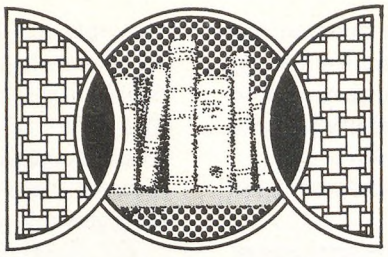
Book Reviews



Alive and Aware: Improving Communication in Relationships. *Sherod Miller, Elam W. Nunnally, Daniel B. Wackman. Interpersonal Communications Programs, Inc., Minneapolis, 1975, 287 pp., $8.95, $6.95 (paper).*

Student Workbook: Increasing Awareness and Communication Skills. *Daniel B. Wackman, Sherod Miller, and Elam W. Nunnally. Interpersonal Communications Programs, Inc., Minneapolis, 1976, 126 pp., $3.95 (paper).*

Alive and Aware presents a perspective on relationships, a framework for talking about communication between two people, and a set of concepts and exercises to serve as tools that can be used to increase awareness and improve relationships. The book progresses through four sections focusing on self-awareness, awareness of others, styles of communication, and patterns of communication that enhance self- and other-esteem and lead toward the resolution of issues that crop up in every relationship. This book is written for a very broad audience and is designed for anyone interested in reshaping his or her lifestyle to include deliberately working on a special type of self-consciousness and style of communicating with a partner who is willing to share this new "dialect."

Alive and Aware initially supplies a language to sort out varieties of sensing, thinking, feeling, wanting, and doing, and later suggests guidelines for how two people can talk constructively about their awareness to enhance mutuality. What is presented here is a technology designed for specific purposes and is not proposed as a model for ordinary conversation.

Overall, the book is a model of modern production. The system presented is elaborate and gives the impression of being complete. The material is tightly organized and logically developed. The format and illustrations add greatly to the text. In addition, there are a *Student Workbook* and *Couple Workbook* which outline the main content of the companion book and provide exercises for partners. A *Classroom Instructor Manual* is also available.

My major reservation about this attractively packaged approach has to do with some of the assumptions on which it is based. These are forthrightly set down in a 24-point "Postscript" at the end of the book. There is a credo here about responsibility, individual choice, positive thinking, growth, authority on personal experience, and relationships which is tied to the training method and which is as much a moral philosophy as a psychological perspective. I suggest that these be read first to provide a context for the rest of the material presented.

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Psychological Assessment in Medicine. *Samuel E. Krug (ed). Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Champaign, Illinois, 1977, 206 pp., $17.50.*

This book reads much less like a scientific treatise than like a long promotional brochure which advertises a commercial product. The product is the "16 Personality Factor Questionnaire," which purports to enable the primary care physician to quickly and accurately assess the emotional problems of his patients without the need to resort to "interview techniques, behavior observation and . . . . picking up nonverbal clues." These skills are described as being "not appropriate in a nonpsychiatric practice." Large numbers of family physicians would dispute that statement.

The above quotation is from a chapter entitled "Office Psychiatry for the Primary Care Physician," written, interestingly enough, by an orthopedic surgeon. This is the only contribution by a physician, although the jacket states that the book "incorporates significant contributions by practitioners and research specialists in medicine, psychiatry, and psychology." This chapter, and much of the rest of the book as well, makes one wonder if some of the appeal of the method is that it eliminates, in part, the need to relate to the patient in a personal manner.

As for the cognitive content of the book, it is clouded by a headlong plunge into the intricacies of graphic displays and jargon associated with the "16 PF," without any introductory explanation of the rationale and method of the system. The terms and diagrams were not clearly understood by the several psychologists I consulted, and they are quite unintelligible to this reviewer. Numerous anecdotal case studies are given to convince one of the effectiveness of the method in directing therapy through precise diagnosis of emotional problems. No convincing evidence is presented, however, to show that the method is more ef-

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fective than traditional methods.

Family physicians have a strong bias against mechanization of the doctor-patient relationship, whether by multifaceless screening, assembly line examination, or impersonal questionnaires. Literally thousands of family physicians are now being trained in understanding their patients, soma and psyche alike, by establishing the personal rapport that is indispensable to good medical care. To reduce this relationship to a formula appears to me to be a giant step backward.

