

# **Conscious and Unconscious Obsession- Based Human Motivation**

By: Grace Pryor

# The Proposal: Theory of Obsession

- Humans are motivated by obsession both unconsciously and consciously.
- This applies to all people.
- Obsession-based motivation is fundamental to being a human.

# Definitions

- The APA definition of obsession is, “a persistent thought, idea, image, or impulse that is experienced as intrusive or inappropriate and results in marked anxiety, distress, or discomfort.”
- To include, “*is also the cause of all persistent **positive** conscious and unconscious thoughts, ideas, images and often results in action.*”

# Examples

## Negative

- Serial Killer
- Stalking
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Schizotypal Personality Disorder

## Positive

- Thomas Edison
- Albert Einstein
- Artists
- Musicians
- Pursuit of excellence

# Obsession Causes Motivation

- The APA definition for motivation is a force or influence that causes someone to do something.
- Obsession ideation causes motivation to occur.

# Unconscious Obsession

- Theory of incubation by Graham Wallace.
- If a person were motivated by an idea and stopped consciously thinking about it, having not reached fruition with the thought, their brain would still unconsciously process the obsessive tendency until the obsession was satisfied.

# Conscious Obsession

- Intrinsic Values
- Being cognitive of what an individual wants.

# Christian Faith

- Belief in Jesus life, death, and resurrection.
- Holy Spirit indwells in an individual.
- Individual seeks to live as Christ and bring glory to God.
- Out of love for God, pursuit of holiness.



# Biblical Integration

- Aesthetic Needs
- Cognitive Needs
- Neurotic Needs
- Motivation Leads to Action

# Aesthetic Needs

- This is seen in the obsession over the aesthetic needs of being unique and set apart, which contradicts God's intent in scripture.
- “So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I am the Lord your God. Keep all my decrees by putting them into practice, for I am the Lord who makes you holy.”
- Originally, God wanted Israel to be holy and set apart. The perversion of this is the need for uniqueness.

# Cognitive Needs

- This can be seen as a spectrum with the thirst for knowledge and the fall of man on one end (Genesis 3:1-24, NLT) and cognitive rigidity and the beliefs of the Sadducees on the other end (Acts 4: 1-7, NLT).

# Neurotic Needs

- Neurotic needs demonstrate the obsession with the self or personal fable.
- Ex. beauty pageants.
- “For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13, NLT)

# Motivation Leads to Action

“Trust only movement. Life happens at the level of events, not of words. Trust movement.”

- Alfred Adler

# Scalability

- Operationally define the behavior.
- Blend psychoanalysis with behaviorism.

"I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate." (Romans 7:15)

# Originality

## **Alfred Adler**

- Social Interest Theory
- Society influences behavior and thought
- The whole influence the parts

## **Theory of Obsession**

- Motivates behavior and thought
- Society is influenced by differing obsessive ideations
- Parts influence the whole

# Originality

## Abraham Maslow



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

## Theory of Obsession

- Only exists because of obsession



# Implications and Potential

- Leonard Mlodinow
- PET and SPECT imaging
- More research should be conducted.

# Closing Remarks

- Humans are motivated by obsession both unconsciously and consciously.
- This applies to all people.
- Obsession it is fundamental to being a human.
- I believe God designed us to be this way, so we may each in our own unique way bring Him glory.

# On Obsession

If my [idea] helps a few young thinkers in their  
practice of their art,  
or induces some other psychological inquirer to  
explore the problem with greater success than my  
own, I shall be more than content.

-Graham Wallace

# Reference:

Raymond, P., Ricardo, & Johnson. (2021, January 4). *Child Growth and Development*. College of the Canyons.  
<https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/24682>

Wallas. (1926). *The Art of Thought*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Baldwin, D. S. (2013). *Anxiety disorders*. Karger.

Talks at Google. (2012, May 24). *Subliminal: How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behavior*. [Video].  
YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ-IfVHJH58>

The Holy Bible. *New Living Translation*, (2015) Tyndale House Publishers.

APA. (2018, April 19). *Apa Dictionary of Psychology*. American Psychological Association.  
<https://dictionary.apa.org/obsession>

APA. (2018, April 19). *Apa Dictionary of Psychology*. American Psychological Association.  
<https://dictionary.apa.org/motivation>