

FOUNDATIONS OF ANGEL WING (SELF-MASTERY VOLUME # 1)

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~ MULTI-DISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS OF
ANGEL WING'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES ~

THE ANGEL WING, LLC

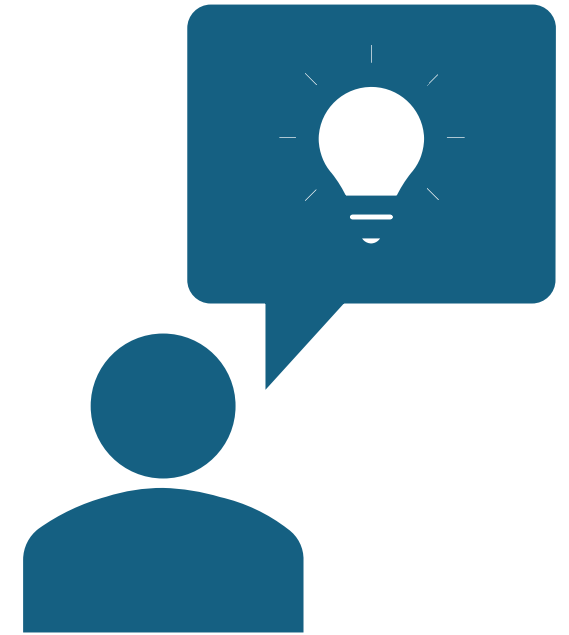


THE INVISIBLE SCAFFOLDING - INTRODUCING CONSTRUCTS

- Imagine trying to describe a rainbow to someone who's never seen one. You might talk about colors, light, and rain, but these are just elements. The rainbow itself, the arc of color bridging earth and sky, is something more. It's a phenomenon created by the interaction of these elements, visible only under specific conditions.
- Similarly, psychology explores the invisible phenomena of the mind. We can't directly observe thoughts, emotions, or personality traits, but we can see their influence in how people behave, interact, and experience the world. This is where *constructs* come in. They act as the "rainbows" of psychology, providing a framework for understanding the unseen forces shaping human experience.

DEFINING "CONSTRUCT"

- A construct is a concept or idea that we use to understand and explain complex phenomena. It is not directly observable but is inferred from patterns in behavior, thoughts, and feelings. Think of it as a **mental tool**, a label we create to represent something intangible yet undeniably present.



SIGNIFICANCE ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Constructs are not unique to psychology. They are essential tools across various disciplines:

- **Psychology:** Intelligence, motivation, personality, self-esteem, anxiety, attachment.
- **Education:** Learning styles, academic achievement, creativity, school climate.
- **Sociology:** Social capital, cultural norms, social class, power dynamics.
- **Business:** Leadership, job satisfaction, organizational culture, brand loyalty.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS



Intelligence: Not just a single thing, but a multi-faceted concept encompassing various cognitive abilities like problem-solving, reasoning, and learning.



Personality: The unique and enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that make each individual distinct.



Anxiety: A feeling of unease, worry, or fear, often accompanied by physical sensations like a racing heart or sweating.



Love: A complex emotion involving feelings of deep affection, care, and attachment towards another person.

WHY ARE CONSTRUCTS NECESSARY?

The Unobservable Mind: We cannot directly observe mental processes like thinking or feeling. Constructs give us a way to talk about these internal experiences and investigate their impact.

Simplifying Complexity: Human behavior is incredibly complex. Constructs help us organize and make sense of this complexity by identifying key underlying factors.

Facilitating Communication: Constructs provide a shared language for researchers, practitioners, and the public to discuss and understand psychological phenomena.

CONSTRUCTS AS BRIDGES: CONNECTING THEORY TO OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOR

Constructs
act as
bridges
between
abstract
theories
and
observable
behavior

Theory: Provides a framework for understanding a phenomenon.

Construct: Represents a key concept within the theory.

Operationalization: Defines how the construct will be measured or observed.

Behavior: Provides concrete data that can be used to test the theory.

EXAMPLE

Theory: Social Learning Theory suggests that we learn by observing others.

Construct: Aggression (a learned behavior).

