



PRAGMATIC EXCELLENCE

A Behavioral Approach

www.pragmaticexcellence.net

2.0

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What determines my behavior?	4
What assimilates my behavior?	6
What motivates me?	10
How attached a person, am I?	14
How dependent a person, am I?	17
Who controls me?	19
Is the world a just place?	21
Is there a Supreme Power?	23
What kind of a person, am I?	26
How I control myself?	37
How positive I feel for myself?	40
How self-disposed a person, am I?	43
How prone am I to fear?	50
How aggressive a person, am I?	53
Is the world a prejudiced place?	58
How prone am I to guilt?	61
How prone am I to anxiety?	63
How prone am I to hurt?	67

How stressed a person, am I?	71
How I manage my impression?	75
How satisfying are my relationships?	79
How happy a person, am I?	84
Acknowledgements and References	90

Introduction

Humans have evolved through the rigors of competition and innovation. Such rigors have exposed us to the perpetual demand for efficiency. The proficiency needed to deliver the outstanding is excellence.

The multifaceted life of modern humans necessitates diverse standards of excellence in the human ecosystem. Education, jobs, skills, performances, accomplishments, institutions, organizations, associations, establishments, etc.; all have their unique standards of excellence. Even the life an individual endures or the values an individual carries have standards of excellence.

However, these standards do not work in isolation. Human nature is the common thread of connection and is the primary driver of excellence in the human ecosystem. Other factors, like education, skill, resource, technology, infrastructure, etc., play a secondary role.

The universal race of excellence, somehow, undermines the importance of human nature. Preset rules of excellence, for varied aspects of human life, are not suitable for all. Humans share broad characteristics, but individual features vary from one to another. Excellence is best accomplished when one's components work in harmony. Pursuance of life objectives, if aligned with personal characteristics, realizes optimal potentials.

It is desirable that an institution should give due importance to the innate needs of each individual, but the truth is that each institution is guided by its own objectives and, in practice, is likely to falter. The primary responsibility of identifying personal characteristics and life objectives, therefore, rests with the person itself.

However, the perplexities of life create dilemmas for an individual. Why I behave the way I do? Why others behave the way others do? What can help me in understanding myself and others? How do I decide what is right for me? How do I pursue what I think is right for me? These and many more such questions continuously bother us.

These questions assume broader significance in the present context when technological advancements are impacting human life in a big way. How modern humans will cope with such changes is a crucial debating point. No one has a clear answer at this stage. However, a person's competence to tackle such twists rises with the grasp of human nature. A person with better awareness has better skills to adaptability, compared to those who lack.

Modern scientific studies have facilitated a much better understanding of human nature. We provide well-thought-out scientific tools to address the perplexities of life. These tools are just-the-right to apply in our everyday life and should help an individual in pursuing excellence with a pragmatic approach to every aspect of life.

We have drawn ideas from multiple resources. Specific sources are acknowledged under the section "Acknowledgements and References" in the handbook.

What determines my behavior?

Human behavior is puzzling. We all have many questions in our minds. We wonder why do we behave the way we do, why do we get angry, why do we feel stressed, why are we hurt, why we feel sad, why we feel happy? There are many more such questions.

Biological research suggests that humans have evolved through the process of natural selection. Still, it isn't easy for many of us to accept that we are just one of the many species on this planet. Three broad aspects of human life provide clues to what shaped our behavior.

Evolution

Like any other living being on Earth, humans are supposed to have evolved through a process of natural selection. This process has made us the kind of living being we are. Some human behavior developed during the long phase of evolution to deal with the problems that our ancestors faced during that time; fear is one such example.

Self-Awareness

This is the ability of humans to think about themselves consciously. This ability is the unique quality of humans, which distinguishes them from the rest of living beings. All animals can think, but only a few can think consciously about themselves. Few other animals can plan for the near future. Few animals like chimpanzees and

dolphins have the ability to think about themselves. But only humans can think consciously about themselves in complex ways. Humans plan not only for their near future but for their long-term goals. Humans also think about who they are and what they are. They evaluate themselves and even try to change their behavior.

Culture

Culture makes humans different from other living beings. Culture allows beliefs, behavioral patterns, new ideas, and techniques in a group or society to be passed from generation to generation. In this way, culture allows human achievements to be cumulative. Few animals can transfer behavioral patterns to other group members. Still, no other animal has beliefs, rituals, and customs, as detailed and complex as humans.

What assimilates my behavior?

The concept that human behavior is the result of learning has been the dominant idea of the mainline scientific psychology for the entire 19th and a significant part of the 20th century. Only in the 1980s and 1990s, the evolutionary ideas slowly started getting recognition in psychology. Along the lines of evolutionary ideas of biology, psychology also began to understand human behavior for evolutionary ideas. Today, nature and nurture both are recognized for playing crucial roles in assimilating human behavior.

History of human evolution dates back to more than 6 million years. Whereas the history of human civilization, when agriculture and settled life started, supposedly dates back to about 10,000 years. More than 99% of human existence on this planet, we have lived the life of hunters and gatherers; only a small fraction of our life has been spent as civilized communities.

The way human life has evolved over these millions of years; human characteristics also evolved over these years. The human brain largely developed during the entire period and has not changed much in the short span of civilized life. Our nature also has not changed much during the short span of civilized existence.

People generally think of evolution in terms of physical aspects through natural selection, but the development of behavioral and psychological characteristics is also part of evolutionary processes.

The way our physical elements have evolved, many of our psychological features also have evolved.

Charles Darwin provided the Theory of Evolution and Natural Selection in 1859. He suggested that all living beings have evolved from earlier species. The process of natural selection ensures the survival of the fittest. Those who are best adapted to living conditions only survive. All individuals vary from each other, and some of these variations are due to inheritability.

Gregor Mendel provided the fundamental laws of inheritance in 1865, through his work on pea plants. He is called the father of genetics. He deduced that genes come in pairs and inherited as distinct units, one from each parent. Each one appears as dominant or recessive traits in the offspring. However, at that time, Mendel's work was ignored. His work got prominence again in the 20th century after Mendel had passed away. Significant progress in the field established many facts. Cells are the basic building blocks of all living beings. Cells house deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Each person's DNA is unique. Genes are part of DNA. Genes are the basic unit of inheritance.

During the long span of human evolution, humans have faced many challenges, the important ones being finding food, protecting themselves, and managing relationships. All individuals were never the same; some had better adaptive characteristics to deal with these challenges in more efficient ways. Over a while, only those individuals who had better adaptive features, could successfully deal with those challenges, could survive, could produce offspring and passed on their genes to future generations. Individuals, who

lacked required adaptive characteristics, could not endure, reproduce, and pass on their genes to successive generations as rapidly and, over some time, became extinct.

Genes, of individuals who had better adaptive characteristics, not only helped them in survival but were also associated with the behaviors that helped them meet those life challenges successfully. We are the descendants of those individuals who were most successful at surviving and reproducing throughout the history of human evolution. The genes that have been passed on to us from generation to generation are responsible not only for our physiological and biological characteristics but also for psychological and behavioral aspects.

Modern humans have consistently shown the basic needs of social-acceptance, group-belonging, influencing-others, protection-against-harm, and close-relationship. These basic needs originated during the evolutionary past and promoted survival and reproduction among humans during the evolutionary phase. Individuals who could not manage these needs efficiently did not survive. We continue to seek these needs of life because evolution built those motives into human nature.

We want to be accepted, if not by all, at least by the valuable ones. Rejection, at a minimum, is not desired. A significant part of our actions is guided in that direction – being cooperative, helpful, and supportive. We want to belong to groups – work, sports, political, civic, etc. We want to influence others – think about specific issues, hold certain beliefs, agree with us, and act in particular ways. The quality of our life is affected by the treatment we receive from

others. We want to protect ourselves from any harm – physical, emotional, unfair treatment, cheating, etc. We want a close relationship – intimate relations, dependable friends, and relatives.

What motivates me?

The motive is an internal force that leads an individual's thoughts and behavior towards producing satisfying conditions and eliminating unsatisfying circumstances. Motivation is the desire to achieve an end and organizing resources to achieve that end. Motives and motivations vary from person to person.

Humans display varieties of thoughts, behavior, and acts that are driven by one or more underlying motivations. Some of these motivations are part of fundamental human nature, whereas others are a later development.

Belonging motivation

Humans are social species. They live in groups and establish relationships with other individuals. Humans, in general, show the desire for social acceptance and belonging. An individual who ultimately does not show such interest is considered psychologically dysfunctional. Some people show strong motivation for belonging and acceptance, whereas others show weaker motivation for the same.

Affiliation motivation

The desire for warm relations with others is called affiliation motivation. Humans show a willingness to foster and maintain relationships with other persons, which are mutually harmonious, enjoyable, and reciprocating. Some people show strong motivation

for affiliation, whereas others show weaker motivation for the same.

Social-desirability motivation

Social-desirability is the human tendency to present self favorably and acceptably. By appearing in a socially and culturally appropriate and acceptable manner, individuals try to gain approvals from others.

Rejection-sensitivity motivation

The desire to avoid rejection from others is a core motivation for humans, the same as the desire for acceptance. Most people are concerned with preventing rejection from essential others, like relatives, friends, colleagues, and romantic partners. Any social rejection affects a person's psychological functioning and behavior. Such rejections lead to increased hostility and decreased prosocial behavior. Rejection sensitive people display intense reactions to rejections. Rejection anxiety leads one to respond to even the anticipation of rejection.

