

Instructor's Manual

for

CARL ROGERS ON PERSON-CENTERED THERAPY

with

CARL R. ROGERS, PHD,
AND NATALIE ROGERS, PHD, REAT

Manual by

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The *Instructor's Manual* accompanies the DVD *Carl Rogers on Person-Centered Therapy* (Institutional/Instructor's Version). Video available at www.psychotherapy.net.

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Instructor's Manual for Carl Rogers on Person-Centered Therapy

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CARL ROGERS ON PERSON-CENTERED THERAPY

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Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD

1. USE THE TRANSCRIPTS

Make notes in the video **Transcript** for future reference; the next time you show the video, you will have them available. Highlight or notate key moments in the video to better facilitate discussion during and after the video.

2. FACILITATE DISCUSSION

Pause the video at different points to elicit viewers' observations and reactions to the concepts presented. The **Discussion Questions** section provides ideas about key points that can stimulate rich discussions and learning.

3. ENCOURAGE SHARING OF OPINIONS

Encourage viewers to voice their opinions. What are viewers' impressions of what is presented in the interview?

4. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL

Assign readings from **Related Websites, Videos, and Further Reading** before or after viewing.

5. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER

See suggestions in the **Reaction Paper** section.

6. CONDUCT A ROLE-PLAY

The **Role-Play** section guides you through an exercise you can assign to your students in the classroom or training session.

Summary of Carl Rogers's Person-Centered Psychotherapy Approach*

Person-centered psychotherapy (also known as client-centered or Rogerian therapy) is a form of talk therapy developed by Carl Rogers in the 1940s and 1950s. The purpose of this form of therapy is to increase a person's feelings of self-worth, reduce the level of incongruence between the ideal and actual self, and help a person become more fully functioning. Rogers's strong belief in the positive nature of human beings is based on his many years of clinical counseling. He suggests that all clients, no matter what the problem, can improve without being taught anything specific by a counselor, once they accept and respect themselves. Rogers (1986) described the foundation of his person-centered approach this way:

It is that the individual has within himself or herself vast resources for self-understanding, for altering his or her self-concept, attitudes and self-directed behavior—and that these resources can be tapped if only a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.

According to Rogers (1957), in order for constructive personality change to occur, it is necessary and sufficient that the following conditions exist and continue over a period of time:

1. Two persons are in psychological contact.
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is **congruent** or integrated in the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences **unconditional positive regard** for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an **empathic understanding** of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavors to communicate this experience to the client.
6. The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic

understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.

Congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding are the three core conditions of the person-centered approach to psychotherapy. In *A Way of Being* (1980), Rogers explains what he means by these three terms.

Congruence means that the therapist is genuine and authentic, not like the “blank screen” of traditional psychoanalysis:

The first element could be called genuineness, realness, or congruence. The more the therapist is himself or herself in the relationship, putting up no professional front or personal facade, the greater is the likelihood that the client will change and grow in a constructive manner. This means that the therapist is openly being the feelings and attitudes that are flowing within at the moment. The term “transparent” catches the flavor of this condition: the therapist makes himself or herself transparent to the client; the client can see right through what the therapist is in the relationship; the client experiences no holding back on the part of the therapist. As for the therapist, what he or she is experiencing is available to awareness, can be lived in the relationship, and can be communicated, if appropriate. Thus, there is a close matching, or congruence, between what is being experienced at the gut level, what is present in awareness, and what is expressed to the client. (Rogers, 1980)

Unconditional positive regard involves basic acceptance and support of a person, regardless of what the person says or does:

The second attitude of importance in creating a climate for change is acceptance, or caring, or prizing—what I have called “unconditional positive regard.” When the therapist is experiencing a positive, acceptant attitude toward whatever the client is at that moment, therapeutic movement or change is more likely to occur. The therapist is willing for the client to be whatever immediate feeling is going on—confusion, resentment, fear, anger, courage, love, or pride. Such caring on the part of the therapist is nonpossessive. The therapist prizes the client in a total rather than a conditional way. (Rogers, 1980)

Empathy means understanding accurately what the client is feeling, or stepping into his or her shoes:

The third facilitative aspect of the relationship is empathic understanding. This means that the therapist senses accurately the feelings and personal meanings that the client is experiencing and communicates this understanding to the client. When functioning best, the therapist is so much inside the private world of the other that he or she can clarify not only the meanings of which the client is aware but even those just below the level of awareness. This kind of sensitive, active listening is exceedingly rare in our lives. We think we listen, but very rarely do we listen with real understanding, true empathy. Yet listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change that I know. (Rogers, 1980)

Rogers expands on his belief about how people change:

How does this climate which I have just described bring about change? Briefly, as persons are accepted and prized, they tend to develop a more caring attitude toward themselves. As persons are empathetically heard, it becomes possible for them to listen more accurately to the flow of inner experiencings. But as a person understands and prizes self, the self becomes more congruent with the experiencings. The person thus becomes more real, more genuine. These tendencies, the reciprocal of the therapist's attitudes, enable the person to be a more effective growth-enhancer for himself or herself. There is a greater freedom to be the true, whole person. (Rogers, 1980)

*Adapted from McLeod, S. A. (2008). *Simply Psychology* (www.simplypsychology.org/humanistic.html), and Rogers, C. R. (1980), *A Way of Being*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Discussion Questions

Professors, training directors, and facilitators may use some or all of these discussion questions, depending on what aspects of the video are most relevant to the audience.

INTERVIEW

1. **Rogarian:** What comes to mind for you when you hear the term “Rogarian”? Do you associate specific techniques with Carl Rogers? If so, what are they? Why do you think Rogers prefers to be known for the person-centered point of view he espoused rather than having the approach tied to his name? What does this say to you about his personality?
2. **Upbringing:** How did you react when you heard Rogers talk about some of his work being a reaction to his early upbringing in a very conservative and religious family? How about when he revealed that, as a child, he did not feel heard as a person and didn’t expect his inner world to be understood at all? When you reflect on your own upbringing, can you relate to Rogers? How did your family members tend to respond when you revealed your inner world to them? Do you think your therapeutic style reflects a reaction against your upbringing? If so, how?
3. **Influences:** Rogers spoke about some of his early influences, including Leta Stetter Hollingworth and Otto Rank. Who would you say has significantly influenced your approach to psychotherapy?
4. **How to be of help:** What reactions do you have to this statement from Rogers: “I learned [that] if I want to seem very smart and very expert, then I will continue to diagnose and tell you what’s wrong with you, and tell you what should be done. But if I want to really be of help, perhaps the thing I should do is to listen to where the pain, or the problem, or the issue is within you”? When you reflect on your therapeutic style, do you see yourself more as an expert who diagnoses and gives advice, or more as someone who listens for a client’s pain? Do you think Rogers’s approach does not focus enough on solving problems? Do you think an absence of expert guidance and professional expertise could be detrimental to your clients? Why or why not?

