

Theory of Self: Observer/Deep-Thinker Theory

Interpersonal Communications

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## Abstract

This paper aims to address my personal theory of self. This theory is crafted from various other existing theories and contains bits and pieces of them. These theories and pieces from them will be used to further analyze myself throughout this paper and further identify my personal theory of self. The resources used to create this paper are *Interpersonal Communications, Everyday Encounters* by Julia Wood, *Why You Should Talk to Strangers* Ted Talk by Stark, K, as well as lecture and notes from CMST210 Interpersonal communications with professor Hering. The end goal of this paper is to explain my theory of self to the best ability as well as explain goals and wishes related to such theory.

There are many theories of self. But almost no one fits into a theory perfectly. Throughout my life, I have learned and am still learning about who I am, and many people still are doing the same. But throughout my life I have also realized that while I can be generalized into categories and stereotypes, I am unique. There are beliefs that there are three top theories of self that anyone can fit into even loosely. These three theories are: Rational Maximizer, Difference Theory, and Aspect Theory. Out of the three, I feel I fit into the Aspect Theory in some way. The Aspect Theory claims that people change based on what they experience. There is a dichotomy between self and what society wants. Essentially, people in this theory/category can sometimes struggle with identity, and I have been in that situation before. Throughout my elementary and middle school days, I was in a small group of kids of only about 20 or so at the most. This made me appreciate people as individuals, and it made me learn impression management and learning from others about myself at an earlier age. I really thrived on what George Herbert Mead coined as the “Game” stage where we learn about ourselves as well as our roles of ourselves and others through games. Though I would have conflict at times with who I was supposed to be/what my identity was, because at the time, I struggled with the concept of how people could have multiple roles, which was what I was trying to do, but not realizing at the time. I was a band geek, loved music and still do. But at the same time, I was a well-respected, somewhat cool kid that some looked up to. Along with this, I was not very out there and didn’t fit the cool-kid type, so I strived to be more like a cool kid, because even though I kind of was, I didn’t always feel like it. I would often try slightly changing the way I acted and tried different identities/roles since I was not afraid because I was with a small group of friends most of the time. I struggled with balancing my passion of music and being a band person, while also realizing who I was through others, how I thought I was, as well as who I thought I was. I even continued this throughout high-school, but through it, I learned

how to be more confident in myself and be more outgoing in general so I could fit in more with larger groups of people.

To define one's own personal theory of self, one must look at themselves deeply at an individual and intellectual level and find the characteristics from themselves as well as take the time to analyze these characteristics through other theories of self. My own personal theory of self is what I call the Observer/Deep-Thinker theory. This theory is a combination of the Looking-Glass Self, as well as some instances of the Aspect theory. Throughout life I have always been an observer and have always tended to look first before doing anything. Whether this is learning, engaging in conversation, or determining what to do next in life, I am always thinking and observing before anything else. When in social situations, I resort to staying back and gaining information from afar before jumping into things. This theory gives me a unique personality that is also relatable to some extent and helps show my strengths and weaknesses as a person.

One of the strengths to my personality and being part of the Observer/Deep-Thinker theory is that I am very careful and thorough before acting. When I am conversing with someone, I am focusing on them and thinking about meaning and interpretation in the background, therefore, allowing me to be more engaging in a conversation since I am doing the deep thinking behind the scenes and focusing more on the actual engagement. Another strength is that I can usually come up with ideas and thoughts about my feelings and situations at almost any given moment. I found this out throughout middle school. When a teacher would explain to us about an upcoming presentation, I would have already gotten an idea, reacted to it and how I would perform and feel while performing, before the teacher would even be done explaining the upcoming presentation project. I believe that being observant is a great strength to my personality because it allows for me to live more slowly in this fast-paced world and cherish each individual thought and idea more.

I can see pieces of myself in others and use that to have deeper connections with close friends and family. My interactions with established friendships and family members are very deep and true to me and has given me great happiness and memories to allow me to think back on as a form of motivation and strength for myself and my self-esteem. Along with this, I am also able to learn more quickly and efficiently since I learn better when observing first as opposed to jumping into things and “testing the waters.”

Along with strengths, there are weaknesses to myself and who I believe I am. One of the biggest weaknesses to myself is that while I am observant and careful about what I do in life, it somewhat limits my own personal growth as well as my enjoyment of interactions with others. I tend to be too in my head and self-conscious, which leads to me usually keeping quiet to myself. Many say I’m shy but I am not. I just struggle with first time interactions since I am too judgmental of myself and too cautious. Like in my middle school years, I still sometimes wish to be in the center of attention and be noticed since I am always observing from the shadows, but to do this I need to break out of my shell even more and realize that making a move first is sometimes better in social situations. Another strength is that while I am slow and try to be in the moment with a lot of things in life, I am not this way in conversations with others. Most of the time I am too focused on my own responses and how my impression management is playing into things. I am too worried about awkwardness in a conversation so I think ahead for what to talk about next, and in doing so, I miss out on the current moment and don’t truly enjoy the interaction with people. This ties into my Looking-Glass self as well as impression management. Since I am always observing, I can be rather harsh on myself and I tend to try too hard at making good impressions that I forget who I am at times.

My main issue I find with myself is that I need to be more spontaneous and open to new things as well as open up more to opportunity. While I have improved on this over the years, I still feel like I am not doing enough to make myself happy with my social life. I have a small group of great friends, but I wish to make myself a better person both inside and mainly outside of that small group of friends, that way I am more confident with myself when engaging in conversation. I have been good at small talk, but I need to improve on deep conversation with strangers or new acquaintances for there is not much to lose. Internally, I need to stop my over-thinking of my Looking-Glass Self and focus more on the positive things I like about myself rather than dwell on the negative things. I need to focus on one thing at a time and I think starting off with small things would help lead me to greater successes. One thing I intend to work on is talking and acknowledging strangers as explained in Kio Stark's Ted Talk on *Why You Should Talk to Strangers*. I want to be involved with others more and feel more connected every day since when I am not with friends or family, I sometimes feel like I am lacking social interaction at a new/exciting level. I believe opening up more to strangers could help me experience more exciting and open interactions in my life. Overall I am happy that I am stable mentally and have a strong self-esteem. The small things that I find lacking in myself as described throughout this paper can make me feel down sometimes, but at the same time, I know I can easily fix them over time if I put in the effort. Once I do this, I know that I will be happier in myself and be able to enjoy conversations and social interactions with others as well as life in general. Until then, I will continue to be a deep-thinker/observer and work on small improvements to make myself a better person overall.

References

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