Achievement motivation

The process and efforts to be competent and to accomplish is the achievement. Many people are driven by the motivation to achieve. The perception of performance generates emotions of self-evaluation and, therefore, is closely linked to self. The motive of achievement directly connects to the feeling of pleasant, unpleasant, success, pride, and shame.

Power motivation

The desire to influence, control, impress other people, and to gain recognition and acclaim for self is power motivation. People motivated by power enjoy reactions from others in the form of admiration, astonishment, and even fear. Such people might use means like vigorous efforts and forceful actions to control others and might display brash personal characteristics.

Sensation seeking motivation

The desire to try varied, novel, complex, and intense experiences is sensation-seeking motivation. The urge for excitement might also involve the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks, but these are not essential. Sensation seekers do many things that are not risky. Sensation seeking motivation might reflect in the field of art, literature, music, media, film. It also reflects in smoking, drinking, drugs, risky driving, risky sports, risky vocations.

Knowledge motivation

The urge to probe and understand the mysteries surrounding our existence is knowledge motivation. Knowledge motivation, at the primary level, might feed into the achievement or power motivations. But, at a deeper level, it serves the higher purpose of life – probing and understanding for the sake of wisdom, spiritual-attainment, self-growth, and service-to-others.

Wealth motivation

The desire to endlessly accumulate materialistic valuables for the sake of hoarding, with no clarity on end-use, is wealth motivation.

Wealth motivation might be serving the broader purposes of achievement and power motivations if the use of wealth is to seek those objectives. However, some people tend to have a motive to accumulate wealth for the sake of hoarding. While humans have shown the tendency to preserve for contingency since the evolutionary period, heightened motivation to accumulate wealth appears to be an offshoot of the modern lifestyle.

How attached a person, am I?

Attachment function is part of the human behavioral system, which allows humans to establish primary connections and seek support in times of difficulties. The genetic factors play a significant role in how a person's attachment system functions and how individuals differ from each other.

The history of close relationships in a person's own life shapes the functional model of attachment in that person's life. This model, in turn, influences the nature and outcome of all subsequent relationships like, with friends, co-workers, relatives, partners, children, any other persons. The quality of interaction with attachment figures in the time of need affects the functioning of the attachment system. The quality of such communications is a major cause of individual differences.

The attachment system has a biological function. An infant or a child seeks protection from threats and dangers by maintaining proximity to caregivers and support-providers during the early stage of life at birth and the time needed to grow to maturity. The needs for protection, assistance, and cooperation continue throughout the lifespan. The attachment system is most visible during the early years of life, but it is active across the lifespan.

The sense of safety, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-respect, and well-being are linked, in a big way, to the quality of social interaction and close relationships in one's own life. When a person

does not receive reliable, trustworthy, and supportive communication, the development of personality is distorted with severe negative consequences.

An actual event or a symbolic act that threatens the sense of safety and security activates the attachment system. Even a feeling that an attachment figure is not sufficiently close or interested or responsive activates the attachment system.

The attachment system activation prompts the expression of distress, the desire of proximity, and the maintenance of proximity. Such feelings are prominently visible in children. Among adults, it could be just activation of the internal comfort of mental proximity to the attachment figure.

When an attachment figure is available, sensitive, and responsive, the individual feels secure and tends to see the world as safe, others as helpful, exploration as rewarding. Such a sense is a signal for the individual that the attachment system is functional, and the strategy is effective.

When an attachment figure is lost or not available, or not responsive, or weak at the response, the functioning of the attachment system is disrupted. The sense of distress keeps compounding. Serious doubt about the sense of security, world being a safe place, others being helpful, engagement being rewarding arises. Negative feelings and worries about self and others keep the attachment system in an activated state. The sense of threat and the need for protection interfere with other activities.

Such a sense might lead to the readjustment of the working of the attachment system and prompt a person to seek proximity to another attachment figure. This urge might prompt an individual to engage in hyperactivity of finding an attachment figure. The efforts continue until the vicinity is established. The attachment system is deactivated after safety and security are attained. However, if the person fails to find and develop proximity to an attachment figure, he/she gets into the mode of hopelessness and tends to withdraw completely.

How dependent a person, am I?

Dependency is the tendency of individuals to rely on other persons for support and protection. It originates from the mental state of viewing the self as weak and ineffective. Dependency is unhealthy when individuals tend to rely upon others for support and protection, even in situations where independent functioning is required.

The behavior of a dependent person is mostly a function of his/her perception of interpersonal risks and opportunities. Goals, beliefs, and expectations drive dependency related behavior. The behavior of a dependent person varies from situation to situation, but the underlying factors are constant.

The behavior of a dependent person may be influenced primarily by one of the following factors:

1. View other as powerful and self as weak
2. Desire to maintain a good relationship with others viewed as the protector
3. Fear of negative evaluation by persons who matter
4. Strategy to avoid rejection by significant others

People having excessive dependency tend to display the behavior of inactivity. Such people always look to others for support and believe that there is still someone available for help. High dependent persons tend to display excessive fear of abandonment by a partner, which exposes them to the risk of being abused.

Parenting style plays a vital role in the development of the dependency system in a child. Overprotective parenting makes a child feel weak and vulnerable and turn to others for protection from a hostile environment. Authoritarian parenting makes a child feel rigid and not to accede to others' demands easily. Instead, supportive parenting is needed to develop a healthy dependency style in a child.

Excessive dependency, which is uncontrolled and part of general behavior across situations, is considered to be a sign of unhealthy dependence.

Healthy dependency is selective, flexible, in the right context, and situation appropriate. Healthy dependency displays a mature style of defense, careful handling of circumstances, better skills for social issues, and better control over impulses.

Who controls me?

The control system of a person is the function of a belief that determines whether a behavior will influence or will not influence the increase in the strength (reinforcement) of achievement in his/her life. The nature of support further strengthens or weakens a person's belief for future behavior (based on the past behavioral outcome).

When reinforcement is viewed by one as dependent upon one's own behavior, it is considered a belief in internal control. Positive, successful experiences in life increase belief in the internal control system.

When reinforcement is viewed by one as dependent upon surrounding forces or to be a function of luck or chance or fate, it is considered a belief in external control. Negative, unsuccessful experiences in life increase belief in the external control system.

Our acknowledgment of experiences in terms of internal or external control system further strengthens the continuation of belief in the system. Four categories of acknowledgment styles are well recognized:

1. Believe in internal controls across all situations
2. Internal and external views as per condition
3. Social behavior influenced by external beliefs
4. Believe in external controls across all situations

People try to explain reasons for success or failure, happiness or unhappiness, positive-experience or negative-experience in a fair, consistent way according to their acknowledgment style.

Is the world a just place?

The underlying principle of the Just-World is 'We get what we deserve, and We deserve what we get.'

The human world is full of injustices and inequalities, whether it is wealth distribution or social rights or political rights or access to health, education, and justice systems. People suffer when confronted with injustices.

People consciously react to injustices, but unconsciously feel the need to restore justice. Belief in the just-world is an essential but unconscious response to unfairness. Conscious and unconscious reactions to injustices coexist and may be activated simultaneously.

Belief in the just-world leads an individual to think that good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people. Such an individual believes in fair treatment to others and reasonable response from others. They also believe in fair means, appropriate tasks, equitable rewards, and trust in the future. Those who want to be treated justly by others also feel obliged to treat others justly – stronger the belief in the just-world, stronger the justice motive.

When a strong-believer of just-world encounters injustices that appear unresolved in the real world, one tries to justify them as partly self-inflicted. This implies that their actions were responsible for such an outcome. Such a person tends to blame the victims for

their fate. Such a justification enables that person to continue with the just-world belief.

The just-world belief leads individuals to rely on their good deeds, hoping that reward will come sometime in the future. The trust also leads individuals to believe that rewards, if not in the present life, will come in the life after. Thus, they keep investing in the future. Such individuals experience lesser negative emotions, feel less threatened, accept challenges, and achieve better results. They are more likely to help people who are innocent or are in need.

A high degree of unjust experiences starts affecting the just-world belief of an individual and, extreme cases of bad experiences might lead to socially non-compliant behavior. When people do not believe in the just-world, they tend to see all actions in terms of immediate results; they tend to doubt the value of an investment for the future.

Children typically, until the age of 7-8 years, believe in immanent justice, implying that wrongdoings are punished automatically. After that, they start developing a more mature version of immanent justice and progress towards belief in the just-world. During adolescence, understandings of personal just-world and general just-world emerge as two distinct beliefs. The strength of the just-world belief slightly decreases during young adulthood. This strength again slightly increases in late adulthood and old age.

Is there a Supreme Power?

The belief that the vast system of existence, surrounding human life, cannot function without the oversight of a superior command gives rise to the concept of supreme power. The mystery of life on earth itself is perplexing for humans. The presence of moons, planets, stars, nebulae, galaxies, universe, and multiverse further add to the complexity. For most of us, it is overwhelming to think that a large and complex system like ours can function in a self-regulated and self-disciplined manner. The question who controls this system points to one answer – the Supreme Power. The belief in Supreme Power is the reassurance to a human that the entire existence is under the control of a competent superior.

The belief in Supreme Power comes with an added notion. In essence, the Supreme Power promotes wellness, compassion, peace, harmony, pleasant and orderly things in the life of its subjects. Some people have challenged this notion and have raised serious questions. If this notion is correct, "why do hunger, poverty, war, famine, and disease exist"; "why do people enjoy prosperity and comforts, even by pursuing unethical means of living."

