

Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences: Theory and Applications

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Week 8

Lecture 16: Kelly's personal construct theory

I welcome you all to Module 8 of this course. So, Module 8 is about cognitive and social cognitive perspectives. Today's lecture is Lecture Number 16 overall, and it is the first lecture of this module. So, today's lecture is titled Kelly's Personal Construct Theory. So, we will be talking about George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory, which comes under the cognitive perspective of personality.

So, before we talk about today's lecture, let me give you a brief recap. The last lecture, that is Lecture Number 15, was part of Module 7, which was about the humanistic perspective on personality. We discussed two specific theories under humanistic psychology: one is Maslow's theory, and the other is Carl Rogers' theory. The last lecture was about Carl Rogers' theory, where we discussed the concept of actualizing tendency, the inherent motivation that all organisms have to grow and expand in their lives and make the best use of their lives.

This is the foundational concept in Rogers' theory, which describes the detailed dynamics of this motivation, how it interacts with societal factors, particularly the conditions of worth, and how this whole journey leads to the concept of the real self and the ideal self. We have discussed the detailed processes there. We also discussed the fully functioning person, in terms of the characteristics of a fully functioning person, from the perspective of Rogers' theory. We also talked about client-centered therapy, which is the therapy that comes from Rogers' theory, or it is the other way around: Rogers' theory developed out of his therapy sessions. So, we discussed the major characteristics of therapies that are required for successful counseling or therapy, which included unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy. At the end, we discuss some of the possible criticisms of Rogers' theory.

So, let us start today's lecture. Today's lecture is about George Kelly's theory, and the major concept that we will be discussing today includes the major concepts or theoretical concepts associated with Kelly's theory. We will talk about personal constructs and the different characteristics of personal constructs. We will also be talking about some of the

fundamental postulates and corollaries associated with those postulates from this theory, and at the end, we will discuss the criticisms of Kelly's theory.

So, George Kelly proposed this theory, which is typically called the cognitive perspective in personality psychology or cognitive theory. It is connected to personality psychology somewhere around the 1950s, and his theory is considered way ahead of its time because of the kind of constructs that were given and the concepts that were discussed. So, we will be looking at some of the things that he talked about and why these are considered way ahead at the time. So, Kelly's theory has some commonalities with other theories like Freud's and Rogers', and obviously, the theory also has some differences from those theories in terms of how Freud emphasized the role of animalistic forces in the unconscious mind, whereas Kelly mostly focuses on the unique rational capacity of human beings in terms of making active thought processes and interpreting different situations. So, the focus and emphasis were completely different.

Kelly focused on the rational mental processes of human beings in terms of deciding personality. On the other hand, Freud focused more on the unconscious part of the mind, which includes a lot of instincts and motivational forces. Kelly and Rogers' contributions also, in some way, have certain similarities. Both theories were concerned with creating a theory of a whole coherent person. So, in that sense, they were addressing a whole person.

However, Kelly's personal construct theory of personality delves much deeper into the specific cognitive processes through which individuals categorize people and things and how they construct meaning from those events in daily life. So, Kelly's theory was more specifically focused on the thought processes and the cognitive processes that are involved in the interpretation of events and how that leads to various kinds of outcomes in human life. Now, as we have already said, this is a cognitive theory of personality, so it places a lot of emphasis on the analysis of human thinking processes at the center of its understanding of personality and individual processes. So the major focus or the central idea in this theory is how our thought processes shape the kind of person we are.

At the center of this theory are the thought processes. That's why it is called a cognitive theory. Kelly himself did not use the term cognitive. He did not describe his theory as a cognitive theory. It was given as a term that was used later because he believed that this term is too restrictive and implies an artificial division between thinking and feeling.

However, cognitive remains the most popular classification of Kelly's theory. Although he did not prefer to use the word cognitive for his theory, this whole tag of cognitive theory

became kind of an essential part of this theory. So, we still know Kelly's theory as a cognitive theory. Now, Kelly's major work in personality was published in the 1950s, somewhere around 1955. At that time, the importance of this theory was not immediately felt.

Its immediate impact was not significant at that time for several reasons. At that time, it was not fully accepted, and the importance of this theory was not revealed or judged by people at that time. There are certain reasons why it was not popular when it was proposed in the 1950s. One of the reasons is Kelly's emphasis on complex human cognitive processes was ahead of its time. His theory was very complex, and it focused on various dimensions of human cognitive processes, at that time, this whole cognitive revolution had not even started.

So that is why it was ahead of its time. People could not appreciate the contribution of his theory at that time. Another reason is behaviorism. The popularity of behaviorism, which avoided the study of subjective mental processes, dominated at that time in academic psychology, and because of that domination of behaviorism, which was opposite to the cognitive perspective. Behaviorism did not give any focus or importance to human mental processes.

They did not even use the word 'mind' to the extent. And that's why, at that time, behaviorism was very popular. This led to the personality theory of Kelly not becoming the focus of attention at that time. Third, contemporary cognitive psychology, which directly addresses human thinking, had not yet developed at that time. So, the kind of cognitive psychology that we see in today's world was not developed at that time.

So, it was not appreciated to that extent at that time. Additionally, Kelly may have hindered the quick widespread acceptance of his theory by employing entirely novel and complex scientific terminology. He used very complex terms which also hindered the understanding and acceptance of his theory at that time. So these are some of the reasons why it did not become popular when it was proposed, but it became popular later on.

