

# Summary of "The Human Side of Human Beings"

## The Theory of Re-evaluation Counseling

by Harvey Jackins

**Introduction** - This theory presents a solution to the basic problem of human irrationality.

This is a problem that impedes the handling of all the other key questions now confronting the world.

**Chapter 1** - This book presents a short description of what a human being is like in the important area of the human's response to the environment.

**Chapter 2** - Human beings are like other living creatures in their active responses to the environment more than they are like non-living matter with its overall passivity to the environment.

**Chapter 3** - Human beings are different from all other living creatures in the type of active responses they make to the environment.

All living creatures with the exception of humans are able to respond actively to the environment only on the basis of pre-set patterns of response (instincts).

A human being is different.

Human beings have the ability to create and use a new, unique response to each new, unique situation that they meet (this is the definition of intelligence).

**Chapter 4** - This special human ability of ours (intelligence) seems to work as follows:

1) It receives information from the environment through our senses;

2) It compares the new information with information in our memory that has already been understood, and the similarities are noted;

3) At the same time, the new information is contrasted with the information in our memory, the differences are noted as well as the similarities, and the new information is understood in relation to other information;

4) Based on this understanding, a new, accurate response is created to fit the present situation as far as the available information allows;

5) The new information from the present situation is then stored as useful material with which to evaluate future experiences.

**Chapter 5** - This flexible intelligence is possessed by each human being in a very large amount.

The person who appears to be a "genius" is someone whom circumstances have allowed to keep a considerable portion of her/his flexible intelligence functioning while everyone around her or him was having theirs inhibited.

**Chapter 6** - In this chapter Harvey Jackins presents a diagram to illustrate the enormous intelligence of a human being.

**Chapter 7** - This chapter describes other inherent characteristics of human beings.

Besides vast intelligence, human beings have a natural way of feeling.

The natural way for human beings to feel is zestful, able to greatly enjoy life.

Human beings also have a natural relationship.

The natural relationship between any two human beings is to enjoy affection for another person, to enjoy affection from another person, to enjoy communication with another person, and to enjoy cooperation with another person.

The rest of human behavior and feeling apart from these characteristics (irrationality and pain) is not inherent but is acquired--it is the result of something that went wrong.

**Chapter 8** - What goes wrong is that we get hurt, emotionally or physically.

While hurting, emotionally or physically, our flexible human intelligence slows down or stops functioning.

This is only the beginning of a process that interferes with the functioning of our minds.

**Chapter 9** - During a distress experience, the information that enters the mind through the senses does not stop.

While our intelligence is not functioning well due to distress, this information is mis-stored in a very different way than the information from a non-distressing experience.

The mis-stored information can be described in various ways.

1) The mis-stored information appears as a frozen rigidity in the thinking, behavior, feelings, and attitudes of the person that seems to make no sense in the present.

2) The information from a distress experience is not available to the mind bit by bit but only in one big piece—not evaluated, not understood, and at times not remembered.

3) The mis-stored information behaves as though it were a very literal, detailed, and complete recording of everything that happened during the painful experience, including the feelings of distress and the inability to think.

**Chapter 10** - The first bad result of the mis-stored information is that a part of our enormous intelligence is not functioning. As many distress experiences accumulate, we increasingly lack the capacity to think.

**Chapter 11** - There is a second bad result of the mis-stored information.

When we are confronted by a new experience that is similar enough to the recorded distress experience, we feel compulsively forced to meet it with an attempted reenactment of the old distress experience.

In other words, when something in the present reminds us of a past distress experience, there is a pull to feel the same distress feelings as in the past and take the same attitudes and actions that we did at that time, although the situation has changed.

**Chapter 12** - During restimulation the information from the current experience that is entering the mind is also mis-stored.

The effect is that the rigid pattern grows.

The person is then predisposed to be upset more easily, by more things, more frequently, more deeply, and for longer periods of time.

**Chapter 13** - This chapter describes the beginnings of damage in the early life of the human being. Early in our life we are wide open to be hurt repeatedly, primarily by the distress patterns of the adults around us.

**Chapter 14** - As adults the result of this process of damage is that we use perhaps ten percent of our intelligence and human capacities.

The other ninety percent is covered by distress patterns and mis-stored information.

Most of these patterns are "intermittent."

They inhibit the capacity of the human being and lower her/his potential, but they do not dominate her/his behavior nor feeling except when they are re-stimulated by particular circumstances in her/his environment.

These recordings do not operate until the person is reminded too much of the past distress experience.

**Chapter 15** - For all adults, a few recordings have been restimulated to the point where they become chronic.

They dominate our thinking, behavior, attitudes, and feelings all the time.

The person is flexible and intelligent only in ways that do not contradict the chronic pattern.

We defend these chronic patterns and consider them our "personalities" or "idiosyncracies."

Freeing a person from a chronic pattern requires more work and ingenuity than an intermittent pattern.

**Chapter 16** - This theory explains why rational human beings behave irrationally.

There are no bad people.

All human beings are good.

Human irrationality is the result of old hurts in the life of the person, which have not been healed.

**Chapter 17** - People do not have to become hurt and irrational.

Young people can be protected from most distress experiences and helped to free themselves from those that do occur.

This is simple and clear although it will not be easy to achieve.

We adults have many distresses that interfere with our ability to help young people to discharge their hurts and avoid new ones.

But adults with even a little information and understanding can make a significant difference in the lives of young people.

**Chapter 18** - The process of damage and loss caused by distress experiences can be reversed and the lost intelligence and abilities can be recovered.

Human beings have a natural healing process (the discharge of distress).

There are various forms of discharge (indicated by crying, shaking, laughter, the expression of anger, yawning, and interested, non-repetitive talking). Discharge drains the distress from the mis-stored residue of a bad experience.

When hurt, an individual would inherently turn to an attentive adult and begin to discharge the distress spontaneously until the distress is drained fully.

After discharge the mis-stored information is stored correctly and the distress experience is clearly understood (these last two steps of the healing process are what we call re-evaluation). The recording is no longer there to be triggered by similar incidents.

Then more of the person's intelligence is available to function again.

**Chapter 19** - Patterns of controlling discharge interfere with the healing process.

All people discharge in these spontaneous ways in the beginning. But the process requires the aware attention of another person to proceed to completion.

These patterns of interfering with discharge exist in all cultures and are passed from generation to generation.

**Chapter 20** - People are always seeking attention from other people and trying to discharge and heal, but often their efforts are frustrated because other people are also looking for attention and at times have difficulty giving attention.

**Chapter 21** - Apparently the ability to heal from distress in human beings is never lost, except possibly due to damage to the brain or other organs involved in discharge and re-evaluation.

We assume that complete recovery from distress is possible.

Each step that a person takes in this direction is satisfying and worthwhile-- it is a gain in our enjoyment of living.

**Chapter 22** - Two people can help one another heal and recover their inherent intelligence and other human capacities.

They can do this by taking turns listening to each other and by assisting the process of discharge and re-evaluation.

People can learn to make this process work well in fundamentals classes and by ongoing participation in the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

**Chapter 23** - The growth of this movement has important implications for humanity and the recovery of human rationality everywhere in the world.

**Chapter 24** - This chapter describes the progress made by Re-evaluation Counseling thirteen years after the first publication of "The Human Side of Human Beings."

**Chapter 25** - This chapter describes the continuing progress of Re-evaluation Counseling twenty-nine years after the first publication of "The Human Side of Human Beings."

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November 2014