

= Werner Erhard (book) =

Werner Erhard : The Transformation of a Man , The Founding of est is a biography of Werner Erhard by philosophy professor William Warren Bartley , III . The book was published in 1978 by Clarkson Potter . Bartley was professor of philosophy at California State University and had studied with philosopher Karl Popper . He was the author of several books on philosophy , including a biography about Ludwig Wittgenstein . Prior to writing the book , Bartley was a friend of Erhard 's and was involved in his company Erhard Seminars Training (est) . While writing the book , Bartley was paid US \$ 30 000 in the role of philosophical consultant for est . Erhard wrote a foreword to the book . The book 's structure describes Erhard 's education , transformation , reconnection with his family , and the theories of the est training .

The book became a bestseller and was well received by graduates of the est training . Reviewers generally commented that the book was favorable to Erhard , and a number of critics felt that it was unduly so , or lacked objectivity , citing Bartley 's close relationship to Erhard . Responses to the writing were mixed ; while some reviewers found it well written and entertaining , others felt the tone was too slick , promotional , or hagiographic .

= = Background = =

Werner Erhard (born John Paul Rosenberg) , a California based former salesman , training manager and executive in the encyclopedia business , created the Erhard Seminars Training (est) course in 1971 . est was a form of Large Group Awareness Training , and was part of the Human Potential Movement. est was a four day , 60 hour self help program given to groups of 250 people at a time . The program was very intensive : each day would contain 15 ? 20 hours of instruction . During the training , est personnel utilized jargon to convey key concepts , and participants had to agree to certain rules which remained in effect for the duration of the course . Participants were taught that they were responsible for their life outcomes , and were promised a dramatic change in their self perception .

By 1977 over 100 000 people completed the est training , including public figures and mental health professionals. est was widely ridiculed in the popular press and aroused a great deal of controversy . William S. McGurk , a lecturer in Clinical Psychology at Brown University , summarized :

Est promises dramatic awakening to its participants by enhancing the capacity to experience oneself . Trainees are given the opportunity to re examine those belief systems and reflex patterns of living that keep their lives from working . Notions of self responsibility are central in which we become cause rather than effect through choosing the inevitable . We can be the directors of our own determined fate .

Needless to say , accounts of est are fraught with controversy and criticisms abound . Its major critics suggest that est is simply brainwashing . They also suggest that it is fascistic , narcissitic , and too superficial . Nevertheless , what follow up studies have been done report strong evidence in favor of positive health changes among the respondents after the training (even though est claims not to be a form of therapy) Space does not allow for a thorough review of est 's principles here . Let it suffice to say that est appears to have a powerful effect on people 's lives in a short two weekends .

In 1985 , Werner Erhard and Associates repackaged the course as " The Forum " , a seminar focused on " goal oriented breakthroughs " .

By 1988 , approximately one million people had taken some form of the trainings . In the early 1990s Erhard faced family problems , as well as tax problems that were eventually resolved in his favor . In 1991 a group of his associates formed the company Landmark Education , purchasing The Forum 's course " technology " from Erhard .

= = Author = =

William Warren Bartley , III , professor of philosophy at California State University , prior to writing his biography on Erhard , had authored *The Retreat to Commitment* , on the epistemology of Sir Karl Popper ; Wittgenstein , a biography of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein ; edited Lewis Carroll 's *Symbolic Logic* ; and authored a book titled , *Morality and Religion* . Bartley was first introduced to est in March 1972 by a doctor whom he had consulted about his nine @-@ year struggle with insomnia . Finding his insomnia cured , he became very involved in the est organization , and served for several years as the company 's philosophical consultant . He received payments of over US \$ 30 @,@ 000 in this capacity during the two years he spent writing the book . He also served on the " Advisory Board " of est . Bartley interviewed a number of individuals who were involved in his subject 's life and made use of quotations from a wide array of sources . Bartley commented on his subject in an article on the book in *The Evening Independent* , stating : " He 's not a huckster , although he 's a great salesman . I think he 's a very good man , a very important man He 's a fascinating man . People are interested in him . "

