



INTRODUCTION TO REICHIAN CHARACTER STRUCTURE
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INTRODUCTION TO REICHIAN CHARACTER STRUCTURE

- 4 sessions - January 12, 19, 26 and February 2nd
- A link to the recording of this webinar will be sent to you within 48 hours. All links will remain active until February 18th.
- For BBTR students only - there will be an exam emailed to you on February 4th. That exam will cover all 4 sessions as is due back February 14th.
- Email questions to prema breath@gmail.com

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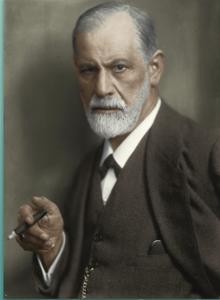
INTRODUCTION TO REICHIAN CHARACTER STRUCTURE

- History and evolution of Character Structure theory and practice - Freud, Reich, Bioenergetics, and Attachment Theory
- 5 Character Types:
 - Schizoid
 - Oral
 - Psychopathic
 - Masochist
 - Rigid

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IN THE BEGINNING.....

- Graduated medical school, specializing in nervous disorders
- Father of psychoanalysis



Dr. Sigmund Freud
1856-1939

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IN THE BEGINNING.....

- "Anna O", a woman diagnosed with "hysteria" (paralysis, convulsions, hallucinations, loss of speech)
- "Studies in Hysteria" (1895)
With Josef Breuer, Freud argued that physical illness are often the surface manifestations of deeply repressed emotional pain.



Dr. Sigmund Freud
1856-1939

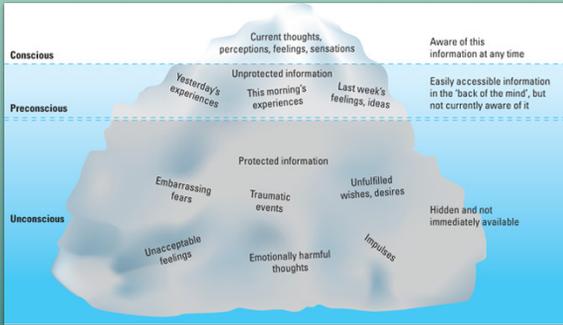
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PSYCHOANALYSIS - TO MAKE THE UNCONSCIOUS CONSCIOUS

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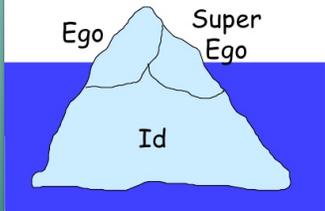
FREUD'S ICEBERG ~ 1900-1905



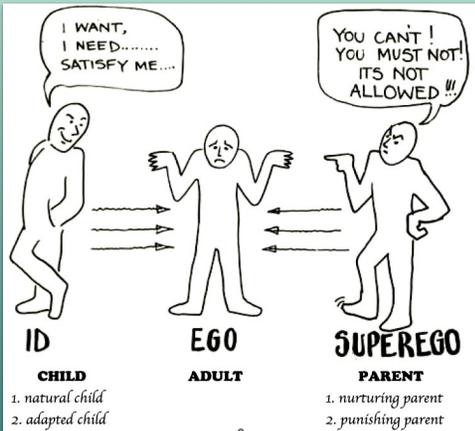
Freud & Personality Structure

Id - energy constantly striving to satisfy basic drives
Pleasure Principle

Ego - seeks to gratify the Id in realistic ways
Reality Principle



Super Ego
- voice of conscience that focuses on how we *ought* to behave





What happens when the Id and Superego can't reconcile??!! ☹

- The psychic energy has to go somewhere!
- Id won't let it go
- Super-ego won't let it happen
- To protect itself the organism employs **defense mechanisms**.



Defense Mechanisms



- Definition: A mental maneuver that one consciously or unconsciously chooses to use to distort or falsify the truth of one's experience in order to protect oneself from feeling painful emotions like shame, guilt, or anxiety.

Freud & Personality Development

“personality forms during the first few years of life, rooted in unresolved conflicts of early childhood”

Psychosexual Stages

Oral (0-18 mos) - centered on the mouth

Anal (18-36 mos) - focus on bowel/bladder elimination

Phallic (3-6 yrs) - focus on genitals/“Oedipus Complex”
(*Identification & Gender Identity*)

Latency (6-puberty) - sexuality is dormant

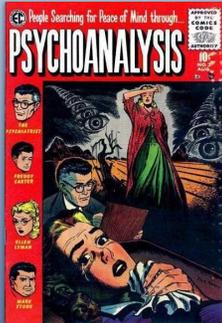
Genital (puberty on) - sexual feelings toward others

Strong conflict can **fix a te** an individual at Stages 1,2 or 3

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BUT SOMETHING WASN'T WORKING...

