

Reader Views

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Life Skills – Improve the Quality of Your Life with Metapsychology

By Marian K. Volkman

Loving Healing Press (2005)

Reviewed by Cherie Burbach for Reader Views (4/06)

How good can life get? Well that's the question we all strive to figure out. "Life Skills – Improve the Quality of Your Life with Metapsychology" addresses this question on the emotional, mental, and physical levels. It also spends time on how we can improve the quality of our relationships. "Life Skills" highlights key factors from metapsychology (as developed by Frank A. Gerbode, MD) and shows how these factors can be used on a daily basis for improved overall quality of life.

For those like me that are new to this subject, "Life Skills" begins with a description on how to use the book and get the most out of it. It then continues with the goals of the book, and as you'll see these are goals most of want in our lives:

- to be fully present
- to increase your knowledge and awareness of how life works
- to bring about positive change in your mental and emotional world, which makes bringing about positive change in the outer environment much easier to do
- to accessing more of your potential change in the outer environment much easier to do
- to access more of your potential through practical exercises

Early in the book I found the exercise on recognizing (and getting a handle on) our judgments of others and feelings of envy or jealousy interesting and enlightening. I also found the discussion on "life as a journey" versus living "life as art" very relevant to my own world.

The book is broken into a few paragraphs about a particular point from the chapter topic, bullet items to ponder (or write about), and an exercise to do (or just think about) to reinforce the lesson. Finally, the end of each chapter summarizes the topics covered.

The book is sprinkled with humor throughout to ease the reading along. Best of all, there is no wrong way to do the exercises in the book. All exercises are meant to help increase your own awareness about particular areas of your life. I found I got as much out of thinking about the exercises as I did writing them out.

“Like Skills” doesn’t try and change you, but encourages you to just first *observe* your life (and provides helpful hints on how to do that) and pay attention to what *is* working. Along that line, I found the emotional scale discussed in Chapter 3 very helpful and applicable to several situations I had going on currently in my life.

I also appreciated the recurrent theme throughout the book that encourages us, in becoming happier, more emotionally stable people, to get along with others as part of that involvement. Too often self-improvement books focus only on ourselves – and perhaps even to the detriment of others. This book doesn’t take this type of view, and it’s refreshing.

There is a discussion on repairing breakdowns in communication I think every reader will find useful. Who among us hasn’t had an odd misstep in communication with someone we care about? As we know this type of problem can lead to something much bigger if left ignored, that is, if the communication doesn’t continue to move forward. This book reinforces reasons why you don’t want to hold back communication during these types of issues, and why doing so can just make things worse.

Perhaps what is most appreciated about this book is that it uses examples from everyday life – things that each of us deal with and encounter all the time – to guide us through the exercises. So often when we’re happy with the normal everyday things in life, we’re able to handle the bigger challenges with grace and humility. When we’re content with ourselves we’re also able to help others during times of distress.

“Life Skills” provides some additional thoughts in the afterward section to help conclude the book, as well as a glossary to define any terms the reader may not be familiar with. I’ll have to admit that before I read “Life Skills,” I was not at all familiar with metapsychology and therefore not sure what to expect. However, I was quickly drawn in to the book because of its no-nonsense approach and real-life application. This really is a book that anyone, regardless of their current situation in life, can benefit from.