

Inferiority Complex

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An inferiority complex, in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis, is a feeling that one is inferior to others in some way. Such feelings can arise from an imagined or actual inferiority in the afflicted person. It is often subconscious, and is thought to drive afflicted individuals to overcompensate, resulting either in spectacular achievement or extreme schizotypal behavior, or both. Unlike a normal feeling of inferiority, which can act as an incentive for achievement (or promote discouragement), an inferiority complex is an advanced state of discouragement, often embedding itself into one's lifestyle, and sometimes resulting in a retreat from difficulties.

Classifications

Classical Adlerian psychology makes a distinction between primary and secondary inferiority feelings. A primary inferiority feeling is said to be rooted in the young child's original experience of weakness, helplessness and dependency. It can then be intensified by comparisons to siblings and adults. A secondary inferiority feeling relates to an adult's experience of being unable to reach an unconscious, fictional final goal of subjective security and success to compensate for the inferiority feelings. The perceived distance from that goal would lead to a negative/depressed feeling that could then prompt the recall of the original inferiority feeling; this composite of inferiority feelings could be experienced as overwhelming. The goal invented to relieve the original, primary feeling of inferiority which actually causes the secondary feeling of inferiority is the "catch-22" of this dilemma. This vicious circle is common in neurotic lifestyles.

A feeling that you are not as good, as important or as intelligent as other people generally use with Psychology Science. In 1912, a psychologist by the name of Alfred Adler wrote a book titled The Neurotic Character. His research in this book founded a popular area of psychology known as the inferiority complex which is a term used to describe a sense of inferiority an individual feels about oneself towards other people. It revolves around social status, power, ego, and dominance. You will have an inferiority complex when you feel inferior and think that other people are better than you. An inferiority complex can arise when you experience an imagined or conditioned feeling of inferiority. As is the case for most people, it is a combination of imagination and subtle conditioning. You would feel inferior when an event takes place which makes you feel less than others (conditioning aspect) and your creative imagination (imagination aspect) would "blow out" your understanding of the event beyond what would seem reasonable to another person.

Causes

Parental attitudes and upbringing - disapproving, negative remarks and evaluations of behavior emphasizing mistakes and shortcomings determine the attitude of the child before the age of six.
Physical defects - such as disproportional facial and body features, weight, height, strength, speech defects and defective vision cause inferiority complexes.

Mental limitations - cause feelings of inferiority when unfavorable comparisons are made with the superior achievements of others, and when satisfactory performance is expected.

Social disadvantages and discriminations - family, alleged race, sex, sexual orientation, economic status, or religion.

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