

PSYCHOLOGY OF ADJUSTMENT



AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Third Edition

JAMES F. CALHOUN
JOAN ROSS ACOCCELLA

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JAMES F. CALHOUN

University of Georgia

JOAN ROSS ACOCCELLA

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About the Authors

James F. Calhoun is Professor of Psychology at the University of Georgia and Associate Department Head there. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Florida and earned both his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He has taught at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he was Director of the Psychology Clinic. His primary area of interest is clinical psychology, particularly social perception change, community psychology, stress management, depression, marital adjustment, and human relations. He has been

a Fellow of the American Council of Education. He is coauthor of *Understanding Abnormal Psychology* (1983), and his articles have appeared in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* and the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

Joan Ross Acocella is a professional writer. She has researched and written numerous articles in various areas of the social sciences, and she is coauthor of *Abnormal Psychology: Current Perspectives*.

To the Instructor

Writing an adjustment text requires a certain daring, since, to a large extent, the authors decide what the subject matter is. In most other branches of psychology, the table of contents for a textbook is more or less fixed before the author comes along. In adjustment, on the other hand, the only requirement is that the book deal with the relationship between psychology and everyday life. This is a loose set of specifications, needless to say, and one that has produced widely different texts. Some are theoretically broad, others tied to one point of view. Some have concentrated on psychological information, resulting in something akin to introductory psychology texts. Others have concentrated on practical problem solving, resulting in something akin to "how-to" books.

In the first edition, we aimed for a combination of strengths—both psychological information *and* applications, both theoretical breadth *and* emphasis on those theories most relevant to normal adjustment. This method, we are happy to report, was very well received in the first edition, and therefore we retained it in the second and now in the third. The book's approach, then, is as follows:

General Procedure: To give approximately equal space to current psychological information and to practical problem solving, but to do this in such a way that the psychological information, once given, is almost immediately applied to the student's life.

Audience: First- and second-year students at two-year and four-year colleges. This

book does not assume that the student has already taken courses in psychology, but it could be as useful to psychology majors who have had introductory courses as to non-majors encountering psychology for the first time. Most important, the book is geared not only to the late-adolescent freshman, but also to the many adults who are going back to college after having worked, married, and had children.

Goal: To teach students (1) what psychologists have learned about human behavior and (2) how to use this knowledge to evaluate and (if they so choose) change their own attitudes and behavior.

Theoretical Orientation: We present all the major theories of personality, and in dealing with various topics, we present whatever theories are most relevant. However, the goal of helping students to change their ways of thinking and behaving has led us to rely especially on two theoretical positions: (1) behavioral theory, for its valuable self-change techniques, and (2) humanistic-essential theory, for its insistence on people's ability to choose, from day to day, how they will live their lives. In no way do we try to "sell" these theories to the student. However, our book, like most books concerned with self-change, has been influenced by these theories, and therefore they deserve mention here.

Subject: The individual's interaction with his or her self and with other people. That is what we mean by "adjustment"—the individual's way of influencing, and being in-

fluenced by, these two factors. Accordingly, these two factors are the topics of the two major units of our book. In addition, there is a chapter on the physical environment—how it affects us and how we can affect it. The book closes with two “application” chapters, dealing with the major areas of life in which people apply their adjustment skills.

Method: As we have already stated, this book has as its two goals providing psychological information and helping students use that information in their own lives. In keeping with these two goals, our chapters alternate between “information” and “problem-solving.” (A glance at the table of contents will make this clear.)

General Information

Four of our chapters provide theoretical background on the general topics of the book.

- *Chapter 1, “Adjustment: A Way of Handling Problems,”* outlines major personality theories.
- *Chapter 2, “The Self: What It Is and How to Analyze It,”* describes various theories of the self.
- *Chapter 8, “The Social Self: How We Interact,”* explains the major theories of social psychology.
- *Chapter 14, “The Environment: How It Affects Us and How We Can Affect It,”* describes the theories of environmental psychology.

Specific Information

Five of our chapters describe what psychologists have been able to discover about the more specific topics covered in the book.

