**The Selfishness Questionnaire (SQ)**

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There has in the past been virtually no standardized research on the personality trait of selfishness, in part due to the absence of an assessment instrument. The Selfishness Questionnaire (SQ) was developed to address this gap. In addition to a total score, three sub-scores can be derived: Egocentric, Adaptive, and Pathological selfishness. This self-report instrument takes about 3 minutes to complete and is designed for use with both child and adult populations.

In our original work (Raine & Uh, 2019) we found that a confirmatory factor analysis supported the existence of the three hypothesized forms of selfishness – egocentric, adaptive, and pathological. We also found good support for internal reliability, test-retest reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, factorial validity, incremental validity, and criterion validity (Raine & Uh, 2019). Pathological selfishness was more strongly associated with antisocial, narcissistic, and histrionic personality disorders, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. Egocentric selfishness in contrast was more strongly associated with a lack of warmth, low altruism, low emotional empathy, and less giving in the Dictator game. Adaptive selfishness was less associated with these traits and was more likely to be endorsed. Selfishness was associated with reduced levels of mindfulness and also increased utilitarian moral decision-making. Criterion validity was established by reduced selfishness in Tibetan monks, and less giving in the Dictator game. Selfishness predicted to outcomes over and above altruism, establishing selfishness as having incremental utility as an independent personality construct in understanding other psychological phenomena.

Citation.

Raine, A., & Uh, S. (2019). The Selfishness Questionnaire: Egocentric, Adaptive, and Pathological Forms of Selfishness. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 101*(5), 503-514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2018.1455692>

The Selfishness Questionnaire can be freely used for research purposes, but I would appreciate knowing a little about your study first at the following email address: [araine@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:araine@sas.upenn.edu)

The instrument and scoring instructions are given below:

Instructions to Participant.

We can’t always be charitable to others, and there are times when you have to look after your own self-interests. Answer the following questions as honestly as you can by indicating whether you:

**Disagree (0), Neither Agree nor Disagree (1),** or **Agree (2)** with each statement.

Disagree Agree

1. I have no problem telling “white lies” if it will help me achieve my goals. 0 1 2

2. I’m not too concerned about what is best for society in general. 0 1 2

3. Now and again I’ve manipulated my friends to gain an advantage. 0 1 2

4. At the end of the day I care mostly for myself, my family, and friends

who can help me. 0 1 2

5. I’ve occasionally put others down to achieve my goals. 0 1 2

6. I don’t give to charities. 0 1 2

7. Even if it meant giving my kids an unfair advantage over others, I’d do

it for them. 0 1 2

8. Sometimes you need to take advantage of other people before they

take advantage of you. 0 1 2

9. I’m not always honest because honesty can end up harming myself

and others. 0 1 2

10. When it comes to helping myself or helping others, I tend to help myself. 0 1 2

11. It’s not nice to exploit others, but there are times when you simply need to. 0 1 2

12. If there was only one space left on a lifeboat that a child needed, I’d

honestly have to take it for myself and my family. 0 1 2

13. Quite often in life, it is more important to receive than to give. 0 1 2

14. I know I love rewards in life, even if there is a cost to others. 0 1 2

15. It’s better to save for a rainy day than to give to charities where money

can be misspent. 0 1 2

16. If I’m honest, there are times when I put myself first, even if it’s someone

else’s loss. 0 1 2

17. If the choice was between killing someone or being killed, I’d kill. 0 1 2

18. I care for myself much more than I care for others. 0 1 2

19. I have sometimes dumped friends that I don’t need anymore 0 1 2

20. I sometimes lie to others for my own good, and theirs too. 0 1 2

21. Even when I see people in need, I don’t feel the urge to help them. 0 1 2

22. I go out of the way to exploit situations for my own advantage. 0 1 2

23. At the end of the day, I have to admit that I’m quite a selfish person. 0 1 2

24. I mostly help those around me who will help me later. 0 1 2

Scoring

Each item has a score ranging from 0 to 2. Add these points as follows:

*Egocentric Selfishness*: questions 2, 6, 10, 13, 15, 18, 21, 23.

*Adaptive Selfishness*: questions 1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 20, 24.

*Pathological Selfishness*: questions 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, 22.

*Total Selfishness*: sum Egocentric + Adaptive + Pathological Selfishness scores