

Millenium, 2(Edição Especial Nº21)



A ARTE DE VIVER NO SÉCULO XXI

THE ART OF LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EL ARTE DE VIVIR EN EL SIGLO XXI

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RECEIVED: 02nd January, 2026

ACCEPTED: 05th January, 2026

PUBLISHED: 14th January, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29352/mill0221e.44829>

EDITORIAL

THE ART OF LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Psychology, the science that studies our overt and covert behaviors, is, of course, a science and not an art. We decided to design a collection for the general public whose name was inspired by a very old book called exactly 'The Art of Living', by Epictetus, a prominent Greek philosopher, because, although Psychology is a science, many of the solutions to our problems must be innovative and creative in order to cope with the complexity of the world we live in. Thus, it seemed appropriate that there should be some art associated with our science, a flexibility that supports us in developing divergent thinking.

This collection is about ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy), and what ACT in general make us realise is that we often dwell on and get stuck in the past or imagine the future (often filling it with fears or giving it unrealistic perspectives) and in doing so we forget to live in the present, with so many beautiful things unfolding right in front of us, therefore missing opportunities.

Our collection was not meant to provide self-help books. They are indeed books about mental health and well-being and are intended, on the one hand, to demystify/de-stigmatise these concepts; on the other hand, to alert people to what they can do for themselves and when it is necessary to seek professional help.

A healthy work environment is not created with 'cosmetic' measures such as a basket of apples or an ad hoc skills class, trying to disguise the 'dark circles' that come from a relationship with an ambitious and short-sighted boss or an unfriendly and toxic work environment. Above all, a healthy environment is created by a change in organisational culture, promoting among employees (or pupils/students) a sense of belonging, social cohesion, effective participation in the life of the institution, and personal and professional development.

Interpersonal relationships with colleagues, the perception of leaders as 'benign' and visionary, recognising, valuing, and adding value, and a balance between family/work.

This is part of the 'emotional salary', and, of course, safety at work/school should not be forgotten. Poverty and job or school insecurity are real 'killers' of our well-being and devastating to our physical and mental health.

The pandemic has made us reflect on the need to be creative in managing our working lives and has brought with it the possibility of managing and limiting 'presenteeism' with all the associated benefits in terms of mental health and productivity.

Social cohesion is highly targeted by certain regimes that I would call 'anti-people and anti-human rights', which is commonly referred to as 'divide and rule': pitting the young against the old; men against women; nationals against foreigners; believers against non-believers; rich against poor; educated against less educated; employed against unemployed.

When we find some 'others' to blame, we stop thinking for ourselves about the kind of society we value and want to live in. We stop trusting (we start blaming!), and trust is the foundation of a modern and democratic society.

What we really need is a human, intergenerational development perspective that values diversity as something that enriches us, that makes us look beyond our own navels and care about issues greater than ourselves: social and intergenerational justice and the fight against various inequalities.

With the acceleration of social, technological, and environmental changes, perhaps the best preparation we can seek for ourselves and our children, students, etc., is to be able to deal with change, to be alert to anticipate it, and to produce flexible, creative, timely, and appropriate responses.

This is a tremendous challenge, which lies at the very heart of what Psychological Science is all about.