

Personal Psychology

For Life And Work



Rita K. Baltus

Personal Psychology

For Life And Work

Fourth Edition

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Preface

The fourth edition of *Personal Psychology for Life and Work* is meant to prepare students to successfully handle the many challenges they will face in their personal and professional lives. Success is determined partly by how well we understand ourselves and others. This text helps students comprehend human nature by exploring basic psychological principles within the context of everyday situations. Thus, students are provided a framework for exploring many issues related to human development—issues such as self-esteem, emotions and attitudes, and interpersonal relationships.

Society in general and the workplace in particular are experiencing changes at a rapid rate—politically, economically, and technically. Change in itself, whether good or bad, creates stress as individuals strive first to understand and then to respond and assimilate the impact it makes on their lives. There is no doubt we are living in a global society, where we need to cooperate with persons whose backgrounds, beliefs, and customs may be different from our own. We must learn to understand and accept others' viewpoints. Maturity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and tolerance are increasingly important. By gaining knowledge about the causes of our own behavior, we become more comfortable and less threatened by differences in other people.

Technology is at the forefront of our lives. We are surrounded by computers, cellular telephones, VCRs, and CD-ROMs. In five years, we will see other advances we can't begin to imagine. Though technology may grow in leaps, we must not lose sight of the importance of the basic pleasures of satisfactory interpersonal relationships and personal goal achievement. This textbook emphasizes the need for excellent communication skills, managing emotions, thinking and problem-solving skills, and maintaining and improving overall health.

Today's employers now place "people skills" on an equal footing with technical proficiency. Human relations skills are required for success, especially as our country moves into a service-oriented economy. We've added Chapter 13, "Human Relations at Work," to raise students' awareness of the growing need to interrelate successfully with others—whether they be peers, supervisors, subordinates, or customers.

Much of the content has been expanded and updated, but we've kept the text-workbook format that has proved so effective in past editions. In-text questions and quizzes provide a way for students to self-check understanding and apply concepts immediately to their own lives. Each chapter begins with a listing of Learning Objectives, followed by the text. *Psychology in Practice*

activities, found at the end of the chapters, offer students ways to apply chapter concepts to their lives through further research, conducting interviews, and keeping journals. An icon distinguishes activities specifically intended for small-group projects and discussions. Learning Activities, which are correlated to the Learning Objectives, are then provided in a tearout section at the end of the book. These activities further show the relevance of the text topics to common situations. Enrichment Activities are included here for out-of-class work and may be used at the instructor's discretion. A comprehensive glossary provides definitions for all bold-faced terms.

The Instructor's Manual and Key contains comprehensive teaching suggestions, answers to the activities, selected resources, and transparency masters. A new microcomputer test bank (IBM) makes testing more convenient for the instructor.

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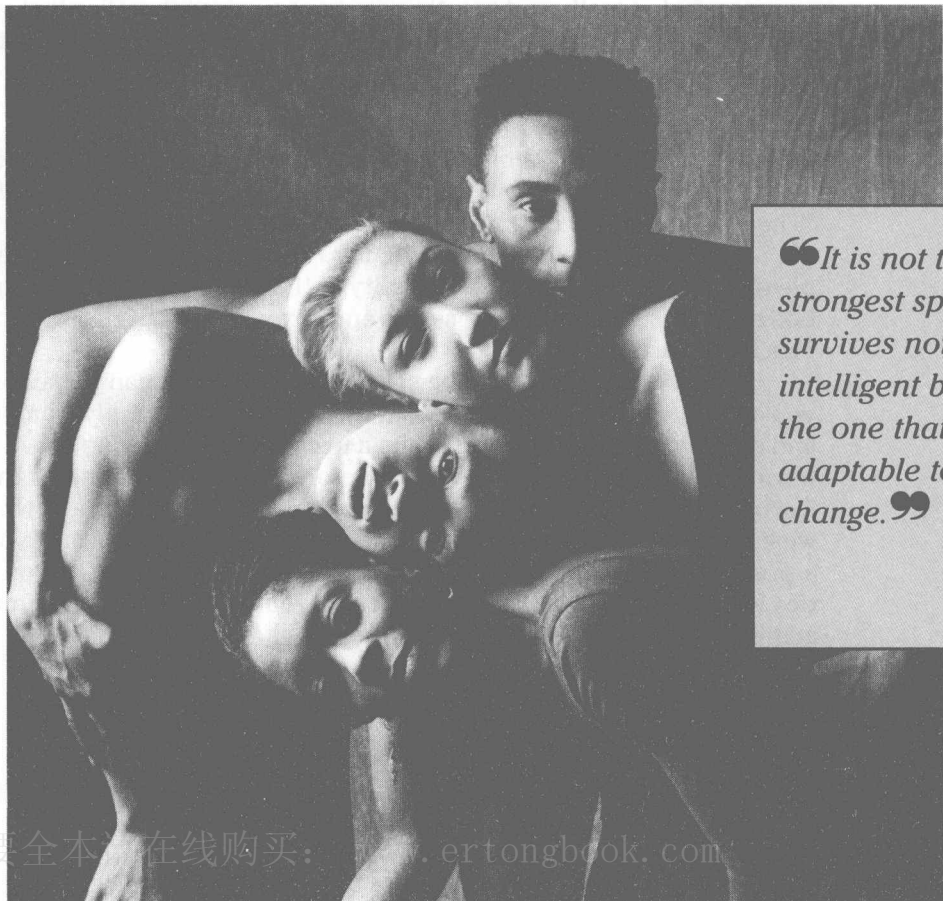
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Psychology in Our Changing World

