THE PERSONALITY PUZZLE

EIGHTH EDITION

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DAVID C. FUNDER

University of California, Riverside

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

New York • London

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Printed in Canada

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Composition: GraphicWorld
Manufacturing: Transcontinental—Beauceville, Quebec

ISBN: 978-0-393-67480-4

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110
wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 15 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

For my father

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David C. Funder is a Distinguished Professor of Psychology and former chair of the department at the University of California, Riverside. Winner of the 2009 Jack Block Award for Distinguished Research in Personality, he is a former editor of the *Journal of Research in Personality*, and a past president of the Association for Research in Personality as well as the Society for Personality and Social Psychology. He is best known for his research on personality judgment and has also published research on delay of gratification, attribution theory, the longitudinal course of personality development, and the psychological assessment of situations. His current research is focusing on the experience of situations in cultures around the world. He has taught personality psychology to undergraduates at Harvey Mudd College, Harvard University, and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and continues to teach the course every year at the University of California, Riverside.

Anybody in science, if there are enough anybodies, can find the answer—it's an Easter-egg hunt. That isn't the idea. The idea is: Can you ask the question in such a way as to facilitate the answer?

—GERALD EDELMAN

Even if, ultimately, everything turns out to be connected to everything else, a research program rooted in that realization might well collapse of its own weight.

—HOWARD GARDNER

The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. That's OK as far as it goes. The second step is to pretend that whatever cannot be easily measured isn't very important. That's dangerous. The third step is to pretend that whatever cannot easily be measured doesn't exist. That's suicide.

—DANIEL YANKELOVICH

There once was an entomologist who found a bug he couldn't classify—so he stepped on it.

—ERNEST R. HILGARD

Interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art.

—SUSAN SONTAG

Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean it's not real?

—ALBUS DUMBLEDORE
(In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, by J. K. Rowling)

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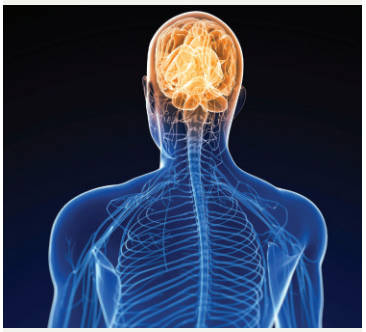

PREFACE

IT HAS BEEN A true labor of love to work on this personality textbook through eight editions. Personality psychology has grown and evolved, but my goal has always been the same: to keep the research current, the writing fresh, and, above all, to continue to make the case that *personality psychology is interesting and important*.

"As a matter of fact, I confess to modest hopes—not wildly unfounded, I trust—that my book may resonate beyond the reaches of academe."

How This Book Is Traditional

In many ways, this is a fairly traditional personality textbook. It covers methods, traits, assessment, development, psychoanalysis, behaviorism, motivation, emotion, and cognitive processes. Most personality textbooks are organized around these topics, variously calling them "perspectives," "paradigms," or "domains of knowledge." Here I call them "basic approaches." By any labeling, this range of topics means that the book should fit in easily with just about any typical Personality Psychology syllabus.

How This Book Is Different

But this book is, in other ways, *not* like the others. What would have been the point of writing just more of the same? Read this book, or just flip through the pages, and you will see that it is distinctive in several ways.

1. **Opinions.** This book includes my personal opinions, quite a few of them. An old friend from graduate school wrote a textbook of his own, on a different subject, and happened to see this one. "Wow," he said. "Your publisher lets you state what you think. Mine makes me take out anything they think anybody might disagree with."

   W.W. Norton is a great publisher and gives me a long leash, and I have learned that my friend's experience is more common than my own. But I try not to abuse the privilege. The opinions in this book are professional, not personal. I think I have some credentials and experience that license me (not legally!) to have opinions about psychological issues. I do *not* have any special qualifications to weigh in on politics or morality. Although I have strong opinions about those

matters, too, I have tried very hard to leave them out. For example, the debate over abortion is considered in Chapter 13, in the context of a discussion of collectivist versus individualist values. A student once told me that after reading that chapter she couldn't tell what my own position was. Good.

When it comes to my views on professional matters, surely not every instructor (or student) will agree with me on every point. But that's fine. For example, in Chapter 3 I express a rather negative opinion about the use of deception in psychological experiments. I suspect this is a minority position among my colleagues, and perhaps students as well. The ethics of research and experimentation, including this issue, could make for a lively lecture topic or class discussion, focusing on the ways in which my own viewpoint is wrong. I express opinions not in the hope of having the final word on the subject, but in an attempt to stimulate the reader to decide whether he or she agrees with me and to formulate opinions of his or her own. For reasons explained in Chapter 15, this is an excellent way to learn material no matter what the subject.

2. **Respect for Freud.** It is oh-so-fashionable for modern psychologists to trash Freud, all of his works, and even all of psychoanalytic thought. Too often, textbook chapters could even be titled "Why Freud Was Wrong." I don't do this. I find Freudian theory to be a perplexing mixture of wise and even startling insights, strange ideas, and old-fashioned 19th-century sexism. As you can see in Chapters 10 and 11, I seek to emphasize the first of these elements and deemphasize (or ignore) the other two. I have had colleagues ask, How can you teach Freudian theory? It's so boring! To which I answer, Not if you teach it right. (Most years, it's my own students' favorite part of the course.) I have also had colleagues ask, How can you teach Freudian theory? Freud was wrong about so many things! To which I answer, Read Chapter 10. I fixed it.

   By the way, orthodox Freudians (there are still a few around) are not especially grateful for what I've done here. They would much rather see a presentation that marches through the entire Freudian canon in chronological order, and includes a detailed apotheosis of *Civilization and Its Discontents* and all of Freud's other major works. There are plenty of places to find presentations like that (my favorite is Gay, 1988). You won't find one here.

3. **Historical perspective.** I am surprised by how many textbooks neglect the history of psychology; in fact, that seems to be a growing trend. I appreciate the urge to present all the latest findings, and, indeed, you will find many new and exciting studies in this book. But that's not enough. How can you understand where you are going if you don't know where you have been? That is one (just one) of the reasons I try to give Freud his due. It is also why this book includes an account of how behaviorism evolved into cognitive social learning theory, how modern positive psychology developed out of existential philosophy and classic humanistic psychology, and how the modern study of personality traits began with Allport and Odbert's famous list of 17,953 ways to describe a person.

