



30-Second Psychology

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Pavlov's Dogs, Psychoanalysis, Milgram's Obedience Study, and Beck's Cognitive Therapy? Sure, you know what they all mean (that is, you've certainly heard of them), but do you understand enough about these psychology theories to join a dinner party debate or dazzle the bar with your knowledge?

30-Second Psychology takes the top 50 strands of thinking in this fascinating field, and explains them to the general reader in half a minute, using nothing more than two pages, 300 words, and one picture. While unraveling the inner workings of the human mind it also introduces many of the luminaries in the field along the way, including William James, Aaron Beck, and (of course) Sigmund Freud. From Behaviorism to Cognitivism, what better way to get a handle on your inner demons?

30-Second Psychology Details

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From Reader Review 30-Second Psychology for online ebook

Marty :) (thecursedbooks) says

Review to come.

Linda says

The book includes an introduction and a brief summary of fifty of the most famous psychological theories, such as psycho analysis, embodied cognition, cognitive dissonance, neuro plasticity, 10 000 hours of practice, cognitive behavior therapy and more.

I am familiar with some of the theories, such as the famous Pavlov's dog. Classical conditioning is a learning procedure. One stimulus is connected to another stimulus and the person learns that they belong together. In Ivan Pavlov's experiment, dogs learned that a bell preceded food. In operant conditioning, the behavior is modified by the behavior's consequences, and the person learns to behave in a certain way.

The theory of birth order is interesting. It turns out the oldest sibling is often social and intelligent, but seeks approval from other people because she no longer is the center of attention when her younger sibling is born. The middle sibling is often competitive and diplomatic. The youngest sibling is selfish and demanding because she is used to be taken care of. It's interesting to think about the theory when meeting people, and it often turns out to be right.

When reading Sapiens by Yuval Harari, I wondered about whether thoughts came before language or vice versa. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis the structure of a language affect people's thoughts. It is probably difficult to form a complicated thought without a language, but I think it is possible to be able to think without words. Otherwise, language wouldn't have been possible to develop in the first place. Deaf and mute people who can't read are of course still able to think as any other people. However, language affects our thoughts in many ways.

I had not heard about some of the theories, such as Simon Baron-Cohen's theory about male brains. Men tend to use systematisation to understand the world, how the individual componenets interact, while women tend to be better at emphasisization. According to Baren-Cohens's theory, people with Asperger syndrom or autism have been exposed to a surplus of testosteron before birth, which has strengthened the systematisation tendencies at the expense of emphasisization.

Another interesting theory is Roy Baumeister's ego depletion. It seems there is only a restricted amount of will within a person. If restraining oneself from eating a cookie, later it is more difficult to solve a task which demand will power. Fortunately, will power can be trained.

There are theories that reveal a very dark side of people. In Stanley Milgram' experiment, participants were ordered to push a button, and an actor pretended to get electric shocks. In the experiment, 65 percent of the participants administered the final 450 volt shock. This is a really disturbing result which shows that people are capable of brutal action when ordered by an authority. Another experiment that showed a really dark and disturbing side of people was Zimbardo's prison, where the participants were either prison guards or interns. The experiment had to be terminated when the prison guards treated the interns really badly. A third of them

were behaving sadistically. Philip Zimbardo's experiment shows that certain situations and social roles might deprive people of their individuality and make them to perform appalling, brutal actions.

I think the part about false memories is interesting. Elizabeth Loftus has often taken part in various trials because of her theory about the malfunctions of memory. Memories are easily distorted by certain questions that suggest something, or misinformation. During her experiment, she asked children about memories, especially about getting lost in a shopping centre. They could describe the incident, even though it had never happened. I recognized the name, but it wasn't until I read that Elizabeth Loftus had taken part in the trial of Ted Bundy that I realized I had read about her in one of the books about him. She was also mentioned in a book about Thomas Quick, the man that confessed to have murdered many people, and was sentenced to prison. Later, he revealed that he had made it up and in fact, it turned out that the psycho therapists and prosecutors had used this kind of suggestive questions. The evidence was non-existent and he was released.