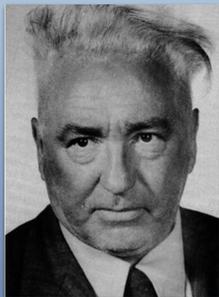
- Patients were telling their stories, dreams, thoughts, etc
- Symptomatology was not improving in the majority of patients



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NEW IDEAS....

- M.D., researcher, and scientist
- Student of Freud

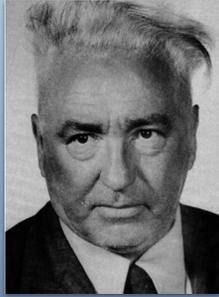


Dr. Wilhelm Reich
1897-1957

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NEW IDEAS....

- M.D., researcher, and scientist
- Student of Freud
- President of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society

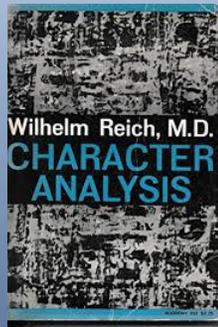


Dr. Wilhelm Reich
1897-1957

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CHARACTER ANALYSIS (1933)

- Started examining why patients weren't getting better
- Essential first step of his work spanning the years 1925-1933
- From psychoanalysis to bio-energetic study of emotions



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SO WHAT IS "CHARACTER"?

- walking patterns
- typical facial expressions
- stance/body posture
- manner of speech
- repeated or frequent behaviours
- gestures

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BREAKTHROUGH IN THERAPY

- Reich worked with character through analysis and discovered that as a patients' awareness increased, they also got more unsettled - strong emotions began to emerge.
- As strong emotions began to emerged, repressed feelings came to the surface.

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- As strong emotions began to emerged, repressed feelings came to the surface.
- As repressed feelings came to the surface, memories might emerge that were not abstractions but had feelings in them.
- So when these strong memories and feelings came up, that started to move people and their symptoms changed.

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BRINGING IN THE BODY

1930-33 BERLIN -
REICH STRONGLY
INFLUENCED BY
EXPRESSIVE DANCE
& BREATH
AWARENESS
TEACHER ELSA
GINDLER



*Elsa Gindler,
1885-1961*

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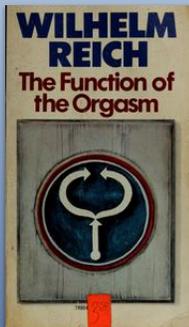
VEGETOTHERAPY

- Constricted breath, chronic muscle tension, fixed patterns of thinking and behaving - all reflections of the same defense mechanism
- Link between energy and breath
- Vegetative Nervous System AKA Autonomic Nervous System

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ORGASM REFLEX ~ CIRCA 1940

- Emotional health was related to the capacity for full surrender in the sexual act - what he called "orgastic potency".
- Different than what we normally think of as orgasm - it represented an involuntary response of the total body, manifesting in rhythmic, convulsive movements.
- Same type of movement can also appear when the breathing is completely free and the person surrenders to their body.



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ARMORING ~

- Totality of psychological and somatic defenses/coping mechanisms
- "Armoring is the condition that results when energy is bound by muscular contraction and does not flow through the body"
- Beneficial originally



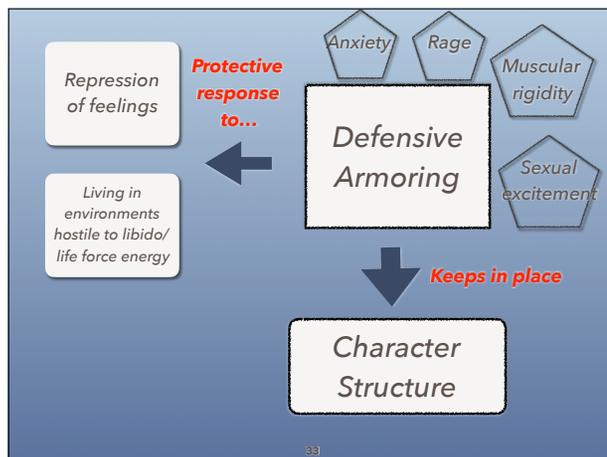
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ARMORING ~

- Can potentially include any part of the body
- Reich eventually established a theory of 7 segments of armoring: "the sum total of muscular (chronic muscular spasms) which an individual develops as a block against the breakthrough of emotions and organ sensations, particularly anxiety, rage and sexual excitation" (Reich:1936).



