The Instructor’s Manual accompanies the DVD *Expressive Arts Therapy in Action with Natalie Rogers, PhD* (Institutional/Instructor’s Version). Video available at www.psychotherapy.net.

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*Instructor’s Manual for Expressive Arts Therapy in Action with Natalie Rogers, PhD*

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Instructor’s Manual for

EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY IN ACTION
WITH NATALIE ROGERS, PHD

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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; no therapy is perfect! What are viewers’ impressions of what works and does not work in the sessions? We learn as much from our mistakes as our successes; it is crucial for students and therapists to develop the ability to effectively critique this work as well as their own.

4. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER
See suggestions in the Reaction Paper section.

5. 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.

6. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL
Assign readings from Related Websites, Videos, and Further Reading prior to or after viewing.
Perspective on Videos and the Personality of the Therapist

Psychotherapy portrayed in videos is less off-the-cuff than therapy in practice. Therapists may feel put on the spot to offer a good demonstration, and clients can be self-conscious in front of a camera. In order to demonstrate particular techniques, therapists often move more quickly than they would in everyday practice. Despite these factors, therapists and clients on video can engage in realistic sessions that convey a wealth of information not contained in books or therapy transcripts, such as body language, tone of voice, facial expression, rhythm of the interaction, quality of the alliance—all aspects of the therapeutic relationship that are unique to an interpersonal encounter.

Psychotherapy is an intensely private matter. Unlike in other professions, students and practitioners rarely have an opportunity to see their mentors at work. But watching therapy on video is the next best thing.

One more note: The personal styles of therapists are often as important as their techniques and theories. Therapists are usually drawn to approaches that mesh well with their own personalities. Thus, while we can certainly pick up ideas from master therapists, students and trainees must make the best use of relevant theory, technique, and research that fits their own personal styles and the needs of their clients.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Because this video contains actual therapy sessions, please take care to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the client who has courageously shared her personal life with us.
Natalie Rogers’s Approach to Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy

Natalie Rogers’s approach to person-centered expressive arts therapy developed out of the client-centered therapy work of her father, the late Carl Rogers, combined with the influences of her mother, who was an artist herself. The person-centered approach is more than just a theory of psychotherapy—it is a belief system and way of life. This philosophy holds that every one of us carries tremendous inner resources, and we each have the capacity to become more fully ourselves. The main task of the person-centered therapist is to create the facilitative environment with the proper conditions for the client’s full self to come into bloom.

The core conditions of empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard form the cornerstone of the person-centered approach to psychotherapy. These are rooted in the belief that the most powerful experience for clients is to be deeply heard and to have someone else see and understand the world as they do. When therapists bring these basic conditions to the therapeutic relationship, they create a safe, nurturing environment in which clients can come into their full selves.

Building on the foundation of Carl Rogers’s person-centered therapy approach, Natalie uses expressive arts in her therapy sessions to engage clients’ creativity. She has developed what she calls the Creative Connection® process, which uses a sequence of self-expression through movement, sound art, and journal writing to delve deeply into the well of creativity and to integrate body, mind, emotions, and spirit. These different art forms allow clients to expand their language for self-expression and often give them more direct access to feelings. Natalie finds that combining different forms of artistic expression can help clients reach an even deeper level of self-exploration. She may, for example, invite a client to move his or her body, then to use color to express feelings that come up in the movement, and to follow up with writing that flows freely out of this creative process.

Although the use of expressive arts can often help clients get to their feelings very quickly, Rogers does not see person-centered therapy as a quick fix. Rather than diagnosing and treating people, this approach is about being fully present with clients and helping them come into
their full personhood. Rogers sees herself as a companion to her clients, walking with them on their inner journeys. The choices about how and where to go on the journey belong to the client, and Rogers follows along as closely and for as long as the client needs her companionship.
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.

INTRODUCTION

1. **A way of being:** How did you react to Natalie Rogers describing the person-centered approach as “a way of being” and a value system more than a method or technique? Does this match your understanding of the person-centered approach? Do you agree with the foundation of Rogers’s approach, which posits that, given the right environment, everyone can solve their own problems?

2. **Core conditions:** What do you think of the core conditions to create a healing environment: empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence on the part of the therapist? Do you think these core conditions are enough to facilitate change? What are some key moments where you see Rogers creating the core conditions of empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard in her sessions with Suzen?

3. **Really listening:** What was your reaction when Rogers said that really listening is not an easy thing to do and takes a lot of practice? Do you agree that listening in the way she described—putting your own ego, needs, and stories aside to be fully present and experience the world as the client views it—is deceptively simple? What gets in your way of listening to your clients in this way? Is it hard for you to refrain from giving advice, analyzing, and/or judging your clients? What helps you stay present with your clients?

4. **Not parroting:** The person-centered approach sometimes is criticized as being too mechanical, but Rogers clarifies that it’s not about parroting what the client says—it’s more about being with the client. What are your thoughts on that criticism? Have you experienced yourself as being mechanical when you use this or other approaches? Are there any times in the two sessions with Suzen where you experience Rogers as mechanical or parroting?
SESSION ONE

5. **Beginning:** What do you like and dislike about the way Rogers begins the first session with Suzen, by putting it in context and letting her know the art is optional? What are your thoughts on her beginning the session with a meditation? In what ways do you think this was helpful or not helpful for Suzen? Would you be comfortable sitting with clients in this way? How do you tend to begin sessions with clients?

6. **Responsibility:** After the meditation, Rogers asks Suzen, “How would you like to begin?” In the commentary, she notes that giving the client the responsibility for the direction of the session and following the client’s lead are a key part of the person-centered approach. What do you think of this aspect of her approach? What do you think the benefits and disadvantages are of putting the responsibility on the client like this?

7. **Silence:** Rogers stated that many therapists have trouble letting silence be in the session. Is this true for you? If so, what comes up for you when there is silence that is difficult for you? How do you tend to deal with this in sessions? How important do you think it is to allow silence in the session? How much silence do you tend to allow before you jump in? Were there times in the sessions with Suzen when Rogers was silent but you would have said something?

8. **Response to dilemma:** If you were Suzen’s therapist and she presented this dilemma about work and passion, how do you think you would respond? Would you have been tempted to offer some guidance or directly help her make a decision? Would you have followed that impulse? Why or why not? What do you think the benefits are of staying with clients versus directly helping them problem-solve? Are there any disadvantages to Rogers’s way of responding to Suzen’s dilemma?

9. **Transition:** What do you think of the way Rogers transitioned from talk therapy to the expressive arts portions of the session? Do you have any experience using any expressive arts or other experiential exercises in therapy? If so, what are some of your
favorite ways to transition into these techniques? What is challenging for you about making these transitions?

10. **Body language and tone of voice:** What did you notice about Rogers’s body language and tone of voice that contributed to creating a healing environment for Suzen? How much emphasis do you tend to place on these aspects of therapy in your own work with clients?

11. **Movement exercise:** What do you think of the movement exercise that Rogers facilitated with Suzen? Do you think this was an effective technique? If so, in what ways? How do you think it could have been more effective? How do you determine whether a technique is effective or not?

12. **Into the darkness:** Rogers mentions in the commentary that she doesn’t try to help Suzen get out of her depression, but follows her “into her darkest feelings about herself.” Her reasoning for this is based on the person-centered belief that re-experiencing one’s dark feelings in an empathic environment is healing. What are your thoughts on this aspect of Rogers’s approach? Do you find it too passive? Are there particular feelings you would not want a client to re-experience, even in an empathic environment? What do you think are the pros and cons are of not actively helping a client out of their depression?