5. **Midwife to a new personality:** What do you think of Rogers's belief that personality change occurs when people connect more deeply within themselves, and that therapists can facilitate this by creating a climate in which clients feel safe to bring out things they have never expressed before? Do you agree that this is how change occurs? If not, how do you attempt to facilitate change with your clients?
6. **Unconditional positive regard:** Were you surprised to hear Rogers say that it is a misunderstanding that unconditional positive regard is a requirement for the therapist, and that his actual position is that he is very fortunate if that feeling exists within him towards his client? Before watching this video, what had been your understanding of Rogers's view on unconditional positive regard? What is your understanding now? Are there particular people who have been or would be especially difficult for you to unconditionally positively regard? Talk about who those individuals are or might be. How important do you think it is to have unconditional positive regard for your clients?
7. **Approach:** Rogers touched on the core of his therapeutic approach, which involves 1) trying to genuinely understand the client, 2) genuinely and unconditionally caring about the client, and 3) being genuinely himself in the therapeutic relationship. What do you think of these conditions for change, growth, and drawing out the potential of the client? Are there aspects of his approach you have concerns about or disagree with? What do you like and dislike most about his approach?
8. **Therapist vs. friend:** What thoughts do you have about the distinction Rogers drew between a therapeutic relationship and a friendship? Do you agree with him that the therapeutic relationship is much more intense than friendship? What other differences would you say there are between these two potentially healing kinds of relationships?
9. **Group:** If you've led groups before, do you agree with Rogers about the differences between individual and group therapy? In particular, what do you think of his opinion that the selection of

group members is not at all important? Do you agree that most groups can handle a person considered “borderline psychotic,” or “fragile,” or do you tend to screen out certain people? What do you think of Rogers’s statement that there is a wisdom to the group? Do you have a similar trust in groups, or do you tend to be more cautious and careful when selecting members for a group? What do you consider when selecting members for a group?

10. **Social change:** Rogers’s interest in change obviously extended beyond psychotherapy, and into international relations and education. Do you share his affinity for social and institutional change? Do you think that your skills as a therapist or counselor are useful in effecting changes on organizational or societal levels? If so, what skills are transferable, and what additional skills do you think are required for contributing to changes in larger systems?
11. **Education:** What reactions did you have to Rogers’s thoughts about teaching? Do you agree with him that nourishing the curiosity of the students should be emphasized more than imparting knowledge? What do you think of his hypothesis that educational institutions don’t change because “they would rather turn out conformists than people who can think”? Do you agree with his concern that children are being taught to obey rather than learning how to be thoughtful, independent citizens of a democracy? What specific changes do you think Rogers would advocate for in our current education system? As you reflect on your own educational experience, does it have the qualities Rogers critiqued?
12. **Therapy and education:** What do you think of Rogers’s statements about the aims of education and psychotherapy being similar, in that they both help produce people who are independent and creative? What would you say are the aims of education and therapy?
13. **Power:** What reactions did you have when Rogers spoke about power in the classroom, and how he would like to see teachers focusing on empowering the student rather than keeping the power in the teacher’s hands? How do you think this idea of

sharing power applies to the therapeutic relationship? How important is empowering your clients to you? What are your thoughts about your own power as a therapist?

14. **Self-indulgence:** Do you think encounter groups and psychotherapy in general promote self-indulgence? Why or why not? Do you agree with Rogers that strong and rich relationships are based in a willingness on both people's parts to both express deep feelings and listen to the other's deep feelings? How do you think psychotherapy contributes to developing stronger, richer relationships?
15. **Trustworthy:** Do you agree with Rogers that the inner core of people is really trustworthy and positive? Why or why not? How do you think your opinion about this may impact your therapeutic approach and other approaches you have studied, such as psychoanalysis?

CONCLUSION

16. **Criticism:** Yalom referenced a common criticism of the person-centered approach, which is that it can be wooden and mechanical. What are your thoughts on that criticism? Have you experienced yourself as being mechanical when you use this or other approaches?
17. **Congruence:** Natalie Rogers described congruence as being honest about what might be impeding the connection between therapist and client, and she gave an example of a therapist telling a client that she has a sick child at home, to clarify that, if she seems distracted, it's because of that and not because of the client. What reactions did you have to this? When you have big things going on in your life and are somewhat distracted in sessions, do you tend to tell your clients what is going on? Can you see yourself being this transparent? What do you think are some of the benefits and disadvantages of this kind of self-disclosure?
18. **The model:** What are your overall thoughts about Rogers's approach to psychotherapy and education? What aspects of his approach can you see yourself incorporating into your work? Are

there some components of his approach that seem incompatible with how you work?

19. **Personal reaction:** How do you think you would you feel about having Rogers as your therapist? Do you think he could build a solid therapeutic alliance with you? Would he be effective with you? Why or why not?

Reaction Paper for Classes and Training

Video: *Carl Rogers on Person-Centered Therapy*

- **Assignment:** Complete this reaction paper and return it by the date noted by the facilitator.
- **Suggestions for Viewers:** Take notes on these questions while viewing the video and complete the reaction paper afterwards. Respond to each question below.
- **Length and Style:** 2 to 4 pages double-spaced. Be concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief paper that you write soon after watching the video—we want your ideas and reactions.

What to Write: Respond to the following questions in your reaction paper:

1. **Key points:** What important points did you learn about Carl Rogers and the person-centered approach? What stands out to you about how Rogers works?
2. **What I found most helpful:** As a therapist, what was most beneficial to you about the model presented? What tools or perspectives did you find helpful and might you use in your own work? What challenged you to think about something in a new way?
3. **What does not make sense:** What principles/techniques/interventions did not make sense to you? Did anything push your buttons or bring about a sense of resistance in you, or just not fit with your own style of working?
4. **How I would do it differently:** What might you do differently from Rogers when working with clients? Be specific about what different approaches, interventions, and techniques you would apply.
5. **Other questions/reactions:** What questions or reactions did you have as you viewed the interview with Rogers? Other comments, thoughts, or feelings?

Role-Plays

After watching the video and reviewing *Summary of Carl Rogers's Person-Centered Psychotherapy Approach* in this manual, break participants into groups of two and have them role-play a therapy session utilizing a person-centered approach.

One person will start out as the therapist and the other person will be the client, and then invite participants to switch roles. Participants playing clients can talk about anything they'd like to talk about, and are encouraged to play themselves, as opposed to pretending to be someone else. This way, they will get a real sense of how it feels to be listened to in a person-centered way.

Participants playing therapists should focus on the spirit of the person-centered approach rather than on any particular techniques. This spirit is rooted in Rogers's belief in the positive nature of human beings, so therapists should try on this belief and let it guide their way of being in the session. Begin by letting go of any agenda, and focus on just *being present* with the client, without trying to accomplish or fix anything. Follow the client's lead, and stay with the client as much as possible, as opposed to asking any leading questions or making any interpretations. Focus primarily on the three core conditions of the person-centered approach to psychotherapy: congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding (see descriptions in Summary). The emphasis here is on *being with* the client rather than *doing* anything *to* the client. You may use the active-listening technique of repeating back or summarizing what you hear the client saying, but again, the emphasis should be on really hearing the client rather than on what you say to him or her.