= = Contents = =

Life story

The book recounts how Erhard 's childhood events , job positions and self @-@ education lead to the development of the est training . Born Jack Rosenberg , Erhard was an inquisitive child who was close to his mother . In his student years , he read profusely and earned superior grades . As a teenager , Erhard experienced both conflicts with his mother and a growing dissatisfaction with his life . Shortly after graduating from high school he married his girlfriend Pat Campbell , who had become pregnant . Instead of pursuing his plans for higher education , he took on a variety of jobs including meat @-@ packing , heating and plumbing , estimating and selling cars . By the age of 21 , Erhard had become the top car salesman at the dealership he worked for . By the time he was 25 , Erhard and his wife had four children and he was feeling increasingly restless and constrained . He formed a friendship with a woman named June Bryde , which gradually deepened into an affair . He secretly arranged a flight from Philadelphia , Pennsylvania with June in 1960 , leaving behind his wife and their four children , who would not hear from him for twelve years . The couple settled for a time in St Louis , and it was at this time that he changed his name to Werner Erhard with June changing hers to Ellen Erhard . After more work in car sales , Erhard joined the sales staff of *Parents Magazine* and was rapidly promoted to training manager and eventually appointed Vice @-@ President in 1967 . During this period Erhard moved frequently to different parts of the US as dictated by the demands of the job , finally settling in San Francisco . When *Parents Magazine* was sold to the Time @-@ Life group , he was recruited by the Grolier Society as Divisional Manager . According to Grolier vice @-@ president John Wirtz the intention of appointing Erhard was that he would bring ? integrity , honesty and straightforwardness ? to their sales practices .

Personal search and self @-@ education

Shortly after moving to St. Louis Erhard began to embark on a program of inquiry and self @-@ education . Initially he focused on self @-@ improvement books such as *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill and *Psycho @-@ Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz . From there , he widened his search to Human Potential Movement psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers , a range of traditional Western philosophers , and Eastern disciplines such as Zen Buddhism , Taoism , Confucianism , Subud and the Martial arts as well as contemporary movements including Mind Dynamics , and Scientology .

Creating the est training

Bartley recounts a revelation that Erhard said he had experienced in March 1971 while driving into San Francisco , California to work at Grolier Society . Erhard described to Bartley what the revelation experience felt like : " What happened had no form . It was timeless , unbounded , ineffable , beyond language . " He told Bartley that he realized : " I had to ' clean up ' my life . I had to acknowledge and correct the lies in my life . I saw that the lies that I told about others ? my wanting my family , or Ellen (his second wife) , or anyone else , to be different from the way that they are -- came from lies that I told about myself -- my wanting to be different from the way that I

was . " His desire to share this experience led to the plans formed later that year to create the est training . The first promotional seminar was held in September with over one thousand attendees , and the first est training took place in October 1971 in a San Francisco hotel . In October 1972 , while leading an est session in New York , Erhard realized that the time had come to reconnect with his family after an absence of 12 years . Although his long absence from his family caused them feelings of confusion and pain , he re @-@ established cordial and loving relationships with all of them . His brother and sister became est Trainers and took on prominent roles in the business . He also set up a separate business venture for Ellen that gave her the financial freedom to choose how to structure her life and her relationship with him .

Key concepts of the est training as defined by Erhard and described in the book include :

Completion : the acknowledgement of actions or decisions taken in the past , and the taking of steps to bring a resolution .

Rackets : behavior patterns ostensibly involving complaints about people in one ' s life , but actually resulting in the perpetuation of the complaint and the securing of a payoff such as dominating the other person .

Integrity : being whole and complete , and honoring one ' s word . In the est context the word is used to depict a matter of workability , rather than with the moral overtones it has in everyday usage .

Stories : the interpretations of experiences which are regarded as reality , leading to conflict with other people who have created differing interpretations of the same events .

Responsibility : the willingness to accept oneself as the source of outcomes in life - whether welcome or unwelcome - rather than blaming others for them .

Intersections

The biographical chapters on Erhard are interspersed with chapters that Bartley refers to as ' Intersections ' . These chapters contain Bartley ' s scholarly overview and analysis of the various disciplines that Werner Erhard explored before founding the est training .