13. **Art:** What are your thoughts about Rogers’s expressive arts interventions? What do you notice about Suzen during these portions of the therapy? Are there aspects of Rogers’s expressive arts work that you would like to incorporate into your practice? How do you feel about moving beyond traditional talk therapy? What, if anything, doesn’t sit as well with you about her use of art in both sessions?

14. **First person:** What do you think of how Rogers speaks in the first person sometimes when she reflects Suzen’s feelings? Do you think this gave Suzen the experience of being deeply attuned to? Why or why not? Do you find yourself sometimes reflecting clients’ feelings in the first person like this?
15. **Ending the session:** Towards the end of the session, Rogers gives Suzen a warning that time is almost up, and she notes in the commentary how important it is to let clients know that the session is winding down. Is this something you have given much thought to? If you’ve been following the client’s lead for the whole session, is it particularly challenging for you to take the lead by setting a boundary in this way? How do you tend to end your sessions? Do you feel it is important to end sessions promptly, or are you flexible about running over a few minutes? In either case, do you find it difficult to bring sessions to a close?

**SESSION ONE DISCUSSION**

16. **Don’t analyze!** How did you react when Rogers stated that she is adamantly opposed to analyzing a client’s art? Do you agree with her that analyzing and/or judging a client’s art can be very counterproductive to the healing process? Do you tend to analyze your clients’ art? What do you think the advantages and disadvantages are of that?

**SESSION TWO**

17. **Two approaches:** In the beginning of the second session, Suzen says that doing the art is what opened things up for her. Do you think her big shift was mostly facilitated by the art, or more by the person-centered approach of Rogers? Do you think that the expressive art techniques are particularly suited to a person-centered approach, or do you feel that they could be integrated just as well into other ways of working?

18. **Respond to joy:** Rogers states that it is important for the therapist to reflect the joy as well as the pain that a client presents, through body language and facial expression. Is this something you aim for in your work? How much emphasis do you put on matching your clients’ moods in this way? How important is celebrating your clients’ growth and successes to you?

19. **Opinion:** Rogers noted in the commentary that it is common for women in our culture to have fears about “letting their light shine” because then they are seen as a threat. What do you think of how
she withheld her opinion about this from Suzen? What do you think the benefits and disadvantages are of the therapist keeping her thoughts and opinions to herself during the session? Is it challenging for you to withhold your perspective in this way?

20. Clay: What do you think of the clay work Suzen did? Have you ever used clay with your clients? What do you think is unique and beneficial about this expressive arts modality?

21. Suggestion: What do you think of the way Rogers suggested Suzen get an art journal? Did making a suggestion seem to contradict your understanding of the person-centered approach? Why or why not?

22. Feelings: What feelings came up for you as you watched these sessions? Were you ever frustrated or bored? Were you comfortable with pace of the process? When do you think it might have been difficult for you to refrain from giving advice or taking the lead in some way?

SESSION TWO DISCUSSION

23. Giant shift: Were you surprised to see what a giant shift Suzen made during the week between the first and second session? What do you think occurred in the first session that contributed to such a big shift? Did you believe that this was a significant change that was likely to endure, or did you have any feelings of doubt? Have you ever had clients make significant and longstanding changes in a single session? If so, discuss.

24. The Creative Connection: What do you think of Rogers’s theory that she described as “the creative connection” between different art forms? Do you see therapy as a creative enterprise? What role does creativity have in your work as a therapist? How about in your own personal growth?

25. The model: What are your overall thoughts about Natalie Rogers’s approach to person-centered expressive arts therapy? What aspects of her approach can you see yourself incorporating into your work? Are there some components of her approach that seem
incompatible with how you work? Are there certain clients you think her approach wouldn’t work with?

26. **Personal reaction:** How do you think you would feel about having Natalie Rogers as your therapist? Do you think she could build a solid therapeutic alliance with you? Would she be effective with you? Why or why not?
Reaction Paper for Classes and Training

Video: Expressive Arts Therapy in Action with Natalie Rogers, PhD

- **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:** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Be concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief response 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 Natalie Rogers’s person-centered expressive arts therapy 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 Natalie 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 therapy sessions with Rogers? Other comments, thoughts, or feelings?
Role-Plays

After watching the video and reviewing *Summary of Natalie Rogers’s Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy Approach* in this manual, break participants into groups of two and have them role-play a therapy session utilizing a person-centered expressive arts therapy approach.

Have some basic art supplies available, such as paper, pastels, markers, and clay. One person will start out as the therapist and the other person will be the client; later, invite participants to switch roles. Participants playing clients can talk about anything they’d like, 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 both to be listened to in a person-centered way and to express themselves with the arts.

Participants playing therapists should take this opportunity to practice the person-centered aspect of Rogers’s approach, as well as the expressive arts component. After speaking for a few minutes, therapists should find an appropriate moment to introduce expressive arts into the session. They can offer movement exercises, clay, pastels, or any other modalities that are available. While clients are engaged in the arts, therapists should keep their attention on the creative process rather than on diagnosing, analyzing, or interpreting the art.

Throughout the session, therapists’ intentions should be to follow the clients’ path and to create a safe environment that is nonjudgmental and permissive. Therapists should embrace the core conditions of the person-centered approach, which Natalie Rogers summarizes this way:

- **being empathic**, conveying “I’m really with you” in words and in intention,
- **unconditional positive regard**, conveying, “I really care about you,” and
- **congruence**, which means being real and authentic as a therapist and as a human being.
To practice the “way of being” that Rogers describes, therapists should keep in mind the belief that given the right environment, everyone can solve his or her own problems. Try to let go of any agenda, and focus on just being present with the client, without trying to accomplish, fix, or solve anything, regardless of what the client presents. 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. From this place of presence and deep listening, therapists should practice paraphrasing and summarizing both the explicit and implicit (e.g. emotion, intent, etc.) content of what clients express, as opposed to parroting back their exact words.

After the role-plays, have the groups come together to discuss their experiences. What did participants learn about the Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy approach? Invite the clients to talk about what it was like for them: Did they feel safe? Did they feel judged at all? Did they feel their therapists’ unconditional positive regard? Did they sense that the therapists were being real? Did they feel that the therapists were present with them? How did they like the expressive arts aspects? Were they nervous about jumping in to the expressive arts activities, or were they excited about this? Were they able to get into a state of “flow” or engagement, or were they self-conscious or plagued by an inner critic? Did they experience or discover something new about themselves via the art? Did they experience their art as being analyzed or interpreted? How did it feel to take the lead and have the therapists follow? Did they feel a heartfelt connection when the therapists summarized the emotional content of what they shared? On the whole, did the expressive arts activities contribute to or detract from their experiences as clients?

Then, invite the therapists to talk about their experiences: How was it to let go of any attempts to “fix” the clients or problem solve? How did it feel to follow the clients’ lead? 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? Did it feel mechanical? How did it feel to introduce the expressive arts options? How were these transitions? Were they bored or frustrated at all, or wanting to take more of an active, directive
approach? Finally, open up a general discussion of what participants learned about the challenges and rewards of a person-centered expressive arts approach to psychotherapy.