After the role-plays, have the groups come together to discuss their experiences. What did participants learn about the person-centered approach to psychotherapy? Invite the clients to talk about what it was like to be listened to in this way. Did they feel accepted and understood? Did they sense that their therapists were being genuine? Did they feel that the therapists were attempting to see the world through the clients' eyes? What did they observe about the therapists

that contributed to or detracted from them tapping into their own inner resources for self-understanding and change? Then, invite the therapists to talk about their experiences: How did it feel to focus on the spirit of the person-centered approach? Was it difficult to connect with Rogers's belief in the positive nature of human beings? How was it to let go of any attempts to "fix" the client or problem-solve? Did they notice any blocks to unconditional positive regard for their clients? If so, how did they work with that? What about blocks to congruence and empathic understanding? What were their favorite ways of conveying their empathic understanding to the clients, and what was challenging about this? Did it feel mechanical? Finally, open up a general discussion of what participants learned about the challenges and rewards of a person-centered approach to psychotherapy.

Alternatively, you may have the exercise done in triads, with a therapist, a client and an observer, and each party sharing during the debriefing.

One other option is to do this role-play in front of the whole group with one therapist and one client; the rest of the group can observe, acting as the advising team to the therapist. Before the end of the session, have the therapist take a break, get feedback from the observation team, and bring it back into the session with the client. Other observers might jump in if the therapist gets stuck. Follow up with a discussion on what participants learned about the challenges and rewards of a person-centered approach to psychotherapy.

Related Websites, Videos and Further Reading

WEB RESOURCES

Carl Rogers.info: Resources for students, researchers, and practitioners

www.carlrogers.info

ADPCA: Association for the Development of the Person-Centered Approach

www.adpca.org

Association for Humanistic Psychology

www.ahpweb.org

Center for Studies of the Person

www.centerfortheperson.org

Person-Centered International

www.personcentered.com/contents.htm

The Person-Centered Website of Peter F. Schmid

www.pca-online.net/index-pcanet.htm

World Association for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling (WAPCEPC)

www.pce-world.org

Website for Natalie Rogers

www.nrogers.com

RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET

Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy with Natalie Rogers

Expressive Arts Therapy in Action with Natalie Rogers

Carl Rogers: A Daughter's Tribute

Person-Centered Child Therapy with Anin Utigaard

Motivational Interviewing with William R. Miller

Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapy in Action with James Bugental

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Kirschenbaum, H. & Henderson, V. L., eds. (1989). *The Carl Rogers reader*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Rogers, C. R. (1942). *Counseling and psychotherapy: Newer concepts in practice*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications, and theory*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, C. R. (1970). *Carl Rogers on encounter groups*. New York: Harper and Row.

Rogers, C. R. (1980). *A way of being*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Rogers, C. R. & Stevens, B. (1967). *Person to person: The problem of being human: A new trend in psychology*. Walnut Creek, CA.

Rogers, C. R. & Freiberg, H. J. (1994). *Freedom to learn*. Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill Publishing Company.

Rogers, C. R. & Russell, D. E. (2002). *Carl Rogers: The quiet revolutionary, an oral history*. Roseville, CA: Penmarin Books.

Video Transcript

ACCIDENTAL BEGINNINGS

Yalom: Hello. I'm Victor Yalom and I'm here today with Dr. Natalie Rogers. She's the daughter of Carl Rogers and a psychologist and psychotherapist in her own right. In a minute, we're going to have a chance to see an interview with Carl Rogers that was filmed in 1985, in Ireland.

Natalie, welcome.

Rogers: Thank you.

Yalom: Can you just say a few words about where Carl was at this point in his life? Coincidentally, he was 83 at the time of this interview and you are 83 right now.

Rogers: Yeah. And the first thing I need to say is I was just amazed at his presentation. He was so articulate, and no hems or haws about it. He just knows exactly what he thinks and feels. I enjoyed watching it.

So, at that time of his life he was focused on groups—what were then called encounter groups—and he worked overseas. He was very interested in cross-cultural work. One of the largest groups he did was in Brazil. And he went to Russia and worked there and around the world doing peace work, essentially, trying to get his way of being, the person-centered approach, adopted by world peace negotiators.

Yalom: Right. And he was even nominated for the Nobel Prize for peace.

Rogers: Yes, he was.

Yalom: Well, let's take a look at the interview, and then you and I can convene afterwards.

Rogers: Okay, thanks.

INTERVIEW

John Masterson: Carl Rogers is one of America's most distinguished psychologists. His ideas, first published in the 1940s, continue to be influential in psychology and education. He has focused on people as

individuals and how to enable them to best develop their abilities and emotions to the full—ideas pertinent for life in today’s perplexing world.

Now in his 80s, he continues to maintain a busy work schedule. I spoke to him recently between sessions at a workshop he was conducting in Dublin. I began by asking how he felt on hearing the word “Rogerian.”

Carl Rogers: By and large, I don’t feel very happy when I hear the word “Rogerian” because I feel that those who tend to use that term often are those who have a somewhat mechanical understanding of my work or are thinking of it as a technique. I really appreciate the general impact I’ve had, but the term “Rogerian” doesn’t thrill me at all.

I feel that I would much prefer to be known as someone who espoused a point of view that got known as client centered, person centered, or whatever, but not particularly after my name.

Masterson: Your work now has been extremely influential since the early 1940s. You describe in that early work your upbringing, which you say was very conservative and very religious. How do you feel that contributed to the development of your thought?

Rogers: Some of it contributed positively, some negatively. I think that, as I think back on my childhood, I didn’t expect my inner world to be understood at all. Whenever I revealed anything of what was going on deep within me, that tended to be judged, and usually negatively. But at any rate, I didn’t wish to expose it. And I certainly didn’t feel heard as a person.

I think that some of what I’ve done professionally and in my work has been a reaction to my early upbringing. Where I was not heard, I really want to hear people. Where I didn’t dare to expose what was going on in my own world of fantasy, because that’s what it was, I would really like to hear from other people.

I would like to make it safe for them to reveal their own inner worlds. So in that respect, what I’ve done is sort of a reciprocal or an opposite of my upbringing.

[00:05:00]

On the other hand, some of the ethical values and so on are things that I think I treasure and have continued in my own professional work.

Masterson: One other part of your early years that struck me was a very practical understanding of science. You've written about your use of it in farming.

Rogers: Yes. That has intrigued me as to what came first. I suppose, like all children, I was curious. And we moved to the farm when I was about 13, I think. And the farm, for my father, was a hobby. And he wanted to do it right. He wanted to do it scientifically. So he accumulated books.

He brought in professors from agricultural institutions. And I read things that a 13-year-old is not supposed to understand or appreciate, but I became greatly intrigued with the idea of experimental groups and control groups, with how you distinguish whether the results were due to chance or to the elements you'd introduced. I really gained a profound appreciation of what scientific research is all about long before I ever heard about such a thing in school.

And I've always been glad that that happened.

Masterson: After that early very practical understanding of science, the work for which you've become very well known has been at the other end of the spectrum, while psychology was seen by many as becoming more and more scientific. How did your early work in client-centered therapy begin?

Rogers: I suppose it has some roots in the graduate training which I had. I started out in the theological seminary and fairly soon realized that I would not be able—I enjoyed the goals of such training and really appreciated them, but I felt I could never tie myself down to a given creed or belief because they kept changing all the time.

So the course that I took in helping young people in the theological seminary was very influential in changing me over to the field of psychology. And then, my beginning clinical training with a woman named Leta Hollingworth, who's not very well known but was a very

warm person and whose clinical work was warm and personal—that influenced me a good deal.

