

Id, Ego & Superego

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson is going to cover Freud's theory on personality by examining:

1. The Id
2. The Superego
3. The Ego

1. The Id

Psychoanalytic theory attempts to uncover how unconscious forces can affect our conscious minds. In the late 1800s, Freud originally proposed an idea that the self is composed of three different parts, and the interaction between these three different parts is what creates a person's personality.

The first part of our unconscious mind is the **id**. The id is primitive and animalistic, and it provides the mental energy for us. It operates on what's called the pleasure principle. The pleasure principle says that we need to immediately satisfy any needs or desires that we have.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** If a person is hungry, they eat. If someone sees something that they like, they take it.

The id also generates what is called the **libido**, which is the mental energy for personality; it's the drive behind it. The libido is divided into:

- Life energies, which are motivations to survive and seek pleasure.
- Death energies, which represent anger and a desire for destruction, or wanting to destroy things.



TERMS TO KNOW

Id

Unconscious part of the personality that provides mental energy; driven by the desire for pleasure

Libido

Life force

2. The Superego

The **superego** is another part of our unconscious, as well as a little part of our conscious mind. The superego is the part of the personality that judges and provides standards for our behaviors. It's the opposite of the id. It balances out the impulsiveness of the id with values about what we should or should not be doing.

There are two parts of a superego:

- The **ego ideal**, which is a person's standards of good behavior for themselves. This is a person's standard for what is considered to be a good or bad person. Often this comes from parents when growing up.
- The conscience, which comprise the standards for bad behaviors, or what we consider to be negative or unwanted. These standards come from a person's parents and the general society.

There is a conflict that's constantly going on between the id and the superego, and this conflict creates anxiety. If the id wins, the superego manifests anxiety by creating feelings of guilt.

↪ **EXAMPLE** If you eat a whole cake because the Id says "eat, eat, eat," then the superego will make you feel guilty about the fact that you did. It might make you feel like you have to go to the gym to work it off.

If the superego wins, then the id needs to channel those energies that were created by that need into other activities, by either displacing or sublimating the energies through acceptable means.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Instead of doing something that you are not supposed to do, you might instead try to channel that energy into sports or dance.



TERMS TO KNOW

Superego

The conscience; part of personality that judges and provides standards for behavior

Ego Ideal

Standard for good behavior; when we meet this standard we feel pride

3. The Ego

The last part of the mind is the **ego**. The ego is the central part of our personality. It helps to direct the actions and thoughts of our conscious minds. The ego is responsible for all of our thinking, planning, deciding, and everything in our interactions with the external world. It also acts to moderate the superego and id.

The ego deals with the desires of the id in a realistic and socially acceptable kind of way, which is to say, our superego. This is what we call the reality principle, and is what operates the ego. The ego resolves any anxiety that occurs as a result of conflicts between the id and the superego.



TERM TO KNOW

Ego

Part of the personality that directs and controls conscious thoughts



SUMMARY

Freud stated as part of the psychoanalytic theory that the self is composed of three parts. **The id** is an unconscious part of the mind that provides mental energy of libido, and operates on the pleasure principal. **The superego** is part of our unconscious and conscious mind. It is made up of the ego ideal and the conscience. The conflict between these two parts creates anxiety. **The ego** works as a moderator for both and resolves the anxiety that is created.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

Ego

Part of the personality that directs and controls conscious thoughts.

Ego Ideal

Standard for good behavior; when we meet this standard we feel pride.

Id

Unconscious part of the personality that provides mental energy; driven by the desire for pleasure.

Libido

Life force.

Superego

The conscience; part of personality that judges and provides standards for behavior.