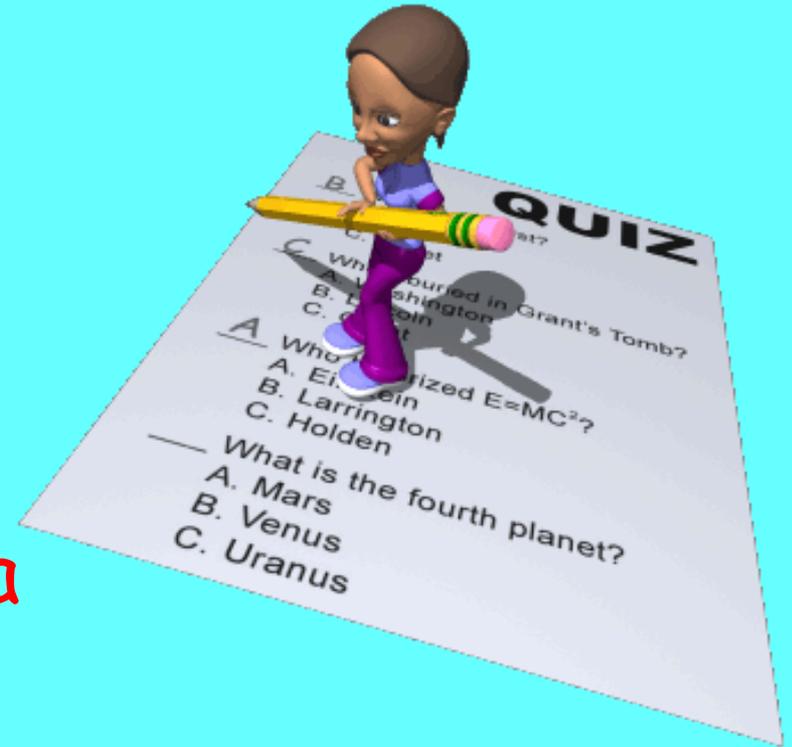


Trait Approaches to Personality



Trait



Personality tests are often objective tests such as self-report inventories and surveys.

- A trait is a consistent, long-lasting tendency in behavior.
- Examples: shyness, introverted, thinker, feeler, uptight
- The trait approach says a personality is the sum of all the traits, and they can be identified and measured.

The SIMS

SELECT TRAITS

 Active	 Cheerful	 Creative	 Art Lover	 Bookworm	 Foodie
 Genius	 Gloomy	 Goofball	 Geek	 Music Lover	 Perfectionist
 Hot-Headed	 Romantic	 Self-Assured	 Ambitious	 Childish	 Clumsy
 Bro	 Evil	 Family-Oriented	 Glutton	 Insane	 Lazy
 Good	 Hates Children	 Loner	 Loves Outdoors	 Materialistic	 Neat
 Mean	 Noncommittal	 Outgoing	 Slob	 Snob	



Gordon Allport

Identified
some 4,500
traits!!!



Gordon Allport decided that Freud overvalued unconscious motives and undervalued our real, observable personality styles/traits.

- ❖ Earned his Ph.D. in 1922 at 24.
- ❖ Accepted a teaching position at Harvard in 1924 where he introduced the first "Personality" course ever taught in the US.
- ❖ Allport argued that humans are consistent ("remarkably recognizable") in personality even though they may vary from situation to situation.
- ❖ Allport argued for the idea of self as a major focus of personality growth.
- ❖ Today, a good deal of research in clinical & social psychology focuses on the idea of the self (e.g., self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy).

16 SOURCE TRAITS MEASURED BY THE 16PF

TABLE 8.2

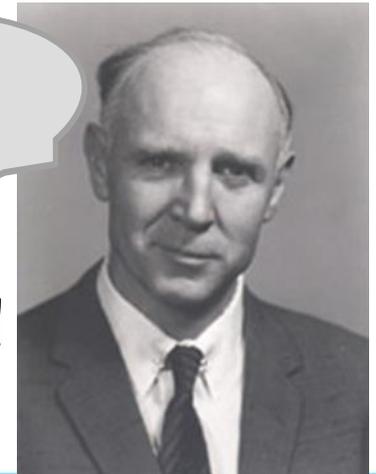
Cattell's 16 Personality Factors (16PF)

A	Warmth
B	Reasoning
C	Emotional stability
E	Dominance
F	Liveliness
G	Rule-consciousness
H	Social boldness
I	Sensitivity
L	Vigilance
M	Abstractness
N	Privateness
O	Apprehension
Q ₁	Openness to change
Q ₂	Self-reliance
Q ₃	Perfectionism
Q ₄	Tension

4500 traits are far too many to be useful. When you have too many factors that need analysis, what approach would you use to measure the data?