4. **Fewer pictures.** Have you already noticed that this textbook doesn't contain as many pictures as most others do? I get complaints. "My college students won't read a book that doesn't have more pictures." Really? Maybe that's true; how sad. But if you would have liked more pictures, blame me, not the publisher. The people marketing this book are all for pictures. But I don't like to have too many, for three reasons:
   - **a.** Pictures are sometimes meaningless window-dressing. I was once leafing through a widely-used personality textbook and noticed a photograph of a student looking thoughtful. The caption read, "Much careful study will be required before a single integrative theory of personality is developed." Someone please tell me the point of that picture.
   - **b.** Pictures can be distracting. This book was written to be *read*, not just looked at. I once replied to someone advising me to have more pictures that John Grisham's books don't have any pictures at all, and yet they sell millions of copies. The response was, "You're not John Grisham." Excellent point! Still, the heart of this book lies in the words, not the illustrations. The words make it worthwhile, or they don't.
   - **c.** One aspect of the kind of pictures commonly seen in textbooks makes me uneasy. Chapter 12 includes a summary of what Carl Rogers said about "conditions of worth," the harm they can do, and the way I think they are promulgated in many typical textbook illustrations. I would rather not do that in a psychology textbook, of all places. Except just once, to illustrate what I'm talking about (see Figure 12.3, in Chapter 12).
5. **More cartoons.** On the other hand, I love well-chosen cartoons. Aaron Javsicas, a former Norton editor, suggested a long time ago that a few *New Yorker* cartoons might liven the book up a bit. You will see that I took this suggestion.[1] But I hope the cartoons are more than just entertaining. I have tried to find ones that underline a point being made in the text. Sometimes the connection is obvious, sometimes perhaps not so much. Trying to figure out why I thought each cartoon was relevant is one way to study for the midterm!
6. **Overall goal.** Probably the most distinctive aspect of this book is its overall goal, which, as I have already said, is to convince the reader of the value of personality psychology. It's fine to cover everything in depth, to include all the latest findings, and even to seek to write in an interesting, engaging manner. Indeed, I did try to do all these things, but they were not my primary aims. To the extent that someone gets through the 600-plus pages of this book and, at the end, concludes that personality psychology is an interesting, important part of science, then I have done what I set out to do. Anything else is gravy.

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[1] Not all the cartoons are actually from the *New Yorker*; some are from other sources, and a few of my favorites were drawn by my older daughter.

New to the Eighth Edition

Doing a textbook is a strange kind of writing because it's never finished. Every few years, you have to do it again. On the other hand, every few years, you get to do it again. Each edition offers an opportunity not only to update the latest research, but also to seek clearer ways to explain complex ideas and improve the overall organization. And I still continue to find (and attempt to fix) clunky sentences that have somehow survived seven rounds of rewriting and copyediting. Over the editions of this book, some revisions have been major and others have been minor. This one is somewhere in between.

The most significant change in this edition is the addition of a section specifically aimed at demonstrating how personality psychology can be useful. Not everybody realizes that personality is an important applied area of psychology. The new Part VII of this book, called "Applications of Personality Psychology" and the new Chapters 16, 17, and 18 seek to demonstrate how and why. Chapter 16 illustrates how personality psychology can be applied to understanding and improving outcomes in relationships and business, such as choosing the right partner or choosing the right occupation. Chapter 17 summarizes some of the latest developments in understanding personality disorders, and current research on the traits and psychological processes associated with physical health. The final chapter on "What Have We Learned" (called the Epilogue in the Seventh Edition) also tries to highlight some practical lessons drawn from this very long book. I do hope people read this chapter, which I suspect was mostly ignored last time around. Apparently, in the previous edition, about as many people read the Epilogue as read the Preface, and such people are unusual. But they do include you.

Another addition worth noting is new sections on issues of replication and the practice of open science in psychological research (in Chapter 3). These topics have become increasingly prominent lately, and include issues such as publication bias, questionable research practices, *p*-hacking, and ways to increase the reliability of scientific research. No course in any area of psychology is up-to-date without at least some consideration of these issues.

The final major difference between this and the previous edition comes from my continued efforts to improve the way the book is organized. One challenge in maintaining

a textbook through eight editions is avoiding book bloat. With every revision, an author is obligated to include the latest findings on each topic, and sometimes add whole new topics that have become important. There is less pressure to take anything out. The result can be a book that gets bigger and bigger until carrying it around can be hazardous to your health (thank goodness for ebooks editions). For this edition, I made an extra effort to remove descriptions of studies that are out-of-date, superseded by newer research, or no longer relevant to current concerns. In particular, I removed quite a bit of material concerning basic principles of behaviorism that are not directly relevant to personality, and old versions of social learning theory that have lesser impact on modern research. This revision allowed me to combine two chapters from the Seventh Edition, on learning and cognitive processes, into a single chapter (Chapter 14) on personality processes.

Pieces of the Personality Puzzle

Pieces of the Personality Puzzle: Readings in Theory and Research (Fifth Edition) is a collection of readings related to the topics covered in this book that my colleague Dan Ozer and I edited several years ago. It is still available as a supplemental text. Selections include original essays by theorists such as Freud, Jung, Erickson, and Allport; classic research articles; and examples of recent empirical research taken from the current research literature. Each article has been edited for clarity and includes explanatory footnotes. Other instructors and I have found that these readings help to provide a firsthand view of the theory and research summarized in *The Personality Puzzle* and can also be the basis of stimulating classroom discussions.

Resources for Instructors

InQuizitive

New for the Eighth Edition of *The Personality Puzzle*, InQuizitive adaptive assessment uses research-proven techniques to improve student learning. Motivating game-like elements engage students in active learning and drive them back into the text when they need to review. Each chapter includes 40–50 questions of varying question types, and each question includes answer-specific feedback to help students grasp course concepts.

Interactive Instructor's Guide

This online repository of teaching assets offers materials for every chapter that both veteran and novice instructors of the course alike will find helpful. Searchable by chapter or asset type, the Interactive Instructor's Guide provides multiple ideas for teaching. The latest version has been revised to coordinate with the addition of new material, research, and updated figures. The Guide also includes links to carefully selected YouTube–style clips and activity ideas that will be continually updated during the life of the edition.

Test Bank

The test bank features approximately 1,700 questions, including 80–100 multiple-choice, 10 matching, and 5 short-answer questions in each chapter. All questions have been updated according to Norton's assessment guidelines to make it easy for instructors to construct quizzes and exams that are meaningful and diagnostic. All questions are classified according to educational objective, student text section, difficulty, and question type. This Norton test bank is available with Exam View Test Generator software, allowing instructors to effortlessly create, administer, and manage assessments. The convenient and intuitive test-generating wizard makes it easy to create customized exams. Other key features include the ability to create paper exams with algorithmically generated variables and to export files directly to your LMS.

Lecture PowerPoints

These text-focused PowerPoints follow the chapter outlines, featuring figures from the text, extra pedagogy notes for the instructor, as well as clicker questions to check students' understanding at the end of each chapter.

