

...with Dorothy Rowe

Clinical psychologist and writer

One inspiration

The philosopher Bertrand Russell showed me that it was possible to write about complex matters in everyday English, and without having to resort to jargon.

One alternative career path

I wanted to be a journalist, but in the 1950s women were expected to write only for the women's pages.

One book that you think all psychologists should read
Chris Frith's *Making Up the Mind: How the Brain Creates Our Mental World*.

One moment that changed the course of your career

In 1977 Don Bannister read the manuscript of my first book *The Experience of Depression*, liked it, and recommended it to John Wiley and Sons for publication.

One great thing that psychology could have achieved but has not

Psychologists have shown that we learn more efficiently by

being rewarded than by being punished, but they have not entered the political arena to persuade parliament to change the law in the UK so that children can enjoy the same legal protection from physical assault that adults enjoy. Is there a connection between the 'reasonable punishment' which the law allows parents to inflict on their children and the fact that each week one or two children die at the hands of an adult, usually a parent or step-parent?

One cultural recommendation

Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*. Published in 1907, this is not only one of the great books of literature but the best study of the parent/child relationship I have ever read.

One challenge you think psychology faces

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies and cognitive behaviour therapy do not attempt to deal with the real issues. Their use of the language of medicine only

serves to obscure the way in which poverty, deprivation, inequality between the sexes, classes and ethnic groups, and cultural institutions like marriage create the conditions where depression and anxiety flourish, and protects the government of the day from having to deal with these issues.

One thing that you would change about psychology

End the division between individual and social psychology and develop a way of talking about individuals in society and the influence of one on the other.

One hero

As Sheldon Kopp said, if you have a hero, look again. You have diminished yourself. I admire the work of Richard Gregory and of Colwyn Trevarthan.

One big question

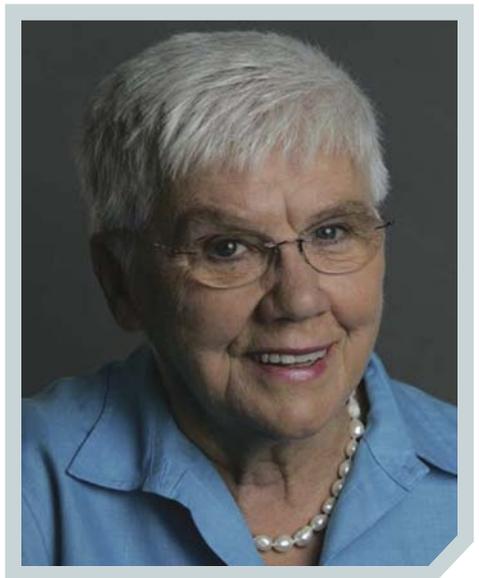
How brain activity becomes meaning, and meaning becomes brain activity. Psychologists should address this rather than being seduced by the new phrenology based on MRI.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

Behaviour is determined not by what happens to us but how we interpret it. Since no two people ever have exactly the same past experience, no two people ever see anything in exactly the same way.

One hope for the future

That all psychologists will remember something what many seem to have forgotten: that psychology is a science. Even though the subject matter is not always suitable for experimentation, that is no reason for abandoning scientific principles and operational definitions of all



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the terms used. Hypotheses need to be drawn from observation and not from the needs and fantasies of the researcher.

resource

Rowe, D. (2008). *What should I believe?* London: Routledge.
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