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Statistical Principles in Health Care Information, (2nd Edition). *S. James Kilpatrick, Jr. University Park Press, Baltimore, 1977, 285 pp., $14.50.*

The primary audience for this book is a long-ignored group of professionals—health care administrators, practitioners, and researchers who do not aspire to become experts in the manipulation of statistical information, but who have a great need to understand, evaluate, and act upon statistical information provided to them by others.

The purpose of this book is to provide these users of health care information with a nonrigorous but lucid explanation of statistical principles. Kilpatrick accomplishes this using a minimum of technical jargon and statistical symbols, and illustrates the use of these principles with well-chosen examples. He succeeds admirably in this task, avoiding both the temptation to impress his readers with the mathematical elegance underlying the statistical principles, and the opposite danger of providing intuitively appealing but inaccurate explanations. The text is clear and, as advertised, it should provide health care professionals who have minimal mathematical training with a readable, informative, and compact reference.

The most remarkable feature of the book is its extraordinary breadth. Kilpatrick acknowledges the fact that health care information comes from many quarters, including clinical investigators, epidemiologists, economists, decision theorists, demographers, and systems analysts. This diversity of information sources demands that health care professionals understand a broad array of concepts, methods, and forms of presentation of numerical information. Kilpatrick manages to package this array in 13 orderly and well-indexed chapters. As might be expected, the chapter on testing for statistical significance is the most technical and difficult.

In an increasingly technological world, health care decisions at all levels, from the care of individual patients to national health policy, are highly dependent on the interpretation of numerical information. This book can be recommended as a basic reference to anyone who desires sufficient understanding of statistical principles to interpret and use this information.

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Self-Assessment in Electrocardiography. *Stelio Mangiola. J.B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1977, 205 pp., $15.00.*

There are many books for self-assessment and self-study in electrocardiography. This is the best that I have seen. It contains 100 case studies which consist of brief clinical information, a large clear ECG tracing, and about five questions, usually multiple choice, related to interpretation of the tracing as well as clinical actions which could be taken based on the interpretation. On the reverse side of each page is the same electrocardiogram, this time illustrated with labeling and, when necessary, diagrams outlining conduction problems. The answers to all the questions are arranged on that page together with detailed explanations. The reader thus is able to interpret the tracing, formulate answers to the questions, then turn the page and see to what extent his/her answers agree with those of the author's, while also examining a detailed explanation of each tracing.

The tracings are arranged in a somewhat random manner rather than in groupings of similar problems. This is advantageous in that it requires the reader to interpret each tracing based on the tracing itself rather than on its location in the book. An excellent index will permit the reader to focus on specific problems.

Although this book is entitled self-assessment, it really is likely to be more useful as a self-study guide, since no norms are available to indicate how other practitioners have fared in answering these questions.

The preface indicates that the book is designed for use by physicians, medical students, and cardiac nurses. It is likely to be most valuable to those who have a solid grounding in the basics of electrocardiography, since basic principles are not covered at all in this volume. But for the experienced individual to review and improve

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his interpretation of electrocardiograms, this is an excellent, easily readable book which should find wide applicability.

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Year Book of Drug Therapy. *Daniel L. Azarnoff (ed), Leo E. Hollister, David G. Shand (assoc eds). Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1977, 426 pp., $24.50.*

The Year Book of Drug Therapy is another member of the familiar Year Book series now provided annually in 22 specialty areas of medicine. This book follows the same format as other members of the series and provides abstracts and comments about published articles for the year ending in September 1976. It begins with a series of questions for clinicians designed to foster in the reader a sense of inquiry about specific articles dealing with drug therapy which have been reviewed. An initial chapter discusses the clinical use of drug plasma level determinations. Subsequent portions of the book review literature for clinically relevant studies of drug therapy covering the universe of medical problems. Included are sections of general information, drug action, adverse effects, blood diseases, cardiovascular diseases, rheumatic diseases, psychiatric diseases, gastrointestinal diseases, skin diseases, and surgery. Thus, the book is organized primarily by major organ systems and specialty areas. There is a useful topic and author index at the end of the book.

Abstracts are generally clearly and concisely presented. Editorial comments are useful. The strength of this book is also its weakness. Its coverage is so broad that the physician must pick and choose those abstracts of relevance to his own needs. Fortunately, efforts will be rewarded by finding a large number of relevant abstracts for the family physician covering such topics as treatment of asthma in children, use of propranolol in myocardial infarction, and abuse of antibiotics in the ambulatory care setting.

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