

Personality Development and Indian Culture

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Indian Culture

By 'Indian Culture', we refer to the ideas, customs, tradition and social behaviour of India that are transmitted from one generation to the next generation. Indian Civilization may refer to a complex and organized social order consisting of different cultures of India over generations.

Personality

The term 'Personality' may refer to the characteristic way of thinking, feeling and behaving. It includes behavioral characteristics, both inherent and acquired, that distinguish one person from another and that can be observed in people's relations to the environment and to the social group.

Personality traits are formed by nature and nurture. It includes one's appearance, character, intelligence, efficiency, effectiveness and behaviour.

Personality Development and Indian Culture

Personality development may be defined as a process of developing and enhancing one's personality.

Indian Culture and Tradition enumerates a number of ways by which one's personality may be developed. Let us briefly discuss a few.

Personality involves two aspects, namely, external personality and internal personality. The western world-view generally gives more importance to the external personality that includes appearance, attire, behaviour, communication and inter-personal skills. Indian Culture gives more importance to the internal personality that includes desire, intention, senses, mind and other intra-personal factors. Therefore, while the dominant focus of the western world-view is on the external development/inter-personal development of one's personality, the focus of Indian Culture lies with the internal development/intra-personal of one's personality.

The western world-view considers one's personality as a combination of the physical body and mind. Therefore, the concentration is on the physical and psychological development of one's personality. Indian Culture perceives one's personality as a combination of the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions. The physical dimension of one's personality may be developed by following the 'middle-path' approach. The psychological dimension of one's personality may be developed by following the 'inward-focus' approach. The spiritual dimension of one's personality may be developed by following the 'karma/bhakti/jnana-yoga' approach. Therefore, the Indian conception of personality development is more comprehensive and holistic by nature.

Indian Culture has identified Five Sheaths that covers one's personality. They are:

1. The food sheath - Annamaya kosha
2. The vital breath sheath - Pranamaya kosha
3. The mind sheath - Manomaya kosha
4. The intellect sheath - Vijnanamaya kosha, and
5. The bliss sheath - Anandamaya kosha.

With the removal of each sheath, the personality of the individual develops.

Indian Culture proclaims that man is considered as man only if he/she follows ethics/principles (Dharma). If not, then man is no better/different from animals. Further, it is the adherence to principles that makes a person into a personality. The power of principles may be understood from the fact that if a person follows positive principles (such as speaking the truth), then that person becomes a positive personality in society. On the other hand, if a person follows negative principles (such as speaking the untruth), then the person becomes a negative personality in society. Thus, we understand that it is principles that transform a person into a personality in society.

Thus, we have seen briefly the number of ways one's personality may be developed in the light of Indian Culture and Tradition.