
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Varenhorst, B. B. (1983). *Real friends: Becoming the friend you'd like to have*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 194 pages.

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Teachers, counsellors, parents, and adolescents alike will be interested in this informative and sensitive account of the "bumps" and "handicaps" of adolescence and how the skills developed in peer counselling groups better equip the individual to cope with these difficulties.

Barbara Varenhorst has expounded on the universal need, expressed by students themselves, "to know about oneself, to care for and relate to others." The descriptions of the various masks behind which are hidden our true feelings and the fears expressed by those who cannot approach others are presented and the first step to forming friendships is suggested: starting a conversation. The basic skills needed in starting a conversation are developed and specific instructions are given to prepare for and to practice these skills.

Ms. Varenhorst continues with a series of four "conversational tools" associated with questions. Most of Chapter 3, "What do you ask?" provides an activity which helps the individual in identifying, developing and using the *closed-ended*, *informational*, *open-ended*, and *personal* types of questions. The activity is presented in such a way that individuals working in groups or independently can benefit from the exercise.

The author compares the conversation to a "seesaw" which involves asking questions and listening to answers. She clearly points out, however, that there are two types of "listening": listening with your ears and listening with your heart. The "desire" to learn how to listen is described as being the basic element required in order to follow four guidelines for improving an individual's listening skills. These guidelines deal with: (a) becoming familiar with your listening and observing "filter", (b) asking the meaning of words not understood or how they are being used in the context of the message given, (c) taking the risk of responding to the feelings and meaning thought to be heard, and, (d) observing body behaviours, facial expressions and tone of voice for additional information being offered.

In Chapter 5, the author shifts the reader's attention from skill development to the expression of feelings. She explains why we do and say hurtful things and how to overcome these behaviours. She supplies a checklist of things to do and encourages the reader to "ask how he/she would like to be treated" when deciding which method to use for what person or situation.

To be an effective "counsellor-friend" one must also understand what is helpful and what isn't. The author offers some suggestions to help individuals in responding effectively and practically to the problems of their friends. One of these suggestions encompasses rating your own helping qualities. In relating the story of the Good Samaritan, the author answers the inevitable question "What do I get out of this?" The reward, she quickly points out, is not a visible one but a *precious* one.

Chapter 7, *The Me I Am Now and the Person I Am Becoming*, helps the individual “explore him/herself.” A well developed exercise takes the reader through three laps: the past, the present and the future. One is vividly aware of how difficult it is “to explore deep inside oneself and examine what holds one’s life together and keeps one going”. The reader is lead in thinking about the value of life, the gambles of finding happiness, and the gambles of commitment. Through a series of questions, the author makes it possible for individuals to determine which traits and qualities they will wish to possess as they grow into helping persons. The personal traits or qualities suggested are presented in a checklist format which allows the individual to rank those considered to be most important.

Death and dying! How does one deal with these facts of life? What does one say to someone who is dying? What comfort can one bring to those grieving the loss of a loved one? Through experiences with death and dying, as accounted by peer counsellors, friends and acquaintances of the author, she emphasizes the importance of attributing greater care of the relationships one still has. She explains why it is hard to say good-bye and how to respond to the needs of the grieving person.

As the author relates the “happy endings” to the story of being a real friend, she reinforces the importance of *learning how* to be a real friend. In order to reach the most effective stage in a developing friendship, change is necessary—a change in behaviour, a change in beliefs. The changes are gradual but they do occur.

In Chapter 10, the final chapter, Ms. Varenhorst develops the peer counselling concept: teaching how to become a real friend. The philosophy, the framework and the curriculum of the program are described briefly, as are the rewards for the helpers and for those seeking help.

Those readers who wish to begin a peer counselling group would benefit greatly from this self-help book. The author has, throughout her manual, dealt with very sensitive issues in a very caring fashion. I do recommend this book to all who wish to be “the friend they would like to have.”

Bernier, J.-J. (1985). *Théorie des tests. Principes et techniques de base*. (2e éd.) Chicoutimi: Gaëtan Morin, éditeur, xxi + 225 pages, 25 \$.

Évalué par: Dany Laveault, professeur, Université d’Ottawa.

“Théorie des tests. Principes et techniques de base” est la deuxième édition d’un manuel publié sous le même titre en 1984. Le contenu de la deuxième édition est essentiellement le même que celui de la première. Il s’agit d’un livre de base en mesure et évaluation. Il couvre les notions fondamentales de mesure, évaluation et statistiques, la théorie classique des tests (notions de validité et de fidélité) et leur application aux problèmes de classement et de sélection, d’analyse d’items, d’interprétation et de présentation de normes et de résultats.

La première édition de ce manuel a été accueillie avec déception d’autant plus que l’ouvrage couvrirait par son contenu un domaine pratiquement vierge de la littérature québécoise en mesure et évaluation et qu’il correspondait à un besoin. Séguin et Ajar (1984) dans leur évaluation de la première édition