FREUD CASE STUDY

It is Friday night. Hank is sitting in his apartment eating a pint of Ben and Jerry’s Cherry Garcia ice cream and contemplating this past week, which had been stressful. He is five feet six inches tall and weighs 250 pounds. Today he saw a therapist about his weight for the first time, something he had been considering after yet another woman decided not to continue a relationship with him. After just two dates, Sally told Hank they should not see each other anymore because they were incompatible.

Sally and Hank had met through a chat room espousing the virtues of Macs over PCs, and Hank became impressed with Sally’s knowledge of computers and software. After chatting a few times on the computer, Sally and Hank found that they lived in the same city and both were single. Because they seemed to have their love of computers in common, they both thought it would be nice to get to know each other better. They met for coffee at a mutual agreed on Starbuck’s and then went to dinner. The date did not go as well as Sally had hoped, and one could understand Sally’s view. She tends to be a calm, friendly person with an aversion to conflict. Hank, however, tends to be quite sarcastic and often says things to other that offend them. For example, Hank made an unkind comment about Sally’s occupation. She is an insurance saleswoman and he implied that she tries to rip off other people by feasting on their insecurities and selling them insurance they do not need. Other examples of his verbal insensitivity include Hank berating the waiter at the restaurant because he was dissatisfied with the service. Hank became so loud that everyone at the restaurant stopped talking to watch Hank and Sally. Sally was mortified.

Far from being occasional, these verbal outbursts seemed to be the norm because Hank engaged in similar behavior on their second date when they went to a computer show. Hank got into an argument with one of the exhibitors about which graphics software package was better.

Unfortunately, Hank has always been sarcastic and his biting comments alienated him from his peers, even as a child. Even when he was growing up, he had difficulty establishing relationships. Friendships were practically nonexistent for Hank. As a child, while all the other kids were hanging out with their best friends and interacting in groups, Hank was learning to use the computer, which now places him at a disadvantage in his line of work.

Hank has other annoying habits that tend to alienate others, including Sally. For example, he often chews his fingernails when he is nervous. Although minor, this tendency repulsed Sally. In addition, he is a chain smoker, and Sally is a nonsmoker.

Hank, however, thought that Sally broke up with him because of his weight program and soothed his ego by telling himself that she was a very shallow person indeed if she could not see past his appearance and value his personality. After all, his weight was probably part genetic: his whole family was somewhat overweight, including his father, mother, and siblings. He also suggested to others (and himself) that *he* was about to break up with *her*.

The week after his breakup with Sally, Hank started experiencing chest pains. After a trip to the emergency room, Hank found out that he had a heart problem. The doctor told him that he must stop smoking, lose weight, change his eating habits, and start an exercise program. Otherwise, he was headed for a heart attack that he might not survive. This was certainly good advice. Hank continuously had something in his mouth, either food or cigarettes. He especially ate and smoked a lot when he was anxious. This news was especially disturbing to Hank, who is relatively young. He is a Caucasian man, only 33 years old.

And so Hank was scared into considering seeing a therapist to help him lose weight to improve his health. During his first visit to the therapist, the therapist described himself as psychodynamically oriented and then continued to describe the types of experiences that would occur in the therapy process. Hank felt confidence in his therapist by the end of the session and decided to continue so he would lose weight and become healthier.

Hank also thought about the trying week he had at work. As an employee of an advertising firm, Hank worked primarily with computers. He was the person others went to when they had a computer or software question. A whiz at computer graphics, Hank designed and maintains the firm’s Web page. Occasionally, he met with clients or potential clients, but his boss usually assigned this duty to other members of the firm. This week, however, his boss asked Hank to meet with a potential client, primarily because the people who usually did so were too busy working to meet a deadline on a different advertising campaign and because other members of the firm were out with the flu. Apparently, the meeting did not go well because shortly afterward his boss called Hank in and chewed him out, stating that this potential client called Hank a loud-mouthed, belligerent cretin. Hank couldn’t figure out where this opinion came from; he thought the meeting went pretty well. Sure, he told the client their health food products were tasteless and that the portions were too small, but the jerk kept self-righteously promoting weight loss and healthy eating. Someone had to put him in his place, Hank thought.

His mother often described Hank in terms that implied that he had been loud even as a baby. His cries used to pierce the air, and his mother would often rush to make a bottle for Hank or give him a cookie to regain some peace and quiet, even when she could not understand why he was hungry because he had eaten so recently. She laughs about it now, but it was stressful at the time.