Two aspects of human behavior play critical roles in strengthening their belief in the Supreme Power; these are 'the control system' and 'the belief in the just-world.'

Individuals, in general, tend to believe that the minor direction of life is a function of internal control. In contrast, the broader course

of life is a function of external power. When an individual tends to submit a part of life to external authority, one also tends to believe and subject to the existence of an external controller.

Individuals, in general, also tend to believe good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people. Belief in the just-world reinforces the faith in Supreme Power in cases of distrust and adversities. At times, we observe that something terrible happens to seemingly good people, or something pleasant happens to seemingly bad people. In such cases, we tend to justify such outcomes by linking them to some deeds of a person's life. When people are unable to explain rewards and punishments concerning the deeds of the present life, they link it to life before and after. The acts and resultant rewards and punishments of the present life are considered to be a function of the deeds of past, present, and future lives. The deeds of the present life, if not rewarded and punished in the present life, are supposed to be paid and punished in the life after.

People who do not believe in the existence of the Supreme Power are driven by their strong belief in personal experiences and learnings. They tend to possess one or more of the following views:

1. What is proven, scientifically, is the truth.
2. The control system is always internal – my successes are mine, and my failures are mine.
3. The world is not a just place – our gains and losses are real; the end justifies the means.

Humans, through all known civilizations, are found to have believed in some or other form of the Supreme Power. This belief has been

reassuring for humans and has helped them in living a meaningful life through their existence. The faith in Supreme Power is the real source of positivity and happiness in human life.

What kind of a person, am I?

Personality is the consistent pattern of a person's behavior across various situations and times. It is how a person tends to respond in general. While almost everyone shares regular patterns, consistent specific patterns differ across people.

The general belief until the late 20th century was that most of the personality traits and behavioral differences among people were due to differences in learnings. People were thought to be born without any baggage and gain personalities by way of their upbringing, knowledge, and experiences. Nurture was supposed to be playing a significant role in shaping a person's personality.

It was proved, with the help of research, that a person's inborn biological base influences personality in a significant way. Around 99 percent of a person's genes are identical to every other person. About 98 percent of human genes are common to chimpanzees, the animal closest to the human. Only about 1 percent of genes in each of us makes us different from other humans. Of that 1 percent, around 0.2 to 0.5 have heritability coefficients. Individuals sharing the heritability coefficients would differ from each other only by 0.8% to 0.5%. The precise biological mechanisms of genes influencing our behavior is still not known. Yet, the fact that genes have both direct and indirect effects on personality is established beyond doubt.

Direct Effects of Genes

Genes have a direct impact on a person's personality. The presence or absence of particular genes or the proportion of presence and absence of specific genes in a person has a direct effect on determining the personality characteristics of a person. The study of heritability tells us about the variability in personalities due to genetic factors. It tells us how much specific personality characteristics are affected by genetics in general in human beings. It does not tell us about the genetic influence on a person's personality. For example, the research suggests that extraversion is in the range of 0.5 to 0.6. This range implies that about 50 to 60 percent of the variability for extravert and introvert is due to genetic factors.

Indirect Effects of Genes

Genes also have an indirect effect on a person's personality. Humans, while growing up, try to create an environment around them that helps them in moving towards their life objectives. Our genes influence our behavior to seek and construct an atmosphere of a kind that, in turn, affects our personality.

For example, babies active from birth try more of outward activities like running and playing. Such babies tend to take more of sports activities and pursue their interests in that direction. When they grow up, they develop specific personality characteristics conducive to their environment. On the other hand, babies less active from birth try more of inward activities like reading and music. Such babies tend to take more of text and music-related activities and pursue their interests in that direction. When they grow up, they develop specific personality characteristics

conducive to their environment. In both examples, genes of babies influenced the creation of environments and shaping of personalities of their kinds. Such small genetic qualities at the time of birth get compounded year after year and affect nature.

Nature and nurture both play active roles in shaping a person's personality and making each person different from others. Human behavior is now studied in terms of both genetic and environmental influences on personality and interplay between them.

Study of Personality

Many scholars, for many centuries, have been studying personalities in their way. Some essential names to mention are listed below:

Sigmund Freud: He offered ideas of conscious, preconscious, unconscious, id, ego, superego.

Carl Jung: He suggested personality types based on dichotomies. Introvert vs. extrovert, sensation vs. intuition, thinking vs. feeling.

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers: They suggested personality types based on human needs. The needs could be bodily (physiological), acceptance as a member of a group (belongingness), fulfillment of potentials (self-actualization), safety, love, esteem, etc.

Hans Eysenck: He identified three dimensions of personality – extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. He attempted to connect the nature of a person to bodily conditions.

Raymond Cattell – He suggested 16 fundamental factors of personality.

Fiske, Tupes, Christal, Norman, Borgatta, Digman, Takemoto, Goldberg, Costa, McCrea, John – They contributed to the development of the Five-Factor model.

Perspectives to the scientific study of personality

Throughout the history of the scientific study of personality, diverse perspectives on the field have competed. Each approach developed over a while with contributions from respective theorists and researchers. Each method has contributed to the development of a global theory of personality.

Prominent perspectives to the scientific study of personality may be classified as below:

Biological – Crucial elements of this approach are temperament, evolution, adaptation, selflessness, sexuality, heredity, rational function, etc.

Cognitive – Crucial elements of this approach are expectation, effectiveness, outcome, reciprocity, personal makeup, life description, etc.

Humanistic – Crucial elements of this approach are creativity, spirituality, freedom, choice, openness, acceptance, empathy, needs, experience, personal responsibility, fulfillment of potentials (self-actualization), etc.

Learning – Critical aspects are approach, stimulus, response, avoidance, generalization, discrimination, punishment, reinforcement, etc.

Psychodynamic – Critical aspects are id, ego, superego, conflict, fixation, repression, attachment, libido etc.

Trait – Critical aspects of this approach are characteristics, type, facet, factors, emotional stability, extraversion, openness, etc.

Historically, personality has been understood from a 'grand theorist' approach, in which selected theories proposed by individuals were studied. Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers are well-known ones. These theories were primarily based on the professional and life experience of their originators and were not universal. This situation led to a fragmented approach to the study of personality, with each theory competing with others in isolation without finding a common language for the discipline.

The trait approach to the study of personality became the most widely accepted approach. While the trait approach has many flaws and questions have been raised in this regard, this remains the most scientific and better-explained approach. Many factors have facilitated the trait approach to the study of personality. These are the use of language terms to explain personality characteristics, collection of empirical data on traits like terms, development of trait theory, development of multiple factor analysis, a combination of trait scales, and application of multivariate statistical analysis.

Trait and Emotion

A personality characteristic, which is narrow or short-lived in terms of behavior and situation, is called a tendency or habit. Relatively

stable behavioral tendencies or habits are called traits or dispositions. Traits characterizing the personality of an individual are called personality traits, which are usually stable over many years in an adult. Though traits may tend to change over a more extended period. Situations and environment affect personality traits. People tend to actively select conditions according to their personalities, like a shy person avoiding social interaction. People passively evoke situations by their personality, like an attractive person drawing attention. People manipulate situations by their personality, like a person with excellent oratory skills instigating verbal discussion. Situational exposure can affect personality traits, like the effect of parenting style on offspring.

Emotion is an essential subsystem of personality. A standard definition of emotion is yet to be agreed upon by scholars. But the general view is that emotions occur to a person in the form of transitory states. It is reflected as a reaction to the perceptions or imaginations of objects and situations. Emotions have both subjective and objective manifestations. Subjectively, emotions manifest as pleasant or unpleasant feelings. Objectively, emotions manifest in a particular action (like fear leading to fighting or flight), expressive reaction (like smile if joyous), physiological changes (like increased blood pressure if angry). Emotion, thus, is about both mental and bodily mechanisms. Emotions arise out of the appraisal of an event or the anticipated event. The assessment determines the cause of the emotion and the nature of emotion.

The Five-Factor Model

With the popularity of the trait approach, several traits-based personality models and instruments have been developed. The

most popular and widely accepted model is the Five-Factor Model, which originated with the lexical hypothesis. The lexical theory assumes that most of the socially relevant and salient personality characteristics are encoded in the natural language. Thus, the personality vocabulary contained in the dictionary of a natural language provides an extensive, but finite, set of attributes that speakers of that language might have found.

Based on the lexical hypothesis, work in German was started by Baumgarten in 1933. Work in English was started by Allport and Adbert in 1936, who identified around 18,000 personality terms. These personality terms were shortened by Cattell (1943) in steps – 4,500 trait terms in the first step, 35 trait variables in the second step, and 16 Personality Factors (by way of factor analyses for correlated factors) in the third step. The progress led to more investigational works by Fiske (1949), Tupes and Christal (1961), Norman (1963), Borgatta (1964), Digman, and Takemoto (1981), and Goldberg (1981) on deriving five-factor structure.

The Big Five Model

Goldberg named these five factors as the 'Big Five,' the name by which the model became popular. The name is not about the greatness of the model. Instead, the title emphasizes that each of these factors is broad. They do not represent traits, but each one is a spectrum of related traits, a summary of a large number of distinct and specific personality traits.

The Big Five model progressed mainly with the description of traits in the English language. The universality of the model majorly

depends upon the ability to generalize the personality nomenclatures across cultures and languages. The underlying theory is that if the most central tasks to human survival are universal, then the terms used to identify them should also be global. If a culture-specific dimension is found to be unique, a variation on that dimension would be uniquely relevant to the social context of that culture. While replicating the Big Five model in non-English languages, translation of terminology comes as a challenging task. In general, the Big Five has been well replicated in western languages and cultures but encounters complexity with other cultures and languages and requires adjustments of some indigenous factors.