Some of the major concepts of his theory we will be talking about, and some of the postulates of his theory we will be discussing. So basically, in this lecture, we will be giving the gist of his theory by explaining the major concepts associated with this theory. One of the major concepts of this theory is that every person is a scientist. So we all are scientists in some sense. So this is the first idea of this theory.

So Kelly believed that each of us, like scientists, attempts to predict and control events. What a scientist does basically in research is trying to predict, control, and understand things. So, like this, we as laymen, every human being, also try to do the same thing in our day-to-day life. The only thing is they may not be using the proper methodology. But our approach to understanding the world is very similar to what a scientist does in the lab.

We are continually evaluating and re-evaluating our experiences using our interpretation to understand and manage the world around us. These processes are what a typical scientist does. We develop our theories about human behavior. When we interact with people, we develop certain ideas and theories, hypotheses about what kind of person he or she is. And we try to predict their behavior the next time we meet.

We do all kinds of mental interpretation when we meet people and when we interact with things around us. We make predictions, hypotheses, and theories about a lot of things, whatever we see or interact with in our day-to-day functioning. We also collect evidence. If I believe that something is true, I also see whether there is evidence for it or not. The whole approach may not be, in terms of methodology, that scientific, but the whole approach towards understanding things is very much like what a scientist does. So, we develop our theories about human behavior and test hypotheses based on those theories. We may say this person is not good or that person is not, you know, somebody may be very good.

Based on our observations, we make all these hypotheses and assess the evidence based on how other people interact and behave. What are the behavioral patterns and so on. Based on this evidence, the world becomes more predictable. So, why do we make this kind of prediction? Because we want to make our world more predictable and controllable. If you do not know anything, if you do not know any patterns, then the whole world becomes very unpredictable.

So, we want to make our world more predictable. We all the time try to find patterns, make predictions, and try to understand and control things, what is to be changed, and so on. So, as a scientist in this sense, we rely on our personalized views of reality when making judgments, which are rarely scrutinized by others.

Our scrutiny process may not be as rigorous as a scientist in the lab, but this whole approach is very typical of what a scientist does. Our constructs are not as objectively defined as those used by research scientists, but our theories seldom meet the rigorous criteria of conventional sciences. So, those methodological issues could be there because sometimes

we may be biased, sometimes we use common sense knowledge which may not be true in a scientific sense, but the approach is very similar. Essentially, we hold common-sense views of ourselves and reality, which are prone to distortion and error. Moreover, many of us continuously adjust our views of reality to fit the data.

And also, many times we change our views based on new evidence. So, all these things happen. In that sense, every human being is like a scientist trying to understand the world, trying to make hypotheses, trying to control things. In their approach, it is very scientific. Methodology may not be as objective as what a research scientist does.

However, what Kelly says, we may have distorted views of reality based on our own biases and personal views. They are still real to us because our behavior will be determined by those perceptions. This perception may not be right, and may not be accurate, but still, my behavior will be guided by those perceptions. Therefore, these perceptions are real to us, even though they may be distorted. And we operate accordingly.

A person may misrepresent a real phenomenon. Such as his income or his illnesses, and yet his misinterpretation will itself be an entirely real thing for that person because he believes this is real. It is real for that person. This applies even to a badly deluded patient. What he perceives may not exist, but his perception exists.

That is the main idea because we are guided by our belief systems and our thought processes. So, whether they are true or not, may not be an important thing in a sense; our behavior is determined by those belief systems. So, Kelly embraced this phenomenological position of humanistic theories. It is a very phenomenological approach in a sense; we all have our subjective worldviews that guide our behavior. In that sense, it is a very phenomenological position.

Like humanists, can we believe we are not passive organisms? We are not passively accepting whatever is happening, and our behavior is guided by those external circumstances. We reorganize things, actively think, and actively try to change things. So, in that sense, we are not passive organisms. We actively relate to the environment, often in very creative ways.

So, this is one of the ideas that we, as human beings, act like scientists in terms of understanding the world. The second important idea of his theory, or the most central idea of his theory, is the concept of personal constructs. The whole theory revolves around that,

that is why this theory is called George Kelly's theory of personal constructs. Now, what is this personal construct all about?

So, George Kelly's concept of personal constructs is the central element of his theory because that is why this theory is called the personal construct theory. So, personal constructs are mental frameworks or templates that individuals use to interpret, predict, and understand their experiences. Kelly used the word 'construct' to refer to the ideas or categories that people use to interpret the world. So, to understand the world, and interpret the world, we need certain mental models that we develop, certain patterns, certain belief systems, and certain frameworks through which we interpret the world. So, based on experiences, we develop templates, we develop frameworks, models, mental models, and certain categories by which we interpret the world. This we form from our experiences. Constructs include all these mental frameworks or the models that we use to interpret the world. We will see what those models are in detail in the upcoming slides.

Kelly's main idea behind that we all have many personal constructs that help us to interpret the world. We have a variety of constructs. We will be looking at some of these examples now. Some of these constructs or categories are universal, universal in the sense that everybody uses similar constructs to interpret certain events. For example, if you and your friend both hear a loud noise and see a flashing light in the sky, probably you both will agree that this is a thunderstorm. So, the concept of a thunderstorm, which is a mental construct, is a universal thing because everybody will agree on this same thing. Because whenever we see this loud noise and flashing light in the sky, everybody universally will say this is a thunderstorm because we all agree on certain things. So, those certain things which are commonly agreed upon by people are universal constructs. So, this construct will be the same in everybody's mind because these are very factual events that happen which we all agree on.