Alternatively, you may have the exercise done in a triad, with one therapist, one client and one 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 expressive arts approach to psychotherapy.
Related Websites, Videos and Further Reading

WEB RESOURCES
Website for Natalie Rogers

www.nrogers.com

“The Path to Wholeness: Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy,”
by Natalie Rogers, PhD, an online article at Psychotherapy.net

www.psychotherapy.net

Association for Humanistic Psychology

www.ahpweb.org

International Expressive Arts Therapy Association

www.ieata.org

The National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations

www.nccata.org

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

www.carlrogers.info

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

www.pce-world.org

RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT
WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET

Person-Centered Expressive Arts Therapy with Natalie Rogers
Carl Rogers on Person-Centered Therapy with Carl Rogers and Natalie Rogers
Carl Rogers: A Daughter’s Tribute
Person-Centered Child Therapy with Anin Utigaard
Art Therapy Has Many Faces with Judith Aron Rubin
Creative Healing in Mental Health with Judith Rubin and Eleanor Irwin
RECOMMENDED READINGS


Session Transcripts

SESSION 1

[00:22:20]

**Natalie Rogers:** Well, Suzen, since this is our first counseling session, I just really wanted to put this in context for you a little bit. I am a person-centered expressive arts therapist, and at some points I will be offering you the option of doing some art or some movement, and I want you to feel really free to say no – yes or no. So it is really an option. Okay?

**Suzen:** Mm-hmm.

**Rogers:** And the other thing is even though there are a lot of lights and cameras going on, I feel pretty sure that just as soon as we get involved, get going, that we will be able to screen out all of this. So, anyway, I really want to be here for you.

**Suzen:** Thank you.

**Rogers:** And the way I appreciate, I like to start which helps me and I think it might help you, too, is to have a minute or two of meditation. You would like that?

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** I gather. And I will say a few things and you can ignore them or listen to them, whatever.

**Suzen:** Okay.

**Rogers:** Okay?

**Rogers Commentary:** I start with a meditation in order to let go of all the external things that have been going on in my life, so that I can really focus on the client and the situation, as well as having the client focus on his or her immediate concern.

**Rogers:** Take a few deep breaths.

And let’s feel the support we have underneath us.

Maybe let our shoulders relax.
Take another relaxing breath.
And you might allow yourself to think about or feel or intuit anything that is of concern to you today or this week that you might want to explore.

[00:25:00]
So allow yourself a few moments to think about that. Allow any feelings to come up.

And when you are ready, you can open your eyes and we can go from there.

So how would you like to begin?

**Suzen:** Well, something that I have been struggling with, noticing, it is very clear to me that I’m struggling with some issues around—well, I see it showing up in almost like a self-sabotage. I feel a struggle between what I am doing—it has a lot to do about career, but it also has a lot to do about the passion and direction in my life. Shall I tell you the history, just a little bit about what got me to where I am?

**Rogers:** Yeah, whatever you need to.

**Rogers Commentary:** Even though this is the very first session I’ve had with Suzen, it’s important to notice that I put the responsibility on her as to where we’re going to go in her therapy. That’s part of the person-centered approach. I’m going to follow the client’s path.

**Suzen:** About five years ago I sold my business, accounting, bookkeeping, doing a lot of very—

**Rogers:** A lot of head work.

**Suzen:** Very technical thinking and working with clients, so that I could work with horses, more in a therapeutic way, just to really—because that field is my calling. And what has happened, I spent three years right after I sold the business, and worked almost completely with horses because I had the financial ability to do that.

And found myself about a year and a half ago having to kind of go back into more lucrative, bringing some money back to—

**Rogers:** The bookkeeping kind of thing?
Suzen: Yeah, and it was okay at first because I chose my clients and I had just taken a few. But what is happening is that I feel I am kind of selling myself out because there is so much of it that I don’t want to do anymore.

Rogers: You really don’t want to do it.

Suzen: I really don’t.

Rogers: I get the feeling there is a lot of emotion there.

Suzen: Yeah. And so what is happening is I am sabotaging. And I’m still working with horses. But there has recently been a shift which has opened up to me, to allow me to really move even more so in that direction.

Rogers: Into the horse direction?

Suzen: Yeah, into where I want to go.

Rogers: But you are sabotaging yourself some way. Could you explain that a little more? What is happening?

Suzen: Well, I procrastinate to the last minute and then feel all of this pressure, and then end up having to go through all of the stress to meet a deadline for somebody or someone.

Rogers: Okay, you are talking about procrastinating about the clients.

Suzen: Right. And it is funny. Someone asked me what things you don’t want in your life anymore, and one of them was I don’t want to manage my life around other people’s deadlines. I don’t want to—because I feel like I am not living my own life. I kind of feel like I have all of this—and it is so detail oriented and it is so intellectually...

Rogers: It’s like polar opposites, it sounds like—the horses and the bookkeeping clients.

Suzen: Yeah. But I feel stuck there, you know?

Rogers: You said—I think you said, if I heard you correctly, that you don’t want to manage your life around other people’s deadlines.

Suzen: Mm-hmm.
Rogers: And you find yourself really procrastinating with those kinds of clients.

Suzen: Right.

Rogers: Like some sort of resistance. “I don’t want to be doing that.”

Suzen: Huge resistance. It’s huge.

Rogers: “I really, really don’t want to be doing that anymore.”

Suzen: Right.

Rogers Commentary: Here, Suzen is offering the whole dilemma that she’s in. It’s an overview of what’s going on in her life that is difficult. So I reflected and summarized her situation that she was not wanting to be dictated by other people’s concerns.

Rogers: So maybe just get in touch with what that is. “I really, really don’t want to be doing that anymore.”

[00:30:00]

Rogers Commentary: So here’s a good example of summarizing what she has been saying without any judgment, just reflecting what she’s saying and emphasizing some of the emotional content. She’s feeling really heard, and therefore, she delves deeper into what is bothering her.

Rogers: It’s okay, yeah.

Rogers Commentary: It’s important here to notice the silence. A lot of therapists have trouble letting the silence be, but that’s when the client is figuring out what she wants to say.

Rogers: It’s so strong, I’m feeling for you. You have had it with them. There’s some Kleenex.

Suzen: Yeah. And the thing is, too—I think for the last year, I have been struggling with it. But I mean, that is all I know.

Rogers: That’s all you know? I’m not quite clear what that means.

Suzen: Well, it’s kind of what I fall back on to make money.

Rogers: To make money. Oh, “that’s all I know,” okay.

Suzen: And to kind of make a living. But there is so much other creative aspects of me that just keep getting pushed down.
Rogers: So there is this real passion to allow the creative part of you to come up, and somehow the finances are really holding you up from getting there. Am I right?

Suzen: Yeah, and it is frustrating because—

Rogers: You can’t make money doing the horse thing.

Suzen: Well, that’s what I keep thinking. But in actuality, that’s not true. But I think I am really afraid to make that shift and to move into that.

Rogers: So there’s some—

Suzen: And you know what part of it is, is that I think I have this belief that you really can’t, something around, you can’t make a living off something you really enjoy doing. And what happens is, because I have—it is a deserving thing because I feel like if I am doing something that I really enjoy, then there’s a weird thing about accepting money for that.

Rogers: I understand that.

Suzen: I don’t know quite…

Rogers: Like if I am doing something that is really my passion, I don’t deserve getting paid well for that.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: There’s something about that that is a belief system of yours. Is that what you are saying?

