

The anthropological  
and psychological  
foundations of  
PRH education

persons and their growth

PRH

Are human beings fundamentally "good" or "evil"?

Are they programmed at birth, predestined?

Where then is their freedom?

Are human beings simply the product of a series of influences, or do they have their own personalities?

Can they change and grow or are they condemned to constantly repeat the same behaviour?

Can they recover from past wounds?

Are openness to a transcendency and the sense of the absolute constituent of human nature?

If so, what influence do they have on the development of personality?

Is there a meaning to human life?

persons and their growth

The PRH education and research organization was founded more than 25 years ago. It was almost 30 years ago that its founder, André Rochais, (1921-1990), initiated the research in psychopedagogy which constitutes its foundation. Until now, many hundreds of thousands of people in the world have received, through PRH education, guidelines to know and understand themselves better. In this way, they have been able to acquire concrete methods to collaborate effectively in their own growth process, improve their relationships and dedicate themselves more and more to the service of others and of society.

All these fundamental questions have been the object of a serious work of observation conducted by the PRH (Personnalité et Relations Humaines) education and research organization. From this has emerged an original, positive and realistic view of the person which is in line with current humanist psychology.

This volume presents for the first time, a synthesis, specific to PRH, of this vision of Humanity and its psychological functioning. It provides useful guidelines for personal positioning, understanding and progress. It brings hope based on what is most profound and most human in Humanity. It is addressed to all individuals, specialists or not, who are interested in human beings and seeks to know them in order to help them

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## The origins of PRH psycho-pedagogy

PRH psycho-pedagogy (also called PRH education) was born from the merger between a man, André Rochais, and a group which formed around his thinking and research.

Born in 1921 in Les Deux Sèvres, this Frenchman of simple origin took a very early interest in teaching, in education and in the relationship between the individual and society. First as a teacher, then as a school principal, he had a passion for the "discovery method" of teaching. As his contact with other teachers and the parents of students went on, he became aware of his more marked interest in the education of adults rather than of children.

At about age 30, he felt a calling to the priesthood. He returned to his studies and was ordained, following which he enrolled at L'Institut d'Études Sociales de Paris, where he was introduced to social psychology. From 1962 on, he devoted himself entirely to the education of adults. He started by teaching social psychology, then developed training courses in political life, economic life, international relations and social psychology. Right from the beginning they were highly successful.

In the course of his teaching, he noted that he was particularly taken with all that concerns humankind and its development. This led him to devote himself to a systematic research on the subject. From the time he started teaching, he had the inkling that in the depths of every individual there exists a healthy zone from which persons can discover their own personality and live harmonious lives. In 1966, he came across the work of an American psy-

chotherapist, Carl Rogers. This confirmed him in his thinking and sent him back to his own research on the human psychological structure.

This intensive work of observation, coupled with constant interaction with his public, eventually gave André Rochais a clear view of the human personality, its functioning and the mechanisms of its growth. His ambition was to describe "the universal human being": the basic structure observable in all humanity, regardless of cultural background. According to him, this understanding of the profound nature of humankind would provide access to an ideal way of functioning with respect to one's development and social productivity; in short, personal fulfilment. Bit by bit, an explanatory system of the human being in the process of growth was taking shape.

A profound humanist, André Rochais sought a way to make his discoveries accessible to all. He wanted his research to be able to help people aspiring to live a better life, whatever their education level. Pedagogue that he was, he then set out on a quest. He went in search of everything that might help people to know themselves, take themselves in hand, find meaning in their life, and free themselves from all constraints preventing them from living an existence in conformity with their personality and their deep conscience.

Thus was the pedagogical creativity of André Rochais set in motion and the first workshops centred on the knowledge of oneself were born. Those first workshops, very general in nature, contained the basis of all that would be developed later.

In view of the success achieved by his workshops and the range of requests pouring in from France, Canada and other countries, he offered a course for people interested in conducting the workshops he was giving. In 1970, together with the "educators" of that time, he created an educational and research Organization called PRH (Personnalité et Relations Humaines), to diffuse the psycho-pedagogy that the Organization was putting in place. His fondest wish was that the educators become competent professionals within an educational enterprise. He was spontaneously interested in the lived experience of his educators and in his own experience as a founder. Based on these observations he began to

research on the characteristics of this type of group.

From then on his life was closely linked to the development of the PRH Organization which his team of educators was helping him to build. He remained at the head of the PRH Organization, not sparing himself in spite of a physical condition sorely afflicted by illness. He delegated his powers as soon as he could, devoting himself only to what he considered to be his mission, namely to work with others to create the pedagogical tools conducive to personal growth. The growth of persons represented for him a privileged and inescapable way of contributing to the humanization of society. That was his dearest wish and one which best unites all the elements of his person: the man, the priest, the Humanities researcher, the pedagogue.

Until his death in 1990, he worked without respite, in close collaboration with his team of educators, extending the range of their research to include group life and life in the business world, the relationship of humans to a Transcendancy, life as a couple and the education of children.

Throughout his entire life he proved himself to be a humble man, deeply honest, authentic, consistent within himself, and unselfish. He sought neither to appropriate his research to himself, nor to profit from the discoveries he made, giving all of it to the PRH Organization.

André Rochais had a passion for the success of men, of women and of humanity.