Initially, the five factors were labeled as Extraversion or Surgency, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Culture. The generally accepted Big Five labels, finally, came to be known and accepted as Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness.

One problem with the Big Five was that, unlike the 16PF model, which was developed and owned by Cattell, it evolved by way of multiple research and studies. As a result, the questionnaires and instruments designed were also various. The need was felt to adopt a common approach and define the Big Five in terms of prototypical traits that occur consistently across studies. To determine the core traits of five factors, a set of 10 judges reviewed all major articles published on the topic till 1988 and used 300 terms included in the Adjective Check List (ACL) as the standard language to find common elements. The judges independently sorted 300 items into one of the Big Five domains and the sixth 'other' category. Finally, 112 terms with 90% or better agreement

were classified and assigned to one of the Big Five domains. The validity of these categorizations was tested by psychologists serving as observers. The assessment study involved 140 men and 140 women. It was conducted at the Institute of Personality and Social Research at Berkeley, USA.

Based on the study, specific central traits are identified as high and low for each of the spectrums. The most central traits of each of the Big Five domains are as below:

Extraversion

High – Talkative, Assertive, Active, Energetic, Outgoing, Outspoken, Dominant, Forceful, Enthusiastic, Show-off, Sociable, Spunky, Adventurous, Noisy, Bossy

Low – Quiet, Reserved, Shy, Silent, Withdrawn, Retiring

Agreeableness

High – Sympathetic, Kind, Appreciative, Affectionate, Soft-hearted, Warm, Generous, Trusting, Helpful, Forgiving, Pleasant, Good-natured, Friendly, Cooperative, Gentle, Unselfish, Praising, Sensitive

Low – Fault-finding, Cold, Unfriendly, Quarrelsome, Hard-hearted, Unkind, Cruel, Stern, Thankless, Stingy

Conscientiousness

High – Organized, Thorough, Planful, Efficient, Responsible, Reliable, Dependable, Conscientious, Precise, Practical, Deliberate, Painstaking, Cautious

Low – Careless, Disorderly, Frivolous, Irresponsible, Slip-shot, Undependable, Forgetful

Neuroticism

High – Tense, Anxious, Nervous, Moody, Worrying, Touchy, Fearful, High-strung, Self-pitying, Temperamental, Unstable, Self-punishing, Despondent, Emotional

Low – Stable, Calm, Contented

Openness

High – Wide-interest, Imaginative, Intelligent, Original, Insightful, Curious, Sophisticated, Artistic, Clever, Inventive, Sharp-witted, Ingenious, Witty, Resourceful, Wise

Low – Commonplace, Narrow-interests, Simple, Shallow, Unintelligent

Instruments to measure the Big Five

Several tools are developed to measure the Big Five dimensions, three most widely recognized are;

Trait Descriptive Adjectives (TDA) model with 100 items developed by Goldberg in 1992.

NEO-FFI (NEO Five-Factor Inventory) model with 60 items or NEO-PI-R (Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness Personality Inventory-Revised) with 240 items developed by Costa and McCrae in 1992.

BFI (Big Five Inventory) model with 44-items developed by John, Donahue, and Kentle in 1991. BFI-2 with 60-items further developed by John and Soto in 2017.

With the help of instruments available to measure the Big Five dimensions, a person can understand own personality on the broad scales of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness.

How I control myself?

The psychological energy that makes us 'do what we should' and 'not do what we should not' is self-control.

The energy of self-control is exposed to continuous interferences. We face many internal obstacles while doing works in our day-to-day life. We resolve to do physical exercise every day, but when the time of action comes, lethargy creeps in. We want to adopt healthy eating habits, but quite often, we give in to temptations of delicious cuisines and deserts. The same is the case with smoking and drinking. The latest trend is the addiction to social media uses. On many occasions, in our day-to-day interactions, we engage in unnecessary acts of complaining, criticizing, and interfering in others' affairs. Even when we realize the need to avoid such things, we fail to exercise control over ourselves.

The energy of self-control continuously involves the battle between two competing motives – abstract & distant motives vs. concrete & immediate motives. This competition is called dual-motive conflict. Abstract rewards, being intangible, do not appear as convincing as concrete rewards, being tangible. Distant goals that could be realized far away in the future do not seem as valuable as immediate goals that are realizable shortly. Values achievable in the future seem less worthy than values realizable immediately. People discount outcomes that are further away in time; this effect is known as temporal discounting.

Research shows that even the presence of a temptation activates our urge to indulge in unwanted behavior. Holding a smartphone in hand and resisting the temptation to use social media seems impossible. For people who are dieting, even seeing or smelling food, causes a desire to eat. Research also suggests that once people are tempted, they find it difficult to control themselves. The control is possible only if they try very hard and think consciously of their goals at the time. Avoiding exposure to anything that makes a person weak is an effective way of resisting temptations. Consciously reminding self about aspiring goals is an effective way of ensuring consistency in approach. We need to do extra work in our mind to overpower immediate temptations and find ways to promote distant and abstract goals over immediate and concrete goals.

Studies show that when people work on controlling one behavioral task, they feel weak in their ability to manage other behavioral tasks. Studies also suggest that self-control strength decreases as the day progresses towards the end due to physical and mental tiredness.

Tips for Self-control

- » Avoid exposure to curb temptations
- » Consciously promote distant goals
- » Focus on one new task at a time
- » Work on a new task, when energy is high
- » Learn to analyze own mistakes

How positive I feel for myself?

Self-confidence is the belief in self that we can do certain things, or we are sure of a specific outcome. But self-esteem is the internal feeling of how positive we feel about ourselves. Self-esteem is an internal evaluation of self.

Self-esteem has two distinct forms – Trait self-esteem and State self-esteem. In general, most of the time, how positive or pleasant a person feels about self is that person's trait self-esteem. In specific, at any particular point of time, how positive or enjoyable a person thinks about self is that person's state self-esteem.

A person may, in general, feel excellent about self and have high trait self-esteem. However, the same person may feel bad about the self in a specific situation and have low state self-esteem. The reason could be as simple as something not liked by one in that situation. State self-esteem fluctuates as one goes through the day.

All of us would prefer to have high self-esteem all the time, but in practice, that does not work. The study suggests that self-esteem is the result of individual experiences and events in life. Positive outcomes lead to high self-esteem, and adverse outcomes lead to low self-esteem. It is not that high self-esteem leads to a positive result, or low self-esteem leads to adverse outcomes.

Humans are social creatures, and the desire for social acceptance seems to be universal. Many aspects of human nature evolved over

a long period of human history. Our ancestors were living as hunters and gatherers and, therefore, living in a supportive group of people was very important. A human who would not be living in a supportive group of people would be finding life to be very difficult. A rejection by the group or society was like a death sentence for them. Our brains evolved in this kind of environment, which is a significant part of our existence. In modern society, social acceptance or rejection doesn't lead to an outcome of death. However, humans are highly tuned to the notion of approval and rejection by others since this was very important in the evolutionary phase. Self-esteem helps us monitor the indications of acceptance and rejection by society.

Research suggests that self-esteem is an internal gauge that monitors the degree to which a person is being 'valued and accepted' versus 'devalued and rejected' by others. Apart from watching others' reactions, it also monitors one's own behavior. It signals us if our behavior might lead other people to reject us. When we get indications that our value and acceptance in the eyes of others are increasing, we feel good, and our state-self-esteem goes up. We continue to do whatever we're doing. But when we get indications that our value and acceptance in the eyes of others are decreasing and others might reject us, we feel bad. Our state-self-esteem drops, and we start analyzing what to do. Self-esteem is a meter, which gives us information about our social acceptability. This information comes to us in the form of good or bad feelings about ourselves.

Tips for Self-positivity

- » Have faith in self
- » Think of hope and courage
- » Treat self and others with compassion
- » Give and take genuine feedback
- » Engage in discussion, not argument
- » Show sympathy for other's aspirations

How self-disposed a person, am I?

People, in general, tend to perceive themselves in a highly favorable manner. They feel and act like they are better than what they are, rate their belongings and associations better than the average.

Disposition to self is widespread; almost all of us are inherently prone to it. Most of us think that we are better than average, but that can never be the truth. Most of our abilities are roughly normally distributed. If we draw a line of average, almost an equal number of people would be placed below and above. A majority of people would be placed around the track of average. But in practice, most of us think that we are better than the average, and things associated with us (belongings, friends, children, personal characteristics, etc.) are better than the average. When we perform well, we tend to demonstrate our ability and efforts; but when we do poorly or when things go wrong, we tend to find excuses or find fault with others. We also think that we are fair in our dealings with others and act without any biases for ourselves. Some people view themselves negatively, but the number of such individuals is tiny, and their views of themselves are for some specific reasons.

People tend to act with self-disposition mainly to feel better about themselves and to convey positive impressions of themselves to others. Unrealistic positive thinking about self helps us in creating positive feelings and avoid negative emotions. Besides, we also act with self-disposition to manage public impression. We think that if

we project more positive characteristics to others, others will perceive us favorably, and we would be better in life. Self-disposition, in that sense, is considered to be creating positive emotions and helping one to remain motivated even in case of difficulties.

The cost involved with such artificially inflated evaluation of self is very high. Overestimation of own abilities may lead a person to the wrong path, pursue wrong goals, and experience failures and frustration. If we consistently think of ourselves as superior and right, we may spoil our relationship.