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: So if I do something that I am passionate about…

Suzen: But I have no problem charging somebody for—

Rogers: Bookkeeping.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: So, is that also part of your self-sabotaging by having this belief system?

Suzen: I think so.
Rogers: So I am not making that up.
That’s part of what you are saying?
Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers Commentary: I’m listening to Suzen at a very deep emotional level, and my attempt is to follow her path, let her experience be heard, rather than helping her make the decision of which way she wants to go with her career.

And the self-sabotage stuff goes pretty deep. It’s almost scary sometimes because I feel that I am a different person when I am alone with myself than I am with other people. And what I do is I create a situation that is frustrating or puts me in a stressful kind of thing where I should be, if I just did it last week or did it yesterday, then I wouldn’t be in a situation where I am trying to catch up. And then I use that against myself and really talk down to myself.

Rogers: So you find a way to put yourself down by procrastinating.

[00:35:00]
Suzen: Yeah. And I sense that it has something to do with feeling frustrated and angry that I am spending most of my time doing this intellectual laden kind of work that I have no interest in. I’m good at it, and that is great but it is not fulfilling me anymore.

Rogers: So there is anger and frustration around that, too, that you are doing that?

Suzen: Yeah. And I am doing some of the work that I want to do, and I find that I will spend most of my time doing that. I mean, that is where my passion is. I will spend a lot of extra time doing that when I really have these deadlines over here that I need to meet for somebody else.

And there’s been a shift, like I said, as of recently, that it looks like I might be able to do more of this work and get paid for it.

Rogers: What’s the shift?

Suzen: The woman I have been working with, I mentored with for three and a half years, she is an amazing trainer. And I did video work for her and—
Rogers: This is around using horses as therapy? Do I understand that?
Suzen: It is. It is also—yeah.
Rogers: Interesting field.
Suzen: It’s amazing work. Yeah, it’s incredible. And she is just amazing. So now, her business is really taking a turn, and she is promoting herself quite a bit. And just in the last two weeks, we have made, I’m going with her to Washington, going with her to British Columbia to do these clinics. And she is paying me for that. And I’m making room for it in my life. And part of the creative aspect for me is doing the video work for her, because I put it to music and create a visceral experience of how this work feels, which is a real challenge.
Rogers: Yeah, that sounds very creative.
Suzen: It is, and I love it.
Rogers: Oh good. And you love it. That’s good to hear. So this is beginning to shift in your life?
Suzen: Yeah, I think so.
Rogers: Uh-huh. But you’re not sure?
Suzen: It’s still scary because—shoot—financially, I don’t have a lot to fall back on anymore, you know?
And my career has been something that has been solid that I can fall back on. But I just want to walk away from it.
Rogers: You really, really want to walk away from it.
Rogers Commentary: Again, she comes back to, “I really, really don’t want to do this.” And my tone of voice and the way I interact with her just let her feel what she’s saying. In being on the path of Suzen’s journey, I also reflect back the joy in my face and in my body. The body language is important, but it’s not something I do consciously.
Rogers: This may not appeal to you, but you are talking with your hands and having some imagery with your body, and I was wondering, if you took a pose—I mean, I can get up with you—of how it feels to be restricted. Is that the word? How do you feel when you are working with the bookkeeping? What word would you use? You really don’t
want to do it. You really don’t want to do it anymore. How would you pose yourself in “I really don’t want to do it anymore”? And then we might just try moving to, “How might it feel if I really got paid for my passion?” Just kind of explore that in your body. Would that appeal to you?

**Suzen:** Sure.

**Rogers:** We can just be right here.

*Rogers Commentary:* It’s not always easy to decide when to move from verbal language to nonverbal or the expressive arts language. However, at this point she had explained in some depth the polarities of her situation, and I was asking her if she would like to experience that in her body. Experiencing it in our body can often put new insight into the situation.

**[00:40:00]**

**Suzen:** Should I stand up?

**Rogers:** Yeah, stand up. Let me just move this. So first, and I may do this with you, just so I get an empathic feel of what it’s like, but if you want to close your eyes. If you don’t, that’s okay. But just get into a body pose of how it feels to you when you say, “I really don’t want to do this anymore.” And you can be on the floor, you can be up, you can be in any position you want. How does it feel? “I really don’t want to do this anymore.”

**Suzen:** I feel a lot of just resistance around it. Ugh.

**Rogers:** Ugh. It’s like, “I really don’t want to do this anymore.”

**Suzen:** I want to close it off. I feel like I just want to—

**Rogers:** I just want to close it off.

**Suzen:** Yeah. I just want it to go away.

**Rogers:** Go away! Okay. I really don’t want to do it anymore. I want to close it off, and it’s down here.

**Suzen:** And I feel protected, too. I just like, ugh.

**Rogers:** It’s like ugh, ugh. And you are hiding it from yourself.

**Suzen:** Yeah.
Rogers: So what is this arm saying down here? You are protecting, you say?

Suzen: It hurts.

Rogers: It hurts. It really hurts to be doing this. Wow. Hurts your whole body, huh? So imagine, make a transition, this is going to be exploring—

Suzen: This was really close to the surface. That’s why I am so emotional around it.

Rogers: That’s okay. Hey, that’s what therapy is about—going in to really experience them with somebody who is compassionate. And I really am with that issue. I feel a lot of understanding for that.

Rogers Commentary: I am using my body and my tone of voice to reflect her deep emotions. I am creating an environment of nonjudgment, of compassion, to follow her inner journey, to help her feel safe to explore what is of deepest concern to her. So just notice how bringing movement into it brings a whole different energy into this situation. She taps immediately into her pain around not wanting to do this anymore.

Rogers: So then, imagine that gradually you are going to let go of that. So you can be in that pose, whatever part of it you want to be in. And just begin to let it drain away. See what that feels like. Whatever. Let it go.

Okay, and then begin to imagine that you are doing your horse therapy. Is that the name of it? What do you call it?

Suzen: It’s Liberty Horse Training.

Rogers: Liberty Horse Training.

Suzen: Yeah, it’s working with horses at liberty, total freedom. And therapeutic.

Rogers: Therapeutic Liberty Horse Training. Okay. So let’s imagine that you are letting go of the bookkeeping gradually. Let’s see if you can just let that drain away. It’s actually going to go away. See if you can feel it in your body, that you are going to let go.

Suzen: It feels good.
Rogers: It feels good? Okay.

And then imagine that the Liberty Horse Training is going to provide you with a real income. And see how it feels to try to let that in. That may be not easy to let that in.

That somehow this turnaround is going to be bigger, and bigger. How would your body express being—?

[00:45:00]

Suzen: I would welcome it.

Rogers: I would welcome it. And there’s tears around it.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: And what are the tears about?

Suzen: I don’t know.

Rogers: Okay, you don’t need to know. Does it feel—you were talking about self-sabotaging.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: And I am just wondering how it feels to try to let go of the—in your body, how it feels to let go of—?

Suzen: It feels good.

Rogers: It feels good, okay.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: So there is not a lot of resistance to letting go.

Suzen: No. I don’t think so.

Rogers: Good. Okay. And then how about letting the—

Suzen: That’s easy.

Rogers: It’s easy to let—?

Suzen: Yeah, to let the other in.

Rogers: And it is like way up here somewhere?

