap decision, and acting on our first impulse can be an effective response. Also, in times of play rather than work, acting spontaneously and impulsively can be fun. Impulsive individuals can be seen by others as colorful, fun-to-be-with, and zany.  
  
Nonetheless, acting on impulse can lead to trouble in a number of ways. Some impulses are antisocial. Uncontrolled antisocial acts not only harm other members of society, but also can result in retribution toward the perpetrator of such impulsive acts. Another problem with impulsive acts is that they often produce immediate rewards but undesirable, long-term consequences. Examples include excessive socializing that leads to being fired from one's job, hurling an insult that causes the breakup of an important relationship, or using pleasure-inducing drugs that eventually destroy one's health.  
  
Impulsive behavior, even when not seriously destructive, diminishes a person's effectiveness in significant ways. Acting impulsively disallows contemplating alternative courses of action, some of which would have been wiser than the impulsive choice. Impulsivity also sidetracks people during projects that require organized sequences of steps or stages. Accomplishments of an impulsive person are therefore small, scattered, and inconsistent.

A hallmark of intelligence, what potentially separates human beings from earlier life forms, is the ability to think about future consequences before acting on an impulse. Intelligent activity involves contemplation of long-range goals, organizing and planning routes to these goals, and persisting toward one's goals in the face of short-lived impulses to the contrary. The idea that intelligence involves impulse control is nicely captured by the term prudence, an alternative label for the Conscientiousness domain. Prudent means both wise and cautious. Persons who score high on the Conscientiousness scale are, in fact, perceived by others as intelligent.

The benefits of high conscientiousness are obvious. Conscientious individuals avoid trouble and achieve high levels of success through purposeful planning and persistence. They are also positively regarded by others as intelligent and reliable. On the negative side, they can be compulsive perfectionists and workaholics. Furthermore, extremely conscientious individuals might be regarded as stuffy and boring. Unconscientious people may be criticized for their unreliability, lack of ambition, and failure to stay within the lines, but they will experience many short-lived pleasures and they will never be called stuffy.  
  
**Neuroticism**  
Freud originally used the term neurosis to describe a condition marked by mental distress, emotional suffering, and an inability to cope effectively with the normal demands of life. He suggested that everyone shows some signs of neurosis, but that we differ in our degree of suffering and our specific symptoms of distress. Today neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative feelings.

Those who score high on Neuroticism may experience primarily one specific negative feeling such as anxiety, anger, or depression, but are likely to experience several of these emotions. People high in neuroticism are emotionally reactive. They respond emotionally to events that would not affect most people, and their reactions tend to be more intense than normal. They are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. Their negative emotional reactions tend to persist for unusually long periods of time, which means they are often in a bad mood. These problems in emotional regulation can diminish a neurotic's ability to think clearly, make decisions, and cope effectively with stress.

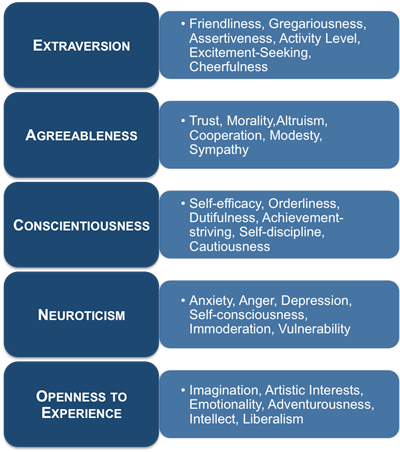
At the other end of the scale, individuals who score low in neuroticism are less easily upset and are less emotionally reactive. They tend to be calm, emotionally stable, and free from persistent negative feelings. Freedom from negative feelings does not mean that low scorers experience a lot of positive feelings; frequency of positive emotions is a component of the Extraversion domain.