Art Slides

All the figures, photos, and tables from the text are offered as JPEGs, both separately and embedded in a PowerPoint set for each chapter. All text art is enhanced for optimal viewing when projected in large classrooms.

Acknowledgments

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge some of the help I have received with this project over the years and editions. First of all, my wife, Patti, has been a source of emotional support, clever ideas, and critical comments throughout the process. Her insights and her skepticism about whether psychology is really a science (she was trained as a cell biologist) continue to keep me on my toes. She also patiently puts up with the foggy state I can go into for weeks and sometimes months while doing this book's periodic revisions.[2] I really and truly could not keep doing this without her. My daughter Morgan has provided some apt hand-drawn illustrations for the book ever since the fifth edition, and contributed some new ones this time around.

Along with Patti, Tiffany Wright (a graduate student at the University of California, Riverside), Chris Langston (a colleague), and Cathy Wick (a former editor at Norton) read the first edition of this book and made many comments and suggestions, most of which I followed. The early encouragement and advice of Paul Rozin was particularly important, and the late Henry Gleitman was also generous. Traci Nagle carefully copyedited the first edition, and a little of the prose she worked so hard on still survives after all these years. Mary N. Babcock made an equally important contribution to the second edition, Anne Hellman to the third, Sarah Mann to the fourth, Susan Middleton to the fifth, Erika Nein to the sixth,

[2] She also tolerates the inclusion of the anecdote about one of our early dates in Chapter 10.

Teresa Wilson to the seventh, and Rosy Lum to this edition. Don Fusting, a former Norton editor, used the softest sell in the history of publishing, over a period of years, to convince me to undertake this project in the first place. If not for him, this book would simply not exist.

When Sheri Snavely came on board as editor for the fifth and the sixth and seventh edition, I felt like this book gained a whole new life. I am grateful for her creative ideas, good judgment, collaborative spirit, and most of all for her understanding of and enthusiasm for the distinctive kind of book *The Personality Puzzle* has strived to be. Ken Barton, a long-time friend and helper of the *Puzzle*, picked up the torch for this new edition. He provided valuable advice and guidance—and a bit of restraint here and there—as I prepared this latest revision.

Assistant editor Katie Pak did a terrific job in keeping organized all the various chapters, revised chapters, illustrations, revised illustrations, copyediting, updated references, and all the million other pieces of this book puzzle that flowed across her desk at random times and in no particular order. Also keeping things on track were Benjamin Reynolds, the production manager, and Caitlin Moran, the project editor. Ted Szczepanski, the senior photo editor, helped to track down photographs and other illustrations that, through the vagaries of copyright law and mysteriously disappearing copyright owners, are more difficult to find than they used to be. Kaitlin Coats, Victoria Reuter, and Allison Smith assembled the ever-growing and ever-improving media resources that accompany this edition, for which Erica Baranski, David Condon, Amy Corbett, Gwendolyn Gardiner, Tera Letzring, and Jennifer McDonald contributed terrific new content. Going beyond the call of duty, in the course of working on the ancillary materials, Tera Letzring also discovered some errors in the text that I was very happy to correct, just in time. Finally, there is no point to writing and producing a book if nobody reads it. So I am grateful to Ashley Sherwood and the whole W. W. Norton sales team (who, in a bit of lovable inside jargon, are called "travelers") for their persistent efforts and long journeys to help make this book available to readers across the United States and around the world.

For this and previous editions, I was aided by the wise and knowledgeable advice of the following people:

PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Sarah Angulo, Texas State University, San Marcos
Nicole B. Barenbaum, University of the South
Susan Basow, Lafayette College
Veronica Benet-Martínez, University of California, Riverside
Diane S. Berry, Southern Methodist University
Mia Biran, Miami University (Ohio)
Boris Bizumic, The Australian National University
Dan Boroto, Florida State University
Turhan Canli, State University of New York at Stony Brook
Kimberly Clow, University of Ontario Institute of Technology
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Omri Gillath, The University of Kansas

I also have been gratified by many emails from students. Some of these messages arrive late at night—apparently, the readers of this book and its author keep the same hours. Many include useful questions, suggestions, and corrections that I have incorporated into every edition. Other messages challenged or disagreed with me on key points, and if the people who wrote them look closely at the latest edition, they will see that they too mostly had an effect. But that wasn't even the best part. I can't adequately express how encouraging it is for an author bogged down at one in the morning to have his computer suddenly yield an email that says, "I really enjoyed your book and just wanted to say thanks." Thank *you*.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the very first person who read the first draft of the first edition all the way through. He wrote comments on nearly every page. Usually, they were notations such as "What does this mean?" or "What are you talking about?" These invariably identified places where I had lapsed into incomprehensible jargon or otherwise failed to make sense. Sometimes his comments were just strong expressions of agreement or disagreement. Over the several years that I worked on the first edition, I never once had a conversation with him that did not include the question "How is the book coming along?" and some sort of suggestion that I really ought to be working faster. He looked forward to seeing this book in print and didn't miss it by much. My father, Elvin Funder, died in August 1995, just as I was putting the finishing touches on the first edition. For the second through eighth editions, I have had to imagine what he would say about some of my observations, but even that was helpful. I rededicate this book to him.

David C. Funder
Riverside, California
July, 2019

THE PERSONALITY PUZZLE

EIGHTH EDITION

1

THE STUDY OF THE PERSON

> All persons are puzzles until at last we find in some word or act the key to the man, to the woman: straightaway all their past words and actions lie in light before us.
>
> —RALPH WALDO EMERSON

YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE been told that psychology is not what you think it is. Some psychology professors delight in conveying this surprising news to their students on the first day of the term. Maybe you expect psychology to be about what people are thinking and feeling under the surface, these professors expound; maybe you think it is about sexuality, and dreams, and creativity, and aggression, and consciousness, and how people are different from one another, and interesting topics like that. Wrong, they say. Psychology is about the precise manipulation of independent variables for the furtherance of compelling theoretical accounts of well-specified phenomena, such as how many milliseconds it takes to find a circle in a field of squares. If that focus makes psychology boring, well, too bad. Science does not have to be interesting to be valuable.

Fortunately, most personality psychologists do not talk that way. This is because the study of personality comes close to what non-psychologists intuitively expect psychology to be, and addresses the topics most people want to know about (J. Block, 1993; Funder, 1998b). Therefore, personality psychologists have no excuse for being boring. Their field of study includes everything that makes psychology interesting.[1]

[1] Thus, if you end up finding this book boring, it is all my fault. There is no reason it should be, given its subject matter.

