

**THE
HUMAN
SITUATION**

HARVEY JACKINS

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THE HUMAN SITUATION

by Harvey Jackins

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Intelligence can count the neighbors' sheep,
Or bore two mountain tunnels so they meet,
Can shrewdly estimate the sun's interior,
Or measure, well enough, galactic atoms
A million parsecs distant.

Close at hand

We've had more trouble grasping things that matter

We've not thought clearly about humans ever
In our recorded or suspected history.

Here,

Where the small group of us, by accident
Were moved to let the heating process flow,
Assisting and not lingering for a change,
Some rifts in this confusion have appeared.

These are rifts only yet. Confusion still
Persists when humans try to think of humans,
But these few insights, though beginnings only,
When checked with mirrors, periscopes, and logic
Are quite worth passing on to one another.

These glimpses can be critical to progress,
Can give one's effort purpose and direction
Much as the handlines staked for mountain traveler
Can guide to safety round the foggy steeps.

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FOREWORD

The basic theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling were worked out in the 1950's and 60's in Seattle and were communicated verbally among the Seattle area co-counselors. The first general publication of theoretical material came in the middle 1960's.

Rapid growth of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities began in the late 1960's, not so much in response to the publication of theory as to the personal communication of theory by experienced co-counselors who had left Seattle and settled in new localities. Once substantial numbers of people were co-counseling away from Seattle, however, a desire for more written theory was insistently expressed.

Theory and practice have continued to develop, and it has been a continuing problem to get this backlog of knowledge and new developments on paper and into wide distribution. The lag has been met to some extent by the informal but wide-ranging discussions of theory in *Rough Notes from Buck Creek I* and *Rough Notes from La Scherpa I*. These are transcripts from early workshops and have been invaluable source books for developing teachers of Re-evaluation Counseling classes. Tape cassettes such as the *Introductory Lecture* and the memorable *Affection, Love and Sex at the University of Maine* have also been useful, and many more of these are in preparation. Short articles and pamphlets have been published at intervals. The demand for published material, however, has continued to exceed the supply.

The present volume, *The Human Situation*, contains the short essays and articles that appeared between 1962 and early 1973, with some revision and some new material. Together with *The Human Side of Human Beings* and the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*, this book should round out the basic theoretical knowledge necessary for students of Re-evaluation Counseling to become functioning members of the co-counseling communities.

The written word, however, is no substitute for the actual experience of co-counseling. Everyone who has learned to use Re-evaluation Counseling has done so by first having a 'session', that is, being counseled by an experienced Re-evaluation Counselor, and Re-evaluation Counseling is not something to read about but to use. One-to-one contact will undoubtedly continue to be the basic method of first communication, but once that has been achieved, then the theoretical material in the present volume will be of vital use to developing co-counselors, teachers, and community leaders.

If you, the reader, are not presently in contact with the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities and would like to be, you are most welcome to write to me at 719 Second Avenue North, Seattle, Washington, 98109, and I will be happy to put you in touch with the experienced co-counselors who are nearest you.

Harvey Jackins
June 15, 1973

The present volume, *The Human Way*, compiles the best essays and articles that appeared between 1962 and early 1973, with some revisions and some new material. Together with *The Human Way of Nelson DeMeyer and the*

Thanks to the Reference Persons, teachers and members of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, to the counselors and workers at Personal Counselors in Seattle, and to my family for requesting this book and assisting it into print.

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Harvey Jacobs
June 15, 1973

THE HUMAN SITUATION

Thanks to the Reference Library, the
members of the Re-education Commission,
libraries, to the managers and workers of
Personal Co-operative, the
for materials
print.

THE
HUMAN

The world today has many brilliant people
Who come to false conclusions with their
brilliance.

Sometimes their logic falters where a pattern
Of old distress deflects their thinking process
But often they can claim their logic flawless
If they omit to question their assumptions.

So it behooves us, too, to look most sharply
At what *we* start with when we do *our* thinking,
And publish broadly the exact foundations
On which our growing structure is erected.

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THE POSTULATES OF RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING

Re-evaluation Counseling is a theory of human behavior and set of procedures for solving human problems. It is a complex theory, still growing, containing a large amount of information in its details and techniques. Its main assumptions can be summarized at present (1964) in the following 24 points.

1. Rational human behavior is qualitatively different from the behavior of other forms of life. (It is not *just* more complicated.)
2. The essence of rational human behavior consists of responding to each instant of living with a *new* response, created afresh at that moment to precisely fit and handle the situation of that moment as that situation is defined by the information received through the senses of the person. (All other living creatures respond with pre-set, inherited response patterns — “instincts.”)
3. This ability to create new, exact responses may be defined as *human* intelligence. It operates by comparing *and contrasting*

new information with that already on file from past experiences and constructing a response based on similarities to past situations but modified to allow for the differences.