The ice cream started to make Hank feel better, more relaxed, and once he finished off the pint, he pulled out a cigarette and lit it. The first inhale also helped to reduce the tension he was feeling. He hoped that the next week would be better.

Hank wished that his co-workers would appreciate him and offer him friendship. When he was younger, he thought that by becoming good at computers (which he thought were cool), and being able to answer other people’s questions about computers, he would be able to make contact with others and form the close relationships that others do, but so far, this strategy has been unsuccessful. More than anything, Hank wishes a woman would fall in love with him. He thinks that love will solve all his problems: He would not be so lonely anymore, and he would be able to lose weight and quit smoking, too, if he just had the love of a woman.

1. Does Hank show any signs of fixations? If so, what are they? Provide specifics.
2. Is Hank’s personality dominated by his id, his superego, or is there a balance between the two? Give specific examples to support your answer.
3. Are there any indications of defense mechanisms? If yes, identify them and give examples.

JUNG CASE STUDY

Mark is a 28-year-old African-American firefighter who loves his job. Although it does not pay as well as he would like and the hours are irregular, he finds it a rewarding and thrilling occupation. As he attempts to describe why he likes his job so much, his face transforms. It lights up. He looks as if he is reliving the excitement of the latest event to which his fire company has been called. He explains that when the fire alarm sounds, adrenaline rushes into his system and his body springs to life. He states that when he is on call, he does not really feel fear, but rather caution – and he feels alive. When he sees the brightness of the fire and feels the heat from the flames, he functions almost automatically, performing his duties bravely but not carelessly. The sight and feel of the blaze and the rawness of his lungs from occasionally breathing in smoke make him aware of his mortality and make him appreciate life.

Part of Mark’s job also consists of giving talks to elementary school children about fire hazards and fire safety. He discusses how fires start and grow. He discusses what children should do if a fire breaks out. When he gives these talks the children look up to him and see him as a brave man, which makes him feel good. He also enjoys the status associated with being a firefighter. The people he helps reward him with thanks and praise. They, like the school children, make him feel important and valiant.

Mark’s job is very stimulating. Even as a child, Mark was always seeking out high levels of stimulation. When he was very young, he was always making noise, either talking or singing continuously or trying to make music with things such as sticks and pots and pans. Sometimes he would claim that it was “just too quiet.” Favorite games were exciting also. Frequently, he would play games in which he was some kind of super hero. He would be the sheriff who captured the bank robbers, the police officer who threw the bad guys in jail, or the captain who outwitted the pirates (and often it was his little sister who was the bad guy or the pirate or the bank robber).

As a teenager and young adult, he always knew he would go into some type of “service” occupation like fire fighting or police duty, and he actually attended the police academy for a short time before deciding that it was not for him. He was concerned that the job would turn out to be monotonous rather than stimulating because of the amount of paperwork and the continuous driving involved in patrols. After his experience with police work, Mark decided on becoming a firefighter because he found it more exciting. This decision was a difficult one for him because his parents disapproved of his career choice. They were concerned about Mark getting hurt or killed. They also disliked the idea of him moving out of their house to go to the fire-training academy. Nevertheless, he made his decision and stayed with it. He performed very well at the academy and rented his own apartment for the times he would not be living at the fire station.

Mark’s friends describe him as outgoing and happy. He loves life and lives it to its fullest. Although he isn’t an introspective person, he is very realistic and pragmatic. His firefighting colleagues describe him as very competent, always able to adapt rescue techniques to the situation as necessary. He is even quite good at fixing and making things. He likes the feel of working with tools and the smell of newly cut wood. Recently, in his free time he has renovated the kitchen of the firehouse.

1. How would you describe Mark? Is he an introvert or an extrovert? Provide support for your answer.
2. Which archetype is Mark demonstrating? Provide specific examples.

HORNEY CASE STUDY

Samara just cannot understand why she is still single at age 35 when all her friends are happily married. She sees herself as loving, generous, and unselfish. Certainly she is sensitive to the needs of others, much more so than her friends seem to be. Her friends seem to criticize their husbands; she would never do that. Certainly, she would not force her mate into going to see a movie or playing that she wanted to see but that he did not.