I did this.

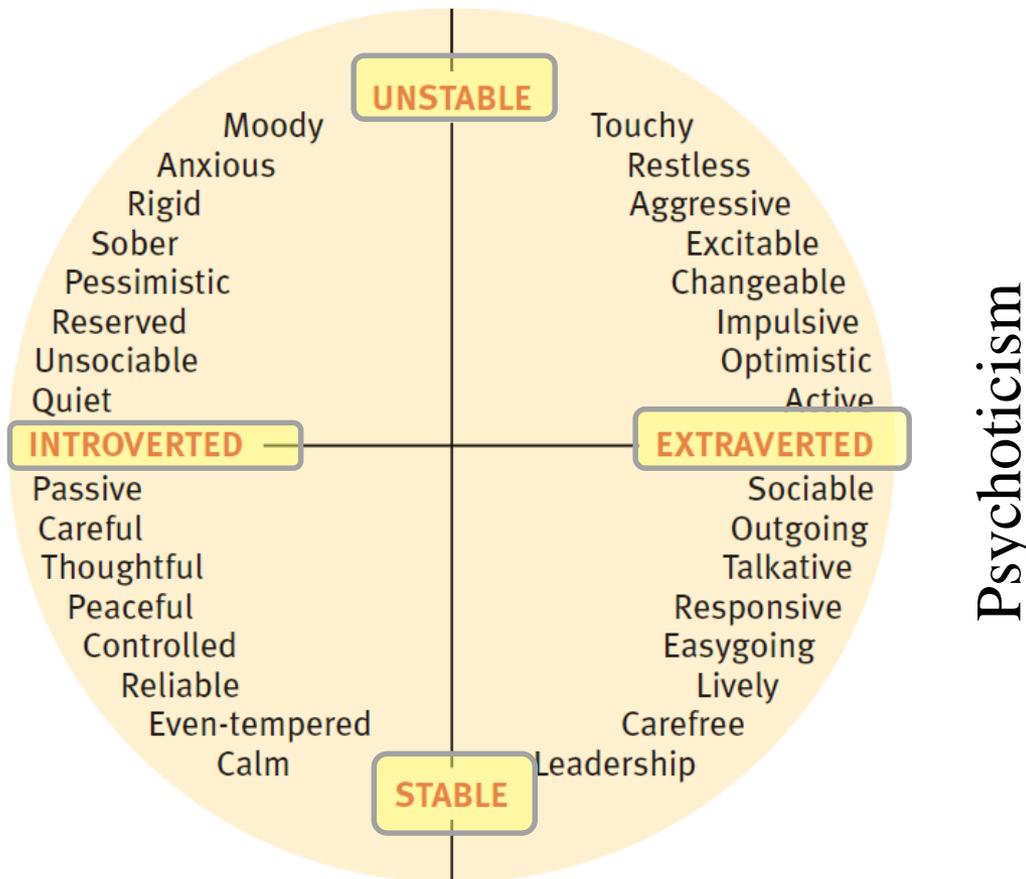
Raymond Cattell



(Note: The names of these factors were different in Cattell's original descriptions. These names correspond to the current revision of the 16PF, as described in H. E. P. Cattell & Schuerger, 2003.)

Factor Analysis and the Eysencks' Personality Dimensions

Unstable/stable measures neuroticism:
an enduring tendency to experience
negative emotional states.



- Factor Analysis: Identifying factors that tend to cluster together.
- Using factor analysis, Hans and Sybil Eysenck found that many personality traits actually are a function of two basic dimensions along which we all vary.
- Research supports their idea that these variations are linked to genetics.

The “Big Five” Personality Factors

- The Eysencks felt that people varied along two dimensions
- **Costa and McRae** expanded the two dimensions to five factors:

to help us remember the five factors, remember that the first letters spell "CANOE"...