Then, when I began ,on my first job, to deal with problem and delinquent children and their parents and so on, I started out feeling that I was well trained. I knew how to do it. You test children, you diagnose them, you analyze the situation, you prescribe what's necessary, you try to see that that's put into effect. Sometimes that was effective. But as I got into what we call treatment interviews—the term psychotherapy was very little used in those days—I began to learn some new things. And there were several specific events that really changed my direction sharply. One I remember quite vividly. I've never written about it.

There was a young adolescent boy who was a great problem to his parents, to the school, to others. And one of the psychologists on the staff of this children's agency was dealing with the boy. And I agreed to work with the mother. And I quite early came to the conviction that the primary problem was that she was rejecting of her son.

In a number of interviews, I attempted quite cautiously and gently to get that across, that “The real problem is that you don't love your son.” After we'd had a number of interviews, I felt that we were really getting nowhere. And I finally said to her, “I think we both tried, and we haven't made much progress. I think we should call a halt to these interviews.” She thought a moment and agreed.

[00:10:00]

And then, she got up and left, got as far as the door. Then, she turned around and said, “Do you ever take adults for counseling in this clinic?” And I said, “Yes.” And she came back to the chair she'd just left and started to pour out a story that was quite different from the careful case history I'd taken from her earlier. She started to talk about her relationship with her husband. Now, that was troubled and not satisfactory.

And I was sort of nonplussed by this. I didn't know quite what to do. So I listened. And as she went on with her story, I realized that the case history we'd taken of the case might be fine from my point of view. It was totally inadequate from the internal point of view of the people

involved. So I not only listened in that interview, she came back for others.

I feel that was my first real therapy case, where we kept in touch for a number of years. Her relationship with her son greatly improved, and he went through college. All was fine. But what I learned was, if I want to seem very smart and very expert, then I will continue to diagnose and tell you what's wrong with you and tell you what should be done.

But if I want to really be of help, perhaps the thing I should do is to listen to where the pain, or the problem, or the issue is within you. And that had a profound effect upon my later experience. So then, that point of view was fed by getting acquainted with the work of Otto Rank, through someone who'd been analyzed by him. We also brought him to Rochester, New York, where I was working at the time, where he spent a weekend with us.

I've often said I really didn't think very much of his theory, but I thought his therapy was very good. He really helped solidify the notion that to rely on the positive impulses in the individual was a very helpful and wise thing to do. And I think then I began to develop what I thought was probably being considered useful in the clinical field.

Gradually I discovered that, no, I was saying something new. It was new and controversial.

Masterson: You've described your role as a therapist as being a midwife to a new personality. What precisely does that mean?

Rogers: The essence of that is that I really want to help the person within to come forth. I held a demonstration interview this morning in which the woman described it as sort of taking off layer after layer and getting into the core of herself.

And to me, that is the process by which change takes place. And that is the process of being a midwife to a new personality. If I can create a climate, an atmosphere in which a person feels safe to bring out things they've never dared to even express to themselves, to say nothing of what they've not dared to express to others, it enables them to become

closer to what is deep within themselves. And that, they find, is a new, and changed, and more powerful person.

Masterson: One of the requirements you place upon yourself is to unconditionally accept and have unconditional positive regard for the person who you're trying to help. That presumably must be very difficult in some cases.

Rogers: No, that's a slight misunderstanding. What I have said is that I am very fortunate in the relationship if that feeling and attitude exists in me.

I am very fortunate and the client is very fortunate if I can feel I really accept you fully just as you are.

[00:15:00]

Sometimes that's very difficult. I held an interview with a young man in South Africa. I didn't know anything about him. It turned out he was an officer in the South African army. Now, for me, that meant that I stretched my empathic abilities to their very limit to try to be with him, to try to understand him, to try to be caring toward him.

I didn't feel I did too well. And yet, I've learned since, that interview really changed the course of his life. So I feel that if I can be genuinely understanding, try to listen not only to the words but the meaning, trying to understand the person that's hidden within each one of us, that's helpful.

If I really care about this person in an unconditional way, that's helpful. If I can really be myself in the relationship, not a professional expert, not a "psychologist," not a psychotherapist, just me in that relationship, that's helpful. All those things are possible. And when they come together, that creates a very powerful climate for change, for growth, for drawing out the potential of the client.

Masterson: In what ways is it different from a sincere and mature friendship, for example?

Rogers: It's different in having a different kind of commitment. The same kind of thing can happen in a friendship, but I think it happens somewhat more rarely. For example, if you come to me as a client, I'm

committed to being, as far as I can, the person who creates the kind of relationship I just tried to describe.

On the other hand, if we're friends and we meet, I feel I have needs. I have some problems right now, and there are some things I want to do, and let's do them together. There's not the intense focus that there is in a therapeutic relationship. In a therapeutic relationship, at its best, I'm genuinely focused on you, and your needs, and whatever is meaningful for you, and whatever the problems that you want to talk about. I'm focused on the person that may underlie the person you are on the exterior.

I would like to understand the person who lies underneath. It may seem strange to say this, but it's a much more intense relationship than friendship. As a matter of fact, one of the virtues of psychotherapy is that it has fallen into the habit somehow of being time limited. If I'm with you for 50 minutes, I can come much closer to being the person I would like to be, focused entirely on your needs, where if we're friends, well, I don't want to listen for 50 minutes to your problems. I want to do something else. I want to tell you about what's been happening to me and so on. Friendship is extremely valuable, but it is different from the sharp, intense focus of psychotherapy.

Masterson: The next development was to move from dealing with individual clients to groups of people at the same time. How does that change the situation?

Rogers: It changes it in several ways, probably.

The basic attitudes of the facilitator, I think, are much the same, and yet become more diffused. If there are several people in a group, I can't understand you as deeply as I would in individual therapy. I understand you somewhat, I understand this person somewhat, and so on. But another difference in the group is that it quickly develops that, with that kind of model, other people also become facilitative.

So there's not only one facilitator—there turn out to be several. And sometimes, in certain situations, members of the group prove more sensitive to feelings that have been expressed than the professional facilitator.

[00:20:00]

The process is somewhat the same in that the individuals find themselves revealing an increasing amount of material about themselves, material which they've felt couldn't possibly be expressed.

I think one thing that is true of both individual therapy and groups is that things which the person has felt, "I could never reveal those. Those are too awful to reveal. I can't ever express those"—they find they can reveal them. And instead of being awful, they're understood, and accepted, and recognized as being quite natural parts of human existence.

And another thing about groups, since they usually do not last as long as individual therapy—sometimes they're for a weekend, or a week, or two weeks, or sometimes spread out over intervals of time—is that a group tends to bring closure in whatever time they have.

If we only have a weekend, the group will deal with what problems it can and bring closure. If they have a week, they will bring closure to that. To me, it is quite fascinating that the wisdom of the group shows itself in many ways. And that's one of the ways in that individuals seem to recognize, probably quite unconsciously, that there is so much time available, we can do so much. We can't do more.

We will do what is possible in that time. Then, I think another aspect of groups is that in individual therapy, a person may reveal very hidden things and realize, "Oh, thank God you understand. You realize that I'm not as abnormal that I thought I was," but then, that's just one person. In a group, when a person reveals himself or herself, he finds a lot of support from other members so that there's a social type of support for the inner person that doesn't exist in individual psychotherapy, is some of the differences I think of.

