

**Psychological characteristics of a fully functioning individual: Rogerian theory**

**Kilicheva Karomat**

Doctor of Pedagogy, Professor Department of Media management and media marketing, Journalism and Mass Communication University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

[karomatkilicheva320@gmail.com](mailto:karomatkilicheva320@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Becoming a fully functioning person is an ongoing process. Humanistic psychology highlights the role of a person in shaping his external and internal world. Carl Rogers believed that humans in their daily lives are creative and active people who stay in the present and are concerned with situations, interpersonal relationships and perceptions, only in the present. Roger's theory of personality development gives emphasis to human potential and free will for goodness. The objective of this paper is to review and analyze a Rogerian theory of a fully functioning individual.

**Key words:** *fully functioning individual, Carl Rogers, self-actualization, personality development.*

**Introduction**

Carl Rogers was a humanistic psychologist who is known for his views about theories of personality and self-actualization. He believed that for a person to improve, he needs an environment that provides with openness and self-disclosure, acceptance, and empathy. He believed that without those qualities, healthy human relationships will not develop as they are supposed to, such as a tree without water and sunlight (Rogers, 1959). Rogers' theory is based on his own experience working with children. His work focused on helping parents understand their children better and teaching them to accept their children unconditionally. During the course of his life, Rogers believed that humans are capable of becoming whole individuals through self-discovery. As he stated, our thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected. We are not separate entities; rather, we are connected parts of one greater whole. In the years that followed, many psychologists were influenced by this philosophy. In the past, this process was called self-actualization. Today, psychologists refer to this process as personality development instead.

**Carl Rogers Theory**

Carl Rogers regarded fully functioning individual as an ideal person. He regards it is wrong to think of this as an ultimate point of a life's journey, rather as a process of a constant change. As he emphasizes, a fully functioning person is the one who is in touch with his deepest and innermost feelings and desires. These individuals understand their own emotions and place a deep trust in their own instincts and urges (Stephen & Elliot, 2022). According to the scientist, unconditional positive regard plays a crucial role in becoming a fully functioning individual. He also states that a fully functioning person is not defensive but open to new experiences without controlling them. Fully functioning person is the one who has embraced "existential living." In other words, they are able to live fully in the moment. They experience a sense of inner freedom and embrace creativity, excitement, risk, and challenges.

If people are able to utilize their organismic valuing processes fully, they will inevitably begin to experience personal growth and movement toward realization of their potentials. In Rogers's terminology, they will be moving toward becoming **fully functioning people**. Such individuals have the following characteristics:

- They are open to experience. Fully functioning people are non-defensive individuals who are open to all their feelings – fear, discouragement, pain, tenderness, courage, and awe. They are fully aware of their experiences and accept them, rather than shutting them out.

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- They are characterized by existential living. Fully functioning people live their experiences as they occur in the present, without trying to superimpose preconceived meaning on them. They are open and flexible, deal with the experience as it is, and discover its meaning for themselves.
- They trust their intuitions. Fully functioning people do what feels right. This does not mean they are inevitably right in their choices, but rather that they make their own choices, experience the consequences, and correct them if they are less than satisfying.
- They tend to be creative. Creative products and creative living emerge when individuals are open to new experiences, able to trust their own judgments, and willing to take risks if they feel good about a new venture.
- They tend to live “richer” lives compared to other people. Fully functioning people live the good life, not in the sense of happiness, contentment, security, and bliss—although they experience each of these feelings at appropriate times—but a life that is exciting, challenging, meaningful, and rewarding. Not a life for the fainthearted, it involves taking risks, experiencing pain occasionally, and facing challenges courageously.

### Characteristics of a fully functioning person

Fully functioning people tend to possess certain traits and characteristics that help them stay in tune with their own emotions and embrace their need to grow as an individual. Some of the key characteristics of a fully functioning person include:

- Not feeling the need to distort or deny experiences
- Flexible self-concept and the ability to change through experiences
- Lack of defensiveness
- Living in harmony and getting along with other people
- Openness to experience
- Openness to feedback/criticism; willing to make realistic changes
- The ability to interpret experiences accurately
- The ability to trust one's experiences and form values based on those experiences
- Unconditional self-regard

### Conclusion

Becoming fully functioning is a journey, not a destination. It is not about following a prescribed series of steps to achieve a static result. Having a positive self-image maybe as simple as having a positive attitude towards yourself, making sure to be honest with yourself, and seeking to improve yourself. Individuals who display this tendency have a realistic self-image. Despite their strengths, they acknowledge they have weaknesses as well. They take on challenges and experiences that allow them to grow and gain new perspectives, while also building upon their strengths. It is important to note that, while these individuals know that they are not perfect, they are still content with themselves. However, their contentment does not imply idleness, as they are constantly striving for improvement.

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