- *Chapter 3, “The Self-Concept: What It Is and How It Develops”*—This includes Rogers’s

theory of the self-concept, Festinger’s theory of cognitive consistency, and a discussion of the self-concept as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

- *Chapter 5, “Self-Control: What It Is and How It Develops”*—The major mechanisms of learning (respondent conditioning, operant conditioning, reinforcement, etc.) are explained here.
- *Chapter 9, “Social Perception: What It Is and How It Operates”*—Attitude formation, attraction, and stereotyping are discussed in detail.
- *Chapter 11, “Social Influence: What It Is and How It Operates”*—This describes the processes of modeling, conformity, and persuasion, including persuasion in advertising.
- *Chapter 14, “The Environment: How It Affects Us and How We Can Affect It”*—This explains how the built environment (rooms, seating arrangements, buildings, neighborhoods, cities) influences human behavior and how people perceive their environments.

Problem-Solving

In eight chapters we take the student, step by step, through techniques for solving adjustment problems.

- *Chapter 2, “The Self: What It Is and How to Analyze It”*—This describes the procedure for analyzing an adjustment problem in order to discover ways of changing.
- *Chapter 4, “The Self-Concept: How to Change It”*—This introduces the student to cognitive restructuring through self-talk.
- *Chapter 6, “Self-Control: How to Change It”*—This emphasizes stimulus control and self-reinforcement.
- *Chapter 7, “Three Self-Control Problems: Diet and Exercise, Study Habits, and Anxiety”*—This suggests specific techniques for dealing with these three areas. Included are the SQ3R study method, armchair desensitization, and the use of exercise for alleviating stress.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

- *Chapter 10, "Social Perception: How to Change It"*—This shows how we can improve close relationships by revising unrealistic expectations.
- *Chapter 12, "Social Influence: How to Change It"*—This describes the reciprocal nature of relationships and how they can be improved by such means as listening to others more carefully, giving clear messages, and criticizing constructively.
- *Chapter 13, "Three Social Problems: Making Contact, Becoming Assertive, and Fostering Intimacy"*—This offers step-by-step procedures for overcoming shyness and nonassertive behavior, and it describes how intimacy can be fostered through informal interaction and self-disclosure.
- *Chapter 14, "The Environment: How It Affects Us and How We Can Affect It"*—This shows students how to analyze and change their behavioral responses to their environments.

Certain of these items are rare in the field of adjustment texts:

1. Thorough discussion of how to improve our perceptions of the people close to us (Chapter 10).
2. Discussion of how personal adjustment is affected by the environment (Chapter 14).

To our knowledge, the first edition of this book was the first adjustment text to discuss these matters in detail.

Applications

A new feature of the third edition is the set of two "application" chapters, addressing areas of life in which, for better or worse, people apply their adjustment skills.

- *Application Chapter A, "Intimate Adjustment: Love, Sex, and Marriage,"* deals with those three topics as well as sex roles.

- *Application Chapter B, "Adjustment and Maladjustment in Adulthood,"* discusses work, child-rearing, midlife and aging, and abnormal psychology.

Adapted in part from the Human Issues essays of the first two editions, the application chapters consist of brief, lively discussions. For each problem area we offer current information and theories. Then we raise the adjustment questions. (Is there such a thing as love? Are children harmed by day-care?) Finally, in each section we offer adjustment tips incorporating principles from the earlier chapters: self-concept, realistic and unrealistic expectations, perceptions of self and others. These chapters are like a bridge from the book to everyday life.

Extra Features

The information given in the chapters is supplemented by

- *Boxes.* These are brief inserts within the chapters, covering a wide range of topics that will be of special interest to the students—for example, problem-solving training for married couples, the use of sophisticated techniques of persuasion in presidential politics, and the research of Mahoney and others on self-control training for athletes.
- *Appendix: "Getting Help."* This appendix explains the different kinds of psychotherapy available and gives the student some practical advice on how to go about getting psychological help.

Pedagogical Aids

To help the student learn what the book has to say, we have used a number of pedagogical aids.

- *Chapter Outlines.* The major headings of each chapter are presented in outline form at the opening of the chapter to give the student a clear preview.

