

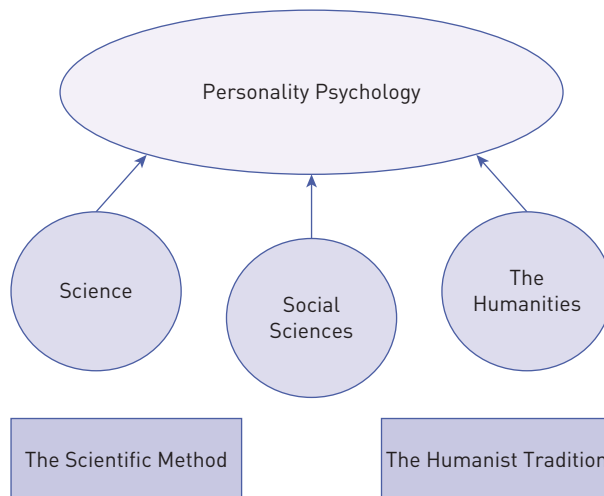




Photo 2.1

A researcher examines a CT scan. Do you mostly rely on scientific knowledge to make decisions? Think of situations wherein you relied on popular beliefs instead. Can you describe these situations?

FIGURE 2.1 ● The Scientific Traditions in the Study of Personality



CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What is cognitive neuroscience? How does it contribute to the study of personality?
2. Explain behavioral economics and why it is important for the study of personality.
3. Compare the scientific tradition and the humanistic method to study personality. Consider two assertions:
 - A. Social sciences, for example, provide evidence about the impact of education on reducing violence and crime.
 - B. The French novelist Victor Hugo (1802–1885) wrote, “He who opens a school door, closes a prison.” Do scientists and poets often convey similar ideas? What are the differences in their approaches to facts?
4. When scientists appeal to reason, artists inspire imagination. Think about and suggest the cases in which science appeals to imagination and art refers to reason.



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Photo 2.2 Have you met any identical twins? If yes, how different or similar did their behavior appear to you?

SELF-REFLECTION

Studies show that people tend to attribute positive personality characteristics, such as kindness or high intelligence, to physically attractive individuals. Mothers tend to unintentionally treat attractive children more favorably than unattractive ones. As evolutionary psychologists maintain, a friendly face is seen as attractive and beautiful because friendliness is an important evolutionary feature (Elia, 2013).

Questions

Just for the sake of this exercise, contemplate for a minute whether other people find you (a) very attractive, (b) somewhat attractive, or (c) not very attractive—based only on your “external” physical characteristics. How did these perceptions of your physical characteristics affect your view of self or your individual features? (We will revisit this issue in Chapter 8.) Discuss whether other people, in your experience, tend to associate a person’s physical characteristics, such as attractiveness, with his or her kindness.

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Explain this statement: *Genes and environment interact*. Describe yourself and some of your physical and behavioral features, as an example, to illustrate this statement.
2. Have you have heard phrases such as “the gene for the diabetes” or “the gene for thinness” or “the gene for alcoholism”? We know there are significant genetic factors involved in certain illnesses and behaviors, but we should be very careful not to oversimplifying the findings. Search the web using all three words together—*gene*, *aggression*, and *found*. You will probably find several links to articles about the genetic foundation of human aggression. Pick one article. What is its conclusion? Most likely, if this is a peer-reviewed publication, it will point to an interaction of biological and social factors that affect human aggression. If the article is posted for entertainment purposes, it will likely try to persuade us that “the gene for aggression has been found.” Sensationalism is good for headlines but not necessarily for personality psychology.
3. Explain the clinical–pathological method.
4. Identify a function of the brain’s (a) frontal lobes and (b) the amygdala that is related to an individual’s behavior.
5. At least three particularly crucial evolutionary adaptations took place and dramatically affected our ancestors’ development: bipedalism (moving by means of two rear limbs or legs), which freed up human hands for tool making; fire building and hunting; and the development of a vocal tract that allowed humans to speak and communicate. Discuss how these three adaptations could have helped our ancestors to build and improve their IG (impulse gratification) control.
6. Define *evolutionary psychology*.
7. Explain who the alpha males were and their assumed role in human evolution.
8. Why can altruism and kindness be viewed as evolutionary “products”?