Masterson: Is the selection of the members of the group important, or does that happen more or less irrespective of who's involved?

Rogers: Some professional people make a big thing of that. To me, it is not important at all. I have worked with groups that have contained people from 15 to 75. Age seems to make no difference. I've conducted groups where it turns out that one of the individuals is really quite a borderline psychotic individual.

The group is able to handle that. I remember one group in which a therapist cautiously suggested that a client of his be included in the group but was much concerned about whether she might be too fragile to take any of the confrontation and so on. Without it ever being mentioned, the group recognized her fragility.

They confronted other members, they talked tough, but in dealing with her, they were very gentle. They somehow realized, “You’re not a person who could take strong confrontation.” So that’s another kind of wisdom of the group. And I have just felt that whatever occasion brings a group together, I’m willing to work with that group. I really feel that the process of selection is greatly overrated.

Masterson: In your experience, the positivity of human nature has outweighed any...

Rogers: That’s right.

Masterson: One particularly interesting group you worked with were a group from Northern Ireland at the height of sectarian killings. Can you tell me what happened with those people?

Rogers: Yes. One of the men on our staff, Bill McGaw—I don’t know what initially interested him in the Irish problem, he wished very much to bring together a group from Belfast and to make a film of whatever process occurred.

[00:25:00]

He and a colleague went to Belfast. They consulted a number of people in social agencies, churches, and so on, and chose and got agreement from a quite representative group of individuals, persons who ranged from militant Protestant to militant Catholic, with some in between, and a representative the British being a retired British army colonel. There were nine people who were so selected.

And we had 16 hours together, which were filmed. That was during one weekend. It seemed to me then, and seems to me now, an incredibly short time in which to deal with a group whose roots of hostility go back for generations and include religious differences, economic differences, political oppression, power struggles, everything that can divide a people.

And yet, during those 16 hours, they moved so much closer together that we had to eliminate some of the things that were filmed, because if the speakers had been seen back in Belfast saying the conciliatory things they were saying in the group, they would have been possibly shot. They certainly would've been ostracized.

Those attitudes softened as they began to hear each other, began to hear the pain, and the hurt, and the very human desires that were there, until one of the Protestant men was saying things like, "Becky is a Catholic. And back in Belfast, a Catholic woman is a Catholic woman."

You put her in a wee box, and that's the end of it." But he said, "Now, we've talked, and I really have a very friendly feeling toward Becky. I don't think I could stand the pain that she's had in dealing with her sons and their contact with the British army and so on." So a great deal of reconciliation went on. When they went back to Belfast, they went out in pairs, one Protestant, one Catholic, showing the film to church groups, school groups, whatever.

And one evidence of the importance of the film is that four expensive copies of that were destroyed by paramilitary groups. We never knew whether they were extremists on the Catholic side or extremists on the Protestant side. The point is that those who were extreme did not want that film to be shown, because it indicated the possibility of a reconciliation of the different points of view.

And to me, I guess that's the best indication of the significance of that workshop.

Masterson: While change at the individual level is one thing, institutions are much more resistant to change. And one institution that you've written about frequently is the educational system. To quote you some years back, you said if you had one wish about the educational system, it would be that all teachers would suffer amnesia, that they'd forget they were teachers and all they knew about teaching. I can imagine that raised a few hackles.

Rogers: Yes, it did. It's interesting. I wrote that quite a number of years ago, after I'd been spending several months in Mexico reading

Soren Kierkegaard's works, and was struck by his very passionate way of saying things. And that's a passionate statement which I would stand by, but which might easily be misunderstood. If you think of teaching as really the mug and jug theory—that the mug has something in it and pours it into the jug, imparting information—if that's what teaching is, then I think it is really not very fruitful. And I do wish that teachers would forget that aspect of themselves and learn to nourish the curiosity of the students in front of them. Because students do have curiosity if it isn't quelled. And they do want to learn things, but not necessarily that the teacher wants to teach.

And so, yeah, that's a pretty extreme statement, and it was very controversial in the group in which I uttered it to, I can tell you.

Masterson: You also described the outcomes of teaching as either unimportant or hurtful.

[00:30:00]

Rogers: And again, that depends on your definition of teaching. Are either what or hurtful?

Masterson: Unimportant.

Rogers: Unimportant, yeah. Either I pour information into you, which really has no relevance to your life—and I think that goes on with many young people today where they're taught things—imagine ancient history to somebody who doesn't have a job, doesn't know where the next meal is coming from—it's just not relevant. And hurtful only in the sense that so many young people today, I feel, regard education as something to be borne—something I must put up with instead of an opportunity to learn. And that just seems tragic to me. They've been so overwhelmed with the floods of information, they feel, "Oh my God. I have to go to school again," where if we were imaginative, and creative, and human, school could be a place where, "Oh, I've got a chance to go to school. I've got a chance to learn. Good." So it can be hurtful in that respect.

Masterson: In education, we do see changes taking some of your ideas on board every now and again. A.S. Neill and Paulo Freire spring to mind immediately. But such people always seem to be at the fringes of

the educational system, and their ideas stay at the fringes. Why do you think we continue to put up with the educational system we've got?

Rogers: I have been very, very puzzled by that, because there's now good solid research that shows that a freer, more understanding type of classroom atmosphere results in better learning of academic subjects, more creativity, all kinds of good results, less absenteeism, and so on. Why don't the institutions adopt it?

I've gradually come to the tentative conclusion that society perhaps, in my country at least, wants it that way. They would rather turn out conformists than people who can think. It could be uncomfortable for society if students in school learned how to think, learned how to think for themselves, learned how to empower themselves.

That could be quite uncomfortable for the society. So perhaps society more or less unconsciously, I think, decides, "No, we'd rather have young people who learn to obey, to put down in their notebooks what is taught, to repeat what has been in the textbooks," rather than developing people who could be independent citizens, thoughtful citizens of a democracy. I come reluctantly to that tentative conclusion. I hope I'm wrong, but it seems to me that's the case.

Masterson: You talk of therapy and the aim of therapy as being to help the client develop an effective personality. Would you also see that as a proper goal of education?

Rogers: I think the aims are very similar—really very similar. I feel that the aim of education, to state it on its own, is to help produce a citizen who is able to take in information, analyze it, come to independent conclusions, to take in contradictory material and decide which seems closer to the truth—to really be both an independent and a creative person. And that's very, very close to what the aim of psychotherapy is.

Masterson: One of the comments you've made about teachers is that the teacher should be able to maintain a relationship with their pupils so that the pupil knows who the teacher is, in the sense that the teacher says, "This is me. I'm the person who is going to be with you for the next while."

It's presumably a very difficult thing for conventionally trained teachers to do. How do you think conventionally trained teachers who are sympathetic with your ideas should go about bridging that gap?

[00:35:00]

Rogers: That is a difficult problem for a conventional teacher, very. Because from being the power to sharing power may sound like a small step, but it's an enormous step.

Actually, I feel that the best help a conventional teacher could get would be to engage in an encounter group, in a workshop of the sort we've been conducting here, or in something similar, where they would begin to realize, "Oh, it is better to listen and hear what divergent opinions there are than to be so sure of what is the truth."

