CHARLES S. CARVER & MICHAEL F. SCHEIER

PERSPECTIVES ON PERSPECTIVES ON A L I I Y

Third Edition

# PERSPECTIVES ON PERSONALITY

THIRD EDITION

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# For the Sheldons—Michael, Elizabeth, Marie, and John MFS

"For Emily, whenever I may find her" CSC

# PREFACE



THIS BOOK EXAMINES one of the most fascinating and mysterious topics in the world: human personality. As the book's title implies, there are many perspectives that one might take on the nature of personality, many ways to think about how people function in life. In this book we present a wide range of the perspectives that are used today by personality psychologists of varying persuasions.

#### WHAT'S THE SAME IN THIS EDITION?

This is the third edition of *Perspectives on Personality*. In many respects it continues on the course set by the second edition. As in both prior editions, the book's content reflects two of our strongly held beliefs. The first is that the critical part of an introductory course on personality is theoretical concepts. Accordingly, we stress concepts first and foremost throughout the book. Our highest priority has been to present as clearly as we can the ideas that are central to each theoretical view.

Our second belief is that research plays an important role in today's personality psychology. Ideas and intuitions are important, but an idea shouldn't lie around too long before someone checks to see whether it actually works. Accordingly, throughout the book we discuss research that bears on the theory being described. In this emphasis on research we seek to portray personality psychology as a living, dynamic process of continuing scientific exploration instead of a series of armchair speculations.

As in the previous editions, we present the theories of personality psychology in groups, which we've termed *perspectives*. Each group of theories rests on an orienting viewpoint from which personality can be considered. Within a given perspective there usually are several distinct theories, which often differ considerably from one another. In each case, however, the theories of a perspective share fundamental orienting assumptions about human nature.

Each perspective on personality is presented in a pair of chapters. Each pair is preceded by an overview of that perspective's orienting assumptions (in the form of a prologue) and followed by a discussion of that perspective's current problems and

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its prospects for the future (in the form of an epilogue). Each perspective thus forms a self-contained unit.

The perspectives are discussed in an order that makes sense to us, but they can easily be read in other orders. Each theoretical section of the book is intended to stand on its own, with no assumptions about prior exposure to other parts of the book. Thus instructors can move through the perspectives in whatever order they desire.

As in previous editions, the book closes with a chapter examining how different views relate to each other. One goal of this chapter is to tie together conceptual threads from the theories discussed separately earlier in the book. A second goal is to consider the usefulness of an eclectic blending of theoretical viewpoints, in which theories are treated as complementary to each other rather than as competitors.

This edition also continues our use of the box feature "the theorist and the theory." These boxes focus on how the personal experiences of theorists have sometimes influenced the form of their theories. In more than one case the theorist almost literally took events from his own life as a model of human affairs more generally and derived an entire theory from those personal experiences. Not all cases are quite this striking, but personal experience does appear to have played a role in the development of a number of theoretical views on personality. These influences are noted at several points in the book.

As in the second edition, this revision has been prepared with an eye to making the content accessible to readers. We've used a simple style of presentation, somewhat conversational in tone, to try to draw the reader into the plot behind the ideas. We've also included examples of how the ideas under discussion can apply to the lives of the students themselves. We hope that these qualities will make the book enjoyable as well as informative.

# WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS EDITION?

This edition retains the second edition's basic structure (the same chapters, in the same perspectives). However, the content of the book differs in several important ways from that of the second edition. These changes in content reflect several developments in the continually evolving research literature of personality psychology. Although there have been updates to every substantive chapter, three changes are important enough that we should note them explicitly.

First, a considerable amount of work has been done in the last four years on the trait structure of personality. Much of this work has been done within the framework of the 5-factor model of personality. This has resulted in substantial change in the content of Chapter 4 (Types, Trait, and Interactionism).

Second, there has continued to be rapid evolution in the work bearing on the biological perspective on personality. Both chapters of that perspective have changed considerably from the second edition. Chapter 6 (Inheritance, Evolution, and Personality) includes far more material on evolutionary psychology than it did previously. Chapter 7 (Biological Processes and Personality) includes expanded treatment of the topic of hormones and behavior, as well as an expanded discussion of models of nervous system functioning.

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Another area of rapid change during the past few years has been work based in attachment and objects relations concepts. Chapter 11 (Psychosocial Theories) incorporates an extensive discussion of this research. We have also reorganized this chapter, so that it begins with object relations and attachment theories, and only then moves to the broader and more integrative theory of Erikson.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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