So, some of the constructs are very universal, like everybody agrees on those constructs. Some constructs may be very personal. Some constructs or categories vary from person to person. People differ in whether they possess certain categories and where they use them. Suppose, for example, somebody is working in a company, and they have a manager. Or suppose your manager sees you and your colleagues discussing a new project during a meeting, interrupts, and redirects your attention back to the agenda. So let us say in a meeting, two persons are interrupted by the manager, who tells them they should not discuss something else. They should focus on the meeting.

So let us say this is the situation. So there are two persons involved. Both were interrupted by the manager and given certain directions. Now both persons may interpret the same event of the manager's direction in two very different ways, depending on their mental constructs. One may categorize the manager as a focused leader because he is focusing on everybody and making sure that everybody listens to him.

Let's say one person may categorize the manager as a focused leader because of this event or his behavior. Another colleague may see the same behavior as a controlling micromanager because another person may interpret the same behavior as very controlling, not even letting them relax or something like that. So, he is a micromanager, managing every micro detail. The same behavior of a manager, but two persons are interpreting the same situation completely different because they have different mental constructs about this person. Many of these constructs are very personal and very individual, and based on that, we kind of interpret the world.

So, in the language of Kelly's personal construct theory, you too will have different personal constructs. One is a focused leader; another is a controlling micromanager to interpret your manager's behavior. So, like this, we have diverse constructs; some are universal, and some are very personal. The use of this construct would have great implications for subsequent thoughts and feelings. So, what kind of construct you use will determine what kind of feelings you have, and what kind of further thoughts you have. Your chain of thoughts, and your emotions and feelings, will be decided by the kind of construct you use. So, in this case, you may appreciate a focused manager. If you have that focused manager construct, you will appreciate him. You will have positive emotions towards him.

On the other hand, the other colleagues interpreted that manager as a micro-controlling manager. They will feel frustrated by the behavior. So, the same behavior, two constructs, two emotions. To Kelly, an individual's personality can be understood in terms of a collection of all these personal constructs, the system they use to interpret the world.

So, all these personal constructs that we use will determine our personality and what kind of person we are. All these constructs that we use are determinants of our personality. That is the basic idea of this theory. Now, let us see the characteristics of these constructs. The varieties of constructs that we use could be universal sometimes and could be very personal, individual constructs.

The varieties of constructs that we use, all these constructs have certain characteristics. So, Kelly explains in detail the characteristics of these constructs. Let us see some of these characteristics. One of the characteristics of these constructs is that most of them are bipolar in nature. Bipolar in nature means they have opposite extremes.

So, constructs are bipolar, meaning they are defined by two opposite ends. For any given construct, there is a contrasting pole. So, for every construct, generally, they can be defined in terms of bipolar opposites. Whenever we have something, we also have its opposite.

This bipolar nature helps individuals distinguish between different experiences and categories. Categorizing them meaningfully provides a framework for understanding and predicting events by comparing them to their opposites. So this helps us to compare with the opposite construct.

For example, we may have a construct called friendly versus unfriendly. So these are bipolar in nature. The moment we explain or categorize certain people as friendly, we also know there will be people who are unfriendly. That is the opposite spectrum. We can compare people who are unfriendly with people who are friendly.

These opposite constructs help us to compare people. Most of these constructs will have some opposite spectrum which helps us to compare and understand the world in a much better way. Most of the constructs will have certain bipolar opposite extremes. So, that is one characteristic.

Some constructs are core constructs, and some constructs are peripheral constructs. That is another characteristic. We have core constructs, and we also have peripheral constructs. Let us see what these two are. When we say core constructs, we are talking about what is fundamental to a person's identity and view of the world.

A core construct is something that is part of your own identity. It is very fundamental. A construct that defines your personality, your identity, and how you think about the world, how you view the world. It is a very important part of one's identity. That is why these are called core constructs. They define you. They are deeply ingrained and central to one's self-concept and the sense of consistency in how they perceive and interact with the world. So, they are a very important part of one's concept of self. That is why they are called core constructs.

And these core constructs give us consistency in how we perceive and interact with the world. We can also say that these core constructs are very difficult to change because they

define you as a person. So, generally, it is not easy to change them. The moment you change them, the whole person will change, which generally does not happen in the real world so often.

Sometimes it can happen, but it is not so easy to change. So, altering them would require a significant shift in one's self-understanding and worldview. So, the moment you change the core construct, you will change your sense of identity, and you will also change your worldview. This is generally not so easy, and people generally don't do that often, so these are very difficult to change. For example, somebody may have a core construct of honesty and dishonesty as a core construct.

So that means, let us say, somebody gives a lot of importance to the concept of honesty. Now, honesty is a part of that person's identity. He gives honesty a very important aspect or part of that person's identity. So, people will know that this person is very honest. He also makes his self-concept as an honest person.

So, his identity is determined by that particular construct. He will always behave in terms of those core constructs. He will try to behave honestly all the time, as much as possible. And he will define his life around that. He will reject everything that is dishonest, which comes under dishonesty. So let us say this is a defining characteristic of a person. Then it will be a core construct for that person. So, someone who values honesty above all is a construct central to their identity.

