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Person To Person: The Problem Of Being Human, A New Trend In Psychology



Synopsis

From the Foreword: This is an unusual book, put together by a unique person, and built around some papers which present an all too uncommon point of view.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Carl Rogers (1902-1987) was an influential American psychologist and (along with Abraham Maslow) among the founders of humanistic psychology. He writes in the Introduction to this 1967 book, "This book is built around seven papers which start from an assumption unusual in psychology today. The assumption is that the subjective human being has an importance and a value which is basic: that no matter how he may be labeled or evaluated he is a human person first of all, and most deeply. He is not only a machine, not only a collection of stimulus-response bonds, not an object, not a pawn. So while the papers deal cover a variety of topics, and in at least three instances deal with individuals labeled 'abnormal,' they are all basically about persons." Here are some representative quotations from the book: "I would stress that my vantage point for making these observations is not that of the scholar or philosopher: I am speaking from my experience of the functioning human being, as I have lived with him in the intimate experience of therapy, and in other situations of growth, change, and development." Concerning his famous debate with B.F. Skinner, he says, "In his reply Dr. Skinner said that he would not go into the question of whether he had any choice in the matter (presumably because the whole issue is illusory) but stated, 'I do accept your characterization of my own presence here.' I do not need to labor the point that for Dr. Skinner the concept of 'learning to be free' would be quite meaningless." "I have tried to show that

the freedom they achieve is definable in ways which complement rather than contradict the current scientific view of man's behavior.""(I)t is the QUALITY of the interpersonal encounter with the client which is the most significant element in determining effectiveness."

Having been a fan of Carl Rogers and Humanistic approaches to life and psychotherapy for some time, I was surprised to stumble upon this book in a "giveaway" section of my grad schools library. I saw that it was written, at least in part, by Carl Rogers. However, Barry Stevens contributes the most in this fantastic perspective on how to be in the world. She provided anecdotal examples that really make understanding the material clear. This is one of those books that I have a hard time understanding why it is no longer in print. It was eye-opening and, to some extent, life changing. My understanding is that Stevens eventually became deeply involved with Fritz Perls and his Gestalt movement (surely not a bad thing), though this book emphasizes her relationship and correspondences with Rogers. Beautiful.

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