There are some theories that are of current interest and important to learn about today. It feels like the bystander experiment is repeating itself today. In their experiment, John Darley and Bibb Latané let people think that a participant had a seizure. The participants that thought they were alone with the patient, acted and called for help to a higher extent, while those who believed they were other participants present didn't act. It seems other people present diminishes the feeling of responsibility. This can be applied to some cases today when a mobile phones and taking photographs of the situation. Another important theory about group think, by Irving Janis, which means that people with the same opinions shield themselves from other opinions. They stop listening to objections and can make catastrophic decisions. An illusion of unity and agreement appear. It is possible that group think affected the decisions about the Bay of pigs invasion and the US's inability to foresee the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbour. The theory about confirmation bias is important today, when fact resistance seems to be increasing and powerful people use information in a way that suit them. People only see what they want to see. They interpret information in a way that confirms their theory.

Prejudices and oppositions between social groups are common today and it is interesting to know about some theories that describe how they occur and what to do about it. Gordon Allport's contact hypothesis shows that children prefer to play with other children with similar clothes or skin color. The instinct can make people dehumanise other people that they view as different or outsiders. Contact between social groups, such as religious and ethnic groups, diminishes prejudices and encourages friendly relations. Therefore, it is important to get to know different people. Apropos prejudices. The theory about stereotype threats means that people are at risk of conforming of stereotypes about their social group. They fear that other people will think that a bad achievement is proving that their prejudices are correct, which create an insecurity that might as well cause that person to achieve badly.

It is an interesting book that contains much information and explanations about human behavior. Unfortunately, the theories are only introduced and explained briefly. It could easily have been twice the amount of information about every theory.

Nan Diliyanova says

Brief and neat, it was nice to see many theories I studied throughout college!

Michelle says

Wonderful book! Easy to read, simple to understand, and great refresher on topics I learned back in Psych 101. I even learned about new theories! I think this is a great introductory book on the subject...definitely useful for classes and even conversation topics. I loved it!

Murilo Andrade says

The book introduces the layman (like me) to some very interesting ideas in the field of psychology. It is interesting to see how many of the empirical psychological frameworks you already have in your mind will be found throughout the book.

The book is divided in a few sets of chapters: Old School, New School, Growth & change, Decision Making & Emotions, Social Psychology, Ways We differ, Disordered Minds, Thoughts & Language. Each set opens with a handful of definitions used through the chapters/ideas.

Here are a few key facts I tried to retain from the book:

Piaget's stages of knowledge development: sensori-motor (0-2), pre-operational (2-7), concrete-operational (7-11), formal operational (11-15).

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development: gap between the child's actual and potential development.

Birth Order: Eldest is socially dominant and intellectual , middle is competitive and diplomatic, youngest is selfish and demanding.

Harlow Monkeys: Experiences with wired and clothed monkeys showed primates need warmth, comfort at least as much as they need food, water.

6 moral stages (Kohlberg).

Brain Plasticity: What you think can change the structure of your brain.

Paul Ekman's Universal Emotions: Developed Facial Action Coding System, and argued that microexpression are universal.

Festinger's boring task: Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort when you have incompatible conflicting beliefs or decisions

James-Lange: Emotions don't cause bodily changes. It is rather the inverse.

Wason's confirmation bias: Experience with cards showed the tendency to seek out evidence that supports our existing beliefs.

Willpower is a finite resource (Baumeister)

Milgram's obedience study: We are all capable of doing terrible things to others if told to by someone in authority

Leaders are in general prototypical members of the group

Lake Wobegon effect: We tend to believe we are better than most.

Big Five: Extraversion, neuroticism (anxiety, apprehension), conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness are big classes psychologists use to encapsulate different traits of personality

Fundamental Attribution error: Tendency to attribute our own behaviour to events, and other's to their nature

Ericsson's 10000 rule: 10000 hours of self-critical , obsessive practice is needed to reach greatness.

Beck: "founded " CBT and took a more scientific approach, backing his ideas with data

Autism is an exaggeration of certain male traits.