Few individuals show a very high level of self-disposition. While extreme cases might require treatment, there are people whose self-disposition is above average but short of being a disorder. Such people think of themselves as uniquely talented and seek a higher level of attention, admiration, and treatment. They make great efforts to promote their superiority and accomplishments. They feel happy if successful in gaining desired recognition, but become disappointed, insecure, and sensitive if met with failures.

Individuals, successful in controlling their self-disposition, are considered humble. They see themselves realistically. They know their strengths and weaknesses and do not engage in unnecessary self-enhancement activities. They understand that they might be better than others on specific dimensions. Still, others would be better than them in other aspects. They do not seek special treatment just because of being outstanding in some domains. They keep their positive attributes in perspective.

Dark Triad

There are many self-disposed socially aversive personality traits. Still, the three most commonly recognized such personality traits are Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy. Researchers (Delroy L. Paulhus and Kevin M. Williams) identified these three together as the Dark Triad. Disagreeableness is a common element among people displaying traits of the Dark Triad.

Narcissism is associated with privilege, domination, and superiority. Narcissists exhibit high self-enhancement activities, strong self-illusory grandness, and poor insight of self. Narcissists are considered to be more of an interpersonal irritant than a threat. Some characteristics of Narcissism have been found, in a limited sense, to be a blessing in personal life, interpersonal life, and organizational contexts.

Psychopathy is associated with high thrill and impulsiveness. It also relates to low empathy and anxiety. The impulsive and treacherous behavior of psychopaths becomes precarious when combined with a lack of concern and empathy. Psychopaths also exhibit grandiosity and poor insight of self. Psychopaths find it challenging to adapt, but their positive self-view and lack of anxiety are somewhat signs of adaptiveness.

Machiavellianism is associated with cold and manipulative behavior, which exhibits more grounded and reality-based activities. For them, the end goal is essential, and manipulation is justified. Such persons are found to be a mixed blessing in personal life, interpersonal life, and organizational contexts.

The Dark Triad shows a positive correlation with youth, male, power, achievement, affiliation, self-enhancement, immature defense styles, selfishness, bravery, leadership, assertiveness, and practical moral judgment. The Dark Triad also shows a positive correlation with doing frightening and unpredictable things and feeling disturbed if not finding a solution or answer to a problem.

The Dark Triad shows a negative correlation with life satisfaction, conscientiousness, agreeableness, compassion, and empathy.

Light Triad

A section of researchers (Scott Barry Kaufman, David Bryce Yaden, Elizabeth Hyde, and Eli Tsukayama) felt that the dark sides of human nature were getting too much attention. In contrast, the light sides of human nature were ignored. They felt that while socially aversive people are in plenty, everyday saints are also present in the society who are fair-minded, socially-inclined people. These are the people who are not strategic about their giving but have a natural, unconditional, and spontaneous tendency to spread love and care. Research in this direction facilitated the theory of the Light Triad, with three distinct factors labeled as Humanism, Faith in Humanity, and Kantianism.

Humanism is the quality of valuing the dignity and worth of each individual (somewhat opposite to the Narcissism). People high in Humanism are found to display the tendency of admiring others, applauding the success of others, treating others as valuable, and enjoying listening to others of diverse backgrounds.

Faith in Humanity is the quality of believing in the fundamental goodness of humans (somewhat opposite to the Psychopathy). People, having great Faith in Humanity, are found to display the tendency of seeing the best in others. They trust others to deal fairly with them, consider people mostly as good, and forgive people easily for hurting them.

Kantianism is the quality of treating people as ends to themselves, not as a mere means to an end (somewhat opposite to the Machiavellianism). People high in Kantianism are found to display the tendency of preferring honesty over charm. They do not feel comfortable in manipulating others to get things done. They prefer to stick to authenticity even at the cost of damaging their reputation, and rarely think about return while engaging to talk with others.

The Light Triad shows a positive correlation with older, female, religiousness, spirituality, life satisfaction, compassion, empathy, satisfying relationships, competence, autonomy, authenticity, curiosity, love, kindness, teamwork, forgiveness, gratitude, optimism, and self-esteem. The Light Triad also shows a positive association with sophisticated defense styles, acceptance of others, openness to experience, seeking more information, and viewing challenges as an opportunity.

The Light Triad is found to be negatively correlated with the motives for achievement and self-enhancement. They may limit a person's ambitions to succeed when others remain less successful. They may expose a person to potential exploitation and emotional manipulation from those who score higher on the Dark Triad.

There is a little bit of light and dark in each of us; blending proportion might vary from person to person. People with extremely high characteristics of the Dark Triad have magnified versions of elements that lie within all of us.

The research suggests that the average persons are tilted more toward the Light Triad rather than the Dark Triad in their rational thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. Extreme meanness is rare.

Tips for Self-disposition

- » View self realistically
- » Keep positive attributes in perspective
- » Try to understand things from others' perspectives
- » Watch for high aversive self-acts
- » Safeguard benevolence against abuse

How prone am I to fear?

Fear is an emotion originating from a perceived threat, danger, pain, or harm, which, when activated, starts a chain of reactions in the brain and releases chemicals. Universal fears are supposed to have evolved, but specific fears are supposed to be the outcome of learning. Most of us react with fear of snakes, spiders, and wild animals. These were the real threat to our ancestors in the evolutionary phase when they were living the life of hunters and gatherers. Since we are descendants of those individuals, these fears are part of our system.

Fear is like a warning system, as an antenna on our head, which signals us for dangers and leads us to avoid things that might hurt. Fear is part of the human motive to protect ourselves. Our ancestors during the evolutionary phase would have survived and reproduced only by being alert to the dangers and threats. Fear was playing the role of alerting them to take actions to protect themselves. Our ancestors, whose fear system was not effective, would not have survived and reproduced. Only those of our ancestors would have survived and reproduced who had an efficient fear and threat detection system. Modern humans are descendants of that branch of human ancestry; hence fear is common for almost all of us. Evolution supports the idea that it is better to experience fear and react to anticipated threats than to wait and fail to respond to real threats.

Irrational fear is called phobia. The phobia is an extreme and intense fear with little or no real danger. It is a kind of anxiety

disorder. Persons who have phobia probably realize that their fear is irrational; still, they cannot control their reactions. Such people try to shape their lives in a way to avoid what they consider to be dangerous. The cause of phobia may be any object, person, animal, activity, or situation. It could be because of genetic or experience related reasons. Phobias are mental disorders requiring medical diagnosis. Few examples of phobias are Acrophobia: fear of heights, Claustrophobia: fear of enclosed or tight spaces, Aerophobia: fear of flying, Hemophobia: fear of blood or injury, Arachnophobia: fear of spiders.

Tips for Fear

- » Seek exposure
- » Enhance experience
- » Fight or Flight; resist Freeze

How aggressive a person, am I?

Aggression is an emotion expressing anger, dislike, hostility, violence. Human is a very aggressive species. Most of us express aggression, from time to time, in some or other form. Some people can suppress and control aggression, but the inclination to show aggression is always present in the background, it is built into human nature.

Aggression is one of the features of human nature which evolved during the evolutionary phase when our ancestors were living the life of hunters and gatherers. Even today, we find that animals use aggression to defend themselves and their offspring or to protect their territory or to obtain food. The same has been true of human beings during the evolutionary phase. They had to defend themselves and their offspring; they had to procure food; they had to protect their territory and resources. In living that life, they mostly had to fend off threats by use of aggression. Non-aggressive individuals and their offspring would not have survived and reproduced at the same rate and probably, down the line, would be extinct at some point in time. Only those of our ancestors would have survived and reproduced who were able to use aggression effectively through the evolutionary phase. Modern humans are descendants of that branch of human ancestry and, therefore, aggression is common for almost all of us.

Modern humans have society, culture, government, police, army, law, and judicial system. In most situations, extreme aggression need not be expressed; it is not beneficial; instead, they are

counterproductive. Even though aggression does not make sense in the modern human living environment, we find that aggressive behavior among humans is a common sight. The truth is that our brains have not changed much in roughly 10,000 years of civilized living, out of around 6 million years of human existence. We continue to display the same basic features of human nature. Aggression is widely visible if the pillars of modern society, like government, police, army, law, fail to deliver. Four types of aggression are noticed – physical, verbal, intimidating (by way of power and position), and passive (by way of non-compliance).

An aggressive reaction in a particular situation that far exceeds the response required to deal with the situation is an overreaction. We all take care of our interests as part of normal behavior. We feel frustrated and disappointed when things do not go as per our planning. In such situations, we react since ideas are opposed to our wellbeing, which is natural for any human. But quite often, we find people reacting far more aggressively to small frustrations and inconveniences. These kinds of overreactions leave observers perplexed.

One of the most common reasons for overreaction is disrespect. People react far more aggressively when they feel treated in a manner that is disrespectful as per their standards.

Another common cause of overreaction is blame. A person, when blamed for anything, tends to react strongly, particularly in the presence of others.

An equally strong cause of overreaction is condemnation. When a person is condemned for anything, he/she tends to react strongly, particularly in the presence of others.

Victimization is another definite cause of overreaction. A person, when develops the feeling of having been victimized or maltreated or taken for a ride or taken for granted, tends to react strongly.

Finally, people overreact just to send a strong message to others, not to trifle with. In such cases, the intention is to send out messages of intolerance to any adversity.

