

POINT of VIEW

Visualize

General Semantics



The worlds we manage to get inside
our heads are mostly worlds of words...

Structure

On that list of the books that have greatly affected me...the book that should head the 'Must List' is Science and Sanity by Alfred Korzybski. - Robert A. Heinlein

It is important to realize that general semantics is not simply something of interest to scholars or university graduates. Teachers can and should introduce it at all levels since thinking skills are useful at every level and in every subject in the curriculum. - Steve Allen

Similarities

Stereotypes

General Semantics applies scientific ways of thinking to the challenges of our daily living. We can describe it as the study of how we perceive, construct and communicate our life experiences.



Relations



Perspective

Evaluate

Labels

All of the questions raised by Science and Sanity are inherent or should be inherent in the work of any thinking writer or communicator. - Alvin Toffler

The goal of general semantics – to show people how they can become aware of their misperceptions, over-generalizing and poor judgements and how they can reconsider and reconstitute them so that they help themselves to more accurately perceive, accept, and live more comfortably with 'reality.' - Dr. Albert Ellis



Abstracting

General Semantics provides a methodology to help us differentiate and integrate four different worlds:

- ⊙ the world 'out there' beyond ourselves, that's always changing, in perpetual process
- ⊙ the world 'in here' inside our own skins, our nervous system and senses, through which we (only partially) experience the world 'out there'
- ⊙ the world that's not words — the non-verbal world that we can see, hear, taste, smell and touch
- ⊙ the world of words — our verbal world of names, symbols, labels, opinions, assumptions, categories, values, beliefs, 'truths,' etc.

Differences

*All our knowledge has its origins
in our perceptions.*

- Leonardo da Vinci

etc.

Inferences

Language serves as our primary means of communicating and our primary tool for **time-binding** — the distinctive human ability to build on the accumulated knowledge of others. Each generation can begin where the previous generation ended because we can write, speak, draw, plan, design, etc.

Those who rule the symbols, rule us.
- Alfred Korzybski

L language Matters

With language we can

- Speak, write, read and listen
- Think and express our feelings
- Analyze and solve problems
- Establish rules, laws, policies, ordinances and standards
- Reach agreements, compromises, settlements, resolutions and contracts
- Understand and pass on our understandings
- Dream, imagine, contemplate, cogitate, deliberate, create, innovate and ponder

But with the same language we can also

- Mislead, misinform and misunderstand
- Deny, suppress, inhibit, prohibit and limit
- Rule, dictate, terrorize, intimidate, indoctrinate and alienate
- Generalize, categorize, stereotype, pigeonhole and profile
- Lie, cheat, steal, quibble, libel, slander, sue and defraud
- Perpetuate myths, superstitions, prejudices, feuds and atavistic traditions
- Create and exacerbate fear, anxiety, regret, guilt, jealousy, paranoia, suspicion and hate

I nstitute of General Semantics

The Institute of General Semantics is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation established in 1938 by Alfred Korzybski. The organization is member-based with about 15% international participation. Members receive the quarterly *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* (published since 1943 and subscribed to by almost 400 libraries), the *Time-Bindings* newsletter, the annual *General Semantics Bulletin* and discounts on books, seminars and programs.

The Institute offers a variety of education and training programs, including courses tailored to the specific needs of individual schools, organizations and companies.

The benefits of practicing general semantics include:

A greater degree of moment-to-moment awareness of your own and others' different perspectives

More desirable reactions, responses and adjustments to what occurs in your four worlds

A more tolerant, inquisitive, open-minded, "matter-of-fact" outlook that is less prone to prejudice, stereotyping and generalizations

More realistic expectations, fewer unexpected surprises and greater predictability in managing your relationships

A greater ability to discriminate between differences that make a difference, and those that don't

More effective communication with others and with yourself



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