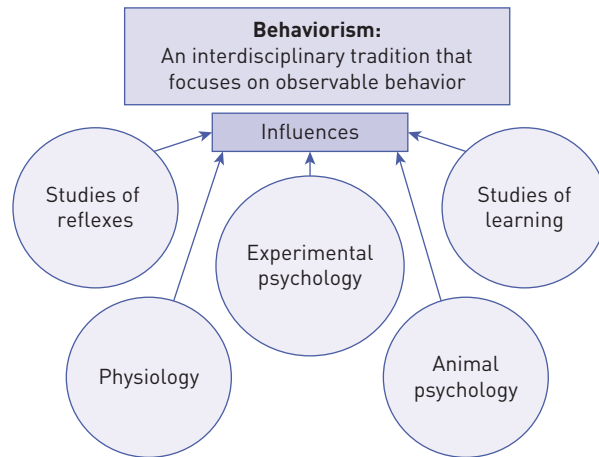




FIGURE 6.1 ● The Behavioral Learning Tradition: An Illustrative Model



CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

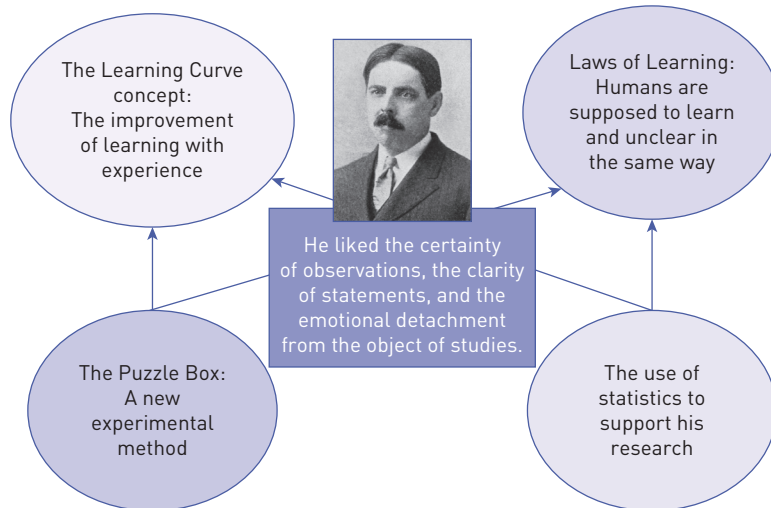
1. Describe yourself from a “behavioral” standpoint. Compose five short statements containing five verbs that reflect what you do as a person (it is a challenging task, but it should help in grasping the essence of behaviorism). Emphasize things you do and not how you feel or what you like and dislike. Compare your profile with one composed by another person. How different or similar are the profiles? What is the main limitation of such descriptions?
2. Who were behaviorist physicians? Imagine this profession existed today and you got a job as a behaviorist physician. What would you ideally want to do? Be creative and discuss in class.

Photo 6.1 There is a monument to the unknown dog in St. Petersburg (Russia), near the Institute of Experimental Medicine, where Ivan Pavlov headed the physiology laboratory for many years; it was commissioned and partially designed by Pavlov himself to honor the animals that died for the sake of scientific progress. Is it possible for animals to be used in research of personality psychology? Dogs, for example, play a big therapeutic role in helping people with psychological problems. Are there other areas in which animals can be studied and used?



Photo by Sergei Pavlov

FIGURE 6.2 ● The Impact of Edward Thorndike



Source: Photo in the public domain.

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What is parsimony? Recall a relatively important decision you have made recently. Explain this decision in a few sentences, using the parsimony principle. The causes of your behavior should appear as simple as possible.
2. Watch television and pay attention to all the commercials over a 30-minute period. Count and describe in a short sentence every display of anthropomorphism in these commercials (such as talking dogs, dancing cats, etc.). What exactly did the animals do or say? In which social activities is anthropomorphism also common?
3. Give an example of the learning curve using a recent episode from your life.
4. Which life situations involving humans should resemble, in your view, Thorndike's "puzzle box"? Have you ever been in such situations, and what did you do?
5. Assume you have a video of seven people stuck in the elevator for 15 minutes and later freed. As a behaviorist who could examine the video, what can you learn about these seven individuals?

