

- *‘Personality traits are not fixed biological qualities but change in response to life experiences and circumstances.’*

Can people really change?

What the research tells us about whether personality is fixed — or changes over the course of life.

The evidence largely supports the claim, but personality is **not infinitely flexible**.

Shaped by: **biology · time · culture · situation**

THE BIG FIVE

openness · conscientiousness · extroversion · agreeableness
· neuroticism

Biology matters, but isn't destiny.



40%

genes

60%

environment &
experience

No single gene explains a trait.

Eysenck (1967); Vukasović & Bratko (2015); Turkheimer (2016)

Personality keeps changing through life.

After 30? still changes

Age 20–40 more conscientious,
less neurotic

COVID-19 shifts in just a few
years



Costa & McCrae (2002); Roberts, Walton & Viechtbauer (2006); Sutin et al. (2022)

Culture shapes how we see personality.

Western model

openness
conscientiousness
extroversion
agreeableness
neuroticism

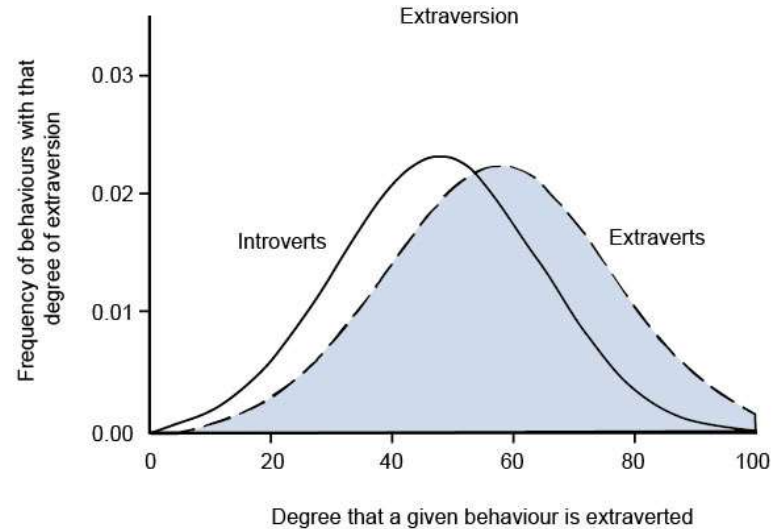
Chinese model

openness
conscientiousness
extroversion
agreeableness
neuroticism
+ personal relatedness

Context can outweigh the trait.

People conform & obey **with the situation.**

One person varies more across situations than people differ from each other.



Asch (1951); Milgram (1963); Mischel (1968); Fleeson & Gallagher (2009)

Traits still matter, just not alone.

Person A

irritated when ignored

Person B

irritated by small talk

Same score, **different people.**

The interactionist view: biology + experience + context

● THE TAKEAWAY

*Personality is real —
but not fixed.*

It shifts across **time, culture & situation**. Yet biology still counts.

For HR: tests can help, but aren't permanent labels.

Thank you.