

Discussion of Self Concept

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1. Self concept is the confluence of: (a) the images we receive through feedback and assessment from others; (b) the roles we lay [those assigned, self generated, and accept; and (c) the self image we gain through ego and experience.
2. We gain self concept feedback in many ways including:
 - a. the level of control we are allowed to have over others.
 - b. the control others exert over our lives.
 - c. praise, blame, encouragement, and support received from others.
3. We engage in many roles, many of these simultaneous with other roles. These roles, at times, are consistent with each other; however, at times our multiple roles conflict with each other and/or with our self image.
 - a. Some role behavior we engage in stems from roles others ask, demand, or assume of us. While we can refuse, alter, or accept most roles, social, political, economic, vocational, and legal constraints frequently press us into some roles. Roles that contradict our general or specific self concept stimulate stress and conflict
 - b. Some role behavior we engage in originates from exigencies that arise; most of these role situations are unplanned [and many are even unpredictable]. Circumstance oriented roles frequently determine later images of us to others [ie: Truman after FDR's death; NYC Mayor Giuliani after 9/11/01; and the Exxon Valdez captain after the great spill.
 - c. Some roles we engage in are, for the main, self determined; they are regulated by ego, surrounding experiences, and our personality. Factors such as extrovertiveness/introvertiveness; high/low risk taking; high/low adaptability; high/low assertiveness or aggressiveness; high/low cognitive complexity; individual/group centeredness; rigidity/flexibility; temporal orientation; leader/follower/watcher status; central/secondary/peripheral/isolate communication status in peer group; high/low task orientation; and high/low trust, determine/influence the roles we voluntarily engage in.
4. Role formation and self concept are symbiotic; that is, each influences the other and is influenced by the other. Multiple factors influence which, in any given case, is the controlling factor.
5. Role assignments occur in several ways; these include:
 - a. being elected, selected, or appointed to various roles = legitimate roles.
 - b. accepting roles because no one else can or will accept them = default roles.
 - c. when emergencies or atypical circumstances put us in roles, they = exigency roles.
 - d. some roles come to us through tradition or rotation; these are labeled cyclical roles.
6. We accept or refuse roles based on many factors including:
 - a. our personal assessment of time and energy available for a given role.
 - b. our judgment as to our abilities in specific arenas.
 - c. our ability or willingness to get along with others co-involved in specific roles.
 - d. our relative familiarity and comfort with specific roles.
 - e. our prediction of success or failure in roles.

- f. perceived rewards for accomplishing roles.
7. We assess our role performance by the following criteria:
- a. does our role performance increase or maintain our self image? Such self image maintenance or increases may be tangible or symbolic; immediate or delayed, short term or long-term.
 - b. does the role performance supply us with affirmation; tangible, emotional, social, spiritual, political, or economic rewards, inclusion in groups/organizations, control over our future destiny, affinity with others, or future selection to desired roles?
 - c. does such a role lead to further self image enhancement? Such enhancements may be in the form of increased or maintained personal or community status, self promotion, rank, or tangible reward.
 - d. does the role performance give the individual or group satisfaction? Does the role performance enhance individual confidence? Does the role performance express individual competence?