Freud’s Structural theory of personality

Freud (1923) three parts : **Id, Ego & memories.**

**The Id** engages in **primary process thinking**, which is primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy oriented. This form of process thinking has no comprehension of objective reality, and is selfish and wishful in nature.

**Super-ego** operates as a moral conscience. **The superego** incorporates the values and morals of society which are learned from one's parents & others. **The superego's function is to control the id's impulses**, especially those which **society forbids**, such as sex and aggression. Super Ego persuades the ego to turn to **moralistic goals & to strive for perfection rather than simply realistic ones**

**Ego** is the realistic part that **mediates** between the desires of the Id and the ideals of the Super-ego. The ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world. The ego develops **to mediate between the unrealistic id and the external real world**. It is the decision-making component of personality. **Ideally, the ego works by reason, whereas the id is chaotic and unreasonable.**

**Although each part of the personality comprises unique features, they interact to form a whole, and each part makes a relative contribution to an individual's behavior**. Therapeutic goal is to enhance ego functioning and help the client test reality through assisting the client to think through their options.



•**The Id** is the impulsive (and [unconscious](https://www.simplypsychology.org/unconscious-mind.html)) part of our psyche which responds directly and immediately to the instincts: the sex (life) instinct – Eros (which contains the libido), and the aggressive (death) instinct - Thanatos. **The personality of the newborn child is all id and only later does it develop an ego and super-ego.**

* The id remains infantile in its function throughout a person’s life and does not change with time or experience, as it is not in touch with the external world. The id is not affected by reality, logic or the everyday world, as **it operates within the unconscious part of the mind.**
* The id operates on the pleasure principle (Freud, 1920) which is the idea that every wishful impulse should be satisfied immediately, regardless of the consequences. **When the id achieves its demands, we experience pleasure when it is denied we experience ‘unpleasure’ or tension.**

**The superego consists of two systems:** The **conscience** and the **ideal self**.

The conscience can **punish the ego through causing feelings of guilt**. For example, if the ego gives in to the id's demands, the superego may make the person feel bad through guilt. **The ideal self (or ego-ideal)** is an imaginary picture of how you ought to be, and **represents career aspirations, how to treat other people, and how to behave as a member of society.**

Behavior which falls short of the **ideal self may be punished by the superego through guilt**. The super-ego can also **reward us through the ideal self when we behave ‘properly’ by making us feel proud.**

If a person’s ideal self is too high a standard, then whatever the person does will represent failure. The ideal self and conscience are largely determined in [childhood](https://www.simplypsychology.org/psychosexual.html) from parental values and how you were brought up.

**The ego operates according to the reality principle**, working out realistic ways of satisfying the id’s demands, often compromising or postponing satisfaction to avoid negative consequences of society. **The ego considers social realities and norms, etiquette and rules in deciding how to behave.**

**Like the id, the ego seeks pleasure** (i.e., tension reduction) and avoids pain, but unlike the id, **the ego is concerned with devising a realistic strategy to obtain pleasure.** The ego has no concept of right or wrong; something is good simply if it achieves **its end of satisfying without causing harm to itself or the id.**

**If the ego fails** in its attempt to use the reality principle, **and anxiety is experienced,** [**unconscious**](https://www.simplypsychology.org/defense-mechanisms.html)[**defense**](https://www.simplypsychology.org/defense-mechanisms.html)[**mechanisms**](https://www.simplypsychology.org/defense-mechanisms.html) **are employed**, to help ward off unpleasant feelings (i.e., anxiety) or make good things feel better for the individual.

**The ego engages in secondary process thinking,** which is rational, realistic, and orientated towards problem-solving. If a plan of action does not work, then it is thought through again until a solution is found. **This is known as reality testing and enables the person to control their impulses and demonstrate self-control, via mastery of the ego.**

ID EGO and SUPEREGO

* **Id: locus of primary, primitive drives**. Your id is what steers you toward that car on the showroom you know you can't afford or your eyes toward that person across the room even if you're there with your significant other. The id operates under the pleasure principle, meaning it has no regard for reality, constraints, or consequences. A wild sexual fantasy or dream is pure id.
* **Superego**: **locus of the internalized moral values, prohibitions, and ideals of the person.** The superego is what compels men to climb out of foxholes under fire to pull a wounded comrade back to safety. It also is what probably drove you to attend medical school or become a physician. It is the repository of your ego ideal, your idealized self, the self you want yourself ideally to be. The superego is also where your conscience lives and is responsible for the experience of guilt.
* **Ego**: **balances the drives of the id against the reality of the world.** More organized than the id, the ego attempts to avoid displeasure and pain. **Patients with good control of their impulses and ability to tolerate difficult emotional challenges are said to have good "ego strength." This is where Freud felt the real action was:** viewing it in somewhat neurological terms, he described it as critically involved in selfpreservation of the organism through memory, awareness of stimuli, and making changes in the external environment to gain advantage**.** The ego also can delay or discharge various impulses of the id, leading to release or tension.