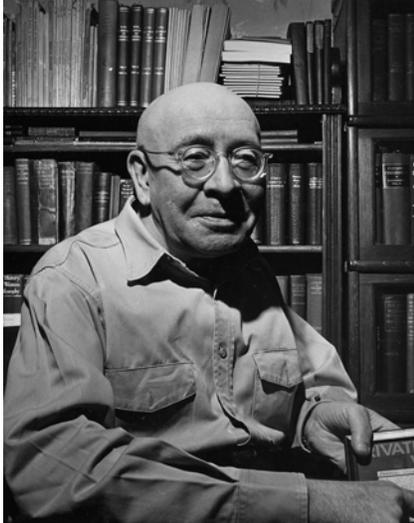


The Semantic Person

An address by Irving J. Lee, delivered at the first conference on General Semantics, Chicago, IL., June 22, 1951.



Korzybski



Lee

Lee: *Now, Alfred, you have been thinking about this stuff for a very long time. Can you tell me, in a nutshell, what are you trying to do? What is the objective of all this reading and studying and talking and sweating that you go through day after day, year after year? What are you after?"*

Korzybski: *Irving, we are trying to produce a new sort of man. A man who will have no new virtues, but we will know how to describe him, and, maybe, we will know how to create him.*

Irving J. Lee's Semantic Person As outlined by Erica Gann

“So, I have been drawing up this profile, as I think, in a very few minutes. Now, let me just list what the chapters would be about. Perhaps some of you could fill in the contents of these; perhaps some of you think that maybe these ought not to be part of that profile. But the idea, I think, is a pretty good one, the discovery of a rounded picture of what would a thoroughly extensionalized, properly evaluating man be like. Well, I offer this as something to think about.” - Lee

1. Tremendous reservoir of curiosity about the world and the people around him; see and listen with tremendous depth and continuity; inquire and query; never be afraid to ask; never be ashamed of venturing into an understanding; never be scared to admit that he would like to know more.
2. Have a good memory; astonishing capacity to forget the unpleasant; shake off the urge for self-pity; be able to forget petty disaffections that he is exposed to; able to forget annoyances and irritations that keep bothering us.
3. Tremendously highly-developed sense not only of the similarities among things but also of the differences among them; acutely sensitive to the nuances, subtleties, variations, gradations; enriched sensitivity to the shadings and varieties no matter where he went and under all the things he came to; when things were new, he would act new; when things were different, he would re-organize the differences in his responses; never suffer from the blindness that obliterates uniqueness.
4. His behavior would be a remarkable manifestation of this thing called non-elementalism; integrate knowing and doing; know that inequities, inequalities, injustices exist and realize that talking about them is not enough; feel the impulse to participate, to perform; would not be satisfied to say that there is greed, and difficulty, and diffidence – act in terms of their elimination; realize that knowing alone is barren, but acting without knowing is barbarism; take calculated risks almost at the drop of a hat.
5. Fight against the sterilization of his appreciation of what is both beautiful and ugly; know how to love, how to hate, to be angry, and indignant; provide stores of affection for people; capable of tremendous indignation and be free of irritations and annoyances that are so small.
6. Have a reservoir of faith, convictions, deep beliefs; continuously be aware of that *etc.*, protecting him from becoming the bigot and fanatic; consciousness that there is something more, which would keep him from letting go and from becoming the kind of fanatical demagogue that it is so easy to become when one has a message.
7. Great reserves of patience; be a little less hurried, a little less impetuous, and over-quick in his actions; when occasions require it, be able to move quickly, but there will be a sense of continuous awareness, testing of what goes on.

8. Great sociality and friendliness; engage fully in small talk as well as in serious talk; poise to be able to talk with people at a dozen strata in the community; free of the kind of bashfulness that keeps us from talking to people who don't speak the immediate patois that we have learned.
9. Know how to achieve precision and specificity in his talking, if he has to; avoid the traps of over-simplification, distortion, eschewing when the occasion calls for care and accuracy.
10. Not likely to succumb to defeat and despair and give himself up to failure and resignation; know the meaning of defeat but he will know that you have to date defeat, too; know there are moments when it doesn't seem worthwhile, but he will also know that you have to put a date on your, or whoever is involved.
11. Ruthlessly realistic as possible; know when he's responding to his feelings inside and outside.
12. Be neither the rugged individualist nor the completely altruistic cooperating man, he'll be both; know the virtues of time-binding; know how much we owe to the past and he will know how necessary it is to move uniquely; willing to express inventiveness, initiative, the arts and devices of cooperation.
13. Be alert to the possibilities and potentialities of the human being; rarely satisfied with his performance as he knows it; realize that we haven't the faintest notion how much a man can know, how much a man can learn, how much a man can do; recognize the limits of learning are awfully hard to define; that in this vast, tremendously big world of ours, the possibilities of human growth and human development, perhaps, have not yet been readily defined.