

Preface

Dear Reader:

I'm delighted your psychology teacher has given me this opportunity to share with you my enthusiasm for psychology as well as the knowledge I've gained in over twenty years of teaching introductory psychology. I love psychology; it is fascinating, challenging, and a source of much satisfaction. The more I observe people, the more questions I am led to ask about the human condition. The more I understand of it, the less I take for granted about the exquisite complexity that goes into making you unique and us different. What better way to spend one's life than being a professional "people watcher," investigating the mysteries of human nature?

I shudder to recall that I almost didn't make it—after my first psychology course. A total disaster! In my whole career as a student my lowest grade ever was in that Psych 1 course. I entered with great expectations and exited quietly depressed, feeling cheated. Most of the blame falls on the text. It was the enemy—a relentless adversary equipped to bore me nearly to death. The author had tried so hard to be serious and scientific, but succeeded only in being irrelevant to any of my personal or intellectual concerns. I was rescued in my senior year from an uncertain future as an accountant by a dedicated psychology instructor—and have never regretted the decision to devote my life to being a psychologist.

When it came time to write about psychology, collaborating with Floyd Ruch was a natural. Professor Ruch had written the first basic text designed for the beginning psychology student rather than to impress his professional colleagues. Since that first edition in 1937, *Psychology and Life* has become the model to be imitated by virtually all the other basic texts that followed. With the publication of the Tenth Edition in 1979, *P&L* ranks first in seniority among more than 160 introductory psychology texts. I hope my contribution to this classic work will help make it first also in student and faculty evaluations.

Essentials of Psychology and Life has been carefully designed to provide you with a comprehensive, in-depth view of what psychology is all about. I have tried to blend academic integrity, sound pedagogy, common sense, humanistic concerns, and a measure of fun. The most exciting areas of contemporary research

are represented, as are the classic studies that constitute the foundations of psychology.

I have tried to communicate directly to you as though you were a student in one of my own tutorials. I hope you will learn much and like most of what you discover. If you do, you will owe a debt of thanks to other generations of students who have used the past several editions of *Psychology and Life*. Thousands of them sent me detailed feedback about what they enjoyed, as well as constructive criticism. My respect for the value of this student input shows up throughout the Tenth Editions of *Psychology and Life* and *Essentials of Psychology and Life*. (Please carry on this tradition by sending in your evaluation on the form provided at the end of this book. It is best to mark down your reactions to each chapter immediately after you read it.)

Psychology is a broad, dynamic field, with shifting emphases and new discoveries about behavior and the mind. For example, while some of my colleagues study the physiological functions of the nervous system, others seek to discover why we forget and still others search for explanations of violence. While some research directions that seemed promising a while ago have proved disappointing, others have emerged with even greater promise. Therefore, in undertaking the task of informing you about the current state of this vast field of knowledge, I have called upon the expertise of many authorities. They have educated me, infused me with some of their enthusiasm for their individual fields of study, shared new ideas, corrected faulty ones, and shown how I might better communicate to you what psychologists have done and are doing. To each of them, I am grateful.

Critical evaluation, valuable insights, and new directions were provided by: Justine Owens, Megan Gunnar, Charles Swencionis, Grace Hagawara, Linda Solomon, and Michael Werb (Stanford University); Helen Joan Crawford (University of Wyoming); Raymond Paloutzian (University of Idaho); Randy Gallistel (University of Pennsylvania); Richard Bootzin (Northwestern University); Ola Selnes (Hennepin County Medical Center); Sharon Brehm (University of Kansas); Paul Ban and Jac Carlson (University of Hawaii); Susan Jackson and Karen Brattesani (University of California, Berkeley); Gary Frieden (University of Southern California); Keith Wescourt (Office of Naval Research); Don Kaesser (Des Moines Community College); Andrew Kish (Saddleback

Community College); and Seymour Siegler (Brookdale Community College).

Karl Minke (University of Hawaii) improved every chapter through his keen appreciation of how best to deliver what psychologists know to an audience of students varying in background and interests.

Special thanks go to those colleagues and friends who assisted me by collaborating on drafting chapters or sections of chapters: Jeff Wine (Stanford University) for physiology, Hayne Reese (West Virginia University) for development, Richard Dolinsky (University of Toledo) for memory and language, Tom Bourbon (Stephen F. Austin State University) for perception, Richard Santee (University of California, Berkeley) for social psychology.

My publisher, Scott, Foresman, backed my efforts with a team of inspired editors whose wise counsel shaped much that is effective in this book, among them Sharon Barton, Linda Muterspaugh, and Kathy Wylie. Marguerite Clark knows how much I continue to value her invaluable input to my thinking. Louise Howe contributed her clarity of thought, sense of effective prose, and patience for my excesses. To John Staley go my thanks for his vision of the ideal introductory psychology text and his sensitive efforts in directing *Essentials of Psychology and Life* along those lines.

Rosanne Saussotte, my secretary, goes far beyond making my scribbles intelligible. She makes me ever aware that it is possible to always be compassionate and involved in the lives of other people regardless of how hard one is working.

My wife, my friend, my colleague, Christina Maslach (University of California, Berkeley) is the gentle force that informs so much of what I am and enriches all that I write. She assisted in many ways, with support, advice, and drafting sections of this book from materials that she has taught effectively to her own students. She shares the credit for whatever joy you find in the ideas that follow.

Where *Essentials of Psychology and Life* falls short of your expectations, I stand alone. With a little more help from my friends, including you, I promise to make the necessary improvements next time around. But for now, the table is set; enjoy.



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