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Theories of Freud Sigmund

Sigmund Freud was a Viennese doctor who was responsible for the introduction into the basic principles of psychology. He was born in 1856 and died in 1939 so lived through the Victorian era. He pioneered the investigation of psychological states through the investigating the patient's childhood. He believed that the basis of many psychological problems was sexual. Freud's theories and approaches were influenced by the ideas and society of his time, nobody in the Victorian era would have even said the word sex let alone come up with some of the theories that Freud did. He was the first person of his time to come up with these ideas, and is seen as the founder of Psychoanalysis.

Freud believed and that people developed in stages. Each stage was linked to physical development. He believed that one part of the body would experience excitement due to need called excitation, and then once need is met the person feels gratification. Then the body would experience excitation again, this will carry on through out the persons life, like a circle.

Excitation

Gratification

Excitement due to need

Need is meet

Freud proposed that we are driven or motivated by are instinctual drives. He saw the instinct and sex drive as exerting the most influence in the early years of life and therefore childhood as a time of key importance in personal development. Freud proposed that children are able to receive sexual pleasure from any part of their bodies, but as they grow older the sexual drive becomes focused upon different parts of the body. There are five different stages of development they are; the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage, the latency stage and the Genital stage.

Stage one the oral stage focuses on the mouth where pleasure is gained first from sucking and swallowing (the oral passive sub stage) and later as teeth emerge, from biting and chewing (the oral active sub stage). This stage is linked to weaning or breastfeeding, the stage is for babies from birth to a year old.

Freud therefore believed that the early years of development are very important, as the experiences of childhood shape the structure of the human personality, he suggested that too much or too little pleasure at that stage might cause a fixation, causing the person in later life to indulge in its pleasures. So for someone to fixate at the oral sucking stage might mean that they become smokers in later life or will always want

something in their mouths like food or drink, or pen lids and often suck their thumbs they will often be very dependant on others. They are like this because they did not have the pleasure of sucking their mothers breast, and so do similar things in later life.

The second stage in a Childs life is at the age of one to three years. This is called the anal stage where the gratification shifts to the anus. Where first pleasure is gained from playing with faeces (the expulsive sub stage) and then during potty training (the active sub stage). If the person was slow and difficult to potty train they might fixate at the anus expulsive stage this could reflect their personality by becoming sloppy and disorganised in later life. Although as a child if you were potty trained at a young age, you could fixate at the anus retentive stage. In later life your personality could be one of a perfectionists and a very clean and tidy person, and someone who is mean and tight.

The third stage is the phallic stage that focuses on the genitals, this usually happens from three years to six. It is an age where pleasure is involved in the genitals, and also towards the opposite sex parent. Both boys and girls at this age fancy their parents, but differ slightly in the way they deal with this situation. Freud named this the Oedipus complex.

For boys the Oedipus complex is where the love for his mother becomes increasingly passionate. So the boy comes in to conflict with his father because his mother loves his father, the boys starts to resent his father because of this as he doesn't want to share the love his mother gives to both of them. The son realises that his father is more powerful and starts to worry that his father will punish him, the boy fears that his father will castrate him if he finds out how much he loves his mother. So the boy decides that if he identifies with the father and tries to be like him his mother will love him because she loves his father and that is what he does. The boy decides to act like his father because he is behaving like the object of his mothers desire and so that the father will not castrate him.

The Oedipus complex for girls (which is referred to as the Elektra complex) involves the girls desire for he father, girls realise that boy and girls are different, the girl also realises that her mother knows that she fancies her father and because of this she has already been castrated by her mother. The girl then gets "penis envy" and gets very jealous because she really wants one. She turns this envy into a desire for a baby "maternal instinct". The girl then turns her envy to have a penis to a desire to have her fathers child. So for this to happen the girl behaves like her mother because her father desires my mother, so the girl hopes because she does this her desire will come true and she can have a baby.

From the phallic stage the child will gain sexual gratification from resolving the Oedipus complex. If the male fixates at this stage and is rejected by their mother they will either according to Freud's theories reject heterosexual society or become a violent man. If the female is rejected and can't solve the Oedipus complex they will either become tomboys and reject heterosexual relationships or become hyper feminise.

Stage four is the latency stage where after the turmoil of the phallic stage the Child's desires diminish somewhat, so nothing happens from the age of six to puberty. Freud suggested that by the end of the phallic stage, the three main aspects of the mind would have developed meaning that there would be no more fixations.

The last stage that is from puberty onwards is called the genitals stage which focuses on the genitals, this is where the person can carry out a normal sexual relationship outside of the family. The person gains sexual gratification from the act of sex.

This is one of Sigmund Freud's main theories, which looks at the development of a child from birth to an adult. Freud's ideas made a large impact on psychology and are still discussed and used today, around 100 years after he started developing them.

Bibliography

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