

Hello, class.

In today's lesson, we're going to be talking about humanism as a theory of psychology, and particularly about the ideas of self, and how that can lead to our personality.

Humanism is a theory of psychology that emphasizes people's perspectives about growth and potential within human beings. The important figures to remember, and the ones we'll talk about today, are Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who are American psychologists from the mid 1900s. They focused on psychotherapy, and on trying to improve people's lives.

Both of them wanted to identify what were the best possible conditions for human growth, and that led to the development of theories of self, and on self-actualization, which we'll talk about next.

Rogers developed a theory of self, which said that our self, or our personality, is composed of three different parts.

The first part is the self-concept, or what we also refer to as our self-image. Those two are used interchangeably. The self-concept is a person's image or idea of himself or herself. It's what a person thinks about himself or herself. This includes evaluations of worth, or what we call self-esteem. This is whether we think that we're inherently a good or bad person. And, according to self-concepts, other people's opinions of ourselves can have a huge influence on what we think of ourselves, especially our parents when we're growing up and we're younger. If a parent says that we're a bad person, or treats us as being naughty, then that person is more likely to think that they're a bad or naughty person, and to do things that are naughty, as a result. OK So they're more apt to develop that as a personality trait.

The second part is the ideal self. This is an image that a person has on what they would like to be. In other words, the perfect you. Because it's an ideal, it might not necessarily be possible to be your ideal self, but the idea is we want to be as close as possible to being ideal. We want to try to achieve our goals, as best as we can. And this ideal self can be shaped by a person's values, as well as the culture and upbringing that they're brought up in. So our culture here in the US might influence what we consider to be good, or what we consider to be the best possible goal for our self.

Finally, we have our true self. This is what a person is actually like. This is a person's abilities, their physical appearance, anything that actually makes themselves up.

According to Rogers, the way that these three aspects of self interact leads to our personality. What he called

incongruence was when these aspects of personality are not together. When they're different from themselves, and we're not aligned as a person. In other words, there are differences between our self-concept, our ideal self, and/or our true self.

For example, a person might have unrealistic expectations about what they're actually able to achieve. So their self-concept and ideal self are apart from each other. Or they might think of themselves as being unworthy or unable to do certain things, so their self-concept and their true self are pulled apart from each other. This leads to stress and anxiety.

What Rogers said was the ideal situation was congruence. Congruence is when a person is honest, and come to terms with, what his or her abilities and potentials are. In other words, that all the different aspects of self are very closely aligned. They don't necessarily have to be completely overlapping, but they should be as close as possible. And this Rogers referred to as a fully-functioning persona. This is a person that's come to terms with, and found a balance between, his or her thoughts and feelings. They have a balanced personality. This means that a fully-functioning persona is a person that's congruent.

Maslow expanded on Rogers' ideas of self, and said that there were certain needs that a person had, which were not necessarily just internal-- or views of self-- but also external, as well. And these sorts of conditions allow a person to become fully functioning. This is what Maslow called his hierarchy of needs. It's what you would consider to be the soil, or what's necessary for a person to grow, and become a fully-functioning persona. Or to become congruent.

Looking at the hierarchy from bottom to top, we've got, at the bottom, our basic kinds of needs. These are first, physiological needs, which are food, water, shelter, as well as a sense of safety. Feeling like you're not going to be in imminent physical danger. Above that, we've got the need for love and belonging. These are social and emotional needs that a person might have. Above that, we've got the need for esteem. That's a need to see themselves as being a positive person, as well as cognitive needs. To be stimulated. And finally, at the top, and the thing that Maslow said we are all striving for, is self-actualization.

Maslow's idea is that we need to fulfill the lower needs first. So we need to be able to feel safe, and to have the things that we need to survive, before we can go on to the stages at the top. However, Maslow said, to have a fulfilled life, we need to have those higher needs. And so eventually Maslow said, we wanted to get up to the point of self-actualization which, according to him, was the desire or the drive to be a fully functioning and realized person.

Self-actualization is what we would say is being all that you can be. Or it's what Rogers referred to as congruency, or a fully-functioning persona. So you see how these ideas begin to align with each other.