- *Chapter Summaries.* A summary at the end of each chapter recapitulates the central points. This allows students to review what they have read.
- *Activities.* At the end of each chapter is a list of suggested activities—small “experiments” that students can conduct in their own daily lives (e.g., analyzing a television commercial). The activities reinforce the material in the chapters and help the students see that the principles of psychology really do apply to ordinary life.
- *Projects.* Also at the end of each chapter is a suggestion for a project, larger in scale than the activities. In some cases, the project is an exercise in “consciousness-raising,” to show the students how the principles outlined in the chapter do in fact apply to their own lives. In other chapters, the project proposes a step-by-step scenario for self-change. These projects can be used as homework assignments.
- *Glossary.* At the end of the book there is a glossary defining all the technical terms used in the book. Thus, students can easily look up terms whose meanings they have forgotten.
- *Definitions.* In the text of the chapter, new terms are italicized, and their definitions are not just implied; they are explicitly stated, so that the student knows exactly what the term means.
- *Examples.* As psychologists know, people tend to learn by observing others. Accordingly, we have provided plenty of “others” for the students to observe, in vignettes and in dialogues. When we explain a psychological principle or theory, we give an example of how it works in ordinary life. When we outline a self-change technique, we follow someone, step by step, through the procedure. (See, for instance, the “sample script” on pages 106–111: this teaches the student, by example, how to use self-talk to improve the self-concept.)

ical aid is its writing style. One of our major efforts has been to make the chapters, line by line, as interesting and as clear as possible. We speak directly to the students, explaining psychological principles in a down-to-earth and commonsensical manner and inviting them, again and again, to look at their own lives in light of these theories. The text should be easy to read, but in no way does it talk down to the students—an approach that most students sniff out quickly and find insulting.

A note on pronouns: the regular use of “he” and “him” to describe human beings in general leaves out the female half of that group. This problem cannot always be solved by using plurals, and the constant use of “he or she” is cumbersome. Therefore, our text alternates between male and female pronouns. This practice—or rather, the “she” part of it—may surprise some readers the first few times they encounter it, but we consider it the fairest solution to the problem.

The only large organizational change in the present edition is the addition of the application chapters, resulting in a new, four-pronged approach: general information, specific information, problem solving, and applications. Aside from that, the research has been thoroughly updated, and new material has been woven into all the chapters. It is impossible to list all of this new material, but the following are some of the points on which the text has been enriched:

- Burnout and its relation to stress (Chapter 1)
- The new psychological advice industry (Chapter 1)
- Self-schemata (Chapter 3)
- Self-efficacy (Chapter 3)
- Nutrition and exercise (Chapter 7)
- Shifting trends in weight control (Chapter 7)
- Networking and its relation to good adjustment (Chapter 11)
- Sources of interpersonal aggression (Chapter 13)

Finally, a book’s most important pedagog-

- Nuclear power and its effect on individual psychology (Chapter 14)
- The demise of the sexual revolution (Application Chapter A)
- New trends in marriage and divorce (Application Chapter B)

As for the pedagogical aids, a number of the activities have been revised, on the basis of feedback from instructors as to which were more "do-able" and which less. The projects remain largely the same. Again they include a number of self-assessment scales, which, aside from the fact that students seem to enjoy doing them, help students see that psychological principles do apply to their own lives. The scales also help students to pinpoint areas where they might want to change.

That, in sum, is what the third edition of this book has to offer. Finally, as aids to teaching and learning, we have provided:

The Student Handbook: Readings, Cases, and Study Guide. For each chapter in the text, this handbook repeats the outline and offers additional learning aids: review questions with answers, and a selected reading (e.g., a case study or a description of some interesting research project) followed by questions.

The Instructor's Manual. This guide of-

fers, for each chapter in the text, the following teaching aids: chapter outline; suggestions for demonstrations, classroom discussions, student-involvement projects, and audio-visual aids; objective and essay questions for use in quizzes and examinations; questions and answers on the readings offered in the *Student Handbook*.

This book has benefited from much kind and expert assistance. The third edition still reflects, to a large extent, work on the first edition by our editors Virginia Hoitsma and Paul Shensa in planning and Elaine Rosenberg in production. For their contributions to the third edition we would like to thank our sponsoring editors Rochelle Diogenes and Susan Badger, assistant editor Renee Shively Leonard, our longtime colleague Suzanne Thibodeau, editing manager, and our patient and helpful editing supervisor, Tom Holton. McGraw-Hill and the authors would like to thank the following reviewers for their comments and suggestions: Charles Alexander, Rock Valley College; Cleveland Evans, Bellevue College; David Lasky, Lebanon Valley College; Debbie Lineweaver, New River Community College; Tom Marsh, Pitt Community College; Gerald Rubin, Central Virginia Community College; and Catherine Wambach, University of Minnesota. Finally, James Calhoun wishes to thank his wife, Georgia, for her support and encouragement.