Then it will become a core construct for that person. So like this, if there are a lot of important things that define us, then they will become part of core constructs. Peripheral constructs, as the name suggests, are less important, less central to a person's identity, and can be changed, or modified significantly without affecting one's sense of identity. So, they do not determine your identity.

They are not so important, not so central to one's identity. So, we can keep changing them also. That is not very problematic. These constructs are more flexible and adaptable, allowing individuals to adjust their perceptions and behavior. So, this can be changed.

For example, somebody prefers tea and coffee. So, preference for certain things could be a peripheral construct. It is not that important whether I like tea or coffee. One can anytime change somebody who likes tea may also start liking coffee sometime later.

It is not a big deal. So, in that sense, these are peripheral constructs. This construct might be a part of a person's daily routine whether you like tea or coffee, but it is not central to

one's identity. If somebody loves tea and suddenly starts liking coffee, it will not change the person's identity. So, these are very peripheral, not so important, not so-centralized concepts associated with the person.

Now, there is another concept called range of convenience. So, the constructs that we use to interpret the world, also vary in the range of convenience. What does that mean? This term refers to a set of events or phenomena to which a particular construct is relevant or applicable. How many phenomena or range of phenomena to which a particular construct can be applied?

So that determines the range. To what extent this can be applied to different phenomena. The more it can be applied to different phenomena, the range is much higher. The less it can be applied, the range is less. So a construct's range of convenience varies.

Some constructs might apply broadly to different life circumstances, and some are applicable and very narrowly focused. So, what is the focus of your construct? Some constructs have broad applications, some constructs have very narrow applications. So, based on that, the construct can have a range of convenience; some have a higher range, and some have a lower range.

So, for example, in constructs such as trustworthy or untrustworthy, trustworthiness can be applied very broadly in relationships, in workplaces. It can have a lot of diverse applications in different settings of life, in different ranges of experiences of life. Trustworthiness can be applied in your personal life, social life, workplaces, and so on, so the range is much higher. On the other hand, certain constructs are very narrow in focus, like liking classical music or disliking classical music. So, this is only in the context of music. Your liking towards classical or disliking of certain music, such kinds of constructs have a very narrow range only in a certain context.

So, in that sense, the range may differ from construct to construct. Another important characteristic of this construct is called permeability. Permeability describes the degree to which a construct can accommodate new elements within the framework. It means what is the degree of openness towards that particular construct, to what extent it is more flexible, and to what extent more elements can be added to it. Or if it is a very rigid, closed construct that nothing else can be added, then the permeability is less.

If we can accommodate new elements and it is more flexible, then it has more permeability. So, a permeable construct is open to new information and experiences, allowing for greater

flexibility in interpretation. An impermeable construct, on the other hand, resists new elements and is less adaptable to change. For example, if someone has a construct of friends that is permeable, they might be willing to consider new people as friends even if they do not fit into a narrow definition.

So, let us say if you have a very permeable concept of a friend, that means you can include a variety of people in your friend circle, not specific types. Then your friend construct is a very permeable construct because you are open to a variety of people in your friend circle. On the other hand, if you are very rigid in your friend's definition or concept, that means you are only very interested in very specific types of people in your friend circle. You do not allow other kinds of people. Then your friend construct becomes less permeable.

So, Kelly also proposed that constructs could be characterized by certain other characteristics such as preemptive constructs, constellatory constructs, and propositional constructs. Constructs could also be characterized based on these characteristics.

So what is a preemptive construct? These are all characteristics of construct, varieties of things that are found in the constructs that people use. His theory has been very complex, and its reach is very high. So it was much ahead of its time at that time.

People are now appreciating all the concepts that he used. So preemptive constructs are those constructs that are rigid and exclusive. This means if you have a preemptive construct, it is very rigid. It is very exclusive.

Once something is classified under preemptive constructs, nothing else can be considered under that. Once an element is classified under a preemptive construct, it cannot be simultaneously classified under any other construct. So, it is very rigid in that sense. If something is classified as X, Y, or whatever it is, then it cannot be classified as anything else.

So, that is called a preemptive construct. So, this type of construct does not allow for overlap or multiple categorization. So, the same thing cannot be done, a preemptive construct cannot be categorized as any other thing, once you categorize anything in a particular concept. For example, let us say you have a construct called a criminal construct.

It could be a very preemptive construct for most people because if you classify someone as a criminal, then you refuse to see them as anything else. So if your criminal construct is preemptive, that means the moment you assign somebody as a criminal or characterize somebody as a criminal, then you don't see them as anything else. They are only a criminal

to you. You do not see this person as a father or this person as a parent. This person is doing many other things.

You do not see anything else. You only see that person as a criminal. So that means that the construct is preemptive. It is very rigid and only exclusive. You do not assign any other categories to that. Only one category. So this could be an example of a preemptive construct. Many times, we have many constructs that are preemptive. Very rigid, we do not want to see anything else about that person, only one category. So, that is called a preemptive construct.

Constellatory construct as the name suggests, sometimes some constructs come in constellations, one connected to another. So, constellatory constructs are organized elements into fixed categories where the categorization of one element influences the categorization of other related elements. They are related concepts of every concept; there will be some related concepts, so there will be a constellation of things. Once an element is classified, it triggers a set of associated characteristics that are considered a package, so if something is there, other things will come. Other characteristics will come as a package associated with that.

