

Definition and Description of Personality

Personality refers to the long-standing traits and patterns that propel individuals to consistently think, feel, and behave in specific ways. Our personality is what makes us unique individuals. Each person has long-term characteristics and a manner in which he or she interacts with other individuals and the world around him. Our personalities are thought to be long term, stable, and not easily changed.

The word *personality* comes from the Latin word *persona* meaning “*mask*”. According to this meaning personality is the impression we make on others; the mask we present to the world.

Personality is defined as “a unique set of traits and characteristics, relatively stable over time.” The definition further suggests that personality does not change from day to day. Over the short-term our personalities are relatively set or stable. However definition does not suggest that personality is somehow rigid, unchangeable, and cast in concrete. Definition recognizes that, over a longer term, personality may change.

Personality embraces moods, attitudes, and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people. It includes behavioral characteristics, both inherent and acquired, that distinguish one person from another and that can be observed in people’s relations to the environment and to the social group. Happy, sad, impatient, shy, fearful, curious, helpful are the characteristics that describe one’s personality.

The term “Personality” varies from group to group and society to society, everyone has personality, which may be good or bad, impressive or unimpressive. It develops during the process of socialization in a culture of a specific group or society. One cannot determine it of an individual exactly because it varies from culture to culture and time to time. For example, a killer is considered criminal in peace time and hero in war. The feeling and actions of an individual during interaction moulds the personality. It is the sum of total behaviors of the individual and covers both overt and covert behaviors, interests, mentality and intelligence. It is the sum of psychophysical (Physical and mental abilities) capabilities.

Definitions of Personality

- J.B Watson (1930): “Personality is the sum of activities that can be discovered by actual observations over a long enough period of time to give reliable information.”
- M. Prince (1929): Personality is the sum total of all biological innate dispositions, impulses, tendencies, appetites, and instincts of the individual and the dispositions and tendencies acquire by experience.
- After analyzing 49 definitions by eminent persons Gordon W.Allport (1948) defined “Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment.”
- According to Woodworth Opines “Personality is the quality of individual’s total behavior.”
- R.B Cattell defines: “Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation.”