To the Student

Psychology is the study of human thoughts and behavior: what people think and do, and why. This particular psychology textbook is concerned with adjustment, the most practical side of psychology. The book has two goals: (1) to pass along to you some of what psychologists have discovered about ordinary, everyday behavior and (2) to show you how you can use these principles to solve ordinary problems in your own life—problems in seeing yourself realistically, problems in getting yourself to study, problems in meeting other people, problems in getting along with the people you care about, and many other types of problems as well.

Along with the main text of our chapters, we have included a number of aids—devices to help you learn the material and make practical use of it. If you take advantage of them, you will get more out of the book. They are:

Organization. The main body of this book is divided into two units: the self and others. Dealing with these two things—and also with the environment, the subject of an additional chapter—is what we mean by “adjustment.” In each of the two main units, there are “information” chapters, which give psychological information, and “change” chapters, which tell you how you can change areas of your life if you want to. If you turn now to the table of contents and read the chapter titles, you will see what we mean by “information” chapters and “change” chapters.

Chapter Outlines. The first item in every chapter is an outline of that chapter. This

will give you a broad idea of what the chapter is about before you start to read it. It is also useful for testing yourself before an exam. Just go down the list and see if you can recapitulate the main points covered under each heading and define any technical terms included in the heading.

Definitions. When we use a technical term for the first time, we italicize it and give a clear, straightforward definition. It will help you to pay close attention to these definitions, since the terms are likely to come up again and again.

Glossary. At the end of the book there is a glossary, listing the technical terms in the book along with their definitions. So if you come across a term and have forgotten what it means, look it up in the glossary.

Activities. At the end of each chapter, there is a list of “activities,” suggestions for things you can do (like analyzing a television commercial) to test the psychological principles we describe and to make use of them for your own benefit. The activities should be fun, and they should also help you learn the material. What we use, we learn.

Boxes. Scattered here and there in the chapters are the “boxes.” These are short, boxed-in essays about interesting sidelights on the main points of the chapter.

Summaries. At the end of the text of each chapter comes the summary, which simply repeats the main points of the chapter in the form of numbered paragraphs. If you read

the summary immediately after reading the chapter, it will help you to remember the material for the future. The summaries should also be helpful in reviewing the material for examinations.

Projects. The final item in every chapter is a "project," which is simply a longer activity. Like the activities, the projects are there to show you how to use psychological principles in your own life. And by using them, you will learn them.

Those, then, are our learning aids; together with the text of the chapters, they constitute the main body of this book. In addition, there are two special features:

Application Chapters. At the end of the book are two special "application" chapters. They are there to give you information and psychological theories about some of the most ordinary but important aspects of living: sex roles, love, sex, marriage, child rearing, work, middle age, and old age. There is also a section on abnormal psychology: how psychologists define serious psychological disturbance and what forms it can take.

Appendix: "Getting Help." At the back of the book is one final essay, on how to get

professional help if you have a psychological problem that you can't seem to solve for yourself. This essay describes the kinds of psychotherapy that are available and offers suggestions for finding a good therapist.

We wish you pleasure with this book—the kind of pleasure that comes from understanding. To many of us, personal problems seem totally personal, not something we share with the rest of the human race. Psychology teaches us that the very opposite is true: although each of us is unique, our problems are in fact quite similar to those of other human beings. It also teaches us that these problems follow certain rules, which means that we can understand them and go to work on them. To take hold of a problem in this way is an exhilarating experience, not only because it might result in our actually *solving* the problem, but also because it reminds us that our lives really do belong to us. Mysterious as life sometimes seems, it is not beyond our understanding. Nor is it beyond our control. Within limits, we can choose the kind of human beings we will be and the kind of lives we will live. If this book helps you find out what choices you have and to act on this knowledge, it will have done its job.

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