Zheen says

Does what it's intended to do and does it nicely. Very well organized and written book, and the subject couldn't get any more interesting. Needless to say that this book does not do the job if you want to dive deep.

Zulhilmi Ghouse says

I bought this because of the cover, and also because I have an interest in psychology. I read my sister's psychology textbook once. This is like a condensed version of that, with all the most important theories. Every theory has an illustration. Can't say I love them, but it's a good book, nevertheless. Would make a nice coffee table book.

Nora says

I love this series in general. If you are interested in any subject and just want to learn the basics it is wonderful. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in psychology.

Yara says

I love how they got 50 psychological theories and studies and summarized them each in page with an even shorter summary at the end as well. Learned a lot reading this. I'll always enjoy a good Psychology book.

Ali Albaijan says

Really interesting book. I couldn't put it down. It summarizes a lot of theories for a half page each. It is light book with so much huge chunk of information. Presented in understandable language. This helps who is interested in psychology to get exposed more to psychology with no worries of not understanding it. Pictures are demonstrating the main idea of each theory next to it. Which makes it easier for me to comprehend the theory.

Anastasia says

Very accurate and handy to have! I have a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and I give it my full approval (whatever that decree may mean)!

Ann Elin Odland says

3.5?

Guillermo Jiménez says

Mi aceptación por la psicología viene de hace poco. El año pasado me animé a tomar terapia y le di oportunidad, o me di oportunidad de probar algo que normalmente tacha de charlatanería, incluso cuando algunas de mis lecturas incluyen obras de Freud, Jung y Fromm, entre otros "conocidos" psicólogos.

Después, mezclando mi afición por las neurociencias y la literatura en general, fue surgiendo un gusto mórbido por aquellos pioneros en elaborar teorías al respecto de la psique, el comportamiento, la manera en cómo procesamos nuestras ideas, pensamientos, comportamientos y demás.

De ahí a dar el brinco y chutarme 50 teorías explicadas en al menos 30 segundos cada una, más uno que otro perfil de "personajes clave" pues, ya no había nada de sorprendente.

Este libro funciona bien. Está escrito con pulcritud y concisión, no quedan cabos sueltos y dependiendo del autor de cada artículo [me inclino más por aquellos escritos por el editor del libro, Christian Jarret) pueden ser bastante profundos como lo permiten unos cientos de palabras.

Obvio, está ordenado casi impecablemente y las ilustraciones son muy útiles a la hora de buscar volver abstracta una teoría.

Me gusta que en el apéndice uno puede enterarse un poquitín más de los autores de los diferentes artículos de que está compuesto el libro, y que en cada biografía se menciona su cuenta de Twitter.

Kirsten says

My attention span has come to this, 30 seconds on complex theories. But let's face it, I was never going to do a psychology degree, and the topic is quite interesting. Two points that particularly struck me were the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, and Loftus' False Memories.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis considers the myth of Eskimos having many words for snow with the underlying presumption that we can't think about concepts for which we lack the words. I remember discussing this with others in the past. I suspect the distinction is that you can think about anything, and create language around it, but with a smaller vocabulary it is harder to express yourself to others.

Loftus' False Memories recognises that 'memories are highly malleable and easily distorted by suggestion and misinformation'. Elizabeth Loftus ran experiments asking people their childhood memories, particularly getting lost in a shopping centre. Many described the incident even though their parents stated it never happened. I think I'm guilty of this once describing something I had done in my childhood to Mum, who then said she thought it was someone else who did it. Had I picked up family folklore and transposed it to myself? Anyway, Loftus ended up speaking on behalf of alleged rapists, child-killers and mass murderers. Interesting. I'd probably like to read more about her.

Each theory is almost always limited to a page of text, broken down into the key part (the 30-second theory), the 3 second psyche summary, the 3 minute analysis, a key quote, and then some related theories. It is generally easy enjoyable reading.

Sanne says

Really enjoyed reading this book as an upcoming psychology student! I'm more familiar now with famous theories and other things. Now I'm even more excited to go to university!
