

Psychoautobiography Assignment
Final Due Date: Friday, March 25
(Note: Revised Due Date)

This assignment serves a dual purpose. First, it is intended to give you some insights about yourself; what kind of person you are today, how you got to be that way, and how your personality will influence your life in the future. Second, this assignment is meant to introduce you to the idiographic method of personality research, i.e., the intensive psychological study of a particular individual. In this case, you are both the researcher and the research participant.

Listed below are the 6 sections that should be included in your paper. These are guidelines, not hard and fast rules. If you want to be creative and make some modifications to these guidelines, GREAT! BUT, come and see me before you do.

- I. **Describe your personality as you are now.** In this first section, you should provide a psychological portrait of yourself by summarizing the Q-sort and personality questionnaires you have taken in class. To assist with this task, I recommend that you construct a table that (a) lists all of the questionnaires you have taken and indicates your standing on each of them and (b) indicates the 13 Q-sort items that are most descriptive of you. The table will then be part of your paper. As a brief example the table might look like this:

<u>Questionnaire</u>	<u>My Standing on the Questionnaire</u>		
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>High</u>
1. Self-Esteem		X	
2. Ego-Control (high=impulsive)			X
3. Positive Emotionality			X
[include remaining questionnaires]			
<u>Most Characteristic Q-sort Items</u>			
2. Is Dependable, Responsible Person			
1. Is Critical, Skeptical, Not Easily Impressed			
[include remaining Q-sort items]			

Based on this table, describe who you are, what you are like when around others, whether you think people perceive you the same way that you perceive yourself, what you like about yourself and what you would like to change. This section can also be supplemented with your own observations about yourself that might not have been picked up in the questionnaires. You have done a complete job if, for example, a close

friend or relative were to read it without knowing who it was intended to describe and says “Hey, this is a description of you!”

II. Describe important life events that have shaped your personality. In this section, you should describe the people and events that have had an influence in molding you into the person you are today. You can describe one event in detail if it had a large impact on your development or you can describe several events that together had an influence on you. In any case, indicate how your past has had an influence on your present life and personality.

III. Some Important Firsts and Other Memories. What is your earliest childhood memory? What is your most positive memory? Your most negative? What is the best decision/worst decision you ever made? What do you remember most about your parents/guardians as you were growing up? Are there any lessons about life that your parents emphasized that you still remember? Who was your first friend and what was he/she like? Who is your best friend? When were you the most embarrassed? What is your first memory of feeling guilty? Who was your first “crush”? When and with whom did you have your first romantic relationship? What did you learn from it? What award or recognition did you receive that you are most proud of? Who was your hero as a child? Do you have a hero now? What was your favorite toy, TV program, pet, teacher, family vacation, food, music group as you were growing up? What bad habit did you have that your parents tried to get you to stop? Other vivid memories?

IV. Describe the ideal (a) Friend. Describe the qualities you want and do not want in a good friend. Will these qualities that you value now be the same or change in the years to come. Is it important to have many friends or do you prefer to have a few friends? Is there a person who comes close to your ideal friend? What do you like most/least about this special person? (b) Parent. Take your time and think about the values you think are important to be a good parent. What is necessary to be a good parent to a newborn, a toddler, a teenager, and an adult child? What will you do the same as your parents? What will you do differently? How do people become good parents? (c) Spouse. What do you need in a relationship to be happy? What characteristics are important to you (right now) for a future spouse? Think about aspects of a relationship such as communication, sex, physical appearance, love, material comforts – what do you need, what would you like, what is essential? Is marriage important to you? Is it important to marry for life? What values must be shared in a relationship?

V. Predict 5 years into the future. Based on your past experiences and on your current personality, make some predictions about what your life will be like in 5 years. How will your personality help you to achieve your future goals, and how might your personality hinder those same future goals? What personality characteristics do you

hope will be the same, and which characteristics do you hope will have changed by then? What will your life be like in 5 years? Will you still be in school or will you be working? If working, how much money will you be making and what will your job be? Where will you be living? In a house that you purchased, or an apartment that you are renting? Will you have any pets? Will you be in a close romantic relationship? Do you want to be married in 5 years? If you could construct the ideal life for yourself in 5 years, what would it be like and what would you be doing?

VI. **Personal Photographs.** Include one or more photographs that express something about you and who you are.

The paper should be a minimum of 15 pages typed and double-spaced, although I encourage you to write more if needed to convey the “real” you. Be creative, explore and try to understand who you are as a person. Consider this a project for yourself as well a class assignment. The autobiography is worth 30 points total.