Overreactions, most of the time, are ineffective and counterproductive. They bring more costs than rewards; still, people overreact. When people are overreacting, they seem to be in a heightened state of consciousness. Such persons become so fixated with their objectives that they ignore other relevant considerations like social norms, moral standards, other's feelings. Such persons engage in a heightened thinking process and exaggerate the seriousness of the problem in their minds. Therefore, they react more strongly than the actual requirement of the situation.

People also engage in internal overreaction and repeatedly analyze specific incidents or situations in their minds. They overanalyze own comments and comments made by others. They tend to be over apologetic for their deeds. This internal overreaction is known only to the person experiencing it; others might be completely unaware of it.

Some have argued that the expression of strong emotions is good for the emotional health of individuals as it is an active and healthy way to reduce anger and aggressive feelings. Renowned psychologist, Sigmund Freud, thought that catharsis, purging one's emotions, is helpful because people's emotions exist in a closed hydraulic system like a pressure cooker. He believed that when emotional pressure builds up, people experience psychological problems and need to relieve the stress. Catharsis continues to be practiced even today. In a controlled environment, people express their anger towards an inactive object, not towards the person who is the cause of the upset. Some modern researchers suggest that catharsis is not helpful since the release of aggression activates more aggressive thoughts and emotions.

In the modern civilized world, overreaction does not help, or the benefits are negligible. Overreaction is not appreciated and is often counterproductive. Victims of overreaction seldom forget and forgive those who indulge in such behavior.

Tips for Aggression

- » Think of peace and happiness
- » Strive for a healthy body and mind
- » Pursue competition in right earnest
- » Resist instant reaction
- » Analyze probable consequences
- » Beware of self and others' rights

Is the world a prejudiced place?

Prejudice is a preconceived, unfair, unreasonable opinion, or feeling, disconnected with facts or experiences. Prejudices are found to be prevalent at the individual as well as group levels.

In our everyday life, we encounter many incidents of hatred and personal violence. We think of ourselves as good, fair, and peace-loving people. Still, somewhere we would be involved in some kind of discriminatory behavior. At the group level, prejudice and discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sect, caste, gender, sexual orientation, etc. are widespread. Millions of people have lost lives in wars that have some kind of prejudicial origin. The common reasons for extreme behavior could be personal preferences or personal biases or group preferences or group biases. Specific social and psychological processes also lead people to develop extreme behavior.

At an individual level, a person is likely to develop prejudicial behavior if one views oneself as a highly superior being. A person develops biased behavior also because of insecurity about one's abilities; such a person tends to judge other people more harshly. A person who has suffered a blow to self-esteem is again likely to develop prejudicial behavior and is more likely to discriminate against others. A member of one group is prone to developing biased behavior towards members of another competing group. Severe cases of individual prejudice could be because of some personality disorder.

Prejudicial behavior is far more complicated at the group level. Conflicts among groups arise when they would be competing for some scarce resources, like food, land, jobs, etc., or even to preserve the cultural identity. Members of one group develop negative feelings for the members of other groups. The members of a group build affiliation to the group they belong to, since the association offers them many benefits, like pooled resources, mutual help, interaction, and association. For a group to be successful, members need to cooperate and treat each other respectfully. A cohesive group provides its members the mental comfort to trust fellow members of their group more than the members of other groups. As a default rule, individuals tend to assume that those who are not part of their group might not be trustworthy. Such an assumption makes us view other groups with suspicion and distrust, which might further lead to conflict and ultimately give rise to prejudice.

Individuals, in comparison to groups, are found to be more cooperative. Individuals of two competing groups might be good friends and cooperating at a personal level. Still, as part of their respective groups, they could conflict and prejudice against each other. The conflict at a personal level seems manageable, but at a group level, the clash appears much more severe and unmanageable. The involvement of many individuals at the group level makes the problem much more severe. All individuals in a group are viewed as similar, even though individuals within that group differ significantly. An underprivileged or disadvantaged group is more likely to see privileged or advantaged groups with prejudice, which could be vice versa too. When two groups do not share cultural and moral values and standards, their feelings of prejudice become far more intense.

Tips for Prejudice

- » Adjust to unavoidable situations
- » Strive to improve upon existing conditions
- » Seek respectable status for competing groups
- » Leverage personal acquaintances in groups
- » Involve impartial authority to reduce conflict

How prone am I to guilt?

Guilt is an ill-feeling of lousy behavior – done something wrong, failed, committed some foolish act. Shame is a stronger ill-feeling beyond guilt that leads to a sense of humiliation, distress, regret, and self-hate.

Guilt and shame are considered similar in general parlance, but they are qualitatively different. Shame is more in-depth and darker than guilt. While both start with some bad behavior, whether a person experiences guilt or shame depends upon how that person thinks about bad behavior. When a person feels that one has done something terrible, the feeling of guilt strikes. But when a person believes that bad behavior is so bad that one is a wrong person, the sense of shame strikes.

When people feel guilty, they try to apologize, repair relationships, fix the problem, and undo the damage. Guilt, in that sense, is functional. A guilty person is likely to behave in proper and pro-social ways.

When people feel ashamed, they tend to withdraw from society, become self-focused, and blame themselves. They tend to lose their cool and become angry quickly. Shame, in that sense, is dysfunctional. An ashamed person is likely to misbehave.

Tips for Guilt

- » Use guilt only to seek correction
- » Resist pushing one to the point of shame
- » Seek help if experiencing guilt or shame
- » Help others in coming out of guilt or shame

How prone am I to anxiety?

Anxiety or worry is a natural feeling that occurs when our wellbeing is threatened, which is in our nature because of evolutionary reasons. Anxiety might originate from real issues or from unrealistic fears and concerns that might disturb sleep, appetite, concentration, and calm.

The process of anxiety involves an activating event, a supporting belief, and the consequent emotion. The feeling of anxiety is part of human nature that alerts us to our behavior vis-à-vis our surroundings. Limited anxiety can be useful and motivate us to do things, like a worry for the job makes us discharge duties properly.

Heightened anxiety disturbs our rational thinking, makes us think about how bad things can happen and how to avoid them. People who are prone to anxiety feel often confused, guilty, ashamed, and avoid sharing their feelings. Persistent anxiety requires professional treatment.

Self-anxiety is excessive attention to the self. In the case of self-anxiety, a person remains occupied with current issues and works of self and directs one's thoughts around these issues and tasks. Heightened attention to these negative thoughts further adds to negative thinking, and people start focusing on their inadequacies. When anxiety is about performance, it involves a concern of self-evaluation and evaluation by others. All these add to anxiety, which further gets heightened if there is an expectation of a negative

outcome. We all try to deal with such concerns. If we meet with success in our efforts, we feel confident, and that reduces anxiety; if we meet with failures in our efforts, the level of anxiety, and focus on inadequacies increase.

Social anxiety, shyness, and embarrassment are closely related, all three originate from the sensitivity to the concern for evaluations of self by others.

Embarrassment is a feeling of awkwardness or undesired assessment from others. It comes from the realization of some missteps or inappropriate utterances. It usually comes as sudden and brief.

Social anxiety comes out of the fear of being evaluated by others, even without any specific reason. It comes out of the belief that one is subjected to real or implied or imagined social evaluation. What others would be thinking, even if nothing has gone wrong, is the dominating concern.

Shyness occurs when social anxiety combines with restrained and guarded social behavior. Shy behavior may include nervousness to suspicion to complete withdrawal from society.

Socially anxious people are highly attentive or alert to signals of social threats and social evaluation. They defensively work to withdraw from signs of resentment or rejection when encountered. They are more attentive to internal physiological signals (heart rate, blood pressure, etc.) than to threatening

external cues. Some stimulus is typical for all, but socially anxious people feel more because of self-focus. Physical nervousness, past failures, and current imagined threats dominate their thoughts. This chain of thinking interferes with their preparation and performance. Close attention to signs of rejection, internal stimulus, and adverse outcomes makes socially anxious people nervous, exhausted, and constantly ill in social settings.

Socially anxious people tend to imagine the worst outcome, even in safe situations. They tend to judge themselves more harshly and blame themselves for adverse consequences. They tend to keep thinking of their problems always. They replay the event in their minds and fuss over their perceived imperfections. They prefer to avoid disapproval defensively rather than seeking approval. They tend to express neutral opinions and conform easily. They generally avoid interaction with the unknown and are unwilling to take advantage of social opportunities. The degree of social anxiety experience varies from person to person and from situation to situation. Extreme social anxiousness leads to social anxiety disorder, where fears of social evaluation are apparent and constant, which interferes with ordinary activity.

Tips for Anxiety

- » View anxiety as a pointer to a need
- » Identify the need
- » Discuss with the trusted
- » Decide on a solution and act
- » Prepare self to deal with the worst
- » Keep busy to avoid unnecessary thoughts

How prone am I to hurt?

Hurt is an emotional pain of anguish, sadness, unhappiness, and upset. We express the feeling of hurt in many ways, such as hurt, heart-broken, back-stabbed, cheated, deceived, etc.

Hurt is a function of perceived relational value. When we feel that our relational value to another person is low than what we want to have, we feel hurt.

Every person has some relationships in life that one values immensely and invests a lot in to. Anything going wrong with such links would be unacceptable and upsetting for that person.

Every person has some relationships in life that one values somewhat less, where the link is mainly about knowing each other and maintaining the status. Anything going wrong with such relationships would be undesirable but wouldn't be unacceptable and upsetting for that person.

Every person has some relationships in life that one values minimal and does not bother much if things go wrong with such links.