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter you will be able to do the following:

1. Explain how the purpose of psychology—to predict—might be useful to you in the area of work for which you are preparing.
2. Identify reasons for your interest in, or concern about, the future.
3. Examine the effects as nontraditional careers become more common for both males and females.
4. Recognize the nature and scope of problems caused by human behavior and suggest possible solutions.
5. Examine the possible advantages and disadvantages of working in one's home.
6. Anticipate the possible impacts of the increased use of robots in homes and at work in the future.
7. Identify ways in which cultural diversity can be beneficial to today's society.



“It is not the strongest species that survives nor the most intelligent but rather the one that is most adaptable to change.”

CHARLES DARWIN,
naturalist

The world in which we live influences who we are and what we do probably more than we realize. It is also important for us to remember that we, individually and collectively, can influence our world and the conditions of our lives.

You are one of over five billion people in the world.

You are a unique individual in a changing world.

You, an individual, can affect tomorrow's world.

The world in which you live is different from what it was in your grandparents' youth, in your parents' youth, and even from the world in which you were a child. It is even different in some ways from what it was a year ago—or perhaps yesterday.

The rate of change has increased so much that today's young people are involved in more radical discoveries and changes than have ever before occurred in one generation. It is an exciting, historical time to live, but change also requires the ability to make choices and adapt.

In 1970 Alvin Toffler, a futurist, wrote a book entitled *Future Shock*. His basic definition of future shock was "too much change in too short a time." He urged us to be aware of the accelerative or "snowballing" effect of change, the social and psychological effects of change, the effects on our values, and the side effects of solutions to problems.¹ An example of such side effects is the development of detergents for home use in 1933. They were more effective than soap for washing and cleaning, especially in hard water. The use of detergents for a multitude of applications grew rapidly. In the 1970s, however, it became apparent that the phosphates used in detergents were creating serious water pollution problems. We don't always know what the long-term side effects of new products will be, but we should at least be alert to possibilities.

We can see other effects of Toffler's concerns in our world today. To some extent they are effects that accompany change regardless of our awareness or concern. Individually and together, however, we must realize that we can have a positive effect on change in our world. Further, we can learn to anticipate and welcome change to keep our lives stimulating and challenging.

WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY?

Would you like to lead a more satisfying, productive life, with less conflict and hassle? Responses might range from, "I seem to be doing all right so far," to "There is no way to remove problems, frustration, and disappointment from life." Regardless of what your particular response would be, there are few people who could not improve the quality of their lives if they are willing to gain a better understanding of themselves and others and put related, proven principles into practice.

Psychology is defined as the scientific study of human behavior. Although you already know a great deal about human behavior simply from having lived and associated with others for quite a few years, you may not have studied behavior from a scientific perspective before. As with most things that we have learned from casual observation and experience in life, some of what we think we know is probably incomplete, or even inaccurate. And even if you have had a previous psychology course, your current learning can give you opportunities for personal, practical application to your activities at this time as well as achievement of goals in the future.

Interest in the functioning of the mind and causes of behavior can be traced back at least to Aristotle, who lived from 384–323 B. C. However, the first psychological laboratory was established by Wilhelm Wundt at Leipzig, Germany, in 1879. Since that time a more orderly, objective study of human behavior has developed. Since psychology is a social science, pertaining to human beings, it cannot be expected to be as exact as other sciences, such as physics, for example. Although psychologists have not yet reached complete agreement on theories of behavior, it can be a challenge to each of us to examine their work and develop our positions on how we believe our own lives and the world in which we live can be improved.

