

Sigmund Freud's Life and Studies

"Sigmund Freud was born on May 6, 1856, in the small Moravian town of Freiberg". His father was a merchant, and his mother was his father's third wife. Freud and his family moved to the city of Vienna when he was almost four. This was the initial stages of the Hapsburg empire's liberal era. A lot of religious restrictions and unfair taxes targeted on the Jewish community were repealed. This created a feeling hope that affected the new generation of Jews, including Freud.

Freud was a brilliant student and always placed at the top of his class. In 1873, Freud entered the University of Vienna to initially study law. However, as Freud would put it later, his "greed for knowledge" made him change his major to medicine. Although Freud was more interested in studying the philosophical-scientific aspects of the mind. He especially became interested in neurology and physiology and finally graduated in 1881. Freud's research was based on close observations and scientific skepticism.

However, this skeptical quality was not appreciated by all of his mentors. One mentor especially, Ernst Brucke, did not like Freud's ideas at all. He even advised Freud to take a lowly position at the Vienna General Hospital. Freud took this position, but his decision was influenced by certain personal events that would change his life. Freud was secretly engaged to Martha Bernays (one of his sister's friends), but he did not have enough money to provide a respectable middle class household that his fiancée thought was necessary. In 1886, Freud finally was able to marry and the next nine years he and Martha had six children together. His youngest daughter Anna would later become Freud's disciple, assistant, and a very good psychoanalyst in her own right.

Before his marriage, Freud had worked in Paris with a famous neurologist named Jean-Martin Charcot. Charcot claimed that he can cure mental disorders using hypnosis. This radical idea deeply influenced Freud and his quest to solve the mysteries of the mind. In 1887, Freud met Wilhelm Fliess (a nose and throat specialist) in Berlin. Fliess was a person who did not get shocked by any ideas. This kind of listener was exactly what Freud needed. For the next ten years, Freud and Fliess exchanged ideas and confidential information. It was during this time that Freud was practicing

psychoanalysis, especially on female patients with hysteria. In 1895, Freud and his friend Josef Breuer published *Studies on Hysteria*. These studies dealt with one of Breuer's patients, "Anna O". This patient had a series of confidential conversations with both Breuer and Freud. She was the patient that Freud would use to prove his idea that hysteria initially originates from certain sexual malfunction. This was also the year when Freud had his famous dream known as "Irma's Injection". This was used by him as the model for psychoanalytic dream interpretations, when he published his book *Interpretation of Dreams* .

In 1896, Freud would first use the word "psychoanalysis". That same year his father would die. This loss would deeply affect Freud, and even his work to some extent. Freud then started working on his "Dream Book". He also abandoned the "seduction theory", a theory that Freud firmly believed in for some time. This theory stated that neurosis occurred in people who were somehow sexually abused when they were a child. Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1899. This book was not very popular as only 351 copies were sold in its first six years.

However in 1901, Freud published his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. This book was a very popular one, as it dealt with how our mind has a certain set of rules governing it. In 1902, Freud was finally appointed the associate professor of the University of Vienna. For the next six years, more people came to support Freud and in 1908, Freud and his followers instituted the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. In 1905, Freud published his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. This book dealt with the psychological development of a person's sex drive ever since childhood.

For the next few years, Freud published more papers about the human psychological condition. in both adults and children. His ideas were strongly debated through out the world, as he found himself in the middle of international academic movement.

In 1920, Freud published his pessimistic *Beyond the pleasure Principle*, that dealt with the human death drive. Three years later, Freud would come out with his *Ego and the Id*. In this book,

Freud gave a structural model of the mind, separating into three parts, the ego, the id and the superego. For the next ten years, Freud continued to write more papers that introduced many new ideas and revised older ones. These papers all would help in building a compact theory that helped to explain the way the human mind works. In 1933, Hitler was nominated as the chancellor of Germany. This led to increased power of the Austrian Nazis, and a strong feeling of Anti-Semitism. Freud however refused to leave Vienna. In 1938, the Germans were welcomed into the city of Vienna. This was the last straw as Freud prepared to leave Austria. That June Freud would leave for Paris and then London so that he could die in freedom. On September 23, 1939, Freud asked his physician for a lethal dose of morphine, and would eventually die. His death did not stop the spread of his work on psychoanalysis, as Freud's theories would eventually become one of the most popular fields in the science of psychology.