Operationalization: Counting the number of times a child hits another child after observing a model engaging in similar behavior.

Behavior: Increased aggression in the child who observed the aggressive model.

SCAFFOLDING

- Constructs, though invisible, provide the scaffolding upon which we build our understanding of the human experience. They are essential tools for measuring the mind, testing theories, and developing interventions to improve people's lives. As we delve deeper into the world of constructs, we begin to appreciate the intricate ways in which these unseen forces shape who we are and how we interact with the world around us.

An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a large, dark blue, semi-circular shape. Inside this shape, there is a 3D geometric structure composed of several blue and dark blue planes, resembling a stylized cube or a series of stacked planes. A bright red sphere is positioned on top of the highest point of this structure.

A HISTORY OF IDEAS - TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF CONSTRUCT THINKING

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- **Opening Vignette:**
 - Imagine trying to understand the concept of "beauty." Is it inherent in the object, or is it in the eye of the beholder? Philosophers and artists have grappled with this question for centuries. Similarly, the concept of "constructs" in psychology didn't emerge in a vacuum. It arose from centuries of philosophical debate about the nature of reality, knowledge, and the human mind.



PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS

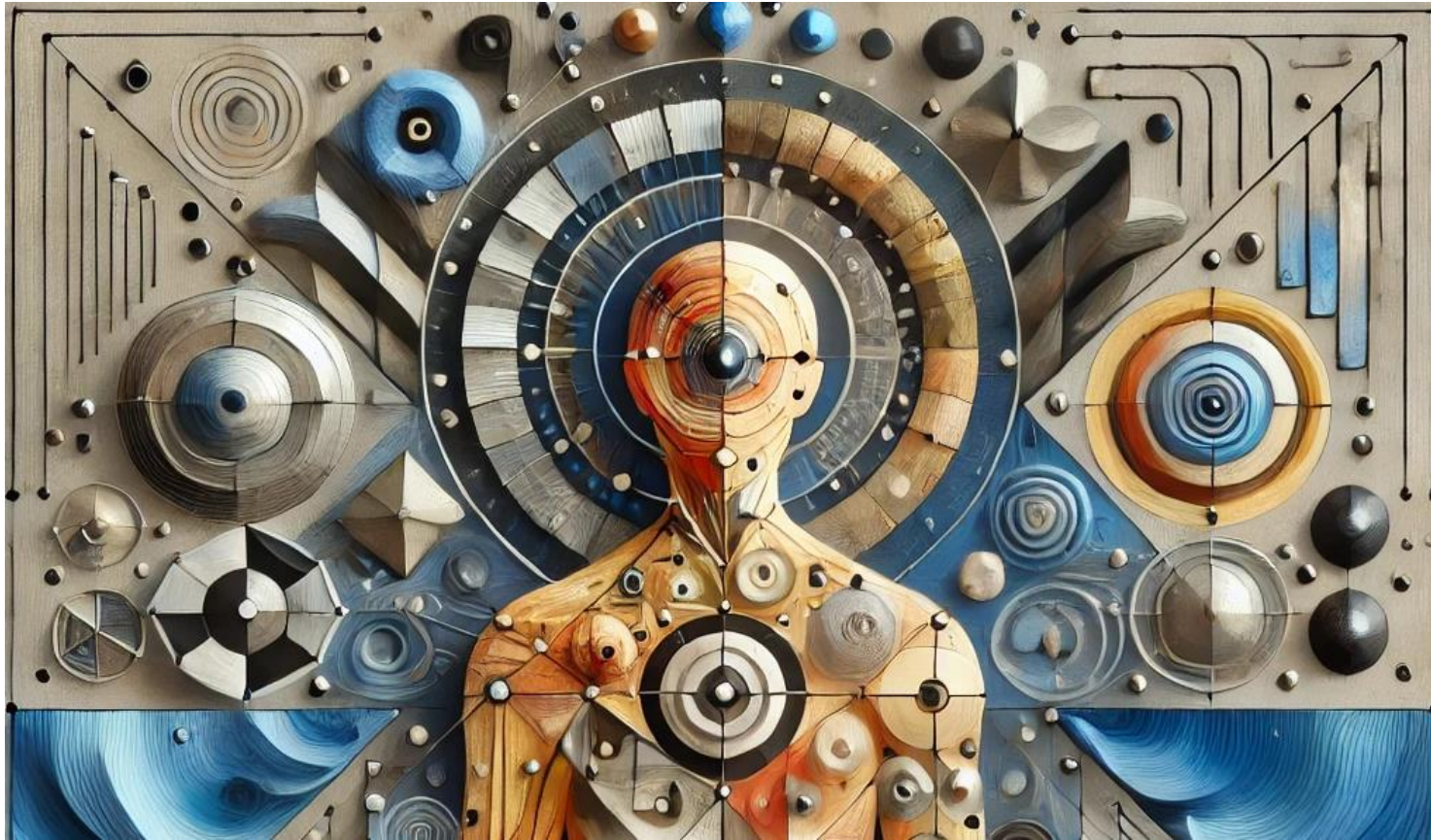
- **Plato's Forms (c. 4th Century BC):** Plato proposed that true reality exists in a realm of perfect, unchanging Forms (e.g., Beauty, Justice, Truth). What we perceive in the physical world are merely imperfect copies of these ideal Forms. This resonates with the idea of constructs as mental representations of underlying realities we cannot directly observe.
- **Kant's Categories of Understanding (18th Century):** Kant argued that our minds are not passive recipients of information but actively structure our experience of reality through innate categories of understanding (e.g., space, time, causality). These categories act like lenses, shaping how we perceive and make sense of the world, similar to how constructs guide our understanding of psychological phenomena.