SELF-REFLECTION

Bekhterev used the concept of energy to explain immortality. Trying to cope with the mystery of death, he argued, many people turn to religion as a great source of hope. Many believe in the immortal soul or the resurrection of the dead. However, in his view, science could provide the most profound justification of immortality.

According to the principle of energy conservation (he borrowed it from physics), energy cannot disappear without a trace, and it cannot appear without being caused by another source of energy (Bekhterev, 1916/2001). Human internal energy transforms into the energy of muscles, thoughts, and actions. When a person dies, the decay of the body leads to decomposition of the organism into simple elements. Yet life is not over; according to Bekhterev, our personality continues into new forms of energy, including the thoughts and actions of other people. Our lives still influence the lives of other people! This is, in fact, the life cycle of immortality (Dobrev-Martinova & Strickland, 2001).

Questions

Animals don't seem to care how their offspring will remember them. Why do people care about how they will be remembered? Do you personally care? Why or why not? If our immortality is pre-determined by our actions, as some behaviorists have proposed, would you agree that some people become more "immortal" than others because they have accomplished more and impacted more people during their lives? As a behaviorist, discuss and suggest an "index of immortality," which is a composite measure of a person's impact. What criteria would you suggest for this index (for example, the number of Google "hits" related to this person)?

FIGURE 6.3 ● Pavlov: Types of the Nervous System and Their Behavioral Profiles

Strong	Balanced	Agile	Strong, balanced, and agile type. Inhibition and excitement are balanced. The person adjusts quickly to changing conditions and can stand up to difficulties. Makes quick decisions and changes strategies when necessary.
		Inertial	Calm and slow type. Able to resist significant pressure. The person can handle difficult situations by ignoring them or by making carefully planned decisions. Changes in habits and behavioral strategies are difficult to make.
	Imbalanced	Strong and imbalanced type. Excitement dominates over inhibition. Explosive and temperamental, feisty and energetic. The person can stand up to difficulties but often cannot control emotions. Frequently and in various situations may lose self-control.	
Weak	Weak type. Experiences difficulties under the pressure of challenges, including lack of time. Highly avoidant and sensitive to external signals such as other people's opinions. The person often has a hard time making quick decisions or selecting among choices.		

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Let's assume Bekhterev was right about energy transformation. Now recall the activities that consumed your "energy" today. Consider two variables such as (1) the time spent on these activities and (2) the effort (small—significant—very significant) you have used in these activities. Which activity has drained most of your energy and why? How could you—or not—save more energy next time around?
2. Choose a character from a book or a movie. Design a brief behavioral profile of this character using Pavlov's three functions of the nervous system: strength, balance, and agility. How strong or weak, balanced or imbalanced, and agile or inertial is this character?
3. Write a brief behavioral profile of yourself (your behavioral characteristics) using Pavlov's three functions of the nervous system. What type are you likely to be? Strong, balanced, and agile? Or imbalanced and inertial? Or will it be weak? Maybe you will discover another combination.