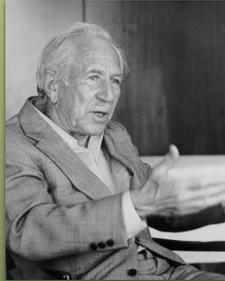
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ALEXANDER LOWEN

- Student of Reich from 1940-1952
- Patient of Reich, 1942-45
- Reichian Therapist, 1945-1953
- Founder of Bioenergetic Analysis - 1956



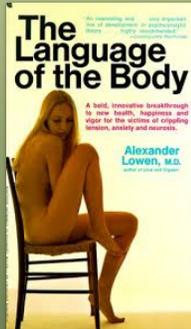
Dr. Alexander Lowen
1910-2008

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ALEXANDER LOWEN

Building on Reich's understanding of the unity of body and mind, Alexander Lowen developed Bioenergetics and identified five basic developmental character structures:

- Schizoid
- Oral
- Psychopathic
- Masochistic
- Rigid



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Reaching out for pleasure *Met with deprivation, frustration or punishment* *Produces feelings of anxiety* *Defenses are erected to cope with anxiety*



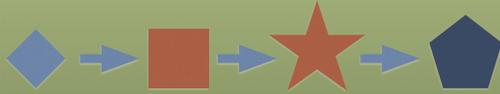
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Reaching out for pleasure

Met with deprivation, frustration or punishment

Produces feelings of anxiety

Defenses are erected to cope with anxiety



The earlier in life that anxiety arises, the more pervasive it is and the more deeply structured the defenses against it becomes

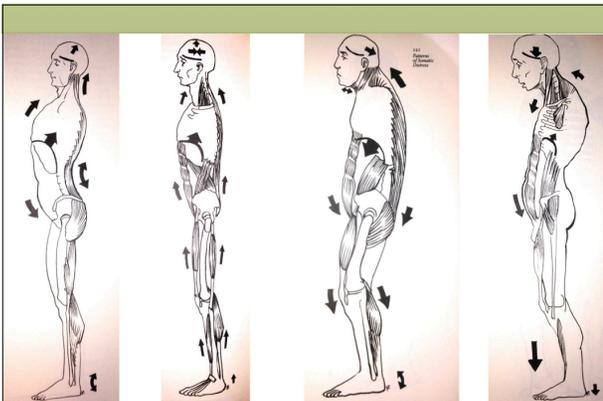
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HOW CHARACTER IS FORMED IN THE BODY

Ego image shapes the body through the control the ego exerts over our voluntary muscles:

- Inhibits impulse to cry by tightening the jaw, throat, belly and holding the breath
- Inhibits anger by contracting shoulder muscles
- Contraction caused by fear

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WHAT is attachment?

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Attachment Theory

- Bowlby viewed infants attachment to a caregiver as a mechanism that evolved to protect infants from predators.
- According to ethological theory, infants and babies are biologically predispose to become attached to each other.
- **Attachment** is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth 1973, Bowlby 1969)



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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- “The infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment”
- “and that not to do so may have significant and irreversible mental health consequences”

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- Early patterns between an infant and the primary caregiver builds a framework or filter through which subsequent relationships will be evaluated.
- Due to the nature in which the brain develops during this time the attachment style has life long effects.

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- Connection can be disrupted by:
 - Inadequate parenting/misattunement
 - Developmental trauma such as abuse, neglect, or early loss of a parent
 - Shock trauma
- In the beginning of life connection with primary caregiver functions as the regulator of the baby's nervous system.

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- Infant learns self-regulation through their relationship to their primary caregiver
- What is self regulation?
- Frustration - anger - signals of sympathetic nervous system activation can overload or overwhelm
- Resignation, shutting down angry protest as well as core need. Parasympathetic nervous system freeze state. Numbs children to their emotions and needs.

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- Child need-satisfaction cycle is healthy
- When significantly disrupted:
 - Healthy development is disturbed
 - Unsuccessful protest by child
 - Belief that something is wrong with their needs
 - Reactions involves degrees of anger, shame, guilt, and collapse
 - Do not learn to attune to their own needs
 - Nervous system dysregulation

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- Lack of ability to self-regulate
 - Disrupts autonomic nervous system functions such as: breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, sleep
 - Common symptoms: anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, depression, addiction

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Bioenergetic Model

Reaching out for pleasure

Met with deprivation, frustration or punishment

Produces feelings of anxiety

Armoring/ Defenses are erected to cope with anxiety



Attachment Disruptions Model

Biological needs of love, touch, nourishment, connection, etc

Caregiver failures

Disconnection from self and other

Adaptation to chronic unfulfillment

Armoring & nervous system dysregulation



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ATTACHMENT THEORY

- Various character types represent survival strategies
- Reflected in our bodies
 - Areas of weakness, tension, disconnection
- Show the way we learned to compensate for disconnection from our needs & life-force
- Protective when we were children, now limiting as adults

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ALEXANDER LOWEN

"A person who doesn't breathe deeply reduces the life of his body. If he doesn't move freely, he restricts the life of his body. If he doesn't feel fully, he narrows the life of his body. And if his self-expression is constricted, he limits the life of his body" ~ From his book "Bioenergetics"



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**NEW & EXCITING
BBTR OFFERINGS**



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