I think that it would take something fairly challenging like that to really help a conventional teacher change to a different stance. Because we're really talking about a change in philosophy, not a change in technique. Teachers are accustomed to using new tricks, new techniques, new procedures in the classroom, but to adopt a different way of being, a different philosophy where the stress is on empowering the student rather than keeping power in the teacher's hands.

That's a pretty drastic change and really needs some sort of quite significant help.

Masterson: As you say, it's a very drastic change for any teacher. And it often strikes me, seeing people who have gone through such encounter groups, that they have a very interesting and emotional experience over a short period of time, but I query the carryover into the classroom over a longer period of time.

Rogers: I think much depends on what their underlying personal philosophy has been. Sometimes, even an encounter group will make a teacher feel, "Oh, I can be the person I've always dreamed of being." On the other hand, another person may be very threatened by this and not carry over much at all. I think the thing that needs to be said is that if we were to make a real change in our educational institutions, it would mean a different type of training for teachers—that we would

need to approach the problem there. And I think then it would be feasible.

Masterson: Many of your ideas presumably have application outside the fields we've talked about. Do you feel that your approach has application to how any ordinary person should live their everyday life?

Rogers: Yes, I'm interested in the fact that studies that have been made of the results of encounter groups show that a primary and major impact is on family relationships.

Husband and wife, parent and child—those relationships really change. And that's also true as a result of psychotherapy—relationships with other people change. I think one of the major results is that in their relationships, whether with family, or students, or whatever, a person who has experienced this kind of approach is likely to be more open, more expressive of real feelings, more willing to hear real responses from the other person.

I think of one parent who went home after such an experience, and after a day or so at home, her child said, "Mommy, what did you learn in that conference? To be nice to kids?"

Masterson: In some of people taking this seriously, do you feel there's any danger that it drifts into self-indulgence so that the most important thing to be worked through this minute is my anger or my pain, and all else must stop until that's done?

Rogers: I've seen that happen, yes. I think there is a risk there. Well, the risk runs two ways. Sometimes what people learn is to be more expressive of their feelings, period. Sometimes what they learn is to be more willing to listen and to hear, and then perhaps sit on their own feelings.

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Either is a risk and unfortunate. I think it has to be a balance of being willing to express what I deeply feel but also a willingness to hear what you deeply feel. And that, I think, is the basis for a stronger, richer relationship—when there is that balance.

Masterson: How do you feel the rest of the psychological community has been listening to you in recent years? You've commented that

academic psychologists in particular are terrified of involvement with anything which might involve them in personal change.

Rogers: There are two comments I would make on that. It interests me that I feel I've become less controversial than I used to be. I'm now included in all the textbooks, at least in a paragraph or two. But I think that the acceptance of my work is strongest outside of academic institutions.

I think it is still true that experiential learning or being personally involved with the possibility of personal change seems unacceptable to most academics, psychology or otherwise. They're there to teach, to profess, not to be changed. That seems threatening to them so that I have some question whether anything but a watered-down version of my work will ever be accepted in the academic world. But I think it's very much accepted outside of that.

Masterson: What do you see as being your major contribution?

Rogers: I think that by emphasizing recording of therapy interviews, I have helped to take the mystery out of therapy and make it something understandable. And I believe that's been a very healthy influence both on psychiatry and psychology—that this is not something hidden and esoteric, that you come for a therapy you can't possibly understand that might help you.

Instead it is a relationship, which can be made audible, and visible, and understandable. The other contribution that comes to mind is of quite a different order. I think that emphasizing that the nature of the human organism is trustworthy is an emphasis that runs counter to much of religion, runs counter to most of our educational system. We don't trust people. They're not trustworthy.

They have to be supervised, watched, and so on. I think the notion that the inner core of the person is really trustworthy and positive has been an emphasis that has had a real impact on all kinds of fields, and that I have helped to contribute to that.

DISCUSSION

Yalom: It was wonderful to be able to see him. And, as you noted, at the age of 83 he was full of energy and articulate, spirited. The first

question was interesting. He was asked how he felt about the word “Rogerian,” and he said that by and large he didn’t like it.

Rogers: Yeah, I’ve heard that often from him. He really didn’t like it. And his reasons were, to me, very important. He did not want it to be focused on him as a person. He always believed that if you get the proper training, this is good for everybody. It’s not Rogers and he didn’t want people trying to be like Carl Rogers. And a lot of people who are “disciples” or whatever really do try and emulate him, and that wasn’t his goal at all.

Yalom: Yeah, because his message is about authenticity, and congruence, and really listening. And yet what you hear, the criticism of his work, is that it’s wooden or mechanical. And that’s the last thing that he wanted.

Rogers: Yeah, and he’s anything but mechanical.

Yalom: When you see him in this interview—and I’ve seen other sessions of him—what really gets conveyed is that he really is interested, as he said—

Rogers: In the other person.

Yalom: And he’s really there.

Rogers: Exactly.

Yalom: And that can’t be a technique.

[00:45:00]

Rogers: Yes. In his later years, I noticed or I thought that his relationships with the client became a spiritual event, in a way, that the relationship was in some sort of altered state—that it seemed to transcend just the words between them.

And some of the clients said as much.

Yalom: Yeah, you really got the sense. And he talked about, from the beginning, you know, really wanting to hear others’ experience.

Rogers: Yes.

Yalom: And you felt that.

Rogers: And one of the reason he says that all evolved was because he didn't feel heard as a child. And he grew up in a very strict, puritanical home. So he was giving to others what he really wanted for himself.

Yalom: Yeah. A lot of us didn't feel we were really heard as children or in another situations. But, for somehow for him, he was able to turn that around.

Rogers: Exactly.

Yalom: And I really felt that, in the interview, as well. He really took seriously—he really listened to the questions, and he would pause briefly and really try to give a thoughtful answer to questions, I'm sure, many of them he had been asked many, many times before.

Rogers: He certainly had. That's true. He gave it real thought.

Yalom: There's so much in there that struck me that I think he articulated so well. He talked about his first case really of therapy with the mother.

Rogers: Yeah, when he asked, "How did client-centered therapy evolve?" And then the case of the mother who had been seen four or five times about her child, and he gave up and she gave up. And she goes to the door knob and turns around and says, "Do you ever see adults?"

That must have been a huge sort of slap in the face or whatever, that he'd been working for her and trying to do his best, and she had not even perceived that the work was with her—about her.

Yalom: Right.

Rogers: And the fact that he didn't just shove her out the door at that point—I mean, that's the big thing. He said, which he always says, he wants to learn from experience.

So, here was his first big opportunity to learn from the negative experience that she was portraying. And he stopped to think about it, and he thought about it long and hard, and changed how he worked.

Yalom: All right. The lesson I got from that is, in the sessions up to that point, he had a goal. He had an agenda to help her with her son.

Rogers: That's true.

Yalom: So it seemed like, the beginning, if you want to call it that—life is always a little more complex—but if it were a Hollywood movie, the beginning of person-centered therapy was him letting go of his goal to change her or to educate her, and to really hear her.

Rogers: And try to understand the world from her point of view.

Yalom: Yeah.