So, these are called one characteristic that leads to many other characteristics. Because you think one characteristic means other things will come automatically. So, that is the constellatory construct. For example, let us say a construct called a political party member. So, if you assign somebody as a member of a particular political party. This can become a constellatory construct. Because the moment you say this person is a member of a particular XYZ party, then you have many other characteristics you will assign to that person. So, if you identify someone as a member of a particular political party, you might automatically assume they hold a set of beliefs and behaviors associated with that party. So, if that person is a member of a particular political party, that means this person will also automatically be assigned this person as having X, Y, and Z characteristics which are the characteristics of that particular political party. For example, all members of party X are, let us say, fiscally conservative, socially liberal, and supportive of policy X, Y, Z. So whatever mental characteristics that we assign to a political party, if somebody is a member of that, we also assign all these characteristics to that person. So that is what constellatory constructs are. One thing will lead to many other characteristics. A lot of the stereotypes belong to this category.

If you assign somebody to a particular group member, then we assign all the characteristics of the group to that person. So, these are called stereotypes. These are generalized beliefs about a particular category or a group of people. So, let's say women are not good at mathematics. Let's say this is a stereotype, which may not be true in many cases. However, many people believe that women are not good at mathematics. It is a stereotype. So the moment you see a woman, automatically it will come to your mind that she will not be good at math. So this is a stereotype.

So because certain characteristics are assigned to a group, automatically whenever you see any member of that group, you say this person will be like this. So those are called stereotypes. We have so many stereotypes about people based on their group membership. All these are part of constellatory constructs. Then come propositional constructs.

So propositional constructs are the most flexible constructs. They allow elements to be considered from multiple perspectives without any commitment to a particular classification. So, like flexible constructs, they enable individuals to explore different possibilities and hypotheses. For example, Consider the construct of a vacation destination.

Let us say you are very open to the concept of vacation destination. So you are not fixed on where to go, but you are very open to going to multiple places. You are planning a vacation and considering multiple destinations such as a beach, mountain, city, or whatever. You evaluate each option based on factors like cost, activities, and weather, and then finally decide. So your vacation destination is a very propositional construct.

It is very open and flexible. You are not fixed on only having to go to this place. So then it becomes a propositional construct. Some constructs can also be arranged into superordinate and subordinate constructs. By definition, it means something higher than something lower in the hierarchy.

So, hierarchically, some constructs can be organized. In George Kelly's personal construct theory, constructs are organized hierarchically. This hierarchy includes superordinate and subordinate things. Any hierarchy means there will be something higher and something lower. So, superordinate constructs are higher-level constructs, more abstract constructs.

They encompass broader categories. Something which is higher means it will be more abstract and broader. It provides a general framework within which more specific constructs are organized. Superordinate constructs help in making sense of larger, more

complex aspects of experiences by categorizing them into higher and lower categories. So, it helps us to organize our concepts.

Subordinate constructs, as the name suggests, are lower-level constructs that come under the superordinate level and are more specific constructs that fall under these broad categories. These are called subordinate constructs. Subordinate constructs help us make fine-grained distinctions. They organize material or concepts into finer categories. Let us see an example.

Let us say we have a construct called career success. This will be a superordinate. So, we have something called career success. This is a construct. Under this construct, there can be many subordinate constructs. Under this higher construct called career success, it may include things like achievement, it may include things like job satisfaction, professional development, and so on. So, like this, career success is a broad concept. Under this, there can be many sub-concepts like career success which may be defined by your achievement, by your job satisfaction, by your professional development, and so on. And there can be further sub-concepts, let us say under achievement you can further sub-categorize if there is something like that. So like this, there can be hierarchically organized. So these are called superordinate and subordinate constructs.

Now, Kelly also proposed a concept called constructive alternativism. Now, these are the characteristics that we discussed of constructs. Personal constructs may have all these characteristics or different categories or types. Kelly also proposed something called constructive alternativism, which means again it is connected to construct only. But what does constructive alternativism mean?

That people are not passive recipients of the experience. We are not just passively experiencing whatever is coming from the outside world. We are actively constructing our interpretation of reality. So, there is some environmental stimulus coming from outside, and then we are actively interpreting that. So that is why everybody experiences life very differently.

Even though they are in the same family and same life situation, they interpret things differently. So it emphasizes the idea that individuals have the freedom to perceive and interpret events in multiple ways. We can experience or interpret the same event in multiple ways based on whatever construct we have. And they can choose also.

So, there is a choice also among all these alternative constructs, what to choose. Sometimes we unconsciously choose something, but many times we have a choice also if we consciously think about it. Among many interpretations, I can choose one interpretation, and accordingly, my emotions will follow. So this is a very important concept that gives a lot of freedom and clarity.

Activeness to the individual that we are not victims of circumstances. We can make conscious and active interpretations of situations and accordingly, we can choose or decide how to feel about a situation. So this talks about the fluidity and subjectivity of human perception and cognition. We are not bound to interpret only in the same ways. For example, this is a case where you lose a job. You can have multiple interpretations of the same situation. For example, one interpretation could be that job loss could be an opportunity for growth.

So one way of interpretation is that you lost a job. Now this can be interpreted as an opportunity for growth for some individuals. Some individuals can interpret it like this also. Because an individual may see the loss of a job as a new opportunity for personal and professional growth. So, a new opportunity where you can find newer jobs and newer situations, more constructive and more jobs which give you more growth.