The purposes of psychology are usually identified as: to *describe*, to *understand*, to *predict*, and to *control or influence* behavior. There are a number of different methods of studying human behavior in attempts to achieve these purposes. Several of the more common ones are: *Comparative*, which compares observations and identifies similarities and differences; *Correlational*, which looks for relationships in existing factors; *Survey*, which seeks information and opinions through interviews or written questionnaires; *Case Study*, which follows the behavior of an individual over a period of time; and *Experimental*, which involves two groups of individuals, an *experimental* group and a *control* group. The experimental group receives an *independent variable*, or change in what they are experiencing to determine possible effects. The control group does not experience this change and is used for comparison to determine the effects of the independent variable. The original condition in both groups is called the *dependent variable*. All of these methods of studying psychology have contributed to a better understanding of human beings.

It might also be helpful to distinguish between the terms *theory* and *principle* as they pertain to the science of psychology. A *theory* is a belief based on present knowledge and thinking of an individual or group; a *principle* incorporates a generally accepted theory into a statement that applies to most cases and situations. We must remember, however, that social sciences are not exact and that there can be exceptions.

The entire spectrum of psychology has many specialized areas. Some of these are *clinical* and *counseling*, *industrial*, *business*, *education*, and *sports*. In this course we are primarily interested in understanding principles of human behavior and their applications to our lives and work.

WHY LOOK TO THE FUTURE?

What will your future world be like? One of the reasons for an interest in the answer to this question may be simple curiosity. We are usually curious about where we are going and what is going to happen when we get there. There are additional reasons why we should be interested in the future. If we have some idea what to expect, we can better prepare ourselves. This is particularly important as it pertains to preparing for work, updating job skills, and retraining for new jobs. It can be to our benefit also to be aware of what will be available in health care, housing, educational opportunities, and other important aspects of our lives.

A further reason for “future awareness” is to use our best efforts to control or influence what is happening to us and our environment. Although we may feel somewhat ineffective as individuals in many situations, we can make a

difference. When we join forces with others who have similar concerns, we can have an even greater impact. We can influence the outcome of what is happening in our schools, neighborhoods, community; in our state or nation; and thus even in the world. Our right to vote is one way we can do this, but there are also numerous other ways. You can control, to a degree, what your future will be like. Take the responsibility to understand yourself, the world, and those around you.

In other instances we may foresee a change that we, individually or as a society, may want to prevent from happening. There are orderly, constructive ways to do this, especially if we are sure of what we want and know what our options are. It is easier to identify and oppose undesired changes in the planning stage than to try to counteract them after they are realities.

A still further reason for interest in the future is to promote desired change or make things happen. We can bring about some changes that would not occur without our efforts. If we want to live in a safer world with more advantages and opportunities, we cannot simply rely on luck, the natural course of events, or the efforts of others.

Since everyone in a society does not have the same needs or values, others do not always want what you want. In fact, some may want the opposite. This complicates the process of change and reaction to it. All persons cannot have what they want, but in a democracy voices are heard and everyone has responsibilities. Change affects everyone and everyone can effect change.

LIFE IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

We live in a global community—a term that appears almost to be a contradiction. We often think of a community as a relatively small town or city. Global, on the other hand, refers to encompassing the whole earth or globe. Yet the term global community is appropriate because our lives have become interrelated in a number of ways with people in all parts of the world. Advances in technology, particularly in communications systems, have brought this about. Even local television news programs often cover events in other countries because what is local and what is global are becoming almost inseparable.

Transnationality, another term referring to our global community, has brought about changes in business and the economy, religion, agriculture, politics, and values and human relationships. In fact, all major divisions and institutions of society are involved and have been affected.

Cultural diversity is an outstanding characteristic of today's society. Culture refers to values, beliefs, customs, and lifestyles learned as a member of a group of people with a common ancestry or background. The mix of people from different cultures in America in earlier generations was referred to a "melting pot." This suggested that, gradually, national and cultural differences would disappear or melt into a homogeneous society. There is more emphasis today on what has been called a "salad bowl" society in which individuality and identity are retained but will also represent contributions to the whole society. Life in such a global community is discussed by John Naisbett and Patricia Aburdene in their book *Megatrends 2000*. They describe life in the 90s and as it is expected to be in the future. They state, "The more homogeneous our lifestyles become, the more steadfastly we shall cling to deeper values—religion, language, art, literature. As our outer worlds grow more similar, we will increasingly treasure the traditions that spring from within."²

How are goals met and problems solved in a global community? The answer is complex, but there must be unified efforts and cooperation among countries. The United Nations and numerous international organizations, for example, are recognizing both responsibilities and opportunities in the global community. The United Nations, organized in 1945 after World War II, states in the Preamble of its Charter:

We the peoples of the United Nations determined

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

and for these ends

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Although there has been criticism of the United Nations for not being more active in accomplishing these aims, in its almost 50 years, the very existence of the organization sends a message to the world. Also, the UN has done more than the average person probably realizes. In recent years there has been still more evidence of the force and effectiveness this organization can have.

