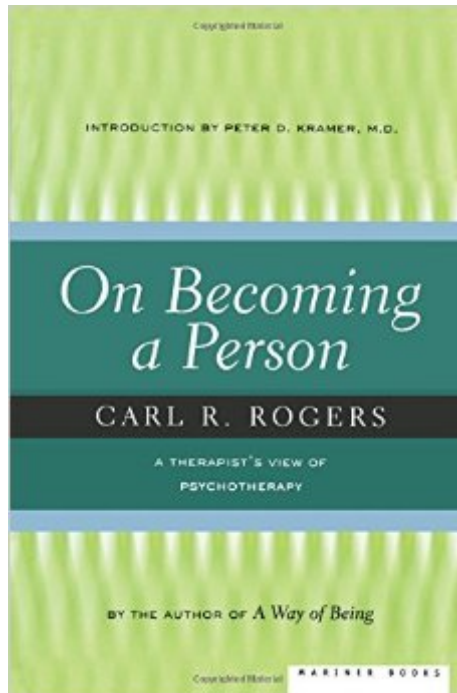


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On Becoming A Person: A Therapist's View Of Psychotherapy



Synopsis

The late Carl Rogers, founder of the humanistic psychology movement, revolutionized psychotherapy with his concept of "client-centered therapy." His influence has spanned decades, but that influence has become so much a part of mainstream psychology that the ingenious nature of his work has almost been forgotten. A new introduction by Peter Kramer sheds light on the significance of Dr. Rogers's work today. New discoveries in the field of psychopharmacology, especially that of the antidepressant Prozac, have spawned a quick-fix drug revolution that has obscured the psychotherapeutic relationship. As the pendulum slowly swings back toward an appreciation of the therapeutic encounter, Dr. Rogers's "client-centered therapy" becomes particularly timely and important.

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Customer Reviews

I was given this book in 1973 when I was a senior in college and wished to attend graduate school in clinical psychology. The book transformed me. I went from page to page recognizing that Roger's spoke directly to me and the way I experienced my relationship with my inner self and soul. This book review is written with the purpose of encouraging others to read this masterpiece of psychological theory. ALL psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, and social workers should be intimately familiar with Rogers and his concepts. Of all the personality theorists and practitioners of psychotherapy such as Jung, Freud, Fritz Perls, Albert Ellis, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, Eric Fromme, and Rollo May; Carl Rogers is the one infused with optimism and a belief in the goodness of mankind. He sees human beings as capable of vast growth and creativity; able to

achieve ethical and loving relationships and encounters; and achieving a healed and healthy soul that directs us toward others and the world. Do not confuse his description of the state of psychological health with that of William James, Clark Hull, or James B Watson. These theorists see man's natural state as homeostatic, neither alert nor asleep, neither happy nor sad. Rogers on the other hand would assert that the Buddha-like state of homeostasis is not full psychological health. Full psychological health is involvement, attachment, love, relationship, creativity, fulfillment, achievement, and goodness. Once the reader buys into Roger's Self Theory, which posits that we are self healing, self directed, and instinctively know psychological health from psychological disease; then he posits his therapeutic model by which the therapist facilitates the process whereby a client moves toward this wholeness.

This book by Carl Rogers on client-centered therapy may lack the drama, the force or the cleverness associated with some books on other forms of psychotherapy. What it doesn't seem to lack is a quiet wisdom that flowed from Rogers' many years of experience and sensitivity to his patients. Despite some redundancy, being a collection of papers and presentations from Rogers over many years, "On Becoming A Person": 1) presents a branch of psychotherapy distinct from psychoanalysis and learning theories as well as from behaviorism, focused more on basically well people growing than on helping disturbed people get better. 2) is rooted in Roger's positive view of human nature as basically good and constructive, as he discovered in encounters with his patients. Roger's emphasis on empathic understanding, on not imposing theoretical speculations about the clients state of mind and on avoiding forceful interference would seem to avoid some of the abuses associated with some other psychotherapies. 3) presents ideas about the helping relationship that Rogers extended from psychotherapy into other areas such as education. Rogers's nondirective approach suggested to him the possibility of a progressive education free of examinations, of grades, of conclusions, and even of teachers. 4) despite its "fuzziness", Rogers does present some experimental evidence in favor of client-centered therapy as compared to those based on learning theory and behaviorism. 5) Rogers' shows appreciation of the growing power of the behavioral sciences but expresses concern lest this science, like other sciences, becomes manipulated by politicians to the detriment of people.

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