Rogers: And that's the hearing and understanding—stepping in the client's shoes. He often said that, "I want to be in the world as he or she experiences it."

Yalom: That's very profound.

Rogers: Yeah, it is.

Yalom: Other things that struck me—he was asked about the core conditions. And he talked about unconditional positive regard, and I liked his answer. He said, "And this is not a requirement. It's fortunate."

Rogers: That's true. Fortunate when it happens.

Yalom: When that happens. Which is a nice way to think about it.

Rogers: "It's something I aspire to," I think he said.

Yalom: Right. The way I'd heard it before it's setting the bar so high. How can you always have unconditional positive regard? If you're trying to do that, are you being phony somehow? But he seemed to really embody that, or took that very seriously.

Rogers: He would like people to really understand that, because it is something people criticize, I think."How can you possibly do that?" is always the question he gets.

Yalom: In terms of congruence, what I got is that the therapist should be authentic. But it's not always clear to me exactly what that means.

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In which way are you authentic? Obviously you don't share everything about yourself or other reactions.

Rogers: No, you don't. And the way I've heard him describe it — one way, I'm sure there's several—is that if there's something is going on between me as a therapist and you as a client that is getting in the way of our relationship, then I need to be congruent and say what I'm thinking or feeling about that.

And with my students, the way I explain that sometimes is if there's something on my mind, like I have a sick child at home or somebody close to me just died, what I say is, "I need to tell you this, because I have a very sick child at home and I'm trying my best to be present with you. But if for any reason my focus goes away, you'll know that I'm distracted in my own feelings. It's not you."

Because clients often think, when the therapist is not focused, that it's their fault. So this helps be congruent and set the stage for that. That's being honest about my own situation. But it's not about sharing my own problems or concerns, or the, "Me, too."

Yalom: And I'm sure at the time he proposed that, that was very different than what the role of the therapist was.

Rogers: That's true—to be very distant and objective.

Yalom: And he talked so much about how his ideas were considered quite radical or threatening to academics.

Rogers: Well, and to the analysts, just the psychiatric world. They fought him a lot. They undermined him.

Yalom: And how did he deal with that? There are some folks that are pioneers that really have a fighting spirit, and almost relish in that role of being a pioneer and others that just quietly go about their business.

Rogers: Well, he was latter. I'm not really a football fan, but I think of it as an end run. You don't just plow into the opponents.

Yalom: The opposition.

Rogers: Yeah, the opposition. You don't just try to drive through them. You do your own thing and go around them. And that helps, to go around them. And then you're on the other side, and the opposition kind has to turn around to see you. And it worked.

Yalom: At some point in his career his interest shifted to doing more group work, and you—

Rogers: I was part of that.

Yalom: You were part of that.

Rogers: I was part of that. He had been doing group work. But when I became single and moved from Boston to California, I went to La Jolla.

I live in northern California, so I went down to visit my parents. And I asked him, “Would you like to do some work together?” It was just sort of off the top of my head. And he said, “Yes, of course.” So we talked a little about what we might do. And I actually went into —

Yalom: You were already a psychologist at that point.

Rogers: Yes. I was a psychologist. I was in my fifties. It was 1975, actually.

Yalom: So this was kind of the heyday of the encounter group movement.

Rogers: Yes, it was, it was.

Yalom: The personal growth, human potential movement in California.

Rogers: Right. So I went to into his study and wrote up a draft proposal for a seven day workshop. And we talked about that proposal, and he liked the idea. And we realized that he would draw a lot of people.

He was very well known at that time. And we each selected two or three people to be on our staff, and wrote more proposals and talked with the people we wanted to include. And from that started encounter groups of about 100 people in each. We did seven summers, each of them attracting 100 people to the workshop.

Yalom: Wow. Now, were these broken up into smaller groups?

Rogers: Well, we did a lot of that. We would gather together as the hundred-plus, then just ask, what did we want to do together?

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It was very nondirective. It drove some people crazy. And some people, it was a total new opportunity to be responsible for what happened in the group. We had some ideas, and we did offer things depending on who the staff was. I was in my feminist role—I was a newly formed feminist—so I offered groups on relationships, or women’s groups, or relationships with men. And other people offered other things. We did sort of a mini-university, and also a lot of encounter group work.

Yalom: It must have been exciting times.

Rogers: It was very exciting. It really was pioneer work. And we kept saying, “We’re learning more from this experience than what we’re offering,” which was sort of true. We learned so much about the group process.

Yalom: Any incidents just pop into your mind, or any memories of working with him?

Rogers: Well, my memory is about my own work and how that developed within that framework. Because here we were, 100 people or so sitting morning, noon and evening sharing our feelings, our thoughts, and having arguments and confronting people and tears and being compassionate. As staff or faculty of these, we were present for each person as they spoke.

And I got really tired of sitting. “How can we just sit and talk and talk and talk?” And by then I was developing expressive arts. So I, with another colleague said, “I have another room over here. I’ve got art materials. Any of you that would like to can come and join us, and we will explore these same issues that you’re dealing with, but using other languages—using art and creativity.”

So it was a perfect opportunity for me to develop expressive arts, because I didn’t have to have a written flyer. I didn’t have to know what I was doing. I had people who just came because they were curious, and I was curious, and we could let something evolve. That was just terrific.

Yalom: So, that was kind of where you developed the expressive arts way of working. So that’s interesting—both his story with the mother,

and that's what kind of launched person-centered therapy, and this.

Rogers: That's true.

Yalom: Oftentimes, these innovations or creative breakthroughs in life just happen spontaneously.

Rogers: Yes, they do.

Yalom: Any other recollections of working with him and what he was like?

Rogers: Well, he was very soft spoken, just like he usually is. He was genuine. He was congruent. He would say when he was not feeling comfortable about something.

Yalom: In these encounter groups, the stereotype and I'm sure it happened—there could be all sorts of things happening. A lot of strong feelings, anger, conflict. Did he ever get fired up?

Rogers: No. He never expressed anger or being totally fired up.

Yalom: Really.

Rogers: And that put a responsibility on us as a faculty. I mean, I don't think that was something he was proud of. But that's just who he was. So I feel like often I acted out his anger or I was more fired up because he was more passive. He was always present, but he didn't really—the rest of us got stirred up, so we would speak our mind. And that was okay because we knew that that's who he was. It was curious and we talked about him not—

Yalom: Would participants ever get angry at him for not—

Rogers: Yeah, the participants would get angry at him, but I'm not sure about that. But, yeah, participants felt free to get angry at him, which is a trust level, which is important.

Yalom: Sometimes with someone is always so calm and centered, you almost want to get a reaction out of them.

Rogers: I know. Well, that happened to me sometimes. I want to get a reaction out of you, I'll punch you and make you react. No, that's a little exaggerated.

But when he came into the room it was different. And it wasn't just like when I come into the room or you come into the room. But when he came into the room there was something about him that really brought a lot of respect, and not because he put himself up. He was very egalitarian.

[01:00:00]

In fact, people have said he could walk down the street and nobody knew he was. He could be in the elevator at a convention and people would be talking about him, and they wouldn't even know he was right there. So he didn't have any grandiose feelings, at all.

Yalom: He didn't want to have a big following.