EARLY PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

- **Structuralism (Late 19th - Early 20th Century):** Pioneered by Wilhelm Wundt and Edward Titchener, structuralism aimed to break down mental experiences into their basic components (sensations, feelings, images) through introspection. This focus on analyzing the structure of consciousness laid the groundwork for examining mental constructs.

FUNCTIONALISM (LATE 19TH - EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

- **Functionalism (Late 19th - Early 20th Century):** Led by William James, functionalism emphasized the purpose and function of mental processes in adapting to the environment. This approach recognized the importance of studying mental processes indirectly through their observable effects on behavior, a key principle in using constructs.



GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY (EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

Gestalt Psychology (Early 20th Century): Gestalt psychologists argued that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. They emphasized the importance of studying subjective experience and perception, highlighting the role of mental organization and interpretation in shaping our understanding of reality, aligning with the concept of constructs.

THE RISE OF OPERATIONALISM (MID-20TH CENTURY)



A key turning point in the development of construct thinking was the rise of operationalism in the 1920s, championed by physicist Percy Bridgman.



Operationalism stressed the need to define concepts in terms of the operations used to measure them. This had a profound impact on psychology, leading to a greater emphasis on:

Operational Definitions: Defining constructs in terms of specific, observable, and replicable procedures.

Measurable Outcomes: Moving away from vague introspection towards quantifiable data to study psychological phenomena.

MODERN PERSPECTIVES

- **Social Constructionism (Late 20th Century):** This perspective argues that many psychological concepts are not objective realities but are socially and culturally constructed. Social constructionists emphasize:
 - **Cultural Influences:** How constructs like gender, race, and intelligence are shaped by societal norms and values.
 - **The Power of Language:** How the words we use to describe psychological phenomena can shape our understanding and experience of them.



CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONSTRUCTS (PRESENT)

Contemporary researchers continue to critically examine the use of constructs, emphasizing:

- **Bias and Fairness:** Ensuring that constructs and their measures are free from cultural, racial, or gender bias.
- **Contextual Sensitivity:** Recognizing that the meaning and expression of constructs can vary across cultures and contexts.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Using constructs responsibly to avoid stigmatization or discrimination.

QUICK REVIEW

- The concept of "construct" has evolved from its philosophical roots to become a cornerstone of modern psychology. From Plato's Forms to contemporary debates about social construction and bias, the ongoing discussion about the nature of constructs reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of psychological inquiry. As we move forward, a critical and nuanced understanding of constructs will be crucial for ensuring that our study of the mind is both rigorous and ethical.