- **Conscientiousness:** self-discipline, careful pursuit of delayed goals
- **Agreeableness:** helpful, trusting, friendliness
- **Neuroticism:** anxiety, insecurity, emotional instability
- **Openness:** flexibility, nonconformity, variety
- **Extraversion:** Drawing energy from others, sociability

The “Big Five”/ C.A.N.O.E. Personality Dimensions



Impulsive
Trusting
Anxious
Conforming
Fun-Loving

(Memory tip: Picturing a CANOE will help you recall these.)

Disorganized Careless Impulsive	← Conscientiousness →	Organized Careful Disciplined
Ruthless Suspicious Uncooperative	← Agreeableness →	Soft-hearted Trusting Helpful
Calm Secure Self-satisfied	← Neuroticism (emotional stability vs instability) →	Anxious Insecure Self-pitying
Practical Prefers routine Conforming	← Openness →	Imaginative Prefers variety Independent
Retiring Sober Reserved	← Extraversion →	Sociable Fun-loving Affectionate

The Big Five

After you complete the survey...

- Reverse the scores for 2,4,6,8,10
- Then add the scores for the following combinations:
 - Add scores for 1 and 6 = extraversion score
 - Add scores for 2 and 7 = agreeableness score
 - Add scores for 3 and 8 = conscientiousness
 - Add scores for 4 and 9 = emotional stability
 - Add scores for 5 and 10 = openness to experience

Higher scores in each area denotes a stronger exhibition of each trait.

Questions about Traits

These topics are the subject of ongoing research:

Stability: Does one's profile of traits change over the lifespan? → **No, one's distinctive mix of traits doesn't change much over the lifespan.**

However, everyone in adulthood becomes:

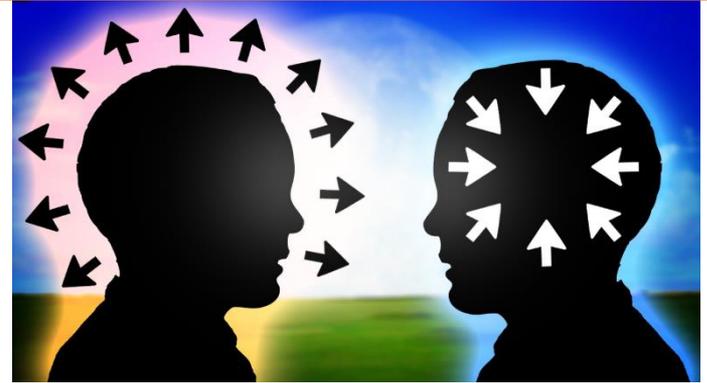
- More conscientious and agreeable, and
- Less extraverted, neurotic/unstable, and less open (imaginative, flexible).

Predictive value: Can we use these traits to predict behavior? → **To a degree: levels of success in work and relationships relates to traits.**

Heritability: Are traits learned or genetic? → in general, **genes account for 50% of the variation for most traits**

Traits: Rooted in Biology?

- Brain: Extraverts tend to have low levels of brain activity, making it hard to suppress impulses, and leading them to seek stimulation.
- Body: The trait of shyness appears to be related to high autonomic system reactivity, an easily triggered alarm system.
- Genes: Selective breeding of animals seems to create lifelong differences in traits such as aggression, sociability, or calmness, suggesting genetic roots for these traits.



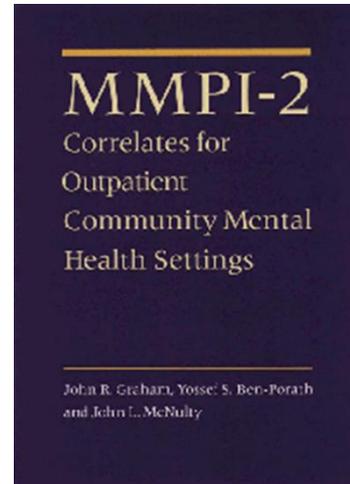
Assessing Traits: Questionnaires

- **Personality Inventory:** Questionnaire assessing many personality traits, by asking which behaviors and responses the person would choose
- **Empirically derived test:** all test items have been selected to because they predictably match the qualities being assessed. (Valid and reliable)