**Openness to experience.**

Openness to Experience describes a dimension of cognitive style that distinguishes imaginative, creative people from down-to-earth, conventional people. Open people are intellectually curious, appreciative of art, and sensitive to beauty. They tend to be, compared to closed people, more aware of their feelings. They tend to think and act in individualistic and nonconforming ways. Intellectuals typically score high on Openness to Experience; consequently, this factor has also been called Culture or Intellect. Nonetheless, Intellect is probably best regarded as one aspect of openness to experience. Scores on Openness to Experience are only modestly related to years of education and scores on standard intelligent tests.

Another characteristic of the open cognitive style is a facility for thinking in symbols and abstractions far removed from concrete experience. Depending on the individual's specific intellectual abilities, this symbolic cognition may take the form of mathematical, logical, or geometric thinking, artistic and metaphorical use of language, music composition or performance, or one of the many visual or performing arts. People with low scores on openness to experience tend to have narrow, common interests. They prefer the plain, straightforward, and obvious over the complex, ambiguous, and subtle. They may regard the arts and sciences with suspicion, regarding these endeavors as abstruse or of no practical use. Closed people prefer familiarity over novelty; they are conservative and resistant to change.

Openness is often presented as healthier or more mature by psychologists, who are often themselves open to experience. However, open and closed styles of thinking are useful in different environments. The intellectual style of the open person may serve a professor well, but research has shown that closed thinking is related to superior job performance in police work, sales, and a number of service occupations.



**Nature Vs Nurture:**

The term **nature**refers to the biological forces that govern development. To a certain extent our development is programmed by the genetic codes we inherit. This biological program unfolds throughout childhood. In some respects, child development can be compared to the blossoming of a flower: A seed sprouts, grows into a fragile seedling, and eventually becomes a mature flowering plant. Nature provides the genetic program contained in the seed—and in the child. By now you know that genes influence the color of your eyes, but did you also know they play a role in determining your height and weight, your level of intelligence, and your basic personality?

**Nurture**refers to the environmental conditions and supports that influence development. A plant needs sunlight, water, and the proper temperature to grow—and it helps if someone pulls the surrounding weeds and adds fertilizer. Children also need to be nurtured: they need love and support from parents, siblings, extended family, teachers, peers, and other people important in their lives. Children can be greatly affected by how these important people nurture them.

Other elements of nurture include a child's economic and sociocultural environments. Poverty, malnutrition, and a lack of adequate medical care can alter a child's developmental path. Cultural heritage and diversity can enrich a child's life, and the neighborhood where the child lives can determine the schools and peer groups that a child will have.

**Individual Difference:**

**Definition:** Individual differences are the variations from one person to another on variables such as [self-esteem](http://tweenparenting.about.com/od/physicalemotionalgrowth/a/Self-Esteem-in-Children.htm), rate of [cognitive developmen](http://tweenparenting.about.com/od/physicalemotionalgrowth/a/cognitive-development.htm)t or degree of [agreeableness](http://tweenparenting.about.com/od/behaviordiscipline/a/Being-Agreeable.htm). Historically, psychological science has overlooked individual differences in favor of focusing on average behavior.

All in all, the study of individual differences helps us to understand not only what makes humans similar to one another, but also what makes them different. By considering the variations that can occur from one person to another, we can best understand the full range of human behavior. We can also come to understand what constitutes normal variation.

**Socialization:**

Human infants are born without any culture.  They must be transformed by their parents, teachers, and others into cultural and socially adept animals.  The general process of acquiring culture is referred to as **socialization** During socialization, we learn the language of the [culture](http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/glossary.htm#culture) we are born into as well as the roles we are to play in life.  For instance, girls learn how to be daughters, sisters, friends, wives, and mothers.  In addition, they learn about the occupational roles that their society has in store for them.  We also learn and usually adopt our culture's norms  through the socialization process.

**Norms** are the conceptions of appropriate and expected behavior that are held by most members of the society.  While socialization refers to the general process of acquiring culture, anthropologists use the term **enculturation**  for the process of being socialized to a particular culture.  You were enculturated to your specific culture by your parents and the other people who raised you.