Specifically, personality psychology addresses how people feel, think, and behave—the three parts of the **psychological triad.** Each is important in its own right, but what you feel, what you think, and what you do are even more interesting in combination, because sometimes they conflict. For example, have you ever experienced a conflict between how you feel and what you think, such as an attraction toward someone you just knew was bad news? Have you ever had a conflict between what you think and what you do, such as intending to do your homework and then going to the beach instead? Have you ever found your behavior conflicting with your feelings, such as doing something that makes you feel guilty (fill in your own example here), and then continuing to do it anyway? If so (and I know the answer is yes), the next question is, why? The answer is far from obvious.

Inconsistencies between feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are common enough to make us suspect that the mind is not a simple place and that even to understand yourself—the person you know best—is not necessarily easy. Personality psychology is important not because it has solved these puzzles of internal consistency and self-knowledge, but because—alone among the sciences and even among the branches of psychology—it regards these puzzles as worth their full attention.

When most people think of psychologists, they think first of the clinical practitioners who treat mental illness and try to help people with a wide range of other personal problems.[2] Personality psychology is not the same as clinical psychology, but the two subfields do overlap. Some of the most important personality psychologists—both historically and in the present day—had clinical training and treated patients (a famous example, of course, is Sigmund Freud). At many colleges and universities, the person who teaches abnormal or clinical psychology also teaches personality psychology. When patterns of personality are extreme, unusual, and cause problems, the two subfields come together in the study of personality disorders. Most important, clinical and personality psychology share the obligation to try to understand whole persons, not just parts of persons, one individual at a time.

In this sense, personality psychology is the largest as well as the smallest subfield of psychology. There are probably fewer doctoral degrees granted in personality psychology than in social, cognitive, developmental, or biological psychology. But personality psychology is closely allied with clinical psychology, which is by far the largest subfield. It also has close relationships with organizational psychology because, as you will see in Chapter 16, personality assessment is useful for understanding vocational interests, occupational success, and leadership. Personality psychology is where the rest of psychology comes together; as you will see, it draws heavily from social, cognitive, developmental, clinical, and biological psychology.

[2] This is why nonclinical research psychologists sometimes cringe a little when someone asks them what they do for a living.

It contributes to each of these subfields as well, by showing how each part of psychology fits into the whole picture of what people are really like.

THE GOALS OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

Personality refers to an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms—hidden or not—behind those patterns. This definition gives personality psychology its unique mission to explain whole persons. Of course, personality psychologists may not always succeed at this job. But that is what they are supposed to be doing—putting together the pieces of the puzzle contributed by the other subfields of psychology, as well as by their own research, to assemble an integrated view of whole, functioning individuals in their daily environments.

Mission: Impossible

There is only one problem with this mission: It is impossible. In fact, this interesting mission is the source of personality psychology's biggest difficulty. If you try to understand everything about a person at once, you will immediately find yourself completely overwhelmed. Your mind, instead of attaining a broad understanding, may go blank.

The only way out is to choose to limit what you look at. Rather than trying to account for everything at once, you must search for more specific patterns. This search will require you to limit yourself to certain kinds of observations, certain kinds of patterns, and certain ways of thinking about these patterns. A systematic, self-imposed limitation of this sort is what I call a **basic approach** (another commonly used term is *paradigm*). Personality psychology is organized around several different basic approaches.

The most all-encompassing tradition in personality psychology, the **trait approach** (the reference is to personality traits), focuses on the ways that people differ psychologically and how these differences might be conceptualized, measured, and followed over time. This is by far the largest and most dominant approach

"Do you mind if I say something helpful about your personality?"

Table 1.1 | BASIC APPROACHES TO PERSONALITY AND THEIR FOCAL TOPICS

Basic Approach	Focal Topics
Trait approach	Conceptualization of individual differences
	Measurement of individual differences
	Consequences of individual differences
	Personality development
	Personality change
Biological approach	Anatomy
	Physiology
	Genetics
	Evolution
Psychoanalytic approach	Unconscious mind
	Internal mental conflict
Phenomenological approach	Conscious awareness and experience
	Free will
	Humanistic psychology
	Cross-cultural psychology
Learning and cognitive approaches	Behaviorism
	Social learning theory
	Cognitive personality psychology

in contemporary personality psychology, and it helps to organize the other approaches, because individual differences are central to pretty much everything.

One specifically focused way to understand individual differences is in terms of the body, concentrating on biological mechanisms such as anatomy, physiology, genetics, even evolution. This is the **biological approach** to personality.

A very different way to understand people is to try to investigate the unconscious mind, and the nature and resolution of internal mental conflict. This is the **psychoanalytic approach.**

Or, one can choose to focus on people's *conscious* experience of the world, their phenomenology, and so follow a **phenomenological approach.** In current research, an emphasis on awareness and experience can lead in one of two directions. The first program of theory and research, called *humanistic psychology*, pursues how conscious awareness can produce such uniquely human attributes as existential anxiety, creativity, and free will—which are important, but of no concern to your dog. The other phenomenological direction emphasizes the degree to which psychology and the very experience of reality might be different

Existential anxiety, creativity, and free will are important psychological topics, but of no concern to your dog.

in different cultures. Interest in this topic has led to an explosion in recent years of *cross-cultural* personality research.

Yet another way to study the ways people differ from each other is to concentrate on how people change their behavior as a result of rewards, punishments, and other experiences in life, a process called **learning.**[3] Classic *behaviorism* focuses tightly on overt behavior and the ways it can be affected by rewards and punishments. Behaviorism evolved over the years into a related point of view called *social learning*. Social learning theory draws inferences about the ways that mental processes such as observation and self-evaluation determine which behaviors are learned and how they are performed. Over the past couple of decades, social learning theory has, in turn, evolved into an influential and prolific new field of personality research focused on cognitive processes that applies insights and methods derived from the study of perception, memory, and thought. Taken together, behaviorism, social learning theory, and *cognitive personality psychology* comprise the **learning and cognitive processes approaches** to personality.

Competitors or Complements?

The different approaches to personality are often portrayed as competitors, and for good reason. The original, famous champion of each typically made his mark by announcing to the world that his approach finally accounted for everything anybody would ever want to know about human nature, and that all other approaches were pretty much worthless. Sigmund Freud, for one, was vocal in claiming that his version of the psychoanalytic approach was the one true path and even ostracized erstwhile followers, such as Carl Jung, who dared to differ with him on seemingly minor points. B. F. Skinner, with his very different view of human nature, was not much of an improvement in the modesty department. He announced that behaviorism explained everything worth knowing about psychology, and he delighted in denouncing all of the other approaches and their presumptions that people might have traits and thoughts, or even freedom and dignity.

This kind of arrogance is not limited to approaches like psychoanalysis and behaviorism that have been closely associated with famous individual founders. Biologically inclined psychologists have been known to proclaim that everything about personality reduces to a matter of genes, physiology, and brain anatomy. Trait, cognitive, and humanistic psychologists likewise have insisted their approach is the one that covers it all. In fact, major advocates of every basic approach have claimed frequently and insistently not only that their favored approach can explain everything worth explaining, but also that the others are all dead wrong.

