

LEARNING TO EVALUATE: CARL ROGERS ON

Rogers (1964) holds that we are born with a set of healthy values, such as hunger satisfaction, security, pain avoidance, and curiosity. As we grow up we learn a more artificial and inefficient value system: we learn it at home, at school, ^{and} at work, from our relatives, teachers, bosses, TV shows, and the like: we introject ^{or internalize} other people's values even when they conflict with our own. For example, the North American youngster learns that making money is the highest good, whereas communism is the greatest evil; that cramming is good, whereas exploratory behavior is bad; that team work is good, and so is smart cheating; and that Coca-cola and cars are more valuable than books or records. The individual makes these values his own even though they are borrowed from others; he does so in order to be accepted and loved; he holds ^{on to} such values ~~in~~

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with one another or
dogmatically, i.e. even if they conflict/with his own experience: they are
beyond criticism and empirical test; hence he fails to see contradictions,
e.g. between "love thy neighbor like yourself" and war mongering or money
does
making; or, when he/realize such value conflicts, he is at a loss to solve
them by himself. However, such value rigidity is not a terminal disease: it
can be cured, by having the patient trust his own life experiences and examine
critically the anachronistic and inconsistent set of values he has introjected.
In the course of this process the individual achieves self-enhancement and inde-
pendence of judgment.