THE NORMAL PERSONALITY

In *The Normal Personality*, Steven Reiss argues that human beings are naturally intolerant of people who express values significantly different from their own. Because of this intolerance, psychologists and psychiatrists sometimes confuse individuality with abnormality and thus overdiagnose disorders. Reiss shows how normal motives – not anxiety or traumatic childhood experiences – underlie many personality and relationship problems, such as divorce, infidelity, combativeness, workaholism, loneliness, authoritarianism, weak leadership style, perfectionism, underachievement, arrogance, extravagance, stuffed shirt, disloyalty, disorganization, and overanxiety. Calling for greater understanding and tolerance of all kinds of personalities, Reiss applies his theory of motivation to leadership, human development, relationships, and counseling.

Steven Reiss was educated at Dartmouth College, Yale University, Harvard University, and the Massachusetts General Hospital. He has published scientific and clinical studies on the co-occurrence of intellectual disabilities and mental illness. His work has been recognized with five national awards, two for scientific research, two for national impact on clinical services, and one for national leadership, and he has received two certificates of recognition for volunteer work. In 1985, Professor Reiss and then-graduate student Richard J. McNally published the construct of anxiety sensitivity as an early risk factor for Panic Disorder. The anxiety sensitivity index has been translated into more than thirty-five languages and is used to help diagnose many thousands of patients throughout the world. Professor Reiss’s theory of motivation is an expansion of the anxiety sensitivity construct to motives other than anxiety.
The Normal Personality

A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT PEOPLE

Steven Reiss
Ohio State University
Dedicated to my family, Maggi, Michael, and Ben

(and in memory of our dog, Rusty)
I call [a] mean in relation to us that which is neither excessive nor deficient, and this is not one and the same for all.

– Aristotle

The quotation is from the Doctrine of the Mean, Book II, *Nichomachean Ethics.*
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