They can view it as a chance to explore new career paths and the development of skills. So this could be one interpretation. Another interpretation is that another person may look at job loss as a setback and disappointment. So one may interpret the job loss as a setback and a source of disappointment. They may feel discouraged, worried about financial instability, and uncertain about the future.

So this could be another way of interpretation. The same situation can also be interpreted as a temporary setback, but it can also give new opportunities. So this individual views joblessness as a temporary setback but also as an opportunity for a new beginning. They acknowledge the challenges posed by the situation but remain hopeful. So like this, the same situation can have multiple interpretations, and your life experiences and emotions will follow depending on what interpretation you choose to apply.

Each will have its emotional consequences. The person who looks at job loss as an opportunity for growth will be more optimistic. They will have more emotions which will guide them towards more dynamic actions and so on. Somebody who looks at it as a setback and disappointment will feel sad and dejected and so on. Consequences will also follow depending on what kind of interpretation you choose to apply.

So, that is called constructive alternativism. Now, we will focus on some of the important postulates. These are like formulas or concepts, formulas given about the construct that we use, and they will have an influence on our lives. The fundamental postulate of Kelly's theory is that a person's processes are psychologically generalized by the ways they anticipate events. How you anticipate certain future events determines how you channel your psychological resources.

So how do you explain this? This postulate asserts that an individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are shaped by the anticipation of future events. How do you think or anticipate future events that will determine your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in the present moment? How do you anticipate your future? It suggests that people's actions are guided by their personal constructs, which they use to predict and make sense of their experiences.

So this is the fundamental postulate of this theory, and we will see that there are different corollaries that can come out of it. So from this one postulate, we can derive many other propositions. So we will see some of these propositions. The number one proposition is called the construction corollary. It is coming from that fundamental idea.

What is the construction corollary? It is about a person anticipating events by construing the replications. So we anticipate some future events by constructing replications from past experiences. Basically, what does this mean? An individual anticipates future events by interpreting them in the light of past experiences.

So they construct mental representations of how similar situations have unfolded in the past, which helps them to anticipate how similar futures will unfold. Naturally, because we need data to interpret events. Now we don't have any data about the future because it has not happened yet. We have data from past experiences. So, we use past experiences to interpret future events and possible future events because we don't know about the future, we only know about past experiences. So the data from past experiences are used to interpret future events. So that's called the construction corollary. So let's say you are going to appear for an interview, a job interview. You don't know what will happen in the job interview, but if you have similar experiences in the past about job interviews, from there you can make certain anticipations or predictions.

What is going to happen? For example, if you have succeeded in the past, probably you will expect that you are more likely to succeed in the future. Or if you have failed again and again, probably you will expect that this time you may not be very hopeful in the future

also. So like this, our past experiences can shape our future anticipations. So, there is another example given here.

Suppose someone has a construct of trustworthy or untrustworthy. So that is one construct in the bipolar sex characteristics. Based on this construct, they anticipate events by construing the behaviors of others. So if you have certain experiences with people in the past, let us say experiences with someone who is a very trustworthy person. You have trusted that person, and that person also reciprocated the trust.

So you have an image of that person as being very trustworthy. Similarly, in the future, when you meet or interact with that person, you will anticipate that this person is going to be trustworthy because you have an experience of trustworthiness with that person. Similarly, for untrustworthy, the same thing can happen. The second corollary is called the individual corollary.

It means persons differ from each other in their construction of events. So every individual differs from one another because their construction of reality is different. I interpret the situation differently than another person. So that is why I am different from another person. Each individual constructs their own unique set of personal constructs to interpret or anticipate events.

Therefore, people perceive and interpret the same event differently. So that is why, even if you put five individuals in the same situation, they will experience it differently because their construction is different. How they interpret the situation will differ. The same thing we have given examples in constructive alternativism of a job loss situation.

Same situation, three interpretations. Three kinds of emotions they will experience. So here, another specific example is given. Two friends attend the same party, but their experiences can be very different. Friend A may see the party as boring and feel out of place.

Focusing on the lack of conversation, he may find the party very boring because he was out of place at that party. Friend B enjoyed the party because he could see it as very exciting, and enjoyable, and appreciated the opportunity to meet new people and so on. Same party, two people, two different experiences based on their personal construct about parties. Third is the organizational corollary, which says Each person's characteristically evolves from his convenience in anticipating events.

A construct system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs. So, how do you explain this? It says individuals organize their personal constructs hierarchically, arranging them in a way that allows for efficient anticipation of events. Constructs are arranged based on their importance and relevance. As we have already seen, one of the characteristics of constructs is that many times we have superordinate constructs and subordinate constructs in a hierarchical fashion. So, many times we develop or evolve our construction system in terms of making something more important as a primary construct and less important as a secondary construct. So, there can be an ordinal relationship in terms of constructs. Here is an example: a professional deciding between two job offers. Let us say a person gets two job offers.

Now, his job personal construct or his thought process is like this: job security or risk is the most important thing to decide which one to choose. For him, security is the most important. Other things come later. So, this person will decide which job to choose based on the fact that he is giving more importance to job security.

So for him, the primary construct or major construct is job security. So if two offers are given, he will see which one is more secure. Then the secondary constructs he will give importance to are salary, location, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and other things. So the individual will give priority to job security and based on that, he will decide which one has higher security and he will give more importance to that. So like this, his choice and decision will depend on.