Getting married is especially important to Samara because she was raised in a very traditional Middle Eastern household where the role of the woman is to be someone’s wife and mother. It isn’t that she doesn’t try to establish relationships. In fact, she has had many relationships with men; they just don’t last. For example, her last boyfriend, Tom, broke up with her after six months. He claimed that she was too pushy and possessive. Samara was pushing him to get married, and he was not ready for that kind of commitment yet. He was also concerned about her jealousy. Samara hated it when Tom showed attention to other women – even though the attention was platonic. Tom has a number of women friends and keeps in touch with them by talking on the telephone. He also goes to lunch with them occasionally. Likewise, Tom has a number of female colleagues at work. Samara often complained to Tom that he spent too much time with other women and not enough time with her. Even though Tom continuously tried to reassure Samara that these relationships with women were nonsexual and that they were friends to him, not potential dates, Samara continued to discourage these relationships. Samara was terrified that Tom would find these other women more attractive than she and desert her. She just did not want to be alone again.

But Samara is rarely “alone.” She goes from a breakup to another relationship very quickly. She had broken up with another boyfriend, Fred, two weeks before she met Tom and started dating him. One month before she started dating Fred, she experienced another breakup, this time initiated by Paul. The breakup with Paul was fairly vicious, and again, Samara had trouble understanding why it happened. She had done her best to make Paul happy. She let him decide where they would go and what they would do on dates. She even let him decide what to order for her at restaurants. When Paul would ask her what she wanted to do, she always replied, “whatever you want.” Samara just couldn’t understand how men could not appreciate what a giving, unselfish person she was.

She was always there for her current boyfriend. When he was having a difficult time, she would listen to his problems very attentively and help him feel better. She would do this even when she too had a problem she wanted to discuss, but she always put his needs before her own. Instead of appreciating their qualities, the men she dated found them unappealing. At the time of their breakup, Paul, for example, complained that Samara was too mousy, that he did not know what she like to do or even eat! He said that he could not get to know her and therefore did not want a relationship with her. He found her submissiveness annoying, not endearing. He also complained, like Tom, about Samara’s possessiveness. Paul sometimes wanted to spend time alone or with his male friends, but Samara resented this time away from her. In fact, the week before they broke up, Samara and Paul had a huge argument about Paul’s friends. Samara had gone shopping and was in the process of cooking an elaborate meal – Paul’s favorite – but Paul called to tell her that he ran into an old buddy who was in town just for the night and that he couldn’t see her that evening; he was going to go out with his buddy. Paul had no idea she was planning to cook a big meal for him; he thought they would be going out for a burger at his favorite bar. Samara became angry because of her wasted effort and told him how unappreciative he was. He in turn complained about her unreasonable assumptions and possessiveness. That argument led to their breakup the following week.

Now, after the breakup with Tom, Samara is again asking friends to fix her up. As she commiserates with her friends, she tells them that all she wants is someone to love her, that if you have love, you have everything. She wonders if she will ever find the right man.

1. What is the source of Samara’s anxiety? Give examples.
2. Which neurotic trend does she use to cope with this anxiety? Provide support.

ADLER CASE STUDY

John is a 30 year old engineer who works at a safety inspection company. On most days, John finds his work fulfilling, as his job involves computing the mathematical equations for the safety of home appliances and testing out his work through running actual experiments, some involving blowing up the appliances.

There are days, whenever, where John gets upset and frustrated about the things in his life, including his job. He never feels like he is good enough because his college degree is not in engineering, like his co-workers. In college, John chose to major in physics, mostly as a way to get back at his father. Growing up, John’s father constantly made him feel worthless by criticizing everything. From the sports he played to the grades he earned, John’s father pressured his son to be the best he could be, but never in a nurturing or caring way. As a result, John’s relationship with his father remains stressed to date. John speaks with his mother regularly, but he completely avoids his father if possible.

Aside from family, John’s friends are also around to support him. His two best friends, Bob and Larry, are somewhat different from John. While John has moved out of his parents’ house, Bob and Larry both still live with their parents (at the age of 30) and kept their jobs at the local movie rental place until it closed last year. Bob has held odd jobs after graduating from college, working as a Pepsi delivery man and a Walgreen’s cashier. Larry ended up with a job in his mother’s company after college, but he only works part time and spends a suspicious amount of time outside of the office. John’s steady employment and sable lifestyle contrasts greatly with Bob and Larry, yet he continues to keep their company and at times can be critical of his friends as well.

1. What is the source of John’s inferiority complex? Give examples.
2. How does his inferiority complex influence his everyday life? Provide support.