It is not possible for us to maintain a relationship with everyone with equal importance and, therefore, having relationships with varying degrees is quite reasonable. The problem starts when a bond valued at a higher degree by us is not assessed to an equal

degree by others; this causes the feeling of hurt. In other words, we experience a sense of hurt when our perceived relational value to some person or some group is lower than what we would like it to be.

Physical injury gives us pain. If we don't feel pain, we would keep injuring ourselves and might not even realize it. Pain draws our attention to something wrong happening in our bodies. Physical pain serves as a warning to threats from our surroundings. It helps us in regulating our behavior to protect our physical well-being. The feeling of hurt is a social pain that serves the same function of warning and protecting us from threats to our emotional well-being. The sense of hurt warns us not to do things in our social relationships that will undermine or damage our relational value with other people.

Our social relationships are essential to our well-being. Throughout evolutionary history, humans were members of supportive groups to protect themselves, take care of each other, and collect and share food. During the evolutionary phase, the social rejection was like a death sentence; it would have been challenging for a human to have survived alone. Acceptance or rejection by others was always critical for humans. Any sense of rejection hurts us even today; it also alerts us to be careful of our behavior with valuable others.

The feeling of hurt has specific categories, based on the commonly expressed sentiments.

Rejection: A person getting a clear signal from the other that he/she does not want to do anything with the person.

Ignored or Avoided: A person getting a clear indication from the other of being shunned or ignored, though not rejected.

Criticized: A person getting the feeling of being criticized by the other.

Betrayed: A person getting the feeling of being deceived by the other.

Mean teasing: A person getting the feeling of being subjected to malicious mockery by the other.

Taken for granted: A person getting the feeling of not taken seriously or not appreciated or taken for a ride by the other.

Tips for Hurt

- » Analyze underlying facts
- » Do not fret on trivial issues
- » Introspect own behavior
- » Confront the cause if warranted
- » Seek emotional support
- » Focus on joys rather than pains
- » Forgive – yourself and others

How stressed a person, am I?

Stress is the feeling of persistent pressure from a challenge or threat to our well-being.

Modern life is very stressful, and most of us feel stressed out due to issues related to finance, health, work, education, legal, relationship, daily hassles, and so on. Certain professions are stressful by their nature, like police, military, mining, cargo-ship, etc. Stress affects our psychological and physical well-being. Stress interferes with our ability to focus and perform. When the stress level is high, we find it difficult to handle daily tasks and start avoiding challenging situations. We find it difficult to enjoy our life. Stress leads to health problems like high blood pressure, weight gain, indigestion, insomnia, etc. People tend to behave in a moody and hostile manner and often get into depression. Stress results in specific financial costs like reduced productivity, absence from work, and health-care costs.

Stress has two categories – acute stress and chronic stress.

Acute stress occurs when people experience an immediate threat to their well-being; this is experienced by animals as well. Events like getting late, traffic jams, minor accidents, minor adverse news, small financial losses, etc. cause stress to us. Similarly, when animals experience a threat to life in their habitation, they feel stress. But once the event is over, our body returns to normalcy,

and acute stress goes away, minor lingering effects might stay in some cases.

Chronic stress is different and is almost always present in the background and could rise at any time. This stress is unique to humans; most of the animals do not seem to experience it. Only the animals living around human habitat or the animals abused by humans appear to show signs of chronic stress.

Modern humans live in an environment considerably different from the context in which our brains evolved. We have lived the life of hunters and gatherers for about 99% of our existence. Our minds are tuned to cope with the challenges of living in that kind of environment. The span of our settled life is less than 1% of our existence, and the span of the modern living environment is almost negligible. In our current situation and lifestyle, we have to deal with cities, crowds, traffic, vehicles, noises, modern workplaces, modern homes, modern schools, electrical and electronic devices, etc. on an ongoing basis. Our brain is not well-suited for this current environment and lifestyle. Our current living conditions pose many challenging and stressful situations that we did not encounter during the evolutionary phase. Our brain, while continuously evolving, is yet to grow to deal with these challenges and stresses adequately.

Modern humans live their life with a great deal of uncertainty. Animals live in an immediate-return environment and see the consequences of their behavior on an ongoing basis. We live in a delayed-return climate. We invest too much time, effort, and energy into tasks that will give results far away in the future,

without knowing whether all the investments will pay off in the future.

Modern humans carry many perceived and anticipated problems in their minds. They cannot find solutions to such issues because they do not exist in their present life.

A person might experience heightened stress when facing a genuinely more stressful situation. Additionally, a person might experience increased stress by judging an event as more threatening. Further, heightened stress might also originate if a person considers self as incompetent to deal with the case or tries to cope with the situation in ways that are not effective.

The experience level of stress varies in terms of personality types. Type A people experience more stress. Such people are engaged in a persistent struggle to do more and more in less and less time. They always have a sense of urgency, and they try to do too much. They get into frustration if things do not happen as they want. They experience more stress as a result. Type B people are those who are low in type A qualities; such people experience less stress.

The personality characteristic of neuroticism is associated with a high level of stress. People with a high level of neuroticism, experience higher levels of negative emotions, like anger, anxiety, sadness, hurt, hopelessness. Such people interpret ordinary situations more negatively and see them as more threatening and challenging. The level of stress we experience depends heavily on how we understand.

Tips for Stress

- » Pursue realistic objectives of life
- » Accept irrationality as part of living
- » Approach unavoidable with optimism
- » Learn to say NO
- » Learn to delegate and supervise
- » Find time to relax and reflect
- » Show self-compassion if things go wrong

How I manage my impression?

The impression is the effect that a person creates on other persons' thoughts and feelings; it is the driving force behind all our social interactions. How others view us determines how the community accepts us and how we see others determines how we engage in society.

Individualism is a concept that tells us that we should not be bothered about what others think of us; we should just be ourselves and live our life the way we are. Still, almost all of us are concerned about what others think of us. Most of us are worried about the impressions we make on others, and we feel upset if others perceive us in undesired ways.

Some of us claim not to bother about what others think, but in practice, we all want to be seen as competent, moral and sought. We do not like it if someone views us as wicked, incompetent, and immoral. A person loving a negative perception of self would be considered a psychopath. In the usual case, we all try to address and remove the contrary opinion of others. However, when we find the negative perception of others to be biased and driven by an ulterior motive, we stop bothering and start living with that.

Social life is an essential part of human life; we need to have social contacts and social interactions to be able to live a social life. The impressions that we carry for each other facilitates our social interactions. People interact with each other, keeping in mind the

opinion they have formed for each other. Engaging in communication with someone without having an impression is not possible, else it would be a directionless or mindless interface. There is every possibility that the opinion we carry for others could be incorrect. Still, there is no other way to engage in interaction. If we view others as friendly, trustworthy, and enjoyable, our response would be of one kind. When we see others as unfriendly, untrustworthy, and dull, our response would be of another type. Since impression plays such an essential role in our social interactions, we are highly concerned about it.

Concern about the impression is quite reasonable, but it has downsides. It causes social anxiety. The feeling of social anxiety comes from our concern for the kind of impression others are forming of us. Our enhanced desire to impress others or our lowered evaluation of our capabilities to impress others increases the feeling of social anxiety. Nervousness in job interviews, meeting new people, social events, public speaking is a sign of social anxiety. Social anxiety, though undesirable, has a purpose of serving; it alerts us to the threats of an unfamiliar situation where we need to pay special attention. Social anxiety is a hazard when intensity is high. It causes troubles in interactions and leads people to avoid social situations. Such people might fall into a cycle of anxiety and head toward even higher strain unless they confront to overcome the problem.

Concern about impression also leads people to engage in risky and harmful behavior, which poses a threat to self and others. Some youngsters engage in dangerous stunts and fast driving to impress others; they also take high risks for selfies.

People tend to manage impressions in line with the end objectives. At different times, people convey different right things about themselves to create impressions that help them in meeting their goals. Some present themselves as tired and sick to avoid tasks. Some present themselves as intolerant and demanding. Some willingly convey negative impressions. Some people exaggerate and lie about themselves to create desirable impressions. They are ready to do whatever is required to get other people to do what they want, even if it involves deception and dishonesty. They are good at getting things done. Such persons are high in Machiavellian characteristics.

Tips for Impression

- » View impression forming efforts as usual
- » Beware of excessive concern for impression
- » Resist conveying a false impression
- » Resist doing anything to get things done

How satisfying are my relationships?

The relationship is the manner of connection for two or more persons or groups or entities. Each link is unique. While some general patterns exist, the reasons for success and failure of each relationship vary.

The modern human has many important things to value in life, like families, friends, health, wealth, education, profession, religion, etc. The relationship is one of the most important things for us to value in life, and we strive to maintain multiple connections in order of their importance.

All relationships that we have in life are influenced by two variables – personality characteristics of persons involved and the nature of relationships.

The personality characteristics play significant roles in determining the success of relationships. A person who is agreeable, easy-going, trusting, and giving is likely to have a more satisfying relationship. In contrast, a person who is disagreeable, hostile, suspicious, and selfish is expected to have a less satisfying relationship. People high in neuroticism tend to have a less satisfying relationship. How personality characteristics of persons connect also contributes to the success of the relationship. For example, in the case of extravert and introvert persons, the link works better if both persons are similar. But in the case of dominant and submissive persons, the link works better if both persons are opposite.

The nature of the relationship is far more complicated and involves multiple processes.

