

# Aspects Of Social Identity, Self Concept, Self Esteem, Self Functioning And Gender Aspects (Part 8)

Azizi Hj Yahaya

## 5.0 FULLY FUNCTIONING

Maslow focused on the characteristics of self-actualizing individuals whereas Carl Rogers focused on the ways to foster and attain self-actualization. Rogers believed that people were basically good and that human nature was fundamentally benevolent and positive. He felt that the natural human state was to be fully functioning, but under certain conditions people become stalled in their movement towards self-actualization.

The core of Roger's approach is the concept of the fully functioning person, the person who is on his or her way toward self-actualization. The fully functioning person may not actually be self-actualized yet, but he or she is not blocked or sidetracked in moving toward this goal.

Below are some characteristics that describe the fully functioning person:

- a. A growing openness to experience- They move away from defensiveness and it is the accurate perception of one's experiences in the world, including one's feelings. It also means being able to accept reality. Feelings are such an important part of openness because they convey organismic valuing. If you cannot be open to your feelings, you cannot be open to actualization. The hard part is distinguishing real feelings from the anxieties brought on by conditions of worth.
- b. An increasingly existential lifestyle-living each moment fully and not live in the past or future. It also means not distorting the moment to fit personality or self concept but allowing personality and self concept to emanate from the experience. This results in excitement, daring, adaptability, tolerance, spontaneity and suggest a foundation of trust. "To open one's spirit to what is going on now, and discover in that present process whatever structure it appears to have".(Rogers 1961).

- c. Increasing organismic trust-they trust their own judgment and their ability to choose behavior that is appropriate for each moment. They do not rely on existing codes and social norms but trust that as they are open to experiences they will be able to trust their own sense of right and wrong.
- d. Freedom of choice-It means that we feel free when choices are available to us. Rogers says that the fully-functioning person acknowledges that feelings of freedom and believe that they play a role in determining their own behavior and feel responsible for their own behavior.
- e. Creativity-If you feel free and responsible, you will act accordingly and participate in the world. A fully-functioning person, in touch with actualization, will feel obliged by their nature to contribute to the actualization of others, even life itself. This can be through creativity in the arts or sciences, through social concern and parental love, or simply by doing one's best at one's job. Creativity as Rogers uses is very close to Erikson's generativity.
- f. Reliability and constructiveness-they can be trusted to act constructively. An individual who is open to all their needs will be able to maintain a balance between them. Even aggressive needs will be matched and balanced by intrinsic goodness in congruent individuals.
- g. A rich full life-he describes the life of the fully functioning individual as rich and exciting and suggests that they experience joy and pain, love and heartbreak, fear and courage more intensely. Rogers' description of *the good life*:

***“This process of the good life is not, I am convinced a life for the faint-hearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities. It involves the courage to be. It means launching oneself fully into the stream of life”.***  
***(Rogers, 1961)***

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