What is its main construct? And what is its secondary construct? So, like this, it will help our decisions in life based on these constructs. Fourth is the dichotomic corollary. It says a person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs.

We have already talked about it. One of the characteristics of constructs is that they are bipolar in nature. So, that is a dichotomy. Personal constructs are bipolar, consisting of opposite poles, and we have already talked about this particular aspect. So that is called the dichotomic corollary.

Fifth is the choice corollary, which says a person chooses for himself or herself that alternative in a dichotomized construct through which he anticipates greater possibility for extension and definition of his system. So out of all the constructs that he used, which are bipolar in construct nature, he will choose that end of the bipolar construct which gives greater possibility for extension of his system, giving more possibilities in his life. So when faced with a choice between two opposite poles of a construct, an individual will choose

that alternative which allows for the greatest expansion and clarification of the construct system. For example, imagine someone who is considering whether to see a new colleague as friendly or unfriendly. So, a new colleague came, whether to look at that person as friendly or unfriendly, what to choose.

If they choose to interpret the colleague as friendly, it may lead to more opportunities for positive interaction and expansion of their social network, thereby extending and defining their construct system in a more positive direction. So let us say that person is more interested in making more networks and so on. So probably choosing the friendly construct for that person is more beneficial in terms of expansion of his social network and so on. If that is important for that person, probably he will choose friendly. To be friendly in his approach towards that new colleague.

Because it will expand his social network and it will give him a more positive direction in whatever he thinks is important in his life. So people prefer to choose things which give them more expansion of their life. More expansion of their constructs in that sense. Sixth is the fragmentation corollary. It talks about how a person may successively employ a variety of construction subsystems that are inferentially incompatible with each other. Many times, we use different constructs in different aspects of our life. And many of them are incompatible with each other in different sections of life. So sometimes, this fragmentation can also happen. Individuals may employ different sets of personal constructs that are incompatible with each other in different situations and contexts.

We may use diverse constructs which are very different and opposite to each other in different contexts of life. For example, consider a person who has different sets of personal constructs for evaluating their work life and personal relationships. How do you evaluate your work life, and how do you evaluate your personal life? You may use completely different criteria or constructs. For example, in their work life, they might use constructs related to efficiency and productivity.

While in their personal relationships, they might use constructs related to emotional connection and trust. So sometimes, this emotional connection and trust could be very different from looking at things from efficiency and productivity. We may not judge our personal lives or people who are very close to us in terms of productivity and efficiency because that is not that important in our personal lives.

But this is more important in work life. So this construct may be completely incompatible with each other. But one may use one construct in one space of life. And another construct

that is opposite to that in another space of life. So that is also possible that we may use many constructs sometimes that are incompatible with each other in different contexts of life.

Seventh is the commonality corollary. It says to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person. So the more common constructs used by two persons, the more they will understand each other. They will be more on the same page because their construction system is similar.

So the more similarity in their construction system, the more they will be on the same page when they interpret the world. So when individuals share similar personal constructs and interpret events in similar ways, their psychological processes are likely to be similar. They will be very similar in terms of their thought processes. Many times we see people, some people are varied, they interpret the world in a very similar way. They agree with each other all the time.

So that means they are using similar constructs in interpreting the world. For example, two friends who share similar views and values might interpret social situations in a very similar manner. For example, if both friends use the construct of trustworthiness to judge people, they are likely to have similar experiences of others' behavior in the setting. So, let us say these people generally tend to trust people. They will interpret new people or strangers in a more similar way because they tend to trust people. Let us say both have similar constructs in terms of trusting people. So their experiences with meeting new people will probably be very similar. So this is how it happens. The more similar the constructs, the more similar the life experiences, and the more likely they are to agree with each other.

Eighth is the sociality corollary, which says the extent to which one person constitutes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in social processes involving the other person. That means individuals can understand and interact with others more effectively when they can interpret and understand the construction process of another person. The more we understand the worldviews of another person, the more we will be able to communicate and connect with that person. Only conflicts and disconnections happen when we don't understand each other's worlds.

The more we understand each other's worlds, the more we will be able to connect, and the more we will be able to effectively communicate with each other. So that's called the

sociality corollary. For example, a manager who understands the personal construction of their employees may be better equipped to motivate and manage them effectively. So a good leader always understands and connects with their followers because they understand their worldviews and their construction process. The more they understand the followers' construction, the more likely they are to connect with them, motivate them, and mobilize them.

By understanding how each employee interprets and anticipates, even the manager can tailor their approach to communication and leadership to suit individual preferences and needs. The more we understand others, the more likely we are to connect and communicate with that person in much better ways. So, if you see, this is a summary of what is there, as there is a fundamental postulate. This fundamental postulate leads to many corollaries like the individual corollary, commonality corollary, fragmentation corollary, choice corollary, dichotomy corollary, organizational corollary, and construction corollary, which we will discuss now. So these are all coming from the same proposition, leading to many diverse ideas.

Now Kelly also tried to measure people's construction of reality, personal constructs, using certain tests. So this test is called the Role Construct Repertory Test. The Role Construct Repertory Test, which is also known in short form as the Rep Test, is a psychological assessment tool developed by George Kelly as part of his personal construct theory. He tried to measure because his theory is very different from a lot of other theories. Just using a questionnaire may not be the right approach here.

