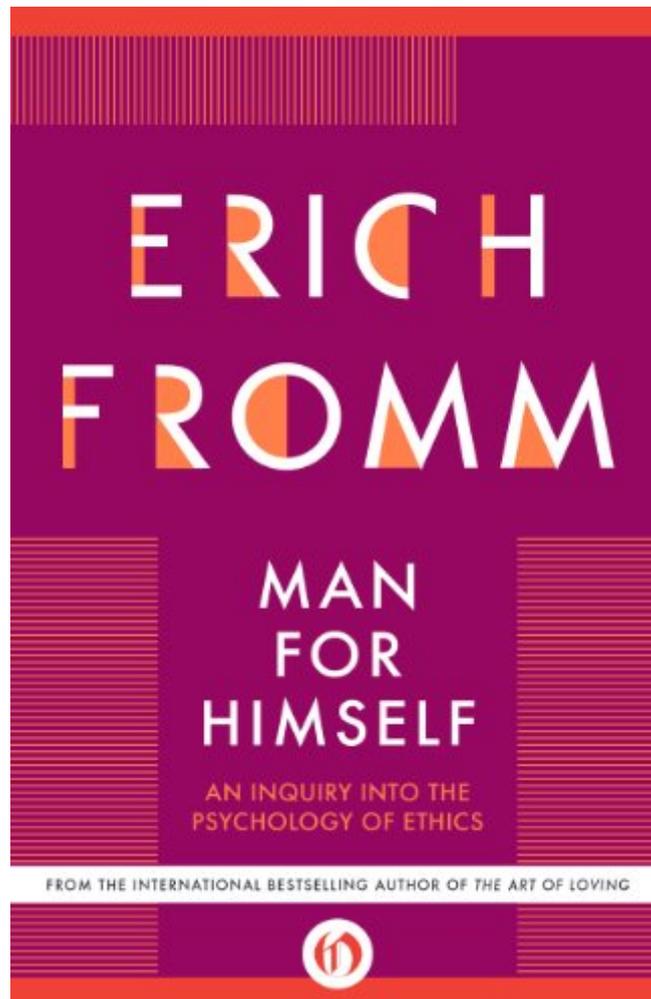


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Man For Himself: An Inquiry Into The Psychology Of Ethics



Synopsis

“There is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers.”

“Erich Fromm: Are we primarily determined by nature or nurture? What are the best ways that people can live productively? In *Man for Himself*, renowned social philosopher Erich Fromm posits: With the gifts of self-consciousness and imagination, any individual can give his or her own unique answer. This answer is rooted in our human nature, and should correspond to mankind’s powers of reason and love. Therefore, Fromm reasons, “living itself is an art.”

In his humanistic concept of man, Fromm describes various character orientations that are to be found in Western culture. For the first time, Fromm analyzes the parallels between economic concepts of market value and how we value others and ourselves—the idea of personality as a commodity. He argues for a return to humanistic ethics, and discusses issues such as the question of conscience, of selfishness and self-love, and of pleasure and happiness.

This ebook features an illustrated biography of Erich Fromm including rare images and never-before-seen documents from the author’s estate.

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Customer Reviews

In this book the author gives an overview of his thinking on humanistic ethics, which is interesting from a speculative/philosophical viewpoint, but falls somewhat short if viewed from a scientific perspective. The book has an optimistic tone, as do many others by the author, and this makes the reading more palatable. If the ideas in it could be fleshed out with real scientific analysis, with supporting data, it would be a significant advance in the study of human psychology. The author explains his optimism, interestingly, by reference to his experience with patients in his psychoanalytic practice. He speaks of encountering the strength of the strivings for happiness and health exhibited by his patients, which he believes is the natural embodiment of humans. "There is less reason", he says, "to be puzzled by the fact that there are so many neurotic people than by the phenomenon that most people are relatively healthy in spite of the many adverse influences they are exposed to". The statistics supporting this are overwhelming, and without a doubt are on the side of optimism. The book is not a "pop-psychology", "self-help" book though, but instead a theoretical attempt to shed light on the problem of ethics and psychology. The author's goal is to get the reader to ask questions, and not to expect to find advice on how to obtain "happiness". The author's main goal is to find a validation for humanistic ethics that does not collapse into moral relativism but is based upon human nature and human's inherent qualities. The character structure of the mature and "integrated personality" is the origin of virtue, and vice originates from the ignoring of the self and "self-mutilation".

At about the age of 23 I discovered for the first time that I had a mind. Previous to that, I had been more-or-less incapable of any sort of introspection. Smoking marijuana opened my unconscious mind and I felt like I was able to step outside of myself and see myself for the first time. I immediately started reading books other than adventure novels. One of the first authors I discovered was Eric Fromm. His thinking completely galvanized me. I thought that he had figured out all human problems, and all people had to do was pay attention. I knew essentially nothing about Freud, Jung, Marx, Nietzsche, and so on, and Fromm synthesized all of their thinking into a coherent system. Fromm championed the bogey-man of right-wing Christianity, namely secular humanism. The idea of which is that the foundations for value systems should be based on man's autonomy and reason. In order to know what was good for man, one has to know the nature of man. Authoritarian ethics is an irrational system based on acquiring power over people. This strikes me as so

self-evident that itâ€™s incredible that it could arouse controversy. Fromm claims that one of the best tools for knowing human nature is psychoanalysis. These days Freudâ€™s ideas are commonly held to be erroneous, and some critics dismiss Frommâ€™s ideas as he relies upon ideas of Freud. This is nonsense. Freud was one of mankindâ€™s greatest geniuses. While it is true that his motivations discoveries he made regarding human nature were physiologically clockwork, following the prejudices of his time, Fromm acknowledged this.

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