FIGURE 6.4 ● **Personality According to John Watson (1919)**

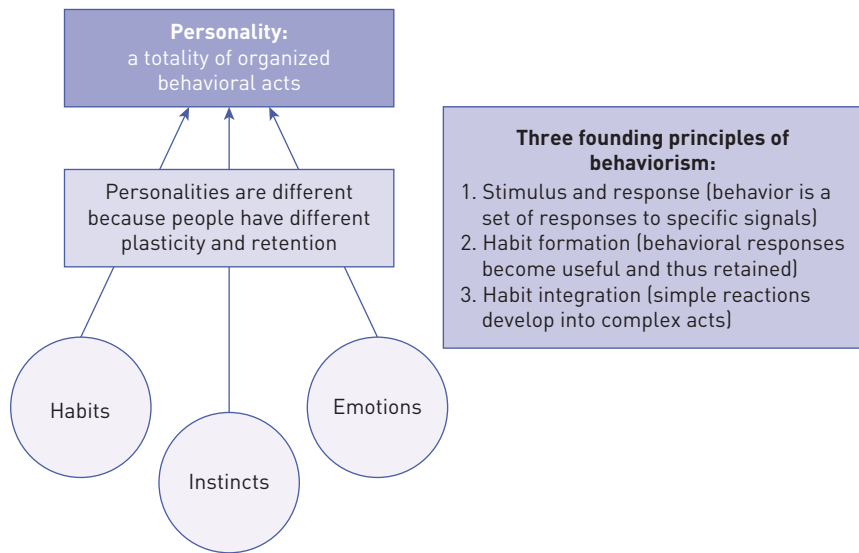
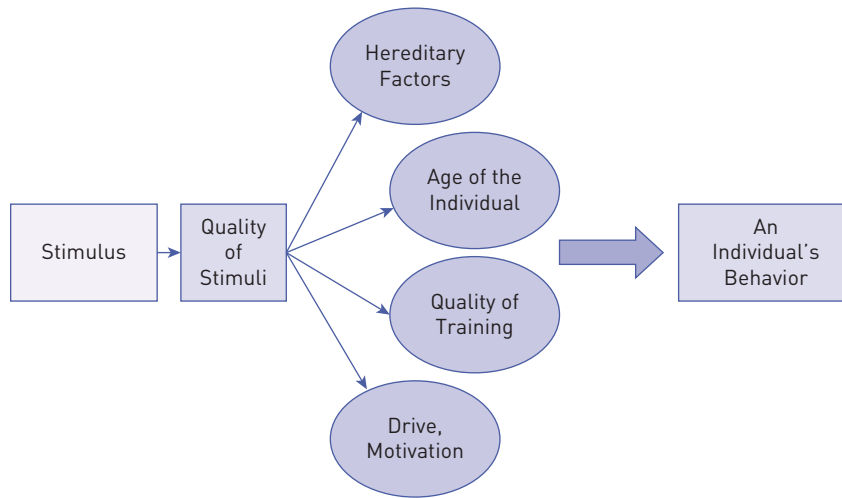


TABLE 6.1 ● **Psychology's Objectives and Their Applications to the Study of Personality**

Psychology's Objectives	What It Means in the Study of Personality
All speculations about the mechanisms of "the mind" and "consciousness" should be abandoned.	An individual is better understood when psychologists focus on what he or she does.
All experiments should be verified and controlled. Specifically, introspection should be ruled out as a method of scientific investigation.	New experimental procedures should be developed and implemented. Psychologists should not ask "How do you feel?" but measure an individual's actions.
Psychology should become an experimental branch of natural science. Psychology should resemble biology.	It is desirable to compare an individual's behavior to the behavior of an animal, especially in experimental situations.
The ultimate goal of psychology should be to describe, predict, and control human behavior. To achieve these goals, psychology must embrace behavior as the subject of studies.	Studying personality is also about applying the received data in various fields, including work, education, communications, advertisement, health care, and so on. Psychologists should play a bigger role in society.

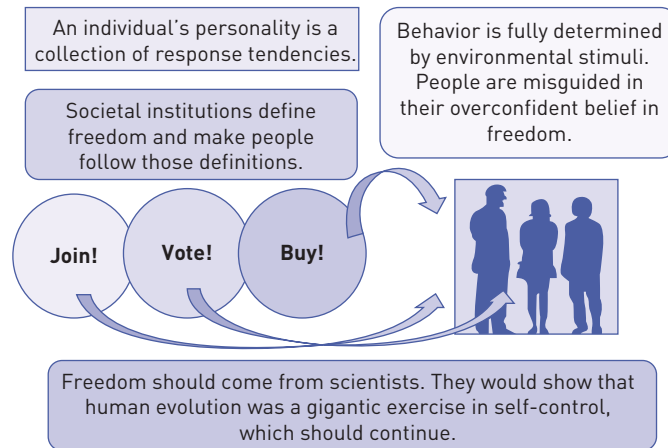
FIGURE 6.5 ● Tolman's Modification of the Behaviorist Formula



CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Could you improve your own plasticity? Recall what Watson meant by it. Think of one habit (a) you do not particularly like in yourself (like procrastination) or (b) you think needs development (like being more punctual, for example). Think of the circumstances in which this habit appears. Without delay, prepare a plan to change this habit. Start today. Monitor the changes.
2. Imagine a dilemma. You can get a B+ as a final grade in this class now, and then you do not have to attend this class any longer. If you reject this offer, you stay in this class, but no particular grade is guaranteed. What will you do? Explain your decision by using Tolman's cognitive map concept. What factors did you include in your decision?