[3] This narrow use of the term *learning* by behaviorists should not be confused with its broader everyday meaning.

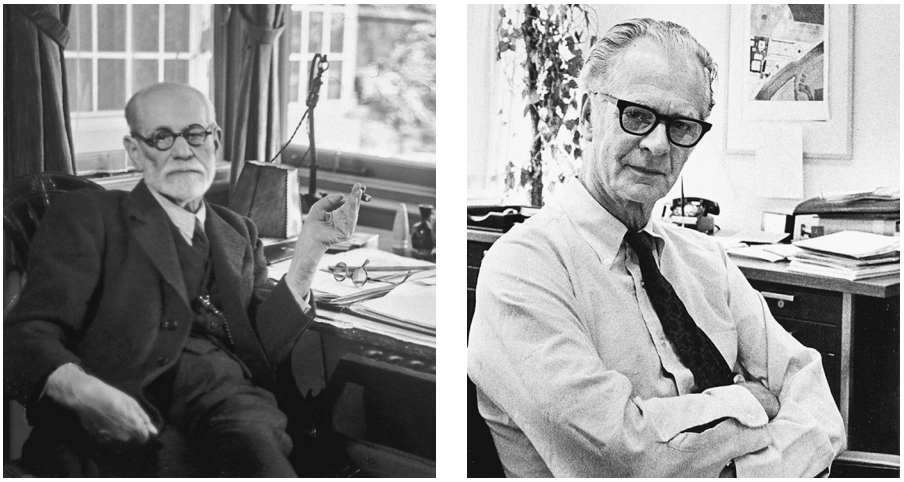

Figure 1.1 Freud and Skinner Sigmund Freud and B. F. Skinner had completely different views about human nature, but each insisted that his perspective accounted for everything that was important to know about personality.

Claims like these certainly can help make someone famous, and are perhaps even necessary to attract attention to a point of view. But their rhetorical smoke screen obscures an important fact. It is not obligatory, and I believe it is not helpful, to regard these approaches as mutually exclusive and forever locked in competition. They complement rather than compete with each other because each one addresses a different set of questions about human psychology.

A manager trying to choose a new employee, for instance, must compare individuals to one another; you can't hire everybody, and you can't reject everybody, either. The manager's problem is addressed by the trait approach. When a morally crusading televangelist is arrested for soliciting prostitutes, questions might be raised about his motivation, especially at the unconscious level; a psychoanalytic approach seems necessary here. A parent worried about aspects of a teenager's behavior and how best to make a difference probably could profit from a behavioral approach. A philosopher contemplating the vicissitudes of free will, or even a student considering career plans and wondering about what is really important in life, might find useful insights in the humanistic approach. And so on. Each approach to personality psychology can be useful for handling its own key concerns.

At the same time, each one typically and rather disconcertingly tends to ignore the key concerns of the others (and, as I already mentioned, often denies they are even important). For example, psychoanalysis has a lot to say about the origin of dreams, but contributes next to nothing to understanding behavior change. On the other hand, the principles of behaviorism can be used to teach your dog an amazing variety of tricks but will never explain why she sometimes barks and whines in her sleep.

Distinct Approaches Versus the One Big Theory

By now, the following question may have occurred to you: Why doesn't somebody come up with One Big Theory (you could call it the OBT) that explains everything that the trait, biological, psychoanalytic, humanistic, and learning/cognitive approaches now account for separately? Maybe someday somebody will—and if you become a personality psychologist, it could be you!

In the meantime, you might consider a time-honored principle of engineering: A device that does one thing well tends to be relatively poor at doing anything else. An excellent toaster is completely worthless if what you really need is to make coffee or listen to music. The converse, equally true, is that a device that does many things at the same time will probably do none of them especially well. A combination toaster, coffeemaker, and clock radio—I am sure somewhere there really is such a thing—will probably not be as good at toasting bread, making coffee, or playing music as a more modest appliance that aspires to serve only one of these functions.[4] This principle seems also to be true within psychology, as it describes the inevitable trade-off faced by personality theorists. A theory that accounts for certain things extremely well will probably not explain everything else so well. And a theory that tries to explain almost everything—the OBT—would probably not provide the best explanation for any one thing. Maybe dreams, learning curves, free will, and individual differences in job performance could all be squeezed into one theory, but the result probably wouldn't be pretty.

If you find the welter of approaches to personality confusing, you are in good company. Personality psychologists have worked on this dilemma for decades and still have not come to a solution that satisfies everybody. Some really would like to develop the OBT that explains everything at least fairly well. A surprising number believe that their own currently favored approach *is* the OBT (they are wrong). Others, instead of developing a whole new theory, would like to organize all the current approaches into a single elegant framework (e.g., Mayer, 1998, 2005). Still others, like me, persist in believing that the different basic approaches address different sets of questions, and that each approach generally has the best answers for the questions it has chosen to address.

If you agree with—or at least understand—this final belief, then you will appreciate why this book for the most part considers each basic approach separately. Personality psychology needs to look at people from all of these directions and utilize all of these approaches because different issues—for example, dreams, rates of learning, and individual differences in job performance, as I just mentioned—are best viewed from different perspectives. For the present, I believe it is most useful to teach and apply these approaches one at a time and in their entirety. Perhaps

[4] Cell phone cameras, for example, have gotten pretty good, but devices that are *only* cameras are still better, even now.

someday they will become fully integrated. In the meantime, as you will see, each approach has many interesting, important, and useful things to say about the aspects of personality on which it has chosen to focus.

Advantages as Disadvantages and Vice Versa

In the introduction to his novel *Mother Night*, Kurt Vonnegut does his readers the unusual service of telling them the moral of the book they are about to read. "I don't think it's a marvelous moral," he writes, "I just happen to know what it is" (Vonnegut, 1966, p. v). My guess is that he hoped to save hundreds of English classes thousands of hours of trying to figure out what he "meant to say." (I doubt he succeeded.)[5]

As a writer, I do not much resemble Vonnegut (though I wish I did), but I, too, think I know the moral of my book, or at least one of its major themes: In life and in psychology, advantages and disadvantages have a way of being so tightly interconnected as to be inseparable. *Great strengths are usually great weaknesses, and surprisingly often the opposite is true as well*. Sometimes I enjoy calling this observation **Funder's First Law** (there will be several other such "laws" in this book).[6] This first law applies to fields of research, theories, and individual people.