The relationship brings both rewards and costs to the persons in the relationship. Companionship, emotional support, financial support, care, advice, gifts, etc. are rewards of a relationship. Whereas annoyances, conflicts, frustrations, abuse, violence, etc. are costs of a relationship. Each link is a combination of rewards and costs. A bond is beneficial to a person if rewards are more than costs, and a bond is detrimental to a person if charges are more than awards. However, this is not a zero-sum game; both persons in the relationship could be in benefit or detriment at the same time. Rewards and costs are a function of expectations.

A person making benefits in a relationship is not necessarily satisfied. Just making benefits is not enough in a relationship. In relation, each person measures the level of benefits through an internal expectation level. The internal expectation level is the expected benefits a person holds to get from the relationship. When benefits in a relationship exceed the internal expectation level, the person receives more than the expected benefits and feels satisfied. The more the benefits exceed the internal expectation level, the more satisfied the person is. But when benefits fall below the internal expectation level, the person feels dissatisfied, even though the person is making benefits. The standards of benefits vary from person to person. A person's commitment to continue with a relationship depends upon one's tolerance level for minimum benefits. A person might decide to proceed with a relationship even if benefits are meager or zero or negative.

The process of a person walking out of a relationship depends upon the alternatives, what choices a person has. The decision to walk out finally rests on – the internal expectation level for benefits in the existing relationship, the tolerance level for minimum benefits in the current relationship, and the perceived level of benefits in the alternative relationship. Typically, the tolerance level for minimum benefits in the existing relationship tends to be the breakaway point for a person while weighing the perceived level of profits from the alternatives.

In a happy and stable relationship, a person's benefits exceed all three parameters – internal expectation level of benefits, the tolerance level of minimum benefits, and perceived level of alternative benefits.

There could be a situation where a person's benefits are below the internal expectation level of benefits, but above the tolerance level of minimum benefits and perceived level of alternative benefits. In such a case, the minimum expectation is met, and the choices for alternatives are worse. Therefore, a person tends to stay in the relationship.

In a broken-up relationship, a person's benefits are low on all three parameters – internal expectation level of benefits, the tolerance level of minimum benefits, and perceived level of alternative benefits. In extreme cases where benefits are utterly low on internal expectation level and minimum tolerance level, people break up even without an alternative.

Some people walk out of a happy relationship. Such cases occur when the benefits are above the internal expectation level and the minimum tolerance level, but significantly below the perceived alternative level. The anticipated benefits from alternative far outweigh the real benefits from the current.

Typically, in a relationship, the rewards are high in the beginning. However, as time progresses, the costs increase, and the satisfaction flattens. The continuation of a successful relationship requires continuous efforts at readjusting costs and improving rewards. In the absence of that, people become dissatisfied, and the relationship sours. A rewarding partner is the most critical aspect of a successful relationship.

The marital relationship in an arranged marriage in a country like India, in general, works differently. The commitment for continuation in the relationship, in such cases, are found to be drawing strength from social and cultural values.

Tips for Relationship

- » Exhibit high responsiveness
- » Resist criticism
- » Develop mutual trust and dependence
- » Show tolerance for mistakes and corrections
- » Praise others for good deeds and efforts
- » Help others in living a life with a good reputation

How happy a person, am I?

Happiness is the long-lasting peace and satisfaction in life. Happiness probably is the sum of all happenings in a person's life and, in that sense, is the most valuable pursuit of life.

Happiness has been the subject of exploration for thousands of years in different cultures of the world. Philosophical discourses have delved into the matter in varied details. The study of happiness, from the perspective of modern human life, is a late development, though. Many questions are yet to be answered, but research suggests that reasons for happiness are different from general beliefs.

Factors affecting happiness may be arranged under four heads – life circumstances, genetic makeup, approach to life, and belief in supreme power.

Life Circumstances

It is difficult for a person to be happy while living under challenging life circumstances. Attainment of the general standards of living and a minimum level of income to secure the living standards are needed for people to be happy. Life standards and minimum income levels might vary from society to society. Still, in the absence of these, people feel less satisfied with their lives in all cultures. Happiness works differently for people; whose income level is above the threshold and who have attained the general standards of living. In under-developed or developing societies, life

circumstances like health, wealth, education, profession, house, car, gadgets, personal and family issues are dominant contributors to the level of happiness.

In contrast, in developed societies, such matters of life circumstances make a smaller contribution to people's happiness. The reason is that in advanced societies, people enjoy the mental peace of secured minimum standards of living. Any new good things related to living standards of life, like buying a house or car or gadget or dress, etc., make people happy; but such happiness is short-lived. Such joys fade away over time due to hedonic adaptation. We become familiar with pleasurable changes in life, and the pleasure brought about by such changes wears off over time; we tend to return to the set level of happiness in life.

Genetic Makeup

The genetic makeup of a person is probably the most significant contributor in determining the experience level of happiness. Genes have a critical role in determining the personality traits of a person. People, having a brain structure that promotes more positive emotions, experience more happiness. But people, having a brain structure that supports more negative emotions, experience lesser joy. Some people have a far susceptible structure of the brain; they tend to respond more quickly to negative emotions. Research, in the field, has conclusively established that genetic makeup plays a significant role in determining the experience level of happiness. Some people are naturally structured to experience a higher level of joy. In contrast, some people are inherently structured to experience a lesser degree of joy.

Approach to Life

Approach to life is yet another critically important contributor to the experience of happiness. Subjective well-being brings joy to our life, which is mainly the mental and emotional evaluation of our own life. What we do and how we do are critically important in life, and that makes a difference between a happy person and an unhappy person. Improvement in subjective well-being leads to a higher sense of happiness, and this improvement mainly comes from good social life, healthy relationships, and attainment of intrinsic goals. We have already discussed the importance of social life and relationships in previous chapters. Research confirms that happier people put more time and effort into ensuring the quality of their social life. They invest in relationships that involve surrounding, community, people, friends, family members, partners, etc.

Additionally, goals that we set and pursue in life make the difference. Happier people focus on the intrinsic goals of life, which are inherent, internal, and relate to self, like personal growth, health, hobby, family, friends, social-service, etc. In contrast, extrinsic goals are secondary, external, and relate to outside influences, like money, fame, status, etc. Making money is an extrinsic goal, but using that money to get what is needed is an intrinsic goal. Intrinsic goals are self-validated and accepted, but extrinsic goals require validation from others and acceptance by society. We mostly have to pursue many extrinsic goals for living in this world. There is no way to avoid those extrinsic goals, but adding intrinsic goals to those extrinsic goals would make life happier. It would be even better if extrinsic goals happen to be a combined outcome of intrinsic goals. Intrinsic and extrinsic goals of life mainly originate from the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of

life. Extrinsic motivations occur to us in the course of living this worldly life, which makes us realize the importance of extrinsic goals for a comfortable and competent living. But the intrinsic motivations, for the same reason, take the back seat. Children are born with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and develop the balance between the two as they grow. However, somewhere down the line, most of them tend to drop the balance.

Three main reasons that prevent the development of this balance are fear and over-protectiveness in parents, non-specific feedback, and focus on rewards. Parents, due to their fear and overprotectiveness, suppress the inherent urge of the child. Parents and teachers, most of the time, give general feedback to the child, which creates confusion for the child. Without specific feedback, a child is unable to differentiate and pursue core interests. Learning for the sake of interest is the best way of learning. But parents and teachers are often found to be motivating a child by adding rewards to the recognition of a child's efforts and education. Such rewards shift the focus of the child from internal interests to external rewards. The best strategy for developing intrinsic motivations alongside extrinsic motivations is to tie intrinsic motivations to extrinsic motivations. This tie ensures that if intrinsic motivations cannot be pursued exclusively, they are not lost, and a balance is developed between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. It is essential to provide specific positive feedback to intrinsic motivations to help them grow. However, these intrinsic motivations might not find a prominent place in the pursuit of material objectives.

Belief in Supreme Power

The belief in supreme power is an immensely powerful contributor to the experience of happiness, as widely observed across societies through ages. Some people do not subscribe to this belief, but the believers far outweigh their number. This belief has helped humans in living a meaningful life with a reassuring faith in eternal justice. The belief in supreme power is a real source of positivity and happiness in human life.

Tips for Happiness

- » Identify and embrace intrinsic motivations
- » Pursue intrinsic goals alongside extrinsic goals
- » Develop and value relationships that matter
- » Strive for an active social life
- » Trust the Supreme Power

Acknowledgements and References

1. Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior – Edited by Mark R. Leary and Rick H. Hoyle – The Guilford Press.
2. Handbook of Personality, Theory and Research – Edited by Oliver P. John, Richard W. Robins and Lawrence A. Pervin – The Guilford Press.
3. Personality in Adulthood, A Five-Factor Theory Perspective – Robert R. McCrae and Paul T. Costa, Jr. – The Guilford Press.
4. The How of Happiness – Sonja Lyubomirsky – The Penguin Press.
5. The Dark Triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy – Delroy L. Paulhus and Kevin M. Williams – Journal of Research in Personality 36 (2002) 556–563, Academic Press – www.sciencedirect.com.
6. The Light vs. Dark Triad of Personality: Contrasting Two Very Different Profiles of Human Nature – Scott Barry Kaufman, David Bryce Yaden, Elizabeth Hyde and Eli Tsukayama – <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00467/full>. Introducing the Light Triad – Scott Barry Kaufman, March 15, 2019 in Blog – <https://scottbarrykaufman.com/introducing-the-light-triad/>.
7. Understanding the Mysteries of Human Behavior – Mark Leary – The Great Courses.
8. How to Win Friends and Influence People – Dale Carnegie.
9. How to Stop Worrying and Start Living – Dale Carnegie.