



Ego Psychology: Loevinger

Psychology 310 Psychology of Personality

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Psyc 310 – Psychology of Personality

Loevinger

- The Ego
 - is the process of making sense of experience
 - encompasses ego, id, & superego functions
- Ego Development
 - Proceeds through a series of invariant stages
 - Can continue throughout life
 - Life experiences can prompt or impede progress
 - Different people “stop” at different stages

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Loevinger - Ego Development Stages 1-3

- Presocial & Symbiotic (E1)
 - focused on gratifying immediate needs
 - very attached to caregiver
 - differentiate caregiver from world, but not from me
 - preverbal (cannot assess via sentence completions)
- Impulsive (E2)
 - focused on bodily feelings & basic impulses
 - demanding & egocentric
 - good & bad seen in terms of how it affects *me*
 - thinking is simple, dichotomous, or confused
 - no sense of psychological causation
- Self-Protective (E3)
 - exploitative, manipulative, hedonistic, opportunistic
 - learning about rules & self-control
 - but to “get what I want without getting caught”
 - wary, complaining, externalizing blame

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Loevinger - Ego Development Stages 4-5

- Conformist (E4)
 - want belonging & approval of reference group
 - view and evaluate self and others in terms of externals
 - appearance, roles, stereotypes
 - thinking is simple, conventional
 - rule-bound and moralistic
 - sentimental, banal understanding of feelings
 - both happiness *and* shame peak at this stage
- Self-Aware (E5)
 - increased but still limited
 - reflections on “deep” issues (God, love, death)
 - awareness of inner feelings/motives of self & others
 - appreciation of exceptions and individual uniqueness
 - tension between real me vs. expected me
 - *self-criticism*

4

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Loevinger - Ego Development Stages 6-7

- Conscientious (E6)
 - values achievement
 - has long-term goals & ideals
 - responsible, self-evaluated standards, principled morality
 - guilt
 - conceptually complex thinking & expression
 - broad perspective, differentiated feelings & motives
 - concern with mutuality & empathy in relationships
- Individualistic (E7)
 - values relationships over achievement
 - broad-minded tolerance of self & others
 - attentive to emotional dependence versus autonomy
 - heightened sense of individuality
 - vivid & unique way of expressing self
 - incipient awareness of inner conflicts & personal paradoxes
 - but without resolution or integration

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Loevinger - Ego Development Stages 8-9

- Autonomous (E8)
 - respect own & others' autonomy
 - *cherishes* individuality & uniqueness & self-actualization
 - relationships are interdependent & systemic
 - rather than dependent versus independent
 - tolerance of ambiguity
 - capacity to face & cope with inner conflicts
 - conflict viewed as expressing multifaceted nature of people & of life
 - vivid expression of feelings
- Integrated (E9)
 - *wise*; broadly empathic; can reconcile inner conflicts
 - accept unattainables & integrate paradoxes
 - full sense of identity
 - seeking to understand & actualize my potentials & achieve integration

6

My main problem is...

- *Impulsive*
...fight with my brother
- *Self-protective*
...my mouth
...filling out this questionnaire
- *Conformist*
...my weight
- *Self-aware*
...not knowing how I really feel about love
- *Conscientious*
...feeling complete responsibility for 4 lives
- *Individualistic/Autonomous*
...impatience and a judgmental attitude
- *Integrated*
...learning not to worry too much and tolerating weakness in those around me

7

Being with other people...

- *Impulsive*
...is OK
- *Self-protective*
...makes you feel good if you're with the right crowd
- *Conformist*
...is a good feeling
- *Self-aware*
...helps me to forget things that make me sad
...I like very much and need
- *Conscientious*
...is generally refreshing
...is a great way to discover different types of people and personalities
- *Individualistic/Autonomous*
...is great. I like to be alone sometimes but not too often
...stimulates me only when we have something in common
- *Integrated*
...sometimes upsets me or sometimes is something I really need. A lot depends on who the other people are

8

The thing I like about myself is...

- *Impulsive*
...I am cute
- *Self-protective*
...everything
- *Conformist*
...that I am happy
...I am a true friend
- *Self-aware*
...I get along with others
...my intelligence
- *Conscientious*
...that I like most people and try hard not to be critical
- *Individualistic/Autonomous*
...my honesty in dealing with other people as well as myself
- *Integrated*
...my abilities to face the actualities, sometimes pleasant, often not, about life and myself

9

Two voices: Subject #64 & Subject #65

#64: When they avoided me... *I felt like a loser.*

#64: I am... *happy to be at Stanford.*

#65: When they avoided me... *my self-esteem falls tremendously. I begin to worry about how I look, who I am with, and how I am acting.*

#65: I am... *a happy, positive-thinking individual who tries her very best to take the time to care about others as well as expand my own horizons.*

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