Suzen: Yeah. It’s almost like a matter of just getting rid of the other.

Rogers: Let’s sit down.
Rogers Commentary: Looking at it now, I feel that I could have done a more fruitful thing by encouraging her to focus longer on the whole effort of letting go.

Suzen: Just letting it go. Giving it permission, giving myself permission to—to let it go. There is so much security around it, you know?

Rogers: Somehow letting that go, giving yourself permission to let that go. How might that evolve?

Suzen: You know, I don’t know.

I don’t know whether it is just a financial thing, but it is also a feeling of security, a feeling of being successful, I think.

Rogers: So that is a sure success because you know you are good at it.

Suzen: But it’s not. It’s such an empty, hollow kind of way to get there. But yeah, it has been in the past. I built the business and had—

Rogers: You were successful at that.

Suzen: Yeah.

So I think that is what it has been for me. But clearly, now it is not.

Rogers: It’s not, no.

Suzen: It’s not something. And that is where the sabotage comes in. I’m not doing a great job anymore. I’m not serving the clients that I am serving as—and it’s almost like, the self-sabotage thing, I’m afraid that—I want to really deal with this before it kind of works itself out. But I’m afraid that, without taking control of it myself, I might be the self-sabotage might—the end result might be that clients would drop me and I wouldn’t—

And that’s where I think that—

Rogers: That you might do a bad job, somehow, or they might drop you before you actually decide. That would be one way to let go. But not—

Suzen: Not how I want to do it.

Rogers: So how do you want to do it?
**Suzen:** I want to consciously be willing to just let go of some of that and take on more of this. And just move. I think I could do that without having—it doesn’t have to be an all or nothing thing.

**Rogers:** So you could let go of some clients, is that what you mean?

**Suzen:** Mm-hmm.

**Rogers:** Just let go of some and see if you can create income on the other side?

**Suzen:** Yeah. And I think it is heading in that direction. And that’s a real positive thing that brings—I am very excited about. Yeah.

**[00:50:00]**

But I don’t know why I—it seems like there is some other issues. I don’t know if they are related to this or not, but the procrastination and not following through is so not like me, I guess I would say, because in the past, I always talk on too much to handle. But at the same time, I am kind of a perfectionist, and I want to take on a lot so that I can prove myself.

But I think that’s getting in my way. I think the perfectionism or the—it’s not working anymore.

**Rogers:** The perfectionism isn’t working anymore, either.

**Suzen:** I really want to be free of all this stuff. I spend a lot of time organizing all my details and organizing all of my stuff, but not accomplishing certain aspects of it. So it doesn’t give me that good feeling to keep going. All of these unfinished business things keep stacking up, and I just don’t want to live like that anymore.

**Rogers:** Okay. So there are other aspects of the bookkeeping that are also—the perfectionism around it is really—

**Suzen:** Yeah. It’s almost like if I have a lot to do than I feel more important as a person.

**Rogers:** That’s an interesting thought. If I have a lot to do, even if it is these details—you feel like a more important person?

**Suzen:** Mm-hmm. Because it sounds funny, but I don’t think I—I can’t remember the last time I didn’t have a whole list of things on my
plate that I really didn’t stress over. And I would really like to change that. I would really like to feel what it feels like to make a choice of doing something that is for me.

Yeah, and not have all of these things that I’m doing for other people.

**Rogers:** So I’m wondering if you hear yourself really saying that – that I would really like to have a choice that is really for me?

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** So I would really like to—that includes the perfectionism I think, yeah?

**Suzen:** Yeah, I think it is related.

**Rogers:** And feeling important because I have a lot of things on my list.

**Suzen:** Mm-hmm.

**Rogers:** You said it has been a long, long time since you had no big long list.

**Suzen:** Yeah. And I want to run my life differently. When things come up, I want to just systematically deal with them. But what has happened in certainly in the last six months, maybe the last year, is that I collect all of these things to do and then organize them, but I don’t do them.

So what happens is they become a source of proof that I am not capable, good enough in some way or shape. It’s like I use it against me. I use it—

**Rogers:** You mentioned that before. You use it against you. You get all of these items on a list some way, but you don’t do them. And then you put yourself down.

**Suzen:** And it concerns me that I do that to myself.

**Rogers:** Yeah.

**Rogers Commentary:** I’ve been silent for quite a while, while Suzen went into more detail about her story. And then I wanted her to actually hear her own words about how negative she was about herself.
Rogers: I would think it concerns you that you are really—

Suzen: It is so funny, because I honestly don’t feel like I dislike me. I don’t feel like I am a bad person. But this sabotage comes in and is holding up all of these signs saying, “See? See?”

Rogers: See, see, what? See? What is the sign saying? See?

[00:55:00]

Suzen: It’s almost like proof or something.

Rogers: Proof of what?

Suzen: That I’m not good enough or—

Rogers: Proof that I’m not good enough.

Suzen: Yeah. But it doesn’t—I don’t know. I never used to feel this way.

Rogers: So you know what it is like not to feel this way.

Suzen: Yeah, I do.

Rogers: Okay.

Suzen: Yeah. It’s almost like I am mad at myself for some reason. So I just don’t know. I feel stuck. I feel stuck with that. I don’t know how to set that aside and move on and not—I feel like it is pulling me down.

Rogers: And you said, “It’s almost like I’m mad at myself.”

Suzen: Yeah. It’s like punishment or something. But I don’t know what it is that I’m punishing myself for. I don’t know. It’s this vicious circle that then I create this situation where I’m not being efficient, I’m not meeting deadlines. I’m finding myself literally sitting in front of the TV just having a conversation with myself, knowing I could be being productive right now. And the dialogue is something like, “Well, I deserve just to relax and enjoy this time. I deserve that.”

And the other part of it is that, “Well, you are not taking care of the things – you have made commitments and you are not following through.” And the end result is I’m not getting things done that I need to get done. And that concerns me. Yet I keep taking on more responsibilities.
Rogers: So this sounds like a big spiral or vicious circle of some sort, is that accurate?

Suzen: Yeah. And it is crazy making in a lot of ways. It has been—

Rogers: Really crazy making.

Suzen: Yeah. The first time, there was a time, maybe it was two, three months ago, I really went into a depression around it where I really shut myself off, because I just felt so stuck. And that was scary. That was really scary.

Rogers: So it really pushed you down into a depression, these polarities talking to each other, and fighting your inner conflict.

Rogers Commentary: It’s important to notice that I’m not trying to help her get out of her depression. I am following her into her dark journey, into her darkest feelings about herself. Again, the reflections help her see who she is and what she is feeling at the moment. And re-experiencing feelings like that in an empathic environment is part of the healing process.

Rogers: Kind of just really—

Suzen: And I had two incidents that I think were—a longtime friend, 20 years I have known this friend, and she, over a very seemingly small issue that we had, quit talking to me.

Rogers: Oh.

[S01:00:00]

Suzen: And we had a conversation about this one thing, but friends who have been friends for a long time and have a commitment to being—it should have been something we could deal with, we could talk about.

And that was—I don’t get it. It feels like abandonment to me when someone just shuts you out of their life and won’t talk to you anymore. Of course, I didn’t, I haven’t—She said, “That’s a deal breaker for me, that’s it, I’m done,” kind of thing. And I didn’t reach out to her. I didn’t write to her. I just kind of let it be. And the other part of that is, a part of me is really okay with it because I realized that it was a
one-sided relationship, that there was a lot of it that I was giving up of myself to be there.