So he developed something called a rep test. So this test is designed to uncover the personal constructs that an individual uses to interpret the world. So it was designed to understand the major constructs a person uses to understand the people and the world around them. By identifying these constructs, the test tries to reveal how an individual perceives similarities and differences with the different people in their life and so on. So I will not go into too much detail about what this test is.

I will just briefly give you a screenshot of what this test looks like. So, a few things are, first, the person must list the names of people who are important in their life. Clients list the names of important people in their social environment across the top, maybe the names of 7 or 8 people who are very important in the life of a person. So, this is something they have to do first.

Then they need to sort these people. So, clients sort these people by considering 3 at a time. How is the sorting done? So, out of let us say 10 or 12 people listed, they will consider 3 at a time. So they will make circles under their names.

I will show you the screenshot, then it will become much clearer. So they make circles under their names. So three people out of, let us say, ten people, they will first consider three people. And put circles under these three people. And they will try to identify two people who are similar in this set of three.

Set of three people. They will try to find out how two of them are similar and how one is different from the others. So, they will find certain characteristics to define them. They identify similarities for each set of three people. The client marks how the two of them are alike.

Meaning similar but different from the third one. A space will be given on the right of each row of the grid for writing. In terms of construct, they will say how these two persons, maybe two persons are very friendly, and the third one is unfriendly. So, like this, they must make certain choices.

Then they have to mark alike people. Clients put an X on two circles corresponding to people who are alike. So, I will just show how that will be done. So two people who are alike will have an X in that circle, and the third one will have nothing, which means he is a different person. Then they will find the contrasting one, the clients write in the space, the right way, and how they are different in terms of writing constructs.

They will check similarities with other people listed also. So, first, they will take three and list out how those two who are similar are also like other people. And in the list of those people, how many of them are in a similar category to these two people, and how many of them are different. With the similarity to the third one who is the contrasting person. So if the space is left blank, it indicates the contrast part.

So the similar repeating is done again. So once it is done for this set of three people, another set of three is taken, and a similar process is done. So how is it done? Here it is a grid, and here you can see this is an actual test of how it is done. They have this list of people. They said self, mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, ex-girlfriend, friend, ex-friend, and so on. So they have a list of all these people. So, they will first take, this as the first column. First, they will take three people.

Here you see circles are put on three people. Here it is 1, 2, 3. Successful person, happy person, ethical person. So this person has not named it but only gave certain designations to certain kinds of people. So these three they took initially.

And these two were marked with an X. So that means these two people are similar, and nothing was put here. So that means this person is a contrasting person. These two are similar, and this third person is a negative, different person.

So then here they have to write how it is different. So, these two people are similar. That similarity poll here shows they don't believe in God. These two people who are similar don't believe in God. So that is the similarity.

This third person is an ethical person. How is he different from these two people? He is very religious. So they have to write this construct. Now they can.

See in the list of all these people who are similar to this similarity conspiracy, these two people who are similar and how many of them are the same as the third person. So whoever is similar will be ticked here. So that means this ex-girlfriend, rejected person, threatening person. They are also similar to the similarity poll of these two people. That is they don't believe in God.

And all these are left vacant. This means no tick mark. That means they are all similar to the third person. Very religious. So all this self, mother, father, brother, everybody is where there is no tick mark.

That means they are very religious, the same as the contrasting person. So like this, they put another set of three people the second time. Like here, they used accepted teachers, rejected teachers, and bosses.

Like this, the process was continued. And so they will get a lot of constructs that people use in interpreting the world and people around them. This gives a snapshot of different important constructs that this person uses. So this is how the test is done. The number of constructs utilized varies among clients, with some sorting people only a few dimensions.

Some people use only a few constructs. Some people may use a variety of constructs. So, this indicates that different constructs people use. Now, at the end, let us see some other criticisms of this theory. One thing is that some people say this has a limited scope in terms of only focusing on thought processes, and cognitive processes, and not looking at biological factors, unconscious factors, and other things. This is the criticism for almost

every theory because every theory cannot look into all the factors. They can only focus on certain factors. So in that sense, every theory is a limited theory. So it is a generalized limitation.

Some say it places too much emphasis on rationality, which is only one important aspect of human personality. There can be many other things that were not focused on in this theory. So Kelly's theory emphasizes rational and conscious processes in construct theory only. Critics argue that it downplays many irrational components of human thought processes. Humans are not always logical and rational.

There are so many unconscious emotional factors. All these things were not given much importance. But this is what the theory is all about. It only focuses on certain aspects. People generally say these role construct rep tests and the techniques derived from this theory can be useful.

Some therapists find them, however, too abstract and too complex in terms of actually applying them in real life. So some people say, you know, because of the complexity involved in it, sometimes directly applying it can become more challenging. So Kelly's career primarily involved working with most of the normal, intelligent people because he was focusing on cognitive rational processes. So for him, therefore, applying it to other kinds of groups, this theory may be a little problematic. Like people who are pathological and have certain mental disorders, probably.

It may not be that suitable in terms of applying a lot of these ideas. Unlike Freud and Erikson, Kelly did not address early childhood experiences or any stages of maturity or old age. He did not focus on developmental aspects and cultural factors. So a lot of these things were not considered. So, these are some of the criticisms which are not very serious as the theory focused only on cognitive factors. From that perspective, this theory has a lot of advantages. But obviously, this theory did not and cannot take hold or consider everything else. So many other factors can influence human behavior. So with this, I stop here.

And we will be talking about some other theories in the next lecture. Thank you.