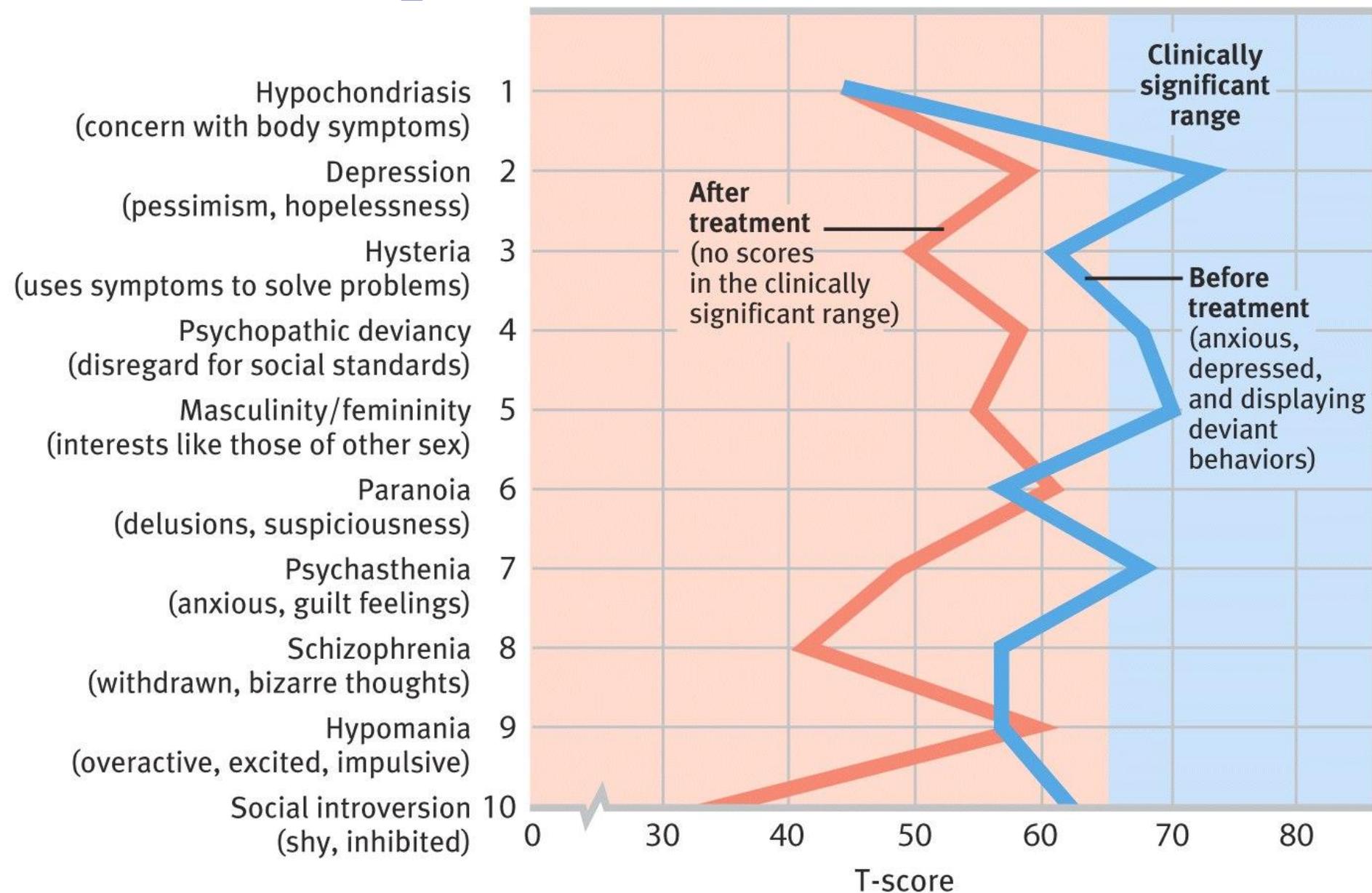
- **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI):** Designed to identify people with emotional disorders.

!!Most widely used personality test!!

- T/F questionnaire; items were selected because they correlated with various traits, emotions, attitudes
- Example: depressed people tend to answer "true" to: "Nothing in the paper interests me except the comics."



Sample MMPI Test Profile



The Person-Situation Controversy

• Are traits really stable? Kind Of....
They change according to the situation.

- There is evidence that some traits are linked to roles and to personas we use in different cultures, environments.



The Person-Situation Controversy

- In the short-term, situations have a strong influence on our actions.

»BUT....