So I look at the whole thing in two different ways. One is that I feel the loss and abandonment of her taking that away from me.

Then the other side, I realize that it is really the best thing, that I needed to move on and I wouldn’t have necessarily done it myself. And I question how honest I am being with other people in my life, as far as, I think I allow myself to stay in situations that I don’t feel comfortable in or that maybe—

Rogers: Maybe stay in them too long.

Rogers Commentary: Watching this now, I realize she was going on a separate issue, but I was trusting her process that she would eventually come to some insight that related to her career decision. And indeed she did, because she talks about staying in a bad situation too long.

Suzen: Yeah. Or not be honest if there is some feelings or thoughts that I have that I just stay quiet a little bit too much rather than expressing how I feel and saying, “That doesn’t feel right; I’m not okay with that,” or whatever.

So I think the incident has allowed me to see that. And then after that, another situation came up where I really did have to put up some boundaries and say that “this doesn’t work for me.”

Rogers: Okay. So you did actually put some boundaries.

Suzen: I did. And it resulted in another ending, which needed to happen. I didn’t want this situation in my life anymore. On one hand, I feel like I am really stepping in for what I want. On the other hand, I’m grieving the losses of what happens around that, what it means to stand up for—

Rogers: Stand up for yourself. And then that means some endings, and you are just discovering what that really feels like, to have some boundaries.

Suzen: Yeah. Because I think I always used to agree with everybody and want to make everyone happy and not create waves. And I am
seeing that it does empower me, but at the same time it is a difficult shift to make.

**Rogers:** Yeah, it is. So you are saying, “It does empower me,” but it is really difficult to make that shift from pleasing everybody to trying to be more authentic and take note of what you really need and what you really want and stand up for it.

**Suzen:** Yeah. The truth is that you will eliminate people and situations that don’t fit.

**Rogers:** People, you will say goodbye to them in some way.

**Suzen:** Yeah. And there probably is an element of that that goes back to the career shift, because that is what I have been doing for so long, and that is what I know, and that is what is comfortable to me. To say goodbye to that, maybe—

**[01:05:00]**

**Rogers:** So you see the relevance of what you were just talking about in terms of your career. It seems relevant to me.

**Suzen:** I do. Yeah.

**Rogers:** How to really stand up for what it is that you really want and say goodbye to some of the things that you don’t want.

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** It’s a big shift.

**Suzen:** Yeah.

But it is what I want.

**Rogers:** You seem clearer to me, when you say “it is what I want.”

**Suzen:** It’s just scary.

**Rogers:** It’s scary, yeah, it’s very scary.

**Suzen:** You know, it’s funny. The way I negotiated with myself around it was, if I would just get myself a little more secure financially, then I would kind of have a financial boost to go and move in this other direction.
Rogers: That’s very understandable. And it doesn’t seem to be working for you.

Suzen: No. I’m sabotaging that, too.

But I’m getting more clear, I think, and more honest with moving in that direction. I have actually taken some steps to make that work.

Rogers: With all of these feelings, again, you don’t need to do this, but I was wondering if you would be willing or interested in exploring just how you feel, just on paper with color.

Suzen: Sure, yeah.

Rogers: Okay.

Rogers Commentary: It seemed to me at this point that we had summarized quite a few of the concerns that she had, and there was a pause that felt appropriate to offer her the opportunity to use some art to go into the nonverbal language again.

Rogers: I have here either white paper or black paper. Which would you prefer?

Suzen: White.

Rogers: Okay, so why don’t we take it over here with a cushion over here. Can you just move the cushion over there to suit yourself?

Suzen: Sure, where do you want it?

Rogers: That looks good. That’s fine.

Suzen: Kneel up here?

Rogers: You can kneel, sit, whatever you want. I just thought that would be—so here, I will bring the colors, whatever you want. And what I like to suggest to people is first just close your eyes and feel the paper. By the way, you can turn that whatever way you want.

Suzen: My nose is running. Just a second.

Rogers: So, you can leave it horizontal or vertical. Close your eyes and then just feel the paper, and think about your situation.

Suzen: Actually feel it?
Rogers: Yes. Actually feel it. And you can make yourself comfortable sitting anyway you want. I suggested the cushion. You don’t need it if you don’t want it.

Suzen: Feels good.

Rogers: Feel the paper. And get back in touch with the feelings that you have. And then, without any conscious effort, just let your non-dominant hand pick some colors and just play with it.

Suzen: Shall I look at it?

Rogers: Yeah, you can look at it. So pick whatever colors you want.

Suzen: So if I am right-handed, use my left hand?

Rogers: Or you can use both hands.

Rogers Commentary: I want her to be comfortable using color and line. And one of the ways we do this is to ask people to use their nondominant hand. You don’t have control over your nondominant hand, and so the freedom of expression is much greater, and the self-judgment is less.

Suzen: And just whatever feels right?

Rogers: Yeah, just let it explore. Just let anything happen.

Suzen: It’s funny because the perfectionist in me comes out. I have to know exactly what I am going to do. And it has to be—

Rogers: I understand. This is a totally different thing. There you go.

[01:10:00]

Suzen: Keep going?

Rogers: As much as you want or as little as you want.

I have more paper, too, if you want.

Suzen: I didn’t expect this.

Rogers: You didn’t expect this?

Suzen: Yes. To have so much emotion around it.

Rogers: Oh, okay. It’s okay.

Suzen: It’s good.
Rogers: It’s good. So it is bringing up a lot of feelings, just working this way.

Rogers Commentary: Suzen has a strong emotional reaction to the process, which is part of our goal in expressive arts therapy. She is using her nondominant hand, which is one part of losing control of the situation and engaging in the process. Tears come up around her perfectionist self, her judgments of herself, and she can go more deeply into this as the process continues.

Suzen: Yeah. The colors are—for me, it feels like a celebration of who I am.

Rogers: Oh, okay.

Suzen: And I haven’t allowed myself to do that lately.

Rogers: So this is a celebration of who you are. And you haven’t had any chance to really allow yourself to do that.

Suzen: No.

Rogers Commentary: I was amazed that she went so quickly from exploring her dark side and her self-judgment about being a perfectionist to celebrating the joy of her life. And this joy brought tears. I notice in my own body language, I am surprised and delighted that she is experiencing this. This is a great example of the power of the expressive arts, and the nonverbal language being even more powerful, often, than the words.

Rogers: There’s a lot of pain around that.

Suzen: Yeah. I’ve been holding myself back. It’s like squelching the light within me. I’m not letting it shine.

Rogers: That’s so painful. And you know it’s there.

Suzen: And I know how powerful it is.

Rogers: And I’m not letting it shine.

So do you want to say any more about what this is for you?

Suzen: I don’t know.

Rogers: It may have been more just about the process.

Suzen: Yeah.
Rogers: That’s powerful. The process itself is what—

Suzen: What I see is real powerful release.

Rogers: There’s powerful release there. Can you put that in the first person as you describe it? “I am”?

**Rogers Commentary:** This is a good example of how to respond to the visual art, or any of the art, from a person-centered approach. I am not interpreting her art, I’m not judging it, I’m not saying it’s good. I’m allowing her to explain what it means to her. I’m asking her to use the first person to explain it, to talk about her art. This is a Gestalt approach which is very useful for the client to embody the art, to own it, rather than to look at it as an object.