4. Each human with a physically undamaged forebrain has a large inherent capacity for this rational kind of behavior, very large as compared to the best functioning of presently observable adult humans.
5. The natural emotional tone of a human being is zestful enjoyment of life. The natural relationship between any two human beings is loving affection, communication and co-operation.
6. The special human capacity for rational response is interrupted or suspended by an experience of physical or emotional distress. Information input through the senses then stores as an unevaluated and rigid accumulation, exhibiting the characteristics of a very complete, literal recording of all aspects of the incident.
7. Immediately after the distress experience is concluded or at the first opportunity thereafter, the distressed human spontaneously seeks to claim the aware attention of another human. If he is successful in claiming and keeping this aware attention of the other person, a process of what has been called *discharge* ensues.

8. *Discharge* is signalized externally by one or more of a precise set of physical processes. These are: crying or sobbing (with tears), trembling with cold perspiration, laughter, angry shouting and vigorous movement with warm perspiration (tantrum), live, interested talking; and in a slightly different way, yawning, often with scratching and stretching. Discharge requires considerable time for completion.
9. During discharge, the residue of the distress experience or experiences are being recalled and reviewed. (Not necessarily with awareness.)
10. Rational evaluation and understanding of the information received during the distress experience occurs automatically following discharge and *only* following discharge. It occurs only to the degree that discharge is completed. On completion, the negative and anti-rational effects of the experience are completely eliminated.
11. As a result of long term conditioning of the entire population, the spontaneous attempt to claim the aware attention of another person and proceed to discharge and evaluation is almost always rebuffed. (Don't cry. Be a big boy. Get a grip on yourself. Don't be afraid. Watch

your temper.) Applied to small children, these rebuffs begin and perpetuate the conditioning of the population which prevents discharge.

12. Undischarged and unevaluated recordings of distress experiences become compulsive patterns of behavior, feeling, and verbalizing when restimulated by later experiences which resemble them strongly enough. Under such conditions of restimulation the rational faculty of the human is again suspended and the new information of the current experience is added to the rigid distress pattern making it more far reaching in its effect and more easily restimulated in the future.

13. This effect of an undischarged distress experience recording in "playing" the bearer through a compulsive, repetitive re-enactment of distress experiences is an adequate explanation for all observable irrational behavior in human beings, of whatever kind or degree.

14. Any human being, and human beings in general, can become free of the restrictions, inhibitions and aberrations of the accumulated distress experience recordings by reinstating a relationship with some other person's or persons' aware attention and allowing the discharge and re-evaluation processes to proceed to completion.

15. Any infant can be allowed to remain free of aberration by protection from distress experiences and by allowing full discharge and re-evaluation on the ones that do occur.
16. Though a greater degree of awareness, rationality, understanding and skill on the part of the person whose aware attention is used ("The second person", "the counselor") provides for more rapid and more complete discharge and re-evaluation, the process is workable if even a small degree of awareness is available and if even a roughly correct attitude is maintained by the second person.
17. By "taking turns", i.e.; by exchanging the two roles periodically ("co-counseling"), two people can become increasingly effective with each other and can help free each other from accumulated distress patterns to a profound degree.
18. Distress patterns which have become too reinforced by repeated restimulation can become chronic, i.e.; surround and envelop all behavior and activity. To discharge these requires initiative, skill and resource on the part of the second person and considerable time for handling, but they are not different in origin or effect from lighter distresses, and can also be completely discharged and evaluated.

19. Distress experiences result from any unfavorable aspect of the environment. In our present state of civilization, the bulk of early distress experiences of any child result exactly from the dramatized distress recordings of adults which the adults received from earlier generations when they were children. We have a sort of transmission of aberration by contagion here—well meaning adults unwarily but systematically infecting each new, healthy-to-begin-with child with their burdened distress patterns.
20. The irrationalities of society (enforcements, punishments, exploitations, prejudices, group conflicts, wars) are reflections of the individual human distress patterns which have become fossilized in the society and often enforced by the rigidities of the society itself.
21. No individual human has an actual rational conflict of interest with another human. Given rationality, the actual desires of each can best be served by mutual co-operation.
22. Nothing prevents communication, agreement, and co-operation between any humans except distress patterns. Given knowledge of their nature, these distress patterns can be coped with, handled and removed.

23. Any individual or group can act rationally first without waiting for rational action on the part of someone else, and can take control of the situation by so doing.
24. It is always safe to be rational. Knowledge of the above information can be applied to all aspects of living and to all relationships with real profit and success.

Re-evaluation Counseling is a meaningful and useful description of the nature of human beings and the source of their difficulties. It is a rediscovery of the workable means for undoing human distress. It is a system of procedures for expediting this discharge and re-evaluation process. It is a promising and successful alternative to individual and social irrationality and distress.

1964