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Socialization is important in the process of [personality](http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/glossary.htm#personality) formation.  While much of human personality is the result of our genes, the socialization process can mold it in particular directions by encouraging specific beliefs and attitudes as well as selectively providing experiences.  This very likely accounts for much of the difference between the common personality types in one society in comparison to another.  For instance, the Semai  tribesmen of the central Malay Peninsula of Malaysia typically are gentle people who do not like violent, aggressive individuals.  In fact, they avoid them whenever possible.  In contrast, the Yanomamö  Indians on the border area between Venezuela and Brazil usually train their boys to be tough and aggressive.  The ideal Yanomamö man does not shrink from violence and strong emotions.  In fact, he seeks them out.  Likewise, Shiite Muslim men of Iran are expected at times to publicly express their religious faith through the emotionally powerful act of self-inflicted pain.

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Successful socialization can result in uniformity within a society.  If all children receive the same socialization, it is likely that they will share the same beliefs and expectations.  This fact has been a strong motivation for national governments around the world to standardize education and make it compulsory for all children.  Deciding what things will be taught and how they are taught is a powerful political tool for controlling people.  Those who internalize the norms of society are less likely to break the law or to want radical social changes.   In all societies, however, there are individuals who do not conform to culturally defined standards of normalcy because they were "abnormally" socialized, which is to say that they have not internalized the norms of society.  These people are usually labeled by their society as deviant or even mentally ill.

**How are Children Socialized?**

Socialization is a learning process that begins shortly after birth.  Early childhood is the period of the most intense and the most crucial socialization.  It is then that we acquire language and learn the fundamentals of our culture.  It is also when much of our personality takes shape.  However, we continue to be socialized throughout our lives.  As we age, we enter new [statuses](http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/glossary.htm#status) and need to learn the appropriate [roles](http://anthro.palomar.edu/social/glossary.htm#role) for them.  We also have experiences that teach us lessons and potentially lead us to alter our expectations, beliefs, and personality.  For instance, the experience of being raped is likely to cause a woman to be distrustful of others.

Looking around the world, we see that different cultures use different techniques to socialize their children.  There are two broad types of teaching methods--formal and informal.  **Formal education**is what primarily happens in a classroom.  It usually is structured, controlled, and directed primarily by adult teachers who are professional "knowers."  In contrast, **informal education** can occur anywhere.  It involves imitation of what others do and say as well as experimentation and repetitive practice of basic skills.  This is what happens when children role-play adult interactions in their games.

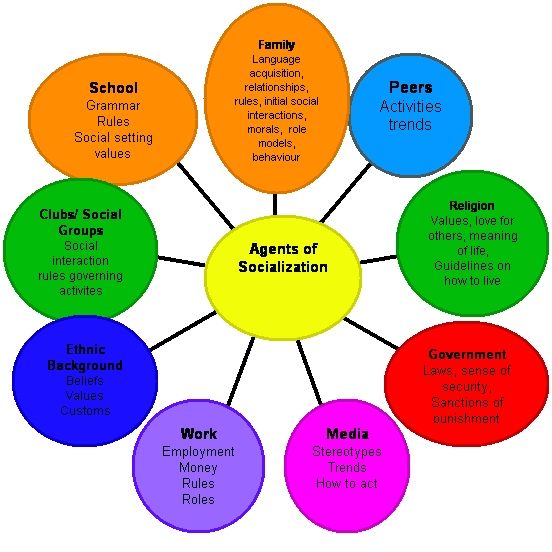
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Most of the crucial early socialization throughout the world is done informally under the supervision of women and girls.  Initially, mothers and their female relatives are primarily responsible for socialization.  Later, when children enter the lower school grades, they are usually under the control of women teachers.  In North America and some other industrialized nations, baby-sitters are most often teenage girls who live in the neighborhood.  In other societies, they are likely to be older sisters or grandmothers.

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**AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION**

There are a number of things that can affect an individual’s socialization process.  The amount of impact that each of the agents has on an individual will depend on the situation, the individuals experiences, and the stage of life the individual is in.



