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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ SELF-HELP

Changing Behavior: Immediately Transform Your Relationships with Easy to Learn, Proven Communication Skills

Georgianna Donadio
SoulWork Press (November 2011)
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In *Changing Behavior*, Georgianna Donadio, a Florence Nightingale scholar and nurse advocate, outlines her innovative methods for training health-care professionals to better communicate with patients and encourage sustainable behavior changes. She also discusses how recent cultural trends in the United States have contributed to rising rates of depression, cancer, obesity, and diabetes, and she offers a detailed explanation of how improved communication and healthier relationships help to reverse these trends.

In order to gain long-lasting health, Donadio believes that people need to have satisfying relationships with others to overcome the deep-seated fears that often thwart attempts to change unhealthy practices. She notes, “As human beings, we find all change stressful. It requires adaptation and learning new strategies for a new job, relationship, living environment, or activity. We want to avoid the stress of change and remain in *the known* where we have identified and defined our adaptation strategies to suit our comfort level.”

The author’s Behavioral Engagement program teaches health-care professionals how to gain the trust of their patients by actively listening to their fears and concerns. This model involves being “purely present” to others and Donadio lays out how to achieve this behavioral transformation through twenty detailed components that offer readers plenty of practical examples, from changes in body language and eye contact to techniques for clearing one’s own mind of personal issues. Donadio provides the scientific research behind her methods in clear and simple language. She also suggests specific actions readers can take to hone their communication skills, and she includes brief self-assessments at the beginning of each chapter.

Donadio’s theories and methods are accessible to a wide spectrum of readers. Her ideas are clearly articulated and accompanied by examples drawn from her many years of clinical practice. The book includes helpful charts as well as a series of delightful color illustrations of whimsical, abstract human figures that contribute much to the flow and lively presentation of the material. Extensive and interesting endnotes enrich the text, and the large font and generous softcover format improve readability. Additionally, there is plenty of margin space for taking notes. All of these features help to create a clean, well-designed package that nicely presents Donadio’s ideas.

Changing Behaviors is an important training resource for nearly all health-care workers, from surgeons to hospital volunteers, but its scope is much broader. The author’s Behavioral Engagement and Pure Presence techniques are applicable to a wide range of practitioners in the helping professions, such as parents, caregivers, and clergy, and can benefit anyone who wants to learn how to better develop their own relationships. Donadio has an engaging style which is reinforced by an effective book design. This title deserves a wide readership.
RACHEL JAGARESKI (May 8, 2012)

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