FIGURE 6.6 ● **Skinner's Views of Personality, Freedom, and the Societal Role of Behaviorists**



CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Skinner's Aircrib today appears outdated and even odd. Yet was his idea of a monitoring and conditioning system odd? Search the web to see what kinds of apps and devices are available today to monitor and entertain a child when the parent is not nearby. Suggest your own device or an app that would provide a kind of positive reinforcement to a baby. Your creative ideas are welcome.
2. Spend about 10 minutes online looking at your favorite websites and social networks. Select five ads that you see while you are online. Take screenshots of them or write down their contents. Do these ads reflect the content of the website you were on? Which of these ads, if any, reflect your shopping habits? Make an argument for or against Skinner's viewpoint that the "system" in which we live hints, suggests, and dictates what you should buy and how you should spend your time.

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Based on what you know about Rotter's research, do you think you are more external, internal, or somewhere in between?
2. After you've made your best guess, go to the companion website to find the original Rotter scale to measure your locus of control. Does your score reflect your expectation about your locus of control? As in previous examples and self-evaluations, use the knowledge about yourself critically and wisely.

Photo 6.2 The Bobo doll experiments sparked a discussion about the role of imitation in behavior. Do you find that people tend to imitate “bad” behavior easier than they imitate “good” behavior? Why?



CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Self-efficacy is not a dichotomous (one either has it or not) but rather a continuous variable (see Chapter 3 on methodology). Self-efficacy can be high and low and anywhere in between. It can be stable, or it can change. Pick a difficult life situation you have encountered either recently or some time ago. How would you evaluate your self-efficacy in that situation? Describe your self-observations in a paragraph.
2. Who among your friends or family members has high self-efficacy? Describe briefly this person's behavior indicative of his or her self-efficacy.



© Stockphoto.com / Henk Baemhorst

Photo 6.3 Behavioral economists bring an individual dimension to the study of economic decisions. Think about yourself. Do you have the particular personality features of a good entrepreneur or not? Explain why.

CHECK AND APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Taylorism is psychology's convenient target to criticize, yet you can find some of its ideas applicable to our daily lives. For example, how much time do you waste every day on something that's under your control? Reflect on your day today. Identify the moments that you consider a waste of time (it could be anything, like chatting with someone, spending time on social networks, browsing the web aimlessly, just hanging out, etc.). Now make an authoritative decision: Tomorrow, try to regain at least some of the time that you think you wasted today. Shorten, cut, or avoid just one of the activities you listed. Do the same the next day. Make saving time a habit. After 2 or 3 days of such habit formation, describe your impressions. Discuss them in class. Was Taylor right or wrong for "pushing" us to change our habits? Will you continue practicing your time saving? Why or why not?
2. Behavioral economics teaches about rational and irrational choices. Return to the example on subjective safety and risky behavior. These days, car accidents are down, and cars are getting safer. However, one of the biggest risks now is the use of electronic devices when driving. Just 2 seconds of taking your eyes off the road may lead to a tragedy.
 - a. In the following practicum, for 1 week, conduct a self-monitoring exercise: Join with two or three people and pledge not to use a smartphone while driving—the driver shall not text or browse the web while sitting behind the wheel.
 - b. During this week, recall the episodes when you were really tempted to use the device. What were the occasions? Did you use the phone or not? Did you stop your car first before using it?
 - c. Discuss your observations with others. Has your pledge helped you not to use the phone and to what degree?
 - d. How would personal examples help persuade others not to text or browse while driving?

Visual Review