Personality psychology provides an excellent example of Funder's First Law. As I already noted, personality psychology's biggest advantage over other areas of psychology is that it has a broad mandate to account for the psychology of whole persons and real-life concerns. This mandate makes the study of personality more inclusive, interesting, important, and even more fun than it would be otherwise. But guess what? This mandate is also personality psychology's biggest problem. In the wrong hands it can lead to overinclusive or unfocused research. Even in the best hands, personality psychology can seem to fall far short of what it ought to accomplish. The challenge for a personality psychologist, then, is to maximize the advantages of the field's broad mandate and try to minimize the disadvantages, even though the two are related and perhaps inseparable.

The same is true about the various approaches within personality psychology. Each is good at addressing certain topics and poor at addressing others. Actually, as we have already discussed, each basic approach usually just ignores the topics it is not good at explaining. For example, one reason that behaviorism is so effective at changing behavior is that it ignores the possibility of free will, whereas the phenomenological approach is able to offer a coherent account of free will because it overlooks how rewards and punishments can shape behavior. The strong points

[5] For the record, Vonnegut wrote that the moral of his novel is that "we are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be" (Vonnegut, 1966, p. v). Come to think of it, this would not be a bad moral for a psychology textbook.

[6] Please don't memorize these laws. They are just my attempt to distill a few of my favorite observations into fortune-cookie-sized sayings.

come with—and are even sometimes a consequence of—the weak points, and vice versa.

This connection between strengths and weaknesses even occurs within individuals. According to one analysis, the personality and ethical "flaws" of several presidents of the United States were precisely the same attributes that allowed them to attain and effectively use power (Berke, 1998). For example, a certain amount of shiftiness—generally considered a character flaw—might enable a president to respond flexibly to changing circumstances. A certain amount of stubbornness—also usually considered a flaw—might enable a president to remain steadfastly committed to important principles. On the other hand, some traits usually considered virtues, such as truthfulness and consistency, might sometimes actually be a handicap in trying to be an effective president. Particular traits can cut both ways as well. Presidents rated as high in *narcissism* (excessive self-regard; see Chapter 6) have tended to be good at public persuasiveness, crisis management, getting votes, and passing legislation. On the other hand, they have also been more likely to be accused of unethical conduct and impeached (Watts et al., 2013).

The same principle applies to other areas of life, such as basketball coaching. Bobby Knight, the longtime coach at Indiana University (and later at Texas Tech), was once described as vulgar, sarcastic, and intimidating—and also, in the same newspaper article, as "loyal, intelligent, charitable, and [a] principled perfectionist who graduates more players than most college basketball coaches" (T. Jones, 2003, p. 6E). Are these two aspects of Knight's character connected? They certainly are, in the sense that they both belong to the same person. A university that hired one of these Bobby Knights got the other one for free. One could speculate that both aspects of this character derived from his passion for perfection, which sometimes led him to constructive behaviors, and sometimes to destructive ones. In any case, everybody's personality comes as a package deal. Personality is coherent; each part stems from and depends on the others (J. Block, 2002).

Figure 1.2 Great Strengths Can Be Great Weaknesses President Nixon's devious nature allowed him to surprise the world with a breakthrough in relations with China, but also led to the Watergate scandal that drove him from office.

You may or may not ever become president or a Big 10 basketball coach yourself, but take a moment and think about your own strongest point. Is it ever a problem for you? Now think about your own weakest point. What are its benefits for you? Given the necessary trade-offs, would you really like to lose all of your weaknesses and keep all of your strengths? Given the way your strengths and weaknesses are interconnected, is this even possible?

Personality psychology is perpetually faced with a similar dilemma. If its scope were narrowed, the field would be more manageable and research would become easier. But then the study of personality would lose much of what makes it distinctive, important, and interesting. Similarly, each basic approach to personality has made a more or less deliberate decision to ignore some aspects of psychology. This is a heavy cost to pay, but so far it seems necessary in order for each approach to make progress in its chosen area.

THE PLAN OF THIS BOOK

This book begins with a brief introduction and an overview of personality psychology that you have almost finished reading. The next two chapters concern how personality psychologists do their research, and will be useful for understanding the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 describes the different kinds of data, or information, that psychologists use to better understand personality, and discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of each kind. The chapter's goal is to indelibly engrave the following idea into your psyche: *There are no perfect indicators of personality; there are only clues, and clues are always ambiguous*.[7] The chapter also addresses the quality of data (reliability, validity, and generalizability) and basic aspects of research design. Chapter 3 describes the basic methods of personality assessment, including how personality tests are constructed, and explains how to evaluate the strength, or *effect size*, of research findings. It also considers some of the ethical issues evoked by personality assessment, personality research, and scientific research in general.

The second section of this book comprises four chapters that directly address how people differ from one another, the central concern of the trait assessment approach. Chapter 4 discusses the basic question of whether differences between people significantly influence behavior and important life outcomes. (Spoiler Alert: The answer is yes.) Chapter 5 describes research on *personality judgment*—how we all assess personality in our daily lives, and the circumstances under which it is more and less likely to be accurate. Chapter 6 describes how the psychologists have developed personality trait concepts and tried to identify which traits are the

[7] This is actually Funder's Second Law, which won't be officially introduced until Chapter 2.

most fundamental, and considers the idea of personality types. In the final chapter in this section, Chapter 7 outlines how and why personality traits develop and also stay the same over the life span, and considers the question of whether personality can be changed, on purpose.

An exciting direction in psychological research is emerging from rapid advances in biology. These discoveries are increasingly applied to the study of personality traits and human nature, and some of that research is surveyed in the third section, which comprises Chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 reviews current knowledge about how the architecture and physiology of the nervous system affect behavior and personality. Chapter 9 considers the biological foundations of personality by looking at *behavioral genetics*, which studies how parents might pass on personality traits to their offspring, and *evolutionary psychology*, which addresses the inheritance of personality in a deeper sense, by seeking the origins of human nature in the evolutionary history of the species.

In the fourth section, two chapters consider the psychoanalytic approach, which is closely identified with Freud. Chapter 10 is a basic introduction to psychoanalysis that describes the structure of the mind and psychological development, and offers a critique and evaluation of this perspective. Chapter 11 brings the story of psychoanalysis into the present day, with some consideration of the neo-Freudians (psychoanalysts who came after Freud), object relations theory, attachment theory, and modern research relevant to psychoanalytic ideas.

The fifth section includes two chapters that consider the topics of experience and existence. Chapter 12 describes how the phenomenological aspects of existential philosophy that emphasize individual experience developed into an approach called **humanistic psychology,** which in its modern form considers topics of "positive psychology," including virtue, mindfulness, and happiness. The theme is that an individual's particular worldview or way of experiencing reality is central to his or her personality. Chapter 13 takes this phenomenological point one step further, by considering how individuals' personalities and worldviews—and maybe the whole notion of personality itself—may vary across cultures.