[01:15:00]

Suzen: I’m beginning to let go. I’m beginning to accept the fact that I can do this.

Rogers: That’s good. That’s very good. “I’m beginning to let go and I’m just beginning to take steps or know, understand that I can do this.”

**Rogers Commentary:** I notice that I’m speaking in the first person as I reflect her feelings. I don’t shift consciously from saying things like, “You are feeling this” or “You are experiencing this,” but I do this in all of my counseling. I think it’s a sign that I am really in tune with the client, and I am imagining they experience it that way as well.

Suzen: Yeah. And the thing is I also know that once I do that, it’s going to be an amazing process. It’s going to be very positive.

Rogers: So you have a kind of intuition or insight that once you actually let go and follow your passion, that it is going to be really big.

Suzen: But then comes that whole deserving thing. Ugh.

Rogers: Do I deserve it? It’s going to be really big, and do I deserve it?

Suzen: Yeah. There was a thought I used to have as a child, that if I would really allow myself to be the happy, loving light that I am, that other people would feel less of themselves. And so I always felt responsible—I always felt that I shouldn’t shine nearly as bright because other people would feel less than who they are.
Rogers: Wow. That is really a powerful statement. As a child, you felt you should not let your light shine because it would diminish other people.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: This is something you have been holding onto ever since childhood.

Suzen: Yeah. And so there I feel that I should take care of people. And in so doing, I completely diminish myself. Does that make sense? It doesn’t make sense, but that is what I think of.

Rogers: So you are thinking that, but for you it also doesn’t make much sense.

Suzen: Right.

Rogers Commentary: I’m noticing as she explains her feelings about her childhood, she’s drawing. She picks up the chalk and starts using some color again. Again, I don’t know why, but it’s an intuitive thing on her part. I don’t stop her, I don’t comment on it. I just let her go with it. And I am always attentive to what she’s doing.

Rogers: So if I let myself be fully all of who I can be, and let my light shine, what is going to happen?

Suzen: Well, I would like to believe it would give other people permission to do the same.

Rogers: You would like to believe that.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: And? Or, but?

Suzen: I think there certainly—I don’t want to—I guess my heart has always gone out to the underdog, the person who just doesn’t quite feel they are ready, worthy, whatever.

[01:20:00]

And I guess maybe it comes down to, how do I do that with an invitation to other people? I don’t want to come off as being better than anyone else.
Rogers: So you are posing the question to yourself, “How do I empower myself, how do I follow my passion and let my light shine and still allow other people to feel their own sense of self?”

Suzen: And celebrate who they are.

Rogers: Celebrate who they are.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: And you mentioned something about not feeling better than or more than yourself. Being worried that you might—

Suzen: Come off as being—

Rogers: Come off as being better than.

Suzen: Arrogant or—yeah. And that hasn’t been a problem in the past. I have a real sensitivity, I think, around that. So I don’t know why I am letting that stop me because I already know that that is not the case.

Rogers: The thought comes, but it is not really what happens, what you are experiencing.

Suzen: Yeah. I already know from experience that I can be an inspiration to people in a way that is not threatening.

But, boy, that was—I want to feel that again. It was awhile ago.

Rogers: Well, we just have a few more minutes, so if there is anything else you want to do or say?

Rogers Commentary: As a therapist, it’s always important to give the client some timeline, some notice that the time is almost up, and not just say, “It’s over.”

Rogers: If you want another piece of paper, we can get that, too.

Suzen: This is good. I realize the resistance that I had to creating something that was perfect, that perfectionist thing—just getting through that—

Rogers: Big.

Suzen: It was big.
Rogers: I hear that. And you did.

Suzen: Isn’t that funny? Who is to say what is perfect anyway? Perfection is in the process, I think. I think it helps to know that I am certainly not the only person who feel this way.

Rogers: You’re not. Definitely not.

Suzen: And that having gone through—when I was in my depression, I think one of the solaces that I had for myself was imagining that going through this process is making me a better person. And so I see that, as I am going through this, too, and working with you, that it is really helping me to move through it.

And having moved through it gives me more compassion and empathy for—

Rogers: For other people.

Suzen: For other people.

Rogers: So you are getting, as you go through all of this difficult time, you are also seeing the bigger picture, that it is going to somehow help me get to a better place for myself.

Suzen: Yeah. Which is helping me. I can already feel it helping me with the process of allowing myself, giving myself permission to move. It’s good.

Rogers: Well, I think that is a good place to end for today, and I will see you next week, too.

Suzen: Thank you.

Rogers: You are welcome.

Suzen: If I wasn’t too emotional, I hope that was okay, that I wasn’t—

Rogers: Oh, no. That’s what it is about.

Suzen: Okay.

Rogers: Allowing yourself.

Suzen: Here I go judging myself again.
Rogers: There you go judging yourself again. No, there is no such thing as being too emotional. No. You are just being who you are. Very authentic. Feels really good.

Suzen: Great.

Rogers: I appreciate your being as authentic and open. And I trust it is helpful for you that way.

[01:25:00]

Suzen: Yeah, it is.

Rogers: Good.

Suzen: Can I take this with me?

Rogers: Sure.

Suzen: Cool.

Rogers: So, let’s call an end.

Rogers Commentary: This closing section shows quite beautifully the warmth between us, both my facial expression, my body language, and the way she’s looking at me, I think, demonstrates a real human connection.

SESSION 2

[01:32:20]

Rogers: Good morning. It’s nice to see you back here again, and I welcome you, Suzen.

Suzen: Thank you.

Rogers: I need to say again, just for my sake as well as yours, that even though there are cameras here, and lights, that my heartfelt intention is to be fully present for you during this hour.

Suzen: Thank you.

Rogers: Is it okay if we start with a meditation again?

Suzen: Absolutely.

Rogers: Okay. So let’s just close our eyes. And feel the support
underneath us. The support of the earth under our feet. The support of the chair that we are sitting in.

And take a few deep breaths. See if we can let our shoulders relax.

And as you go inward, see what your thoughts and feelings are at this moment, here, now, today.

And when you’re ready, you can open your eyes, and we will begin wherever you want to begin.

**Rogers Commentary:** Starting each client session with a meditation is not specific to the person-centered approach. However, it does help us get focused and centered.

**Suzen:** Wow. Well, it’s been a very interesting week for me, in that a lot has shifted.

**Rogers:** Shifted.

**Suzen:** A lot has opened up for me. I think I was surprised, in relation to the last session, how much I realized I was in fear and holding back.

**[01:35:00]**

And the process opened up something for me. I let go at a level. And clearly I was ready. I knew that I was holding back but I didn’t quite know what it was about. And the process just started an opening and a release for me.

And the amazing thing about it is that, as I let go, all of these opportunities started to show themselves.

**Rogers:** Really?

**Suzen:** Yeah, in an amazing way, just one right after the other. It was like the universe was saying, “Yes.” I mean amazing, amazing, amazing ways.

**Rogers:** Okay. So a lot of it was, you are saying the process was so releasing.

**Suzen:** It was. In doing the drawing, I didn’t realize how much I was holding myself back.
**Rogers Commentary:** This is the power of the expressive arts. It allows people to go deeply into their unconscious and express it in a nonverbal way. And this often results in new insights.

**Suzen:** And what I saw was that I have so much potential, so much to give, so much light. We were talking about the light within me that I was afraid to shine.

