
3.9 SIMPLE TIPS FOR PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

You would have understood by now that personalities can be developed if we know the right direction and make conscious efforts towards it. Personality is neither static nor fixed but is organic and dynamic and evolves with changing situations and circumstances. Depending upon our skill set and professional needs, we need to modulate our personality. A doctor may be an excellent medical practitioner but may need to work on his patient management and likewise a teacher may be a good researcher but might have to improve his/her communication skills. All of us have our strengths which we should capitalize on but there is always scope for improvement. The following are some simple tips for personality development.

1. **Self-evaluation** is the first step to personality development. Do a SWOC analysis, use metrics easily available on the internet and other sources or use the above-mentioned traits and attributes as a testing zone to chart your strengths and weaknesses. Make a list of what you admire in others, what you would have wished for yourself. Do not forget to prepare a list of your weaknesses too. Study those you admire carefully; they have their weaknesses too.
2. **Step out of your comfort zone** and push the boundaries step by step. Do not restrict yourself to the comfortable and habitual. Set small targets and test yourself periodically. If uncomfortable talking to strangers, do make it a point to introduce yourself to a new person at the next party. Your comfort level will grow naturally.
3. While doing a SWOC analysis, keep in mind the **soft skills you need for your work profile**. Work on that to begin with. If listening is an important part of what you do, inculcate patience and if speaking and interacting with public is part of your profile, reach out to strangers and learn to initiate conversations. It may be stilted at first but will emerge naturally as you go on.
4. **Inculcate a positive and optimistic outlook**. Nothing adds to your personality as much as positivity does. It is the magnet which attracts others to you and makes you feel much better with yourself. Everything is possible with a positive mindset. Optimism leads to better opportunities as challenges are not seen as setbacks but vistas that only lead you further.
5. **Surround yourself with like-minded people**. While several of us enjoy being alone, it is important to meet and interact with like-minded people. Laughter and cheer are important part of our lives and healthy interactions expose us to different points of view. Meeting new people is very good for us as it widens our horizon and there is so much to learn from others.
6. **Inculcate a reading habit**. Reading gives us the much-needed exposure to other's lives and experiences. Choose a genre that you think you will enjoy the most and gradually widen your reading tastes. Reading autobiographies and biographies of your idols is very inspirational and focusing on the personality traits of great leaders and thinkers and learning from them in an engaging way is also helpful.

7. **Pay attention to physical fitness and your appearance.** Though a book should never be judged by its cover but yet first impressions are usually the lasting ones. How we appear to other is significant to their impression about you. Being physically fit is not about size zero or a gym toned body but a healthy approach to life and being appropriately dress for an occasion reflects your attention to others as well.
8. **Self-reflection, Meditation and Yoga** – While keeping physically fit is important, mental health is equally important if not more so. Keep aside some time every morning for yourself to reflect about the day gone by, do a few minutes of meditation and some yoga to rejuvenate you. This works wonders and adds to your confidence levels. You will start enjoying the peace this brings and will value this self-medication more and more.
9. **Work on your communication skills.** Most people lack confidence because they believe they have poor communication skills particularly when they have to speak in front of a large gathering. They suffer from anxiety, sweaty palms and usually have a fluttering sensation in the stomach with racing heart beats and choking sensations. Such people can easily overcome all of these by systematically working on their communication skills. Simple techniques like speaking aloud while reading a newspaper, indulging in role playing and recording oneself as one speaks to listen and analyse later helps a lot. This is particularly so when one has to speak the acquired language, usually English.
10. **Improve your Body Language** – Observe those whom you admire minutely. Focus on their body language, their posture, gait, tone, pitch amongst other paralinguistic features. Improve your gait by practicing walking with a stack of books on your head, correct yourself when you realise that you are slouching, actively remind yourself to sit erect and most important practice the art of shaking someone’s hand. It should be a firm grip, neither too tight nor too slack. These days a graceful namaste is also appropriate. Paying attention to such details goes a long way in developing our personality.