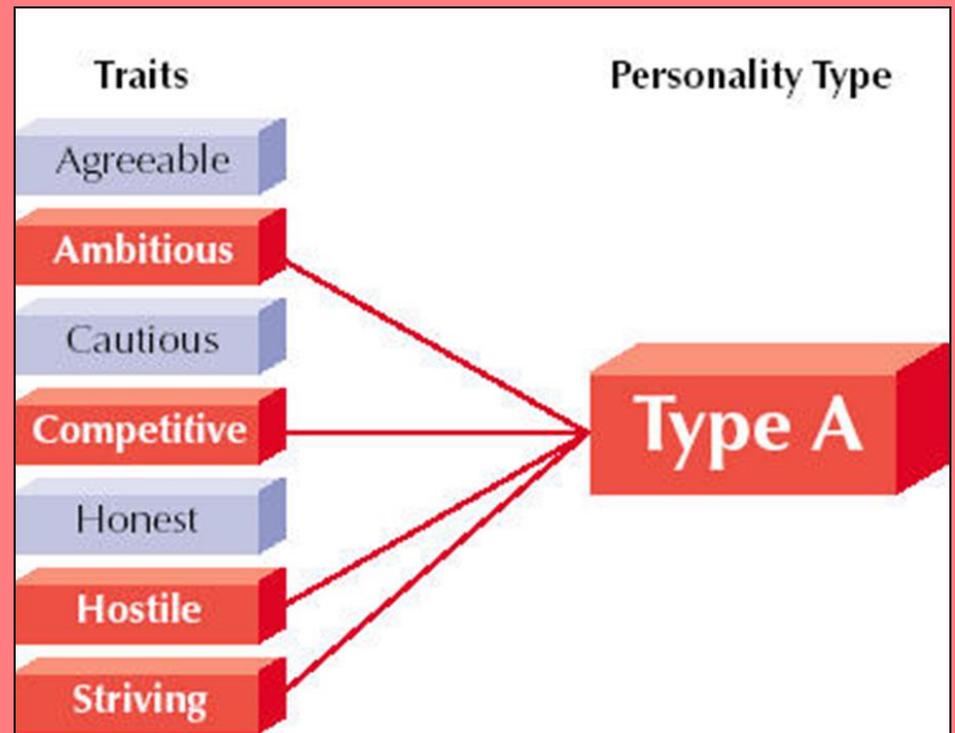
- Averaging our behavior across many occasions does reveal distinct personality traits.
- Walter Mischel states that while traits may be enduring, it is the situation that is a better predictor of one's actions.
- Therefore, traits are not good predictors of behavior, situations are better.

Types and Traits

Personality Trait: Stable qualities that a person shows in most situations

Personality Type: People who have several traits in common

Example of a personality type:



Types of Personalities



Friedman and Rosenman

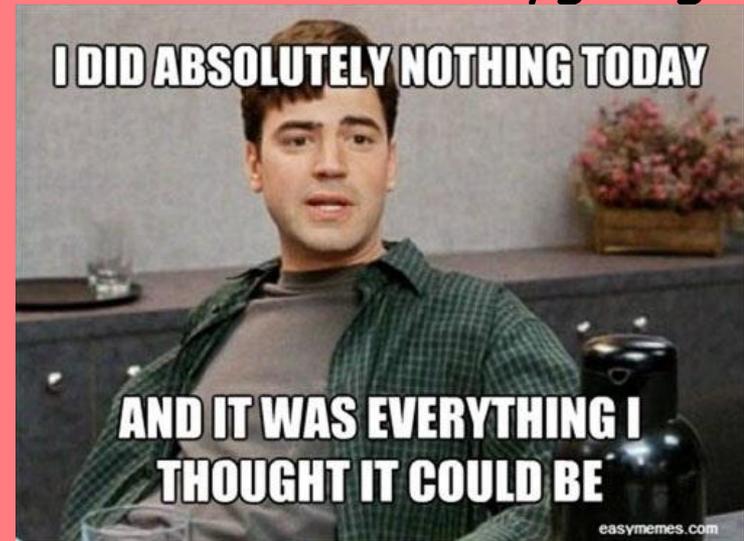
Type A

- Type A individuals have an intense desire to achieve, are extremely competitive, have a sense of urgency, are impatient, and can be hostile

- More prone to heart disease than rest of population.

