

# Carl rogers

Psychology, Psychotherapy



Carl Rogers Carl Rogers is known today as one of the most popular and influential American psychologists and is among the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology. He was born on January 8, 1902 in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. He was one of six children to Walter Rogers and Julia Cushing. His father was a very successful civil engineer and his mother was a housewife, as many women were during this time period. At the age of twelve, Carl Rogers and his family moved to a farm about 30 miles west of Chicago and it was here that he was to spend his adolescence. Julia Cushing, a devout Christian, had Carl Rogers begin his education in a strict religious environment. Due to his harsh upbringing, Rogers became rather isolated, independent, and self-disciplined. With the ability to read well before kindergarten, it was obvious that Rogers was ahead of his peers when it came to child development. He planned to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison to study agriculture with undergraduate focus on history and religion, but then switched to religion to study for the ministry. During this time, Rogers was selected for a trip to Beijing, China for the " World Student Christian Federation Conference" for six months that would ironically result in him doubting his religious beliefs. After having these doubts, Rogers attended a seminar named, " Why am I Entering the Ministry?" for two years. He graduated the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Bachelor's Degree in History and would soon after change his career choice. After graduation he married Helen Elliot and switched to the clinical psychology program of Columbia University, and received his Ph. D. in 1931. He then began clinical work at the Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It was there that he learned about Otto Rank's theory and therapy

techniques and began to develop his own approach. In 1945, Rogers was invited to set up a counseling center at the University of Chicago. While working there he published his first major work, *Client-Centered Therapy*; this was where he outlined his basic theory. His theory was based upon years of experience dealing with his clients. He believed that every person has the motivation to continue to grow and develop. In other words, he saw mental health as a normal progression of life and mental illness as distortions of one's natural tendency. The entire theory is built on a single "force of life" he calls the actualizing tendency or self-actualization. This was one of Carl Rogers most important contributions to psychology and for a person to reach their potential a number of factors must be satisfied. Actualizing tendency meant that if every individual strives to make the best of their existence and fails to do so; it is not for a lack of desire. He believed that humans would flourish and grow to their full potential if the conditions were right, but we are constrained by our environment. However, because every human is a unique individual, we are meant to develop differently according to our personalities. Rogers stated that humans can only be hindered from reaching their goal when a poor self-concept or negative external influences disrupt them. One of the main factors when trying to achieve self-actualization is congruence. Congruence is when a person's "ideal self" (who they aspire to be) is the same as who they believe they are (self-image). Rogers described a person who has reached congruence as the "fully functioning person". A "fully functioning person" was one who was pleased with their reality and continued to grow and change. Rogers identified five characteristics of the "fully functioning person": open to experience, live for the moment, trust

feelings, creativity, and satisfaction with life. Although the "fully functioning person" was ideal, Rogers realized and made it clear that most people do not ultimately achieve this state in life. Another one of Rogers's main factors in achieving self-actualization is self-concept. Self-concept is the organized, consistent set of beliefs about one's self. The two major sources of influence on a person's self-concept are childhood experiences and evaluation by others. According to Rogers, people want to behave in ways which are consistent with their ideal self. The closer our self-image and ideal-self are to each other, the more consistent or congruent we are and the higher our sense of self-worth. Rogers's humanistic approach states that each person has a unique self-concept but everyone's self-concept includes three components: self-worth, self-image, and ideal self. Seeing as though Carl Rogers was a therapist, he also had to do his part in assisting his clients in reaching self-actualization. Rogers believed that in order to help a client achieve their full potential a therapist must express complete acceptance of the patient. He began to use the expression "client" instead of "patient" due to the fact that the individuals that he was counseling did need help but not within the same regard that a medically ill person does. Today throughout the field of psychology it is a worldwide practice to address the individual as a client instead of a patient. He believed that a client did not need to completely surrender themselves to their therapists but they did need the assistance of the therapist. Self-actualization is centered on the idea of developing towards self-reliance and away from negative external influences. In conclusion, Carl Rogers made a huge impact on the field of psychology. He developed the idea of self-actualization and the concept that

every individual strives to achieve their fullest potential in life. In an effort to assist his clients in achieving self-actualization, he developed Client-Centered Therapy which suggested that a client should be a catalyst for their own healing and that therapist's role is to provide guidance and structure. He also did a lot of research with congruence and the "fully functioning person", determining that the only way to reach these stages in life is to have a congruent "ideal self" and self-image. These developments are only some of Carl Rogers's contributions to the world, throughout his career he received numerous amounts of prestigious awards validating how important he was to the field of psychology. Works Cited Kirschenbaum, Howard. On Becoming Carl Rogers. Oxford, England: Delacorte, 1979. Print. Rogers, Carl. Client Centered Therapy. London, United Kingdom: Constable, 2003. Print. McLeod, Saul. Carl Rogers. Simply Psychology, 2007. Web. 16 August 2012. Hall, Kathy Jo. Carl Rogers. Muskingum College, 1997. Web. 16 August 2012. Boeree, George C. Carl Rogers. Personality Theories, 2006. Web. 16 August 2012.