In the sixth section, two chapters describe behaviorism and later approaches to personality that emphasize the processes of learning, motivation, emotion, and cognition that underlie what personality *does*, as opposed to what personality *is*. About 70 years ago, some influential psychologists decided to focus on how people (and animals) behave rather than on what might be going on in the hidden recesses of their minds. The original psychologists who took this approach were the classic behaviorists such as John Watson and B. F. Skinner. Over the later decades of the 20th century, three different derivative theories grew out of behaviorism—theories focused on social interaction and cognitive (mental) processes. Interestingly, all three—the theories of John Dollard and Neal Miller, Julian Rotter, and Albert Bandura—were called "social learning theory." Later, Walter Mischel added a cognitive and phenomenological flavor to social learning theory

to produce yet another version, and Carol Dweck elaborated a theory that aims to connect social learning theory with the psychology of personality traits.

At the same time, these theories became increasingly influenced by the rapidly developing field of cognitive psychology. The sixth section of this book describes how some of the concepts and methods of cognitive psychology have been applied to personality, adding insights from the other basic approaches to consider topics including perception, memory, motivation, and emotion. All of these *personality processes*, from learning to cognition and emotion, are summarized in Chapter 14. The collection of thoughts, feelings and knowledge called *the self* is considered in Chapter 15.

As a way of summing up and using what we have learned, the seventh and last section of the book focuses on personality psychology as an applied science, one that can be used for practical aims. Chapter 16 summarizes some of the implications of personality for relationships and business. Chapter 17 addresses the extremes of individual differences that are called the *personality disorders*. With a new edition of the major handbook in psychiatry, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association (commonly known as the *DSM*), the approach to personality disorders is in the process of major change. The chapter outlines the differences—and tension—between the old and the new approaches, and the implications for understanding, diagnosis, and treatment. The chapter also considers the implications of personality for physical health, including the startling fact that some personality traits are associated with how long a person can be expected to live. At the end of the journey comes Chapter 18, which offers a brief summary of what I think are the most useful lessons from this book, the ones I hope you will remember long after you finish reading it.

PIGEONHOLING VERSUS APPRECIATION OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Personality psychology tends to emphasize how individuals are different from one another. A critic who wanted to be harsh could even say that personality psychology "pigeonholes" human beings. Some people are uncomfortable with measuring personality or categorizing people into types, perhaps because they find it implausible, undignified, or both.[8]

Other areas of psychology, by contrast, are more likely to treat people as if they were all the same or nearly the same. Not only do the experimental subfields of psychology, such as cognitive and social psychology, tend to ignore how people are

[8] As the old saying goes, there are two types of people in the world: those who believe there are two types of people in the world, and those who don't.

different from each other, but also the statistical analyses central to their research literally put individual differences into their "error" terms (see Chapter 2).

But here is yet another example of a potential disadvantage working as an advantage. Although the emphasis of personality psychology often entails categorizing and labeling people, it also leads the field to be extraordinarily sensitive—more than any other area of psychology—to the fact that people really are different. We do not all like the same things, we are not all attracted to the same people (fortunately), and we do not all want to enter the same occupation or pursue the same goals in life (again, fortunately). This fact of individual differences is the starting place for all of personality psychology and gives the field a distinctive and humanistic mission of appreciating the uniqueness of each individual.[9] People are different, and it is necessary as well as natural to wonder how and why.

[9] The focus on individual differences is obvious in the trait and psychoanalytic approaches to personality, which concentrate, respectively, on the quantitative measurement of individual differences and on individual psychological case studies. Less obviously, it is also true—even especially true—about behaviorism, which sees the person as the product of a unique learning history and therefore different from anybody else.

WRAPPING IT UP

SUMMARY

The Goals of Personality Psychology

- Personality psychology's unique mission is to address the psychological triad of thought, feeling, and behavior, and to try to explain the functioning of whole individuals. This is an impossible mission, however, so different approaches to personality must limit themselves by emphasizing different psychological topics.

- Personality psychology can be organized into five basic approaches: trait, biological, psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and learning and cognitive processes. Each addresses certain aspects of human psychology quite well and ignores others. The advantages and disadvantages of each approach are probably inseparable.

The Plan of This Book

- This book is grouped into six sections, beginning with a section on research methods and continuing with five sections that survey the basic approaches to personality. It ends with a chapter on the implications of personality for mental health, and then a final summing up.

Pigeonholing Versus Appreciation of Individual Differences

- Sometimes regarded as a field that seeks to pigeonhole people, personality psychology's real mission is to appreciate the ways in which each individual is unique.

KEY TERMS

psychological triad, p. 4
basic approach, p. 5
trait approach, p. 5
biological approach, p. 6
psychoanalytic approach, p. 6
phenomenological approach, p. 6
learning, p. 7
learning and cognitive processes approaches, p. 7
Funder's First Law, p. 10
humanistic psychology, p. 13

THINK ABOUT IT

1. What do we know when we know a person?
2. What is the purpose of psychology? What questions should the science of psychology seek to answer?
3. Why are you taking this course? What do you hope to learn? Of what use do you expect it to be?
4. If you could choose what this course (or book) would be about, what would you ask for? Why?
5. Are psychology textbooks and courses more boring than they should be? If so, why do you think that is? Can something be done about it? Should something be done about it? (Perhaps "boring" just means that a complex topic is being rigorously studied. Do you agree?)
6. Which are more important: answers or questions?

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PART I

THE SCIENCE OF PERSONALITY

Methods and Assessment

A colleague of mine once was choosing what to teach in a general psychology course. She decided to poll her students to find out what they wanted to learn, and listed all the standard topics. One scored so low it wasn't even funny. The all-time least-favorite topic in psychology is . . . research methods. Yet almost every course and every textbook in psychology—including this one, alas—begins with this topic.

Why? The answer is that psychology is a science, meaning that any claim to validity it might have depends on the data upon which it is based. And it is impossible to understand these data without understanding the methods that were used to gather, analyze, and interpret them.[1] But don't worry—methods can be fun. Really! The basic methods of personality research are neither hopelessly obscure nor impossibly technical; and it is only natural that somebody who wants to learn more about psychology should find them interesting and useful.

To see what I mean, let's imagine an acquaintance who claims he can read minds—he has ESP. Are you curious about whether he really can? Maybe not (what *does* it take to pique your interest?). But if you are, then the next question is, how can you find out? You might come up with a few procedures that would test his claim. You could have him guess which playing card you are thinking of, for example. You might even do this several times and keep track of his right and wrong answers. Suddenly, by choosing which questions to ask and how to ask them, you have ventured into the realm of research design. In effect, you have designed an experiment. By writing

[1] The word "data" is the plural of "datum," which means a single data point. Thus, for example, one should say "the data are . . ." rather than "the data is . . ." Sometimes I remember to do this.

down the number of right and wrong answers, you have gathered data. And by interpreting the numbers obtained (Do 6 right answers out of 20 qualify as ESP?), you have ventured into the world of statistics! Yet, all you have done is apply good common sense to find out something interesting.

