

Personal Reflection

■ Fixed Role Enactment

If you want to have an experience that really gets at Kelly's idea of behavior as an experiment, try the following.

- 1) Write a one-page *self-characterization sketch*, in accordance with these instructions adapted from Kelly (1955/1991a, p. 242):

I want you to write a character sketch of (your name), just as if he or she were the principal character in a play. Write it as it might be written by a friend who knew him or her *very intimately* and *very sympathetically*, perhaps better than anyone ever really could know him. Be sure to write it in the third person. For example, start out by saying, "(Your name) is . . ."

- 2) After writing the character sketch, think of some characteristics you admire but do not currently feel you possess. Then, write a second one-page character sketch, this time of a fictional person who possesses the character traits you admire. Name this second character anything you like. Again, be sure to write the sketch in the third person, using the same format you used for your own character sketch. This second sketch is your *fixed role sketch*.
- 3) Follow these instructions, adapted from Kelly (1955/1991a, p. 285), for how to enact the fixed role sketch:

For the next two weeks I want you to do something unusual. I want you to *act* as if you were (fixed role sketch name). . . . For two weeks try to forget that you are (your name here) or that you ever were. You *are* (fixed role sketch name). You *act* like him or her. You *think* like him or her. You *talk* to your friends the way you think he or she would talk! You *do* the things you think he or she would do! You even *have his or her interests* and you *enjoy* the things he or she would enjoy!

. . . You might say we are going to send (your name here) on a two weeks' vacation. . . . In the meantime (fixed role sketch name) will take over. Other people may not know it but (your name) will not even be around. Of course you will have to let people keep on calling you (your name), but you will think of yourself as (fixed role sketch name).

- 4) At the end of the two weeks, reflect on the experience. What have you learned? Are there aspects of the fixed role sketch you think you will retain?

Now that you have had this one opportunity to test out new behaviors through acting out the fixed role, what other new fixed roles might allow you the leeway to try out new personal constructions of yourself?