3.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed what constitutes the term, personality, its etymology and select definitions that sum up the attributes it entails. We have looked into the views of two key theorists on personality i.e. Gordon Allport and Sigmund Freud. The factors that influence personality have also been detailed along with the five-factor model by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa. What is meant by the term personality development and how it can be developed has been taken up along with the need for the same. The immense benefits of personality development have also been detailed along with delineation of the first step towards it i.e. SWOC analysis.

3.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Allport, G. W. (1937). *Personality: A psychological interpretation*. New York: H. Holt and Company.
- Cattell, R. B. (1965). *The scientific analysis of personality*. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

- Freud, S. (1923). *The ego and the id*. SE, 19: 1-66.
- Larsen, R.R., & Buss, D.M. (2018). *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge About Human Nature*.
- Shields, J. (1976). Heredity and environment. In *A textbook of human psychology* (pp. 145-160). Springer Netherlands.
- Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (1999). Personality and sport. *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 25-46.

3.12 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

- 1 Listen to a panel discussion on TV and then analyse which speaker were you listening to carefully. Make a list of the qualities of that speaker that you paid attention to the most. (Indicative answer) I watched a panel discussion on TV last night, it was on the election results. There were four panelists, two of them were political analysts and two were representatives of different political parties. The moderator was balanced and reached out to each one of them for their views. I observed all four carefully and based on my observations, I realized that I paid most attention to panelist no. 3 as she seemed the most balanced, rational, calm, and communicated well without getting impatient or angry. She came well prepared with statistics and observations, she did not react to provocation by others, instead stood her ground well and made her points in a reasonable manner. She came across as a positive person with a well-developed personality.
- 2 Also make a list of reasons why you did not pay much attention to the other speakers. What is it about them that you did not particularly like? (Indicative answer) The other three panelists were creating more noise than giving a reasoned argument. One was very impatient and did not wait for others to finish and tried to dominate the panel discussion. The second panelist was argumentative and did not agree to anything the other three said. He seemed irrational and angry while the third did not communicate at all. He seemed timid, and neither did he interject when he could have but also did not speak well when addressed directly.

Check your progress 2

- 1 Make a list of your character traits and habits and compare them to those of your parents and siblings. Those common to your immediate family members are biological traits. (Indicative answer)

Myself	My father	My mother	My brother
Extrovert	Extrovert	Introvert	Introvert
Quick to react	Impatient	Calm	Calm
Act fast	Reactive	Thoughtful	Passive

Talkative	Gregarious	Reticent	Attentive listener
Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive

Based on the list given above, it is clear that I am more like my father and we are similar in nature, but both my brother and I are positive individuals as we acquired this from our parents biologically.

- 2 What do understand by the term ‘personality’? Is it static and fixed or can we enhance our personality?

Personality is characterized by certain distinct attributes which some possess in greater degrees than others. These attributes may be our character traits, emotions, thoughts, habits, attitudes, temperament, and responses to the environment around us or the situations we find ourselves in. While some of these qualities are inherent and biologically determined, others are subconsciously acquired through our early environment and education, there are still several though that we develop and enhance through conscious effort, which is called ‘personality development’.

Check your progress 3

- 1 What is common to the three definitions of personality given above?

While several psychologists have attempted to define what they understand by the term personality, no two definitions are same but there are common elements in the three definitions given above. While some psychologists focus on character traits as genetic others see it as formed by our early education, environment, and socio-cultural influences. All though agree that these make us distinctive and unique to a certain degree.

Check your progress 4

- 1 What do you understand by Allport’s definition of personality?

According to Allport, personality is dynamic and organic, it is neither fixed not static. It keeps evolving and changing as we grow older and respond to socio cultural stimulants around us. It encompasses both our physical and psychological traits and encompasses both body and mind. He later added components of “characteristic behaviour and thought” to his definition and was also the first to introduce character traits as an important element of personality.

- 2 Use Cattell’s 16 key attributes/ traits to chart elements of your own personality. (Indicative answer)

Using Cattell’s 16 key attributes, following is an attempt to chart my personality

Warmth	Outgoing
Reasoning	Rational
Emotional stability	Reactive
Dominance	Forceful

Liveliness	Spontaneous
Rule-consciousness	Conformist
Social-boldness	Unrestrained
Sensitivity	Tender
Vigilance	Trusting
Abstractedness	Practical
Privateness	Open
Apprehension	Confident
Openness to change	Flexible
Self-reliance	Independent
Perfectionism	Disciplined
Tension	Restless

Check your progress 5

- 1 What do you understand by Freud's concept of id, ego and superego?