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

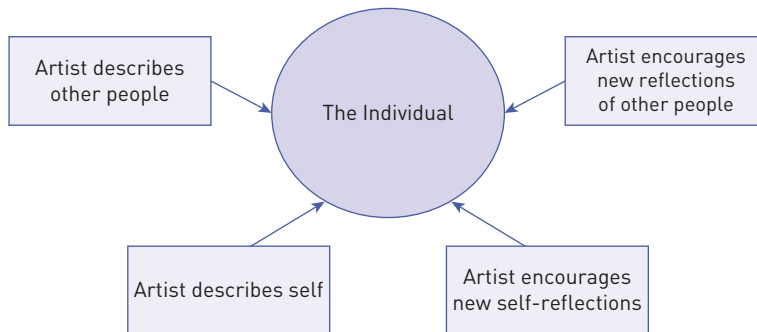
1. Name the two key summative assumptions (related to the study of personality) of social sciences.
2. Explain the phenomenon known as the “frontier spirit” in America and Japan.
3. What is class consciousness? How does it relate to the study of personality?

TABLE 2.1 ● Religious Prescriptions of Engagement and Disengagement

Prescriptions	Action and Engagement	Inaction and Disengagement
Positive prescriptions and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become an activist; volunteer.• Engage others.• Make a difference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not impose your views.• Grow inside through self-discipline, knowledge, and mediation.
Negative prescriptions and taboos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abstain from substances.• Abstain from sex before marriage.• Confront evil temptations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reject wealth, greed, and material success.• Pursue a simple life; embrace asceticism.

Sources: Ellens, 2011; Graham and Haidt, 2010.

FIGURE 2.2 ● Art's Impact on the Individual's Personality



CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Explain the transcendental side of human experience.
2. How would you explain nirvana?
3. Does religion affect your behavior directly? Discuss a few examples illustrating the impact of your religious beliefs on your daily habits and behavior.
4. How does art impact an individual's personality?
5. Which literary or film character has had at least some impact on your ideas or behavior? The impact does not have to be direct and overwhelming. It can be limited and subtle.

TABLE 2.2 ● Knowing Your Own Individual Features

Individual Features	Assessments
Physical features: Describe your height, weight, body shape, and so on.	Are you satisfied with your physical features? Mostly satisfied Not sure Mostly dissatisfied
Health: Describe if you have health issues or concerns today.	Are you satisfied with your health? Mostly satisfied Not sure Mostly dissatisfied
Social status: Describe your income, living conditions, and education today.	Are you satisfied with your social status? Mostly satisfied Not sure Mostly dissatisfied
Personal relationships: Describe your friends, relatives, and people with whom you are close today.	Are you satisfied with your personal relationships? Mostly satisfied Not sure Mostly dissatisfied
Daily habits: Describe the things you do regularly—your daily routines.	Are you satisfied with your daily habits? Mostly satisfied Not sure Mostly dissatisfied



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Photo 2.3 Do you exercise regularly? If you do, how does being active affect your individual traits? If you do not exercise, does this inactivity reflect your personality?

TABLE 2.3 ● Changing Own Individual Features

Individual Features	Areas of Change
Physical features: Describe your height, weight, body shape, and so on.	Do you want to change your physical features? In which way? How soon?
Health: Describe if you have health issues or concerns today.	Do you want to change your health status? In which way? How soon?
Social status: Describe your income, living conditions, and education today.	Do you want to change your social status? In which way? How soon?
Personal relationships: Describe your friends, relatives, and people with whom you are close today.	Do you want to change your personal relationships? In which way? How soon?
Daily habits: Describe the things you do regularly—your daily routines.	Do you want to change your daily habits? In which way? How soon?

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What is yoga, and what can it do for self-improvement?
2. Explain positive psychotherapy.
3. What is social categorization? Give examples.
4. Read about the similarities and differences concerning religion while considering how different and how similar religions and their followers are.

Similarities. Religiosity describes the degree or depth of one's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dedication to a religion. There are levels or dimensions of religiosity, which involves believing, emotionally bonding with religious knowledge, behaving, and belonging (Saroglu, 2011). Religious teachings may have a relatively similar impact on individuals regardless of their specific religions. Religious rituals and the experience of related emotions seem rather universal across cultures (Saroglou, 2014). Religious teachings may have a different impact on individuals simply because these individuals are already different when they turn to their religions.

Differences. The very specific forms, predictors, and outcomes of religion and personal religiosity should vary as a function of many factors referring to specific geographic region, climate zone, ethnicity, history, politics, and so on. Consider a simple example: Religious groups endorse a great variety of beliefs and rituals regarding food. Jews and Muslims don't eat pork, and Hindus don't eat beef. Catholics don't eat meat on Fridays during Lent. Consider (and research if necessary) other important differences—such as food, clothing, and rituals—among different religions.

Questions

Studies show that different religious teachings tend to inspire similar individual features in us, including honesty, goodwill, modesty, and kindness. In other words, if two people belong to different religions yet they are equally bright, kind, and generous, then what is the difference between their religious beliefs, in your view? Does their actual everyday behavior make it relatively unimportant what they eat and how they pray? Or does their diet or their style of praying matter in our understanding of them?

Visual Review