Type B

- Relaxed and easygoing.



- But some people fit in neither type.



Personality Types

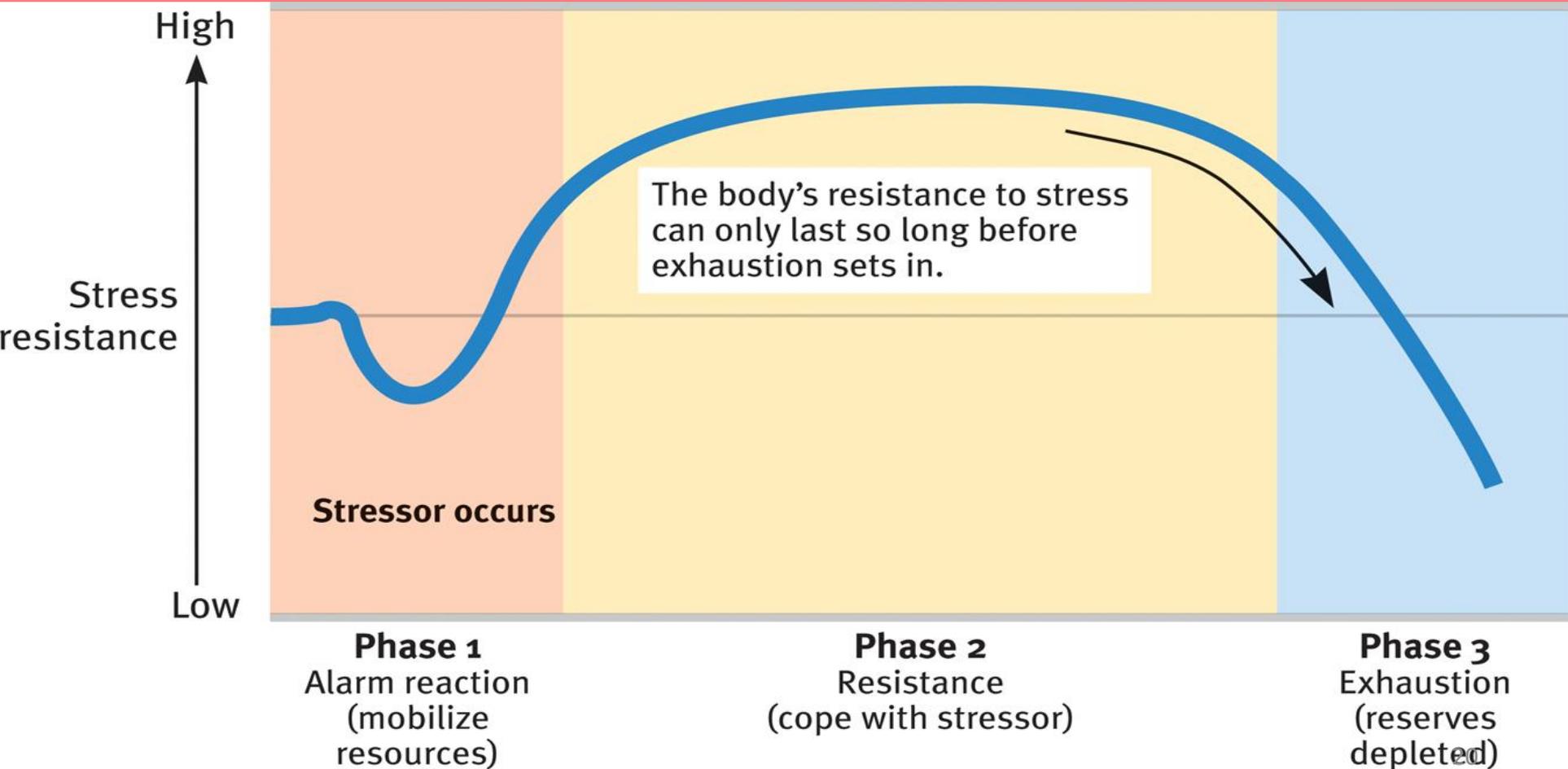
Type A's

1. are always moving, walking, and eating rapidly;
 2. feel impatient with the rate at which most events take place;
 3. strive to think or do two or more things at once;
 4. cannot cope with leisure time;
 5. are obsessed with numbers, measuring their success in terms of how many or how much of everything they acquire.
-

Type B's

1. never suffer from a sense of time urgency with its accompanying impatience;
2. feel no need to display or discuss either their achievements or accomplishments;
3. play for fun and relaxation, rather than to exhibit their superiority at any cost;
4. can relax without guilt.