It is no longer a matter of deciding whether we want to be involved. Our decisions pertain to the responsibilities we want to take in that involvement—and they are important decisions. One of the most important issues for the United States as a country is how to provide for our own national security and still be a positive force in promoting peace in the world. Another important decision pertains to the extent to which we can reasonably ease the suffering or protect the rights and freedom of human beings around the world.



**What do you
THINK?**

How does the Preamble of the UN Charter emphasize the need for practicing psychology?

**HIGH TECH/
HIGH TOUCH**

In *Megatrends*, an earlier book by John Naisbitt, major trends of the 1980s are identified. One of these is movement from forced technology to high-tech/high-touch. He explains, “High-tech/high-touch is a formula I use to describe the way we have responded to technology. What happens is that whenever new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counterbalancing human

response—that is, high touch—or the technology is rejected. The more high tech, the more high touch.”³

Naisbitt explains high touch further in saying, “But something else was growing alongside the technological invasion. Our response to the high tech all around us was the evolution of a highly personal value system to compensate for the impersonal nature of technology. The result was the new self-help or personal growth movement, which eventually became the human potential movement.”⁴

An example of high tech/high touch that Naisbitt gives is that the high technology of transplants and brain scanners has led to a new interest in the family doctor and neighborhood clinic. Another example is that word processors have led to a revival of handwritten notes.

High tech, balanced by high touch, can improve the quality of our lives and of the community. This is expressed by Auzille Jackson, Jr. in “High Tech’s Influence on our Lives”: “High tech has the potential, if properly used, of giving us a more full, more useful, longer, dynamic, and exciting life, and to free many of us from dull and repetitious jobs. It will permit us to spend more time in cultural and learning activities, recreation, and helping others in the community.”⁵

Human beings must decide on the technologies they want, learn to use them to their advantage, and still retain their humanness in the world of work as well as in their personal lives.

THE WORLD OF TELECOMMUNI- CATIONS

Fast, accurate communication is necessary in today’s high-tech business. Telecommunications is an area of high technology that affects us all and will continue to open lines of communication. Human beings can now talk to one another from practically anywhere in the world and even from space. Computers talk to us and even to other computers.

Telecommunication, or the transfer of messages by electrical or electronic means, has an impressive role in the changing world in which we live. Consider this message heard by David on his arrival at work: “Good morning, David. You have a safety committee meeting this morning at 10:00. Bring this month’s accident reports. Thank you. Take care.”

David was listening to a “disembodied voice” known as a speech synthesizer. Such talking computers, and other communications technology, are products of the technology and information age in which you, David, and the rest of us live and work. Not long ago, futurists were referring to the “coming of the technological age.” We are now living in that age—also referred to as the communications revolution, computer era, and information age and by other variations of these terms.

Other ages have preceded the technology and information age. Alvin Toffler in a later book, *The Third Wave*, refers to the agricultural age as the first wave, to the industrial age as the second wave, and to our current technological age as the third wave.⁶



What do you THINK?

What do you think the fourth wave will be? Some say space; others say genetics. There are any number of possibilities. We do know that change will continue and there will be other “waves” in the future of this planet.



Modern communications technology enables engineers to increase their technical knowledge at their workstations through closed-circuit university courses.

Modern telecommunications systems were preceded by the invention of the telegraph in 1844 and the telephone in 1896. A major development in telecommunications was *Telstar*, a satellite that first linked Europe and North America via television in 1962. Other technological developments of this age are citizens band (CB) radios, cordless telephones, microcomputers, fax machines, and picture phones.

By the twenty-first century, computers within the home are expected to be as common as television sets are today. These computers will be used to conduct business and to achieve numerous other purposes. There has been continuing progress with communications satellites, including the use of laser beams in place of radio waves. By the year 2000 it is expected that communications satellites could make it possible to contact another person anywhere by three-dimensional holography, whereby the image of the person is produced by means of laser light.

Innovations in technological communications are developing at an astounding rate. "Now what's new?" can be asked on a regular basis. It will be possible before too many years to give vocal commands to your electrical appliances—not only to start and stop but to inform a toaster, for example, how dark you would like your toast. Your TV will be in 3-D and interactive so that you will have the opportunity to request certain program features or express your opinion on issues. Kalman A. Toth, in an article in *Futurist*, describes another technological possibility: "If your car broke down or you were involved in an accident, you could just walk to the nearest SMI (serico magnetic