Who am I?

The search for the self
Self expression and identity

Class Objectives

- The development of the self
- The development of identity
- How do we develop self-esteem?

Who am I?

- The **Self** is all of the characteristics of a person
  - A conceptual system made up of one's
    - Body
    - Possessions
    - Thoughts
    - Psychological functioning
Infants have a basic sense of self... How would we know that infants recognize themselves in a mirror?

- **The Rouge Test**
  - The mother places a red mark on her infant’s nose and then the infant is placed in front of the mirror
  - 12-month-olds: Touch the red mark on the mirror, showing that they notice the mark on the face in the mirror
  - 15-month-olds: Infants see the red mark in the mirror, and some then reach up and touch their OWN noses
  - 24-month-olds: Infants see the red mark in the mirror, and all then touch their OWN noses

Who am I?

- Toddlers gradually develop an awareness that they are individual.
- This awareness becomes the **Self Concept**
- “I am a girl/boy”
- “I am a big brother”
- “I am 4 years-old”
- “I can tie my shoes!”

Self Concept

- **Preschooler:**
  - I am ...
  - I like ...
  - I am good at ...

- **Elementary school child:**
  - I am ...
  - I like ...
  - I am good at ...

- **Adolescent**
  - I am ...
  - I like ...
  - I am good at ...

- **Adult**
  - I am ...
  - I like ...
  - I am good at ...
Self-Understanding in Early Childhood

- By 2–3 years:
  - Children can construct narratives of the events in their lives

- Toddlers’ self-understanding is not strongly linked across time – it is focused largely on the present

Self-Understanding: Childhood

- By 3–4 years of age:
  - Children understand the self in terms of concrete, observable characteristics related __________________________
    __________________________
    __________________________

  - “I am always happy”
  - “I am 3-years-old”
  - “I have brown hair”
  - “I have an Aunt Jasmine”

Self-Description

- My name is Gregory. I live in a blue house with my mom, dad, and sister Ashley. I have a dog that is brown. His name is Bluto. I have a skateboard and a hockey stick. I can skate really fast. I can brush my teeth and wash my hair all by myself. I can jump on one foot 50 times in a row... want to see? I’m not even tired when I stop. I have green eyes and lots of freckles. Most of the freckles are on my nose.
By elementary school, children engage in social comparison. They pay more and more attention to discrepancies between their own behavior and others' behavior.

By middle to late elementary school, children use higher-order thinking. They come up with explanations of their own behavior by thinking through how they could have done things differently and why they did what they did.

“I am helpful”
“To be popular, I have to be nice and keep secrets”

Self-Description

I'm a human being. I'm an 11-year-old girl. I'm a truthful person. I'm not pretty. I do so-so in my studies. I'm the best pianist in my class. I'm a little tall for my age. I like several boys. I like several girls. I'm a very good swimmer. I try to be helpful. I'm always ready to be friends with anybody. Mostly I'm good, but sometimes I lose my temper. I don't know if I'm liked by boys or not.

Self-Awareness in Adolescence

In adolescence, the self is defined by

Adolescents can conceive of themselves in terms of a variety of selves, depending on the context.

With friends, siblings, parents, etc...
Adolescents’ self-understanding is more abstract, more psychological, and sees the self as evolving over time.

Self-Description
- I’m sensitive, friendly, outgoing, though I can also be shy, self-conscious, and even obnoxious. I’d like to be friendly and tolerant all of the time. That’s the kind of person I want to be, and I’m disappointed when I’m not. I’m responsible, even studious every now and then, but on the other hand I’m a good-off too, because if you’re too studious, you won’t be popular. I’m a pretty cheerful person, especially with my friends, where I can even get rowdy. I can be my true self with my close friends. I can’t be my real self with my parents.

“They don’t understand me.”

Self-Understanding: Adulthood
- As individuals transition from adolescence to adulthood, they begin to engage in more
  - Three important components:
    - Self-awareness
    - Possible selves
    - Life review
Less possible selves?

As adults get older, the possible selves they imagine becomes more attainable and realistic.

Life review is engaged in most by middle-aged adults and involves looking back at one's experiences, evaluating them and interpreting them.

Next Class

- How does Self-esteem develop?
- Theories about Identity Formation