Rogers: Well, he liked having people who believed in what he believed in. But the word "following" he wouldn't like, and the word "disciples" he wouldn't like. But to have colleagues, to have worldwide appreciation of the work, yes, that was really important to him. He used to say, "I choose to do this or that workshop depending on much impact it will have." So he really did want to have impact on the world with his ideas.

Yalom: Yeah, what's your sense of that when he was doing his peace work? I don't know exactly how he did that, but what's your sense of the impact? How effective were those?

Rogers: If you take the video, *The Steel Shutter*, which is about the Irish work in Ireland about the Protestant and Catholic issues.

Yalom: He did a two-day encounter group or something?

Rogers: Three- or four-day encounter group. And for me, it's a very powerful video.

Yalom: I've had a chance to see it.

Rogers: You've had a chance to look at that. And I understand from Pat Rice— he and Bill McGaw were the two people that created that with him. Just recently I think there's more research being done on the follow-up on all those. Some of the people are dead, but I've heard from Pat Rice that there's some interest in Ireland of following up to

see what happened. But a lot happened. We know that from within a few years. A lot happened to those people.

Carl said in something I watched recently, there was so much shift. Those two groups were just at each other for years and years, and to get those people together was difficult. But there was so much shift in people's perspective after they left that they didn't want to release any of the names of the people that were in that group, because they could be assassinated or lose their job or because they had mellowed and really understood the opposite side to a degree that they wouldn't stand up for the team.

They really had mellowed and appreciated why people have the views that they have.

Yalom: I noticed he talked about education, and his ideas were used in education. You have a sense of—how did he get interested in that?

Rogers: Well, as an educator himself, I know he gave some talks and wrote some articles about teaching.

It was really from his academic point of view that you couldn't teach anybody anything. He used the image of the pitcher.

Yalom: Yeah.

Rogers: Yeah, so you couldn't teach anybody anything. You had to create the environment where they wanted to learn.

Yalom: Seems like an extreme viewpoint. I mean, certainly some things —

Rogers: Yeah, it was a very challenging. He loved to challenge people, I think. Yeah, he did some very dramatic words, dramatic ideas.

Yalom: It certainly seems like there are some things that needs to be taught.

Rogers: Yeah, I know. Well, that's true. But nobody will absorb them unless you create the environment for them to learn. I mean, you can tell me all you want. But if I'm not comfortable, I don't listen and I don't hear and I don't learn. You have to make the environment, which includes the relationship to the teacher something that will enhance the learning. And I could say that he wrote the book *Freedom to Learn*,

and then redid that, the Freedom to Learn in the 80s. And then, even before he died, Jerome Fryeburg, who is a teacher, educator, they joined together to create the new book. And Jerry Fryeburg has continually created new editions of that book.

[01:05:00]

And it's even better than when Carl wrote it because it comes from a lot of research in the person-centered approach and the academic—not in the higher education, but in the lower education.

Yalom: One thing that's certainly conveyed in the interview is his sense of optimism, certainly idealism. And this just two years before he died, it seemed like. Did he maintain that idealism all the way through the end?

Rogers: He did. It was his faith in the individual. I would say his optimism came from a deep belief that people are inherently good if given the right opportunity. And that was argued a lot, too. But that was his optimism, I think.

Yalom: And he was genuinely like that.

Rogers: Oh, yeah. It was harder for him to see the dark side, I think, within a group or within individuals.

Yalom: Was that a blind spot? Did he miss—like when you were in encounter group?

Rogers: Sometimes, yes. “Blind spot” is too heavy, but I think one of the reasons in my work I emphasize the shadow, having people get in touch with any of the shadow experiences, is as a response, a reaction to his not really exploring that deeply. And I feel that's the one way I've really expanded the work a lot. Through the arts, it's easy—not easy, but it's available to offer ways to express and experience one's shadow side. And by expressing it and experiencing it in a compassionate environment, you move through it.

Yalom: Well, you and I share something important in that we're both psychologists and psychotherapists in the field, and we both have—my father's Irv Yalom, and yours is Carl. We both have great role models.

Rogers: Yes, we do. And that's both a wonderful experience, and it creates some difficulties, too.

Yalom: Yeah.

Rogers: But, in general it's great. It's really wonderful. As his daughter, the opportunities that have come my way have been just marvelous. It's given me a marvelous life. I had to do it well or it wouldn't keep happening. The doors are open. But once they're open, you have to do a good job at what you're doing, as you know, or it would not get recognized. I really appreciate that the doors were opened.

Yalom: Yeah, you did that. And then you've done your own work.

Rogers: Oh, absolutely.

Yalom: And personalized it.

Rogers: Yeah, and he appreciated that. I hadn't published my *Creative Connection* book, but he was at a couple of our workshops that I started. I asked him to come and be on the faculty of the first expressive arts training program that I had. And he came. And he was open to learning. I know he came as a skeptic, somewhat. But, he was really interested, curious, and actually learned quite a bit about himself and for himself in his work. He appreciated it.

Yalom: That must have been very gratifying for you.

Rogers: It was. And the second session of that course, after six months, he came back for a few days, not as a total faculty.

And when he left, he said something that really touched me at my heart. He said, "You know, these participants didn't come to this workshop because of me, Carl Rogers. They came because of you." And I said, "Well, yeah." Because all of us used him in some ways. We wanted him to come join us so that a lot of people would participate.

Yalom: Sure.

Rogers: And here was a case where he acknowledged that, "Well, people came for you." That was sweet.

Yalom: Yeah, that's a gift.

[01:10:00]

Natalie, I want to thank you so much for taking the time to sit down with me. I think the viewers of his historic interview with Carl will really have their experience enhanced and enriched by hearing your reflections and your perspective on things. Thanks so much.

Rogers: Well, it was a real pleasure and a joy, both to watch this interview, which I hadn't seen before, and to be with you to talk about it. It warms my heart to be able to talk about my father that way.

Video Credits

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About the Contributors

VIDEO PARTICIPANTS

Carl Ransom Rogers, PhD (1902-1987), is one of the most influential psychologists in American history. His contributions are outstanding in the fields of education, counseling, psychotherapy, peace, and conflict resolution. A founder of humanistic psychology, he has profoundly influenced the world through his empathic presence, his rigorous research, and his authorship of sixteen books and more than 200 professional articles. His best-known books are *On Becoming a Person*, *Client Centered Therapy*, and *A Way of Being*.

Natalie Rogers, PhD, REAT, is Distinguished Consulting Faculty at Saybrook Graduate School and has previously been on the faculties of the California Institute of Integral Studies and the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. In 1984, she founded the Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy Institute and its parent organization, Resources for Creativity and Consciousness, where she participated as teacher, trainer, workshop facilitator, consultant, and board member until its closing in 2005. Dr. Rogers is a psychotherapist whose practices in California, Hawaii, and Massachusetts have combined expressive arts with person-centered therapy with children, adults, families, and groups. She is the daughter of Dr. Carl Rogers and has written three books: *The Creative Connection: Expressive Arts As Healing*, *Emerging Woman: A Decade of Midlife Transitions*, and *The Creative Connection for Groups: Person-Centered Expressive Arts for Healing and Social Change*. She has trained professionals in expressive arts therapy around the world. View Natalie's website at www.nrogers.com or contact her by email: nrogers@sonic.net.

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