The Ego

The ego is the mediator between the outside world and the id. The ego was originally part of the id, and through the influence of the outer world, has formed into a separate psychological element. The principal task of the ego is self-preservation. The ego commands a wide variety of voluntary movements. It is the part that is responsible for our memory, and also the human self defense mechanisms (fight or flight). The ego can adapt to new situations through adapting. The ego is also responsible for reducing the amount stress (displeasure). The ego is also responsible for making the body rest through the process of sleep.

The Superego

The superego is the part of the personality that is formed while growing up under the care of parents and other role models. It constitutes all that is learned from these figures to be the right way to act. This includes knowing what is taboo in society and what behavior the society holds in high esteem.

The Id

The id is the oldest of the psychological elements. It is everything that humans have inherited

at birth. The id is the part of the mind that has to deal with our instincts. The id is the part of the mind that is responsible for sexual urges, and is often repressed.

A. Instruments of the mind

1. Elements of the Id - The Eros Instinct - The natural urge to bond and connect with others in order to return to the original oneness of the first cell. All sexual relations including the Oedipal Complex and Penis Envy that occur in young boys and girls arise out of this. - The Death Instinct - The natural urge to crush relationships and things in order to return to an earlier state when all things were inorganic/not living. When the destructive urge is repressed, the anger turns to self-destructive tendencies.
2. Elements of the Ego
3. Elements of the Superego
4. Interactions between Id and Ego - This occurs when one has a choice between small instant gratification or better future rewards.
5. Interactions between Id and Superego - This occurs when one has to choose between doing what's morally right and doing what is better for themselves.
6. Interactions between Ego and Superego - This occurs when one has to choose between acting practically and doing the right thing, no matter what the consequences.
7. Interactions between Id and Ego/Superego - This occurs when one has to choose between acting on instincts and doing what is practical as well as morally correct.
8. Interactions between Ego and Id/Superego - This occurs when one has to choose between doing what is practical and that what is desirable both personally and morally.
9. Interactions between Superego and Id/Ego - This occurs when one has to choose between doing what is morally correct and that which is both practical and instinctive.

B. Characteristics of the Mind

1. Description of the Unconscious - The Unconscious is the psychical quality that one has no direct access to. The properties that originate in the unconscious are usually repressed. One can only access the unconscious through indirect interpretations, such as dreams.
2. Description of the Pre-Conscious - The preconscious is the psychical quality that one does have access to. While the elements in the preconscious are not present in one's immediate

consciousness,
these elements can easily be recovered if necessary.

3. Description of the Conscious - The conscious is the psychological quality that deals with a person's immediate state of mind. It is composed of what one is thinking and acting right at that moment.

Interpretations of Dreams

Dreams, no matter how bizarre they may be, are actually thoughts that the mind has repressed while one is awake. During sleep, these repressed thoughts can no longer be held in check. Often the mind interprets these repressed thoughts in an indirect fashion, thus causing what is known as dream distortions. It is due to these dream distortions that people may see some nonsensical event occurring in their dream. The repressed information that one may see while sleeping is triggered due to either an unconscious wish, or a preconscious wish that has been repressed by the mind. Dreams therefore act as fulfillment of wishes.

First to identify the subconscious. The subconscious is the area of your mind that stores all of your memories and desires. The subconscious is like a giant warehouse that is waiting to be filled with all of your experiences and emotions.

The subconscious allowed people to understand how dreams at night were linked to the activities of the day.

Freud says that dreams are your repressed desires. He says that dreams are the visuals of your subconscious. Freud made many amazing observations that left an understanding of dreams and a distortions of dreams. One of Freud's distortions is that all dreams are about sex. He felt that every symbol in a dream was directly related to sex, thus the nickname 'The Viennese Sexologist'. Freud thought that symbols, in dreams were projections of sexual feelings associated with frustrations and guilt. Many feel Freud had such a sexual focus because of the era that he was living in and because he struggled with his own sexuality. Give any Freudian a dream and they will tell you it's about sex.

Time Line

1856 Sigmund Freud was born on May 6 in Freiberg

1860 Freud and family moved to Vienna

1873 Freud entered the University of Vienna, planned to study law but instead became a physician

1881 He received a degree in physiology and neurology

1882 Freud left the laboratory to take a lowly post at the Vienna General Hospital

1885 Worked in Paris with the celebrated French neurologist Jean-Martin

1890's founded the psychoanalytic theory of mind

1895 Freud and Breuer published Studies of Hysteria

Irma dream interpretation

1899 Interpretation of Dreams was published in November

1905 Introduced Three essays on the Theory of Sexuality

1910-20 many papers on psychoanalysis were published

1923 Classic study of Id, Ego, and Super-ego developed

1938 Freud left Paris and went to London

1939 Sigmund Freud died on September 23