**Family**

*      First emotional tie  
*      Greatest impact on socialization process  
*      First place to learn language, norms, and values of the culture  
*      May be problematic  
*      Parents/Guardians may reproduce negative modeling that they experienced as a child

**Schools**

*      Opens the door to a new social world  
*      Provides importance that society places on gender and race  
*      Provides information to individuals understand themselves and others  
*      Provides skills to function as a citizen and a worker  
*      Exposure to inequality  
*      First experience of economics and social status  
*      Reduces opportunities for control and makes children feel less competent

**Peers**

*      Influential from late childhood through adolescence and early adulthood  
*      Learn how to form relationships without adult supervision  
*       May encourage good and bad interests  
*      May guide short term choices  
*      Change behaviour and personality to be accepted by peers

**Mass Media**

*      Represents impersonal communication directed at a certain audience  
*      Major type of secondary socialization  
*      Influences people’s behaviour through modeling and imitation  
*      The mass media can create and influence/control perceptions of what is important in society selecting   and stressing particular topics, views, interpretations, and themes.   
*      Advertising secretly manipulates the audience

**Definition of Diversity** 

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect.   
It means understanding that each individual is unique,   
and recognizing our individual differences.  These can be along   
the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs,   
political beliefs, or other ideologies.  It is the exploration   
of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.   
It is about understanding each other and moving beyond   
simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the   
rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

# Advantages and Disadvantages of Diversity in Workplace

Diversity in the workplace encompasses a range of elements. Differences in national origin, primary language, religion, social status and age can benefit or harm organizations. Managing diversity effectively is the key to leveraging the advantages and minimizing the disadvantages of diversity in the workplace.

## Diverse Experience

Co-workers with diverse cultural backgrounds bring unique experiences and perceptions to the table in groups and work teams. Pooling the diverse knowledge and skills of culturally distinct workers together can benefit companies by strengthening teams' productivity and responsiveness to changing conditions.

Each employee in a diverse workplace possesses unique strengths and weaknesses derived from their culture in addition to their individuality. When managed properly, diversity in the workplace can leverage the strengths and complement the weaknesses of each worker to make the impact of the workforce greater than the sum of its parts.

## Learning And Growth

Another advantage of workplace diversity is the opportunity for employees' personal growth. Being exposed to new ideas, cultures and perspectives can help individuals to reach out intellectually and gain a clearer view of their surroundings and their place in the world. Spending time with culturally diverse co-workers can slowly break down the subconscious barriers of ethnocentrism and xenophobia, encouraging employees to be more well-rounded members of society.

## Communication Issues

Diversity impacts workplace communication in positive and negative ways. Between co-workers, diversity can place impediments in the way of effective communication, which can directly dampen productivity and the cohesiveness of small groups. Spending time with diverse employees can break down communication barriers over the long-term, but first impressions and co-workers' orientation periods can be difficult to control when cultures clash.

Diversity can strengthen your company's relationships with specific customer groups by making communication more effective. Customer service representatives can be paired up with customers from their specific demographic, making the customer feel comfortable with the representative, and thus with the company. A number of companies in the southwest United States, for example, prefer to hire bi-lingual customer service reps to deal with Spanish-speaking customers in their native language.

## Integration Issues

Social integration at work can only be influenced to a small degree. The formation of cliques and exclusive social groups is a natural process that can be impossible to control at times. Because of this, companies can experience informal divisions in their staff, creating a situation where culturally diverse employees avoid exposure to each other during break times and after work. Although there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this scenario, it can hinder the effectiveness of sharing knowledge, skills and experience, thus curbing productivity growth and the effectiveness of teams.

**Patriotism**

**Patriotism** is a cultural attachment to one's [homeland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeland), excluding differences caused by the dependencies of the term's meaning upon context, [geography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography) and [philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy). In a generalized sense applicable to all countries and peoples, patriotism is a devotion to one's country.