General Adaptation Syndrome [GAS] (Identified by Hans Selye): Our stress response system defends, then fatigues.



General Adaptation Syndrome

Stage 1

- A state of initial shock (reduced activity) is followed by over-mobilization of forces within the organism to meet the shock.
- In this stage the organism responds to a situation as fear or anger.
- The **adrenal glands** become enlarged as they produce more adrenalin and discharge their stored-up supply of steroids.

Stage 2

- After a few days of prolonged stress, the organism seems to adapt to the stress and return to normal.
- The **adrenal glands** returns to their usual size and color, and their supply of steroids is renewed. Blood sugar and salt levels also return to normal.

Stage 3

- The acquired adaptation to the stress is lost.
- In this stage the **adrenal glands** again become enlarged.
- The animal or human will suffer exhaustion or even death.

Does stress predict heart attacks?

3000 healthy men aged 35-59

Nine-year study (makes this what kind of study?)

During a 15 minute interview about eating habits and work, researchers noted behavioral patterns (talking speed, gestures, intonation, etc.)

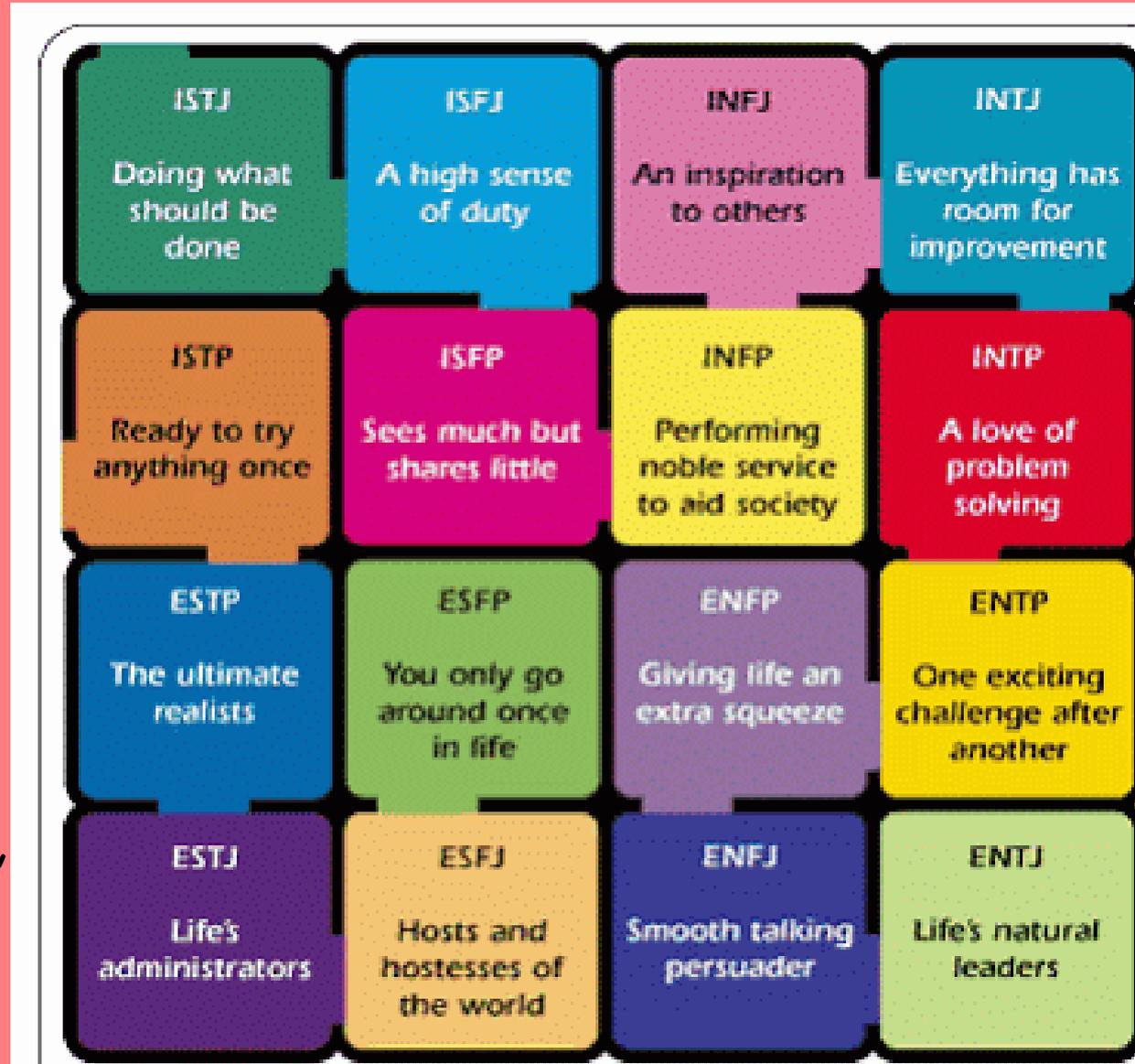
- Separated into Type A and Type B
- By the end of the study, 257 men had suffered heart attacks; 69% were Type A, none were "pure" Type B.

