

Internal Conflicts of Personality: A Psychological Approach

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Received: 12 April 2025; **Accepted:** 08 May 2025; **Published:** 10 June 2025

Abstract: This article examines the nature and types of internal conflicts that arise within an individual's personality from a psychological perspective. It analyzes the causes, manifestations, and consequences of various forms of inner conflicts, such as role conflict, moral conflict, motivational conflict, conflict of unfulfilled desires, and conflict stemming from inadequate self-assessment. Drawing on contemporary psychological theories, the study highlights how these conflicts influence emotional stability, decision-making, and personal development. The paper also outlines practical recommendations for recognizing and managing inner tensions to maintain psychological well-being and self-regulation. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of personal values, self-awareness, and volitional qualities in overcoming internal contradictions.

Keywords: Internal conflict; personality; role conflict; moral dilemma; motivational conflict; self-assessment; psychological well-being; volitional control; emotional regulation; psychological resilience.

Introduction: Inner conflicts are among the complex psychological phenomena related to the inner world of an individual. An individual's inner conflict is an intense negative emotional experience that arises due to contradictions between different structures within their inner self, reflecting conflicting relationships that hinder decision-making in relation to the external world.

Inner conflicts can be either constructive or destructive. Constructive inner conflicts are considered an integral part of personal development. On the other hand, destructive interpersonal conflicts pose a risk to an individual, potentially leading to stress, severe emotional turmoil, and in some cases, even suicide [1].

Therefore, every individual should have an understanding of inner conflicts, be able to identify them, and know how to resolve them. In order to identify an individual's inner conflicts, it is necessary to study their main symptoms and how they manifest in various aspects of the person's psyche.

In psychology, four main indicators of inner conflict are distinguished:

1. Emotional domain indicators.
2. Cognitive domain.
3. Behavioral domain.
4. Integral indicators.

Emotional domain: In the emotional domain, inner conflict manifests through intense negative experiences and psycho-emotional tension. Examples include depression, stress, apathy, and loss of interest in life.

Cognitive domain: In the cognitive domain, inner conflict appears as disturbances in self-perception, such as:

- Decreased self-esteem;
- Difficulties in decision-making and choosing between alternatives;
- Doubts about one's motives, aspirations, and principles;
- Contradictions in one's self-image, etc.

Behavioral domain: In the behavioral domain, inner conflict is expressed through negative changes in a

person's behavior, such as:

- A negative tone in communication;
- Decrease in performance and productivity;
- Dissatisfaction with one's own activities.

Integral indicators refer to complex psychological disorders, such as:

- Increased emotional and psychological stress;
- Disruption of adaptation mechanisms;
- Prolonged inability to adapt to external circumstances.

Inner conflicts not only manifest in various domains, but can also be classified into different types. According to various theoretical concepts, several types of inner conflicts are identified. In psychoanalysis, conflicts are distinguished between human drives and socially accepted norms, as well as between different needs. Interactionism analyzes the role of social roles. However, such approaches alone are insufficient in real-life situations.

The classification of inner conflicts can be based on the value-motivational sphere, as a person's tendency toward internal conflict is linked to this sphere and sufficiently reflects their interactions and relationships with the external world [3].

From this perspective, the main structures of the inner self that may enter into conflict can be identified:

1. Self-esteem – an individual's assessment of their potential and their place among others; their sense of self-worth.
2. Values, including accepted social norms.
3. Personal orientation and aspirations – including inclinations, desires, interests, and needs.

Based on which aspect of the inner world is in conflict, the following main types of inner conflict can be distinguished:

1. Adaptive conflict
2. Role conflict
3. Moral conflict
4. Motivational conflict
5. Conflict associated with unfulfilled desires (regret)
6. Conflict related to inadequate self-assessment [3]

Let us take a closer look at these types of inner conflict:

Adaptive conflict refers to a disruption of the balance between an individual and their environment, particularly in terms of professional and social adaptation (e.g., being demoted at work). This type of

conflict arises when there is a discrepancy between a person's capabilities and the demands placed upon them (psychological, physical, or professional). Such imbalance may manifest either as a lack of full readiness or as an inability to meet the given demands. Examples include:

- An employee who is unable to effectively perform their job duties;
- A young man drafted into the army struggling to adapt to the new regime;
- A person physically unable to endure the exertion of climbing a mountain peak.

Role conflict refers to a situation where an individual is unable to perform multiple roles simultaneously or experiences difficulty in reconciling the expectations associated with a specific role. For example, a woman might face challenges when she is simultaneously acting as both a mother and a teacher to her son (or playing the roles of both mother-in-law and aunt at the same time); a police officer may find it difficult to balance fulfilling his duty with maintaining a friendly relationship with a friend if he is required to arrest him.

Moral conflict is a clash between duty and desire, or between personal attachments and moral (ethical) principles. For instance, romantic feelings that may develop between a male psychologist and a female client can result in moral tension. A man may experience an internal conflict if, while being married, he feels affection or attraction toward another woman and has the opportunity to establish a relationship with her. Another example would be a pacifist who is forced to take strict measures to protect himself or his loved ones, leading to a moral conflict due to the contradiction with his values.

One of the most common types of internal conflict is motivational conflict. This occurs due to the collision of unconscious desires and different motives. For example, a young man must choose between meeting his old friends or spending time with a girl he likes; or a teenager wants to practice boxing but is afraid of experiencing physical pain.

Conflict of unfulfilled desires arises from the contradiction between one's wishes and reality. A person may want to resemble their idol but is completely different in real life; or someone may dream of living a wealthy life but faces a reality that is far from it — these are vivid examples of this type of conflict.

Conflict of inadequate self-evaluation emerges from a mismatch between one's level of aspiration and real potential. This type of conflict includes:

- Underestimation or overestimation of oneself;

- Striving to achieve too much but leaving everything as is;
- Unwillingness to leave one's comfort zone.

Recommendations for preventing internal conflicts include:

- A person must perceive life's difficulties as an integral part of their existence in order to maintain inner harmony.
- It is important to form personal life principles and consistently adhere to them in all actions and decisions. Life principles can serve as a shield in situations that provoke internal conflict.
- One should be ready to change ineffective habitual lifestyles. Life often demands adaptability and flexibility in various situations.
- It is necessary to maintain a belief in positive outcomes. Optimism supported by internal motivation and self-development ensures a positive outlook on life and psychological well-being.
- Instead of focusing solely on weaknesses, individuals should assess their potential and the opportunities to fulfill personal needs and desires adequately.
- Learning to control one's psyche, including emotional states, is essential.
- The development of willpower is critical because it underpins self-control and is essential for making sound decisions.
- One should develop an adequate self-assessment. Both underestimating and overestimating oneself may stem from the fear that others will not perceive them as they wish to be perceived.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a person's ability to resolve internal conflicts depends on their worldview, mental attitudes, capacity for self-control, experience in dealing with such issues, strength of will, the degree of their temperament traits, emotional stability, processing speed, rhythm, as well as gender and age characteristics.

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