Beck's Distinction Between Autonomous Versus Sociotropic Depressive Subtypes: Pre-Norbid Personality

**Autonomous: Pre-Episode Personality**

Focus is on obtaining goals and success--driven toward accomplishment

Action-oriented--focus is on doing, taking action

Sets excessively high standards/goals for self

Harder on self than others (judges self more stringently than judges others)

Empathic "failure"--oblivious to the effect of own actions on others

Empathic "failure"--low sensitivity to other people's needs and wishes

Not influenced by criticism or praise from others, or by external feedback in general

Needs to be in control--needs freedom to take action; despises being held back, blocked, or deterred from taking action; despises external demands or deadlines; despises asking for help

Direct, decisive, dogmatic, and rigid

When relationship ends, typically because felt "trapped" or felt someone was trying to exert control

Adapts well to relationships that are variable and/or ambiguous (up and down; strained)

Self-esteem contingent upon success, accomplishment, meeting own goals, being independent and action-oriented

**Sociotropic: Pre-Episode Personality**

Needs people for safety, help, and gratification

Needs a stable relationship where feels secure and confident will get interpersonal "supplies"

Needs reassurance continually to make sure will get interpersonal "supplies"

Rejection is worst nightmare--it's worse than being alone, although being alone is painful

Socially outgoing (when not depressed)--builds wide circle of friends to protect against isolation

Tries to be "good" and please others by doing what's expected (e.g., reluctant to express anger)

Submissive (if this will maintain relationships)

Obtains pleasure primarily by receiving nurturance and love

Self-esteem contingent on being accepted/loved--following rejection, will "fall apart" and feel old, unattractive, repulsive, and unlovable