= = Reception = =

The book was a bestseller in 1978 , taking 8th place on the TIME non @-@ fiction bestseller list of November 20 , 1978 . Bartley told The Evening Independent in February 1979 that the book had sold a total of 110 @,@ 000 copies and gone through five editions . The growing numbers of est graduates contributed to strong sales .

Jonathan Lieberman , writing for The New York Review of Books , described the book as " attractively written , never shrill or unduly proselytizing , careful to avoid the hysteria and tribalism that usually characterize the early years of movements like est " , but considered Bartley to have " fallen " for Erhard . Given Bartley ' s previous work , Lieberman stated , he might have made an ideal interpreter of Erhard , but he found this expectation " disappointed [although] the book is nevertheless instructive " . A review of Werner Erhard in Kirkus Reviews similarly concluded , " Too entranced to be truly objective , Bartley is nonetheless an insightfully partial observer . " Booklist stated that Bartley , as an est student , had made the " mistake of being too close to his subject to be objective or critical . "

In Psychology Today , Morris B. Parloff stated that Bartley had written his biography of Erhard " carefully , lovingly , and well " . Kris Jeter , writing in Cults and the Family , commented that " wise researchers know and teach that one should be in love with their research topic " , and counted Bartley ' s book among several in which " this love was highly evident " . Steve McNamarra , in the Pacific Sun , said that the book was " clearly written and , while basically sympathetic " was not " an adulatory ' house job ' . " McNamarra found the sections detailing Erhard ' s " soap opera " , making up three @-@ quarters of the book , the easiest to read , while the " intersections " , passages in which Bartley provided concise summaries of the philosophical traditions underpinning Erhard ' s est training , were tougher but ultimately rewarding .

Kenneth Wayne Thomas , in Intrinsic Motivation at Work , described the book as " somewhat sympathetic " to Erhard and the est philosophy ; Steve Jackson , writing in Westword , similarly

included it among " books sympathetic to Erhard , est and Landmark " , written by an " old friend of Erhard 's " . Stephen Goldstein , in a Washington Post review , said Bartley had made it " obvious from the start that he cares about his subject and his own est experience " and had told " a rather simple , straightforward story that pretty much lets you draw your own conclusions [about Erhard] or keep the ones you have already reached . " A reviewer in Choice : Current Reviews for Academic Libraries stated he was " enthusiastic about this book " , praising the " personal quality [of] the narrative , which , though , sometimes becomes overly detailed . " He highly recommended the book for general and college libraries focused on the social sciences .

Other commentators felt that the book was unduly favourable to Erhard . A review of the book in The Christian Century stated that Bartley had got " sucked into " writing a " promo on Erhard , founder of one of the pseudo @-@ therapies of the ' 70s . " The Los Angeles Times commented that " [Bartley 's] philosophical justification of est as a mishmash of totalitarianism , hucksterism and existentialism makes this book more a public relations product than an objective study . " A Chicago Tribune review described the book as a " painstaking [...] act of devotion " that nevertheless failed in its mission : " No one reading it is likely to agree with Bartley that the founder of est is a philosopher and spiritual leader of Gandhian magnitude except the already convinced . " James R. Fisher , in Six Silent Killers : Management 's Greatest Challenge , and Suzanne Snider , writing for The Believer magazine , referred to Bartley 's book as a " hagiography " , and Rachel Jones of Noseweek considered the book " sycophantic " . A review in The Evening Independent described Bartley as Erhard 's " friend and admitted booster " , telling his " often @-@ sordid story in detail . " E. C. Dennis , writing for Library Journal , found that Bartley 's work " has a slick tone and more than a trace of hero worship " . Dennis acknowledged that the book gave " the full details of Erhard 's ' soap opera , ' often in his own words , " but was critical of Bartley 's writing , saying he cast " a Freud 's @-@ eye @-@ view on his subject 's youthful failings , but after the famous ' transformation ' his tone becomes almost reverential . " Dennis stated that the book failed to ask important questions , but that large public libraries should carry a copy , given its status as an " authorized " biography .