The id is the most instinctive part of our personalities, which is at the same time biological and inherent in humans and operates on the principle of wish fulfillment. The ego is the reality principle and is rooted in our interaction with the outside world, it takes into account social behaviour, family bonds and underlying norms of collective living. The superego is a combination of what we have learnt from parents and our environment and experiences in early childhood and can be linked to our conscience. A combination of all three lead to the complexities in our behaviour and personalities. The id is a part of us from birth and controls the instincts and reflexes, the ego moderates the id and is expressed in socially accepted behaviour, and it helps us deal with reality. The superego defines our sense of right and wrong, it suppresses the irrationality of the id and helps us adhere to an accepted code of conduct.

- 2 Explain Freud's psychodynamic theory of personality.

According to Freud, our personalities are neither static nor fixed, they evolve and develop as we grow. He has charted this growth in five distinct phases – The first stage being 'Oral' defined by activities such as tasting and sucking, the next being the 'Anal' stage which focusses on bladder and bowel movement or control of bodily movements. This is followed by the 'Phallic' stage which is marked by an awareness of biological differences. The 'Latent' stage mars the growth upto puberty and is characterised by development of social skills. The final stage is the 'Genital' stage which continues till death. A balance in each stage leads to a well-developed and balanced personality.

Check your progress 6

- 1 Reflect on different aspects of your personality and try and gauge which were influenced by any of the factors mentioned above. For example, which aspects of your personality

are hereditary, and which have been influenced by the environment and which are socio-cultural influences? (Indicative answer)

Since our personalities are influenced by a combination of several factors, the following is an analysis of factors governing my personality.

- Body type – average height - Biological & Hereditary Factor
- Brown eyes & round face- Biological & Hereditary Factor
- Extrovert and confident – Hereditary Factor
- Trusting and loyal – Environmental Factors
- Religious – Socio-Cultural Factors
- Hard working - Socio-Cultural Factors

Check your progress 7

- 1 How does Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's five factor model help us understand our personality better?

Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's five factor model describes five dimensions of human personality. Psychometric tests which evaluate our personalities often use scores based on these five dimensions:

- Openness, which is suggestive of people who are thoughtful, reflective and are willing to try new ideas and activities and are flexible to change.
- Conscientiousness, which refers to a higher sense of responsibility and duty. It reflects motivation, diligence, and a tendency to work harder than others.
- Extraversion indicates traits such as outgoing, talkative, assertive, and energetic behaviour. Those with extraversion traits are sociable and gregarious and usually the centre of attraction in a group.
- Agreeableness indicates those who have higher emotional intelligence and are empathetic and kind. Such people are cooperative and well-liked by peer groups as they avoid conflicts and confrontations.
- Neuroticism indicates emotional swings and irritability. People in this category of traits over think and are prone to anxiety.

Check your progress 8

- 1 What does the term 'Personality Development' mean?
Personality development defines the ability to develop and enhance our personalities to our advantage. Our personalities are not static or fixed. While some character traits are genetically defined, we can work consciously and enhance our personalities as desired.

Check your progress 9

1 Is personality development desirable? Why?

Yes, development of personality is not just desirable but essential too. It is an important soft skill for holistic development. It is a significant component of who we are and what we appear to be to others. It enhances our confidence and adds to our sense of self-worth. Furthermore, a well-developed personality will lead to a positive attitude and help deal with stress better. It will help us communicate with others and build a positive and cheerful environment round us.

2 Which aspects of your personality would you like to improve? (Indicative answer)

There are several aspects of my personality that I would like to work on. For example, I am lazy and find it difficult to complete tasks on time. I have to work consciously to set daily targets and complete tasks. Moreover, I am timid and shy, find it difficult to talk to strangers. I must work on my confidence levels and communication skills.



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