What about Type A's leads to heart attacks?

- Tend to be "combat ready" or aggressively reactive.
- Negative emotions tend to result in an activated sympathetic nervous system.
- Coupled with abrasiveness and high risk factors like smoking, drinking and obesity create an internal environment that may lead to sudden heart stoppage.

What is Myers-Briggs personality type?

- Isabel / Katharine Briggs created a survey based on Jung's personality types.
- The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a questionnaire categorizing people by traits (creating a "type" by pairs.)
- Used in counseling, leadership, training, work-team development.



Examples of MBTI questions

- 1. I would rather
 - a. Solve a new and complicated problem.
 - b. Work on something I have done before.
- 2. *I like to*
 - a. Work alone in quiet place.
 - b. Be where the action is.
- 3. *I want a boss who*
 - a. Establishes and applies criteria in decisions.
 - b. Considers individual needs and makes exceptions.

Trait Theory - In summary

Over time, however, real distinct personality traits do emerge.

Personality trait scores are positively correlated with scores obtained seven years later.

Interests may change, but traits remain.

- **avid baseball collector becomes avid fine art collector**
- **determined salesperson becomes determined social worker**
- **loving spouse becomes loving parent**

Evaluating Trait Theory

- Trait theory, especially the Big 5 model, is able to describe personality
 - Cross-cultural human studies find good agreement for the Big 5 model in many cultures
 - Appear to be highly correlated not only in adulthood, but also in childhood and even late preschoolers
 - Three dimensions (extraversion, neuroticism and agreeableness) have cross-species generality
- Problems with trait theory include:
 - Lack of explanation as to WHY traits develop
 - Issue of explaining transient versus long-lasting traits

Personality Theory	Key Proponents	Assumptions	View of Personality	Personality Assessment Methods
<i>Psychoanalytic</i>	Freud	Emotional disorders spring from unconscious dynamics, such as unresolved sexual and other childhood conflicts, and fixation at various developmental stages. Defense mechanisms fend off anxiety.	Personality consists of pleasure-seeking impulses (the id), a reality-oriented executive (the ego), and an internalized set of ideals (the superego).	Free association, projective tests, dream analysis
<i>Psychodynamic</i>	Adler, Horney, Jung	The unconscious and conscious minds interact. Childhood experiences and defense mechanisms are important.	The dynamic interplay of conscious and unconscious motives and conflicts shape our personality.	Projective tests, therapy sessions
<i>Humanistic</i>	Rogers, Maslow	Rather than examining the struggles of sick people, it's better to focus on the ways healthy people strive for self-realization.	If our basic human needs are met, people will strive toward self-actualization. In a climate of unconditional positive regard, we can develop self-awareness and a more realistic and positive self-concept.	Questionnaires, therapy sessions
<i>Trait</i>	Allport, Eysenck, McCrae, Costa	We have certain stable and enduring characteristics, influenced by genetic predispositions.	Scientific study of traits has isolated important dimensions of personality, such as the Big Five traits (stability, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness).	Personality inventories
<i>Social-Cognitive</i>	Bandura	Our traits and the social context interact to produce our behaviors.	Conditioning and observational learning interact with cognition to create behavior patterns.	Our behavior in one situation is best predicted by considering our past behavior in similar situations.