Psychology

Take Home Test

Personality Theories

Read the following hypothetical case history. You may want to read the case history several times – until you a have feel for the personality being described.

Select any one personality theory. Then apply the ideas, terms, and principles of the theory you have selected to the case history. For example, suppose you choose the theories of B.F. Skinner. What ideas proposed by Skinner would explain the particular behaviors of Debbie S. that are described in the case history?

Helpful Hint: Make a list of specific terms and principles of the personality theory you selected that apply to Debbie S. Next to each of these write the particular behavior of Debbie S. that fits. Underneath each, in your own words, explain the connection between the two.

Remember the theory may not explain all behaviors, elaborate on the weaknesses of the theory as you see it, as well as strengths. Also there is only a limited amount of information on Debbie S., What else might you need to know that would help to better explain her personality?

 **CASE HISTORY: DEBBIE S.**

 Debbie S. is 21 years old. She lives in a small Southern town. Her intellectual ability is high: Her IQ is 136.

 Her family is in the middle-income level. She had a younger brother, who died in infancy (when she was three years old). When she was five, her mother died. Since her father could not stay home to take care of her, an aunt kept her for several years.

 In college she made good grades in difficult subjects. She had planned to become a nurse, but decided not to, stating that she could not stand to see other people suffer. After graduating from college, she returned home. She has no present plans for work. She says that she cannot seem to find work that suits her special talents.

 Since early childhood, she has been considered a “spoiled brat”. Even now, when she sees something that she wants, she runs home and tries to talk her father into buying it for her. Sometimes she goes to car dealers to look over new cars. She tells each sale person, “My father is thinking about buying me a new

Car.” Her father has never told her that he would buy her a car.

 She quite often acts childish and plays practical jokes on people. This drives people away from her. To keep people around, she spends money on them. For example, she treats others to movies, gives them presents for no special occasion, and has many parties.

 At social gatherings she tries to be the life of the party. She talks loudly and interrupts others when they are talking. She runs around the room telling everyone that they should be having as good a time as she is.

 She rarely gets taken out. When she does go out, she usually does not see the same person more than twice. She gives as her reason,” I just don’t seem to be able to find a man who appreciates what I want out of life.”

 She is in good physical health, having had three physical exams in the past year. However, she complains about having headaches and a sore back, especially when asked to do any household duties.

 Lately she has become increasingly isolated from others. She stays at home by herself more and more. She reads book after book, especially on philosophy and on the lives of famous people like Churchill, Napoleon and Roosevelt.