

## **Personality**

The term personality has been defined in many ways, but as a psychological concept two main meanings have evolved.

- 1- The consistent differences that exist between people:  
in this sense, the study of personality focuses on classifying and explaining relatively stable human psychological characteristics.
- 2- Emphasizes those qualities that make all people alike and that distinguish psychological man from other species;  
it directs the personality theorist to search for those regularities among all people that define the nature of man as well as the factors that influence the course of lives. This duality may help explain the two directions that personality studies have taken: on the one hand, the study of ever more specific qualities in people, and, on the other, the search for the organized totality of psychological functions that emphasizes the interplay between organic and psychological events within people and those social and biological events that surround them.

The study of personality can be said to have its origins in the fundamental idea that people are distinguished by their characteristic individual patterns of behaviour—the distinctive ways in which they walk, talk, furnish their living quarters, or express their urges. Whatever the behaviour, personologists—as those who systematically study personality are called—examine how people differ in the ways they express themselves and attempt to determine the causes of these differences. Although other fields of psychology examine many of the same functions and processes, such as attention, thinking, or motivation, the personologist places emphasis on how these different processes fit together and become integrated so as to give each person a distinctive identity, or personality. The systematic psychological study of personality has emerged from a number of different sources, including psychiatric case studies that focused on lives in distress, from philosophy, which explores the nature of man, and from physiology, anthropology, and social psychology.