That is what research methods are supposed to do: apply good sense to gather information in order to learn more about questions of interest. The only way to find out something new—about behavior, the mind, or anything else—is to follow a set of procedures that begins with observation (looking at what you want to know about) and ends with data analysis, which means trying to summarize and understand the observations you have recorded.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed account of the kinds of observations that are relevant to understanding personality. All observations are data, and these can be categorized into four basic kinds, called S, I, L, and B data (which, when rearranged, yield the cheerful but misspelled acronym BLIS). The chapter also considers basic issues about the quality of data—their reliability, validity, and generalizability, and *research design*, which is the plan for gathering data.

Chapter 3 introduces *personality assessment,* the class of methods that is most directly relevant to the study of personality. Understanding these methods is critical for understanding the contributions of personality research, and has other important implications. For example, personality tests are often used to select employees. If some people are going to get hired, and others aren't—and this outcome seems inevitable—then the selection needs to be done right. The chapter also addresses how to evaluate research findings, such as the degree to which a personality test can predict behavior. To do this you need to interpret the effect size, or strength, of the result, along with its "replicability," the degree to which you could expect to get the same result if you were to do the study again. Finally, Chapter 3 considers some of the ethical issues that are critically important for psychology and every other branch of science, including the need for research methods to be thoroughly described and the importance of data being openly available for any scientist to examine.

2

PERSONALITY RESEARCH METHODS

PSYCHOLOGY'S EMPHASIS ON METHOD

It is sometimes said that the main thing psychologists know is not content but method. This statement is not usually meant as a compliment. When all is said and done, psychologists do not seem to provide firm answers to questions about the mind and behavior very often. Instead, they offer methods for generating research aimed at these questions. Indeed, sometimes psychologists seem more interested in the research process itself than in the answers their research is supposed to be seeking.

Such a characterization is not entirely fair, but it does contain a kernel of truth. Psychologists, like other scientists, never really expect to reach a final answer to any question. For a researcher, the real thrill is in the chase, and the goal is to continuously improve on tentative answers (hypotheses) rather than to settle anything once and for all.

Another kernel of truth is that, more than any other kind of scientist, psychologists are sensitive and sometimes even self-conscious about research methodology, the way they use statistics, and even about the basic procedures they use to draw inferences from data. Issues like these don't seem to worry physicists and chemists so much. They have fewer debates about methodology, and introductory physics or chemistry textbooks usually do not contain an introspective chapter—like the one you are reading now—on research methods. But no psychology text seems complete without one. Why do you think this is?

Sometimes, the emphasis on methods and process is seen as a sign of weakness, even by psychologists themselves. It's been said that many psychologists suffer from "physics envy." But psychology's self-consciousness about method is one of my favorite things about it. I remember beginning to study chemistry

and finding that one of my first assignments was to memorize the periodic table of elements. Where did this table come from, I immediately wanted to know, and why should I believe it? But this was not part of the introductory curriculum. Certain facts were to be memorized and accepted without question. The evidence would come later. This was understandable, I suppose, but it did not seem like much fun.

When I took my first psychology course, the approach was completely different. Although I was somewhat disappointed that the professor did not immediately teach me how to read people's minds (even though I was sure he was reading mine), I was engaged by the approach to knowledge he displayed. Everything was open to question, and almost no "fact" was presented without both a description of the experiment that found it, and a discussion of whether or not the experiment's evidence was persuasive. Some students did not like this approach. Why not just tell us the facts? they complained, like the professor does in chemistry class. But I loved it. It encouraged me to think for myself. Early in the semester, I decided that some of the facts of psychology did not seem all that solidly based. Later on, I even began to imagine some ways in which I could find out more. I was hooked. It could happen to you. Read on.

Scientific Education and Technical Training

Research emphasizes thinking over memorizing because it entails seeking new knowledge, not cataloging facts already known. This distinction is the fundamental difference between scientific education and technical training. By this definition, medical education is technical rather than scientific—it focuses on learning what is known and how to use it. Physicians-in-training do an astonishing amount of sheer memorization, and the last step in medical education is an internship, in which the future doctor shows that she can apply what she has been taught, with actual patients. Scientists-in-training, by contrast, do much less memorization; instead, they are taught to question what is already known and to learn methods to find out more. The last step in scientific education, including in psychology, is the dissertation, a research project in which the future scientist must add something new to the knowledge in her field.

"Certainly. A party of four at seven-thirty in the name of Dr. Jennings. May I ask whether that is an actual medical degree or merely a Ph.D.?"

The contrast between technical and scientific approaches applies in many other areas, such as the distinction between pharmacists and pharmacologists, gardeners and botanists, or computer operators and computer scientists. In each case, the issue is not which is "better"; each member of the pair is necessary, and each depends on the other. The biologist goes to a

physician when sick; most of what the physician knows was discovered by biologists. But they are importantly different. Technical training teaches one to use what is already known; scientific training teaches one to explore the unknown. In science, the exploration of the unknown is called **research.** The essential aspect of research is the gathering of data.

PERSONALITY DATA

Personality is complicated. It is manifested by all of the characteristic ways in which the individual thinks, feels, and behaves—the psychological triad mentioned in Chapter 1. An individual might be deeply afraid of certain things, or attracted to particular kinds of people, or obsessed with accomplishing some highly personal and idiosyncratic goals. The observable aspects of personality are best characterized as clues. The psychologist's task is to piece these clues together, much like pieces of a puzzle, to form a clear and useful portrait of the individual's personality.

In that sense, a psychologist trying to understand an individual's personality is like a detective solving a mystery: Clues may abound, but the trick is to interpret them correctly. A detective arriving on the scene of a burglary finds fingerprints on the windowsill and footprints in the flower bed. These are clues. The detective would be foolish to ignore them. But it might turn out that the fingerprints belong to a careless police officer, and the footprints belong to an innocent gardener. These possibilities are not reasons for the detective to ignore the clues—far from it—but they are reasons to be wary about their meaning.

A psychologist trying to understand an individual's personality is like a detective solving a mystery. Clues may abound, but the trick is to interpret them correctly.

The situation is similar for a personality psychologist. The psychologist might look at an individual's behavior, test scores, degree of success in daily living, or responses to a laboratory procedure. These are possible clues about personality. The psychologist, like the detective, would be foolish not to gather as many as possible. Also like the detective, the psychologist should maintain a healthy skepticism about the possibility that some or all of them might be misleading.

This brings us to **Funder's Second Law:** *There are no perfect indicators of personality; there are only clues, and clues are always ambiguous.*

"Are you just pissing and moaning, or can you verify what you're saying with data?"