**Rogers:** I remember that.

**Rogers Commentary:** One of the exciting things about the expressive arts is that people often find an inner light as they explore their dark side. And here I want to comment on the fact that women often come to the conclusion that they have an inner light and a strength that they didn’t know about.

**Suzen:** So something in that process, just acknowledging, I think, talking about it, and releasing it through the drawing itself which is something I don’t do—a lot of artwork—allowed me to open up and make a space for opportunity, I guess. And what started to happen is opportunities came. I said yes without even a second thought of “Can I do this, is this...?” It’s a shift, because I really wanted to move from one focus in my life to another, and not knowing how it was going to happen or if it was something that could really work.

**Rogers:** You had a lot of doubts.

**Suzen:** I had a lot of doubts. And I mean, connection to one person that said they need and want this. What has developed over the last week has been a support of people who are coming to me and saying, “Would you be interested in this?” Some amazing stuff. And I’m saying yes to it.

**Rogers:** You are saying yes. So the opening up, the releasing and sharing, actually talking about it, you said, was really important. And seeing what you did in the artwork, which was new to you, just letting it go.

**Suzen:** It literally opened up something for me.

**Rogers:** And so things are falling in, and you are saying, “Okay.”

**Suzen:** I mean, it’s amazing. And I’m not questioning it. And really
seeing the possibility. It’s like the universe is saying, “This clearly is an option now that you have allowed—”

**Rogers:** So when you are saying this is clearly an option, what are you talking about?

**Rogers Commentary:** This is a very dramatic shift for Suzen from the first session to the second session, in that she is now saying yes to opportunities where formerly she would have had a lot of doubt. This does not happen in early stages of therapy, necessarily, but here she made great strides.

**[01:40:00]**

**Suzen:** I’m talking about working in what I love to do. Working with horses. I got offered to do a documentary with somebody.

**Rogers:** That’s what I was wondering. What kind of things are you saying yes to? So you have been offered what?

**Suzen:** Well, video is one of the things that I have been doing for this woman who does this amazing work with horses. And my creative niche is photography and video. And I love that expression. And the work that I am videotaping is this healing process with horses and people. And as the woman that I have been working with is completely opening up, committed to working together full-time and paying me for doing the work that I do, which, in the past, as I was mentoring with her, I was trading her knowledge for my work with her. And so we reconnected really in an exciting, looking forward kind of way. And that created an openness for a lot of other people that started to come into this process.

**Rogers Commentary:** As a facilitator, I responded to Suzen’s joy using my body language and my facial expression as well the words, reflecting the content. I think it’s important that the therapist be able to respond to the light and the bright side that the client is expressing as well as their shadow.

**Suzen:** And as the word kind of got out there, someone she is connected with, who does video work and is really interested in doing a documentary, he and I have connected and gotten together and will be doing a documentary on this work.
**Rogers:** Wow, that’s pretty quick.

**Suzen:** It is really.

**Rogers:** Pretty amazing.

**Suzen:** It is. It is. And I think I really believe in the process of, once you do open to possibilities, that is when the opportunities flow. But I think the fear held me back from—

**Rogers:** Yeah, there was a lot of fear.

**Suzen:** There was a lot of fear.

**Rogers:** And a lot of self-doubt.

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** And also you have said it again today, the reluctance to really let your potential, your shine, come through. A real reluctance around that. And somehow that reluctance has disappeared.

**Suzen:** Yeah. And you know, there was one video. As I reconnected with Robin, this person I am working with, I jumped right into starting working on this little short video that is a really upbeat, fun expression of this amazing work. And it just kind of fell together. And I shared it with her, and then she shared it with other people. And the feedback that I am getting is, I have had people call me and email me and say, “It brought me to tears.”

**Rogers:** Oh really, already?

**Suzen:** Just because of the celebration.

**Rogers:** Did you put it on YouTube or something?

**Suzen:** Yes, it’s on the internet and it is passed through the woman who originated this work. It’s on her blog. And the video is not even finished yet. It’s not even—

**Rogers:** That’s a lot in a week.

**Suzen:** It is a lot. I have the video pretty much done, but then it launched in this last week and the feedback has been—I am taking it in. I’m hearing what people are saying, and I’m really hearing it at a deeper level.
I think I’m seeing that my work does touch people, and that I have a gift there that I can—that whole process is encouraging me to continue to pursue it.

**Rogers:** I see these gestures. It’s coming through.

**Suzen:** It’s coming through, yeah.

**Rogers:** And I’m going to pursue. The body language is really like “yes.”

**Suzen:** And I still don’t know how the transition is going to work. I find myself wanting to just dive into it and leave that old work behind. I realize there is a transition, there is responsibility that I have to people in this—

**Rogers:** The bookkeeping.

**Suzen:** —whole accounting thing. But I see the potential and the possibility over here.

**[01:45:00]**

So in one way, I am adding to my possible stress because I am taking on this and still have this responsibility over here. So that is what I am working with now, how to make that shift in a way that is productive and doesn’t get me in a position where I have too much on my plate. I really need to say goodbye to this other aspect, and that is one part of me that is hard to say no to people. So I am really paying attention to needing to be really clear, and set my boundaries.

**Rogers:** Set your boundaries.

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** You are going through this, you are excited and opening to whole new potential for yourself. And on the other hand, you want to find a way to responsibly say goodbye to the accounting business and to learn how to set boundaries and say no.

**Suzen:** Yeah. And it is saying goodbye to a part of myself that I have identified with so much, that has been a security for me.

**Rogers:** So it is not only saying goodbye to the business and the people, but it is saying goodbye to some part of yourself?
Suzen: Yeah, it is. It is. But when I look at the two, this is light and this is dark. It is clear to me which direction I need to go. I think two days after we met last—I manage a ranch, and I have been working with the people who own the ranch to do a program there and to use their horses as well as mine. And there’s never been quite the commitment that I have needed to make that step. Two days after we met, they called me and they said they want to talk. And I didn’t know what to expect. I was a little fearful that maybe they were going to say something in a negative way that would mean—I don’t know. I just didn’t know what to expect. And they opened up. They said, “We are committed to this, we would really like for this to be a place of healing. We want more horses. We want you to do what you want to do, and we want to give you the green light.”

And I almost—I shook my head and said, “Really? This is it?”

And I took with it and ran with it. I stayed up all night that night, almost, just laying out what kind of things I needed to prepare in order to initiate that shift immediately. Because the idea and the thought and the process has been in my mind for months, if not years.

Rogers: A long time.

Suzen: A long time. And I realize I do that with a lot of things. I prepare myself really well for things. And then it takes me awhile to actually do it. But I am getting so much help from all of these different people that I am collaborating with.

Rogers: And you are open to accepting it.

Suzen: I am.

Rogers: And I see that in your face, actually.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: And your eyes and so forth. They are really open to accepting what is there and is offered to me, and that I’m really worthwhile and I have a lot to offer kind of person.

Rogers Commentary: Here is an example where I am responding to her facial expression, her expression of joy, as well as her words. And it’s obvious that I’m exuberant as well, so I’m picking up the energy that we
both have. My exuberance is a spontaneous reaction to her, which is being congruent, actually. I feel her joy and her delight, and I am intuitively and spontaneously reflecting that back to her.

Suzen: Yeah. And I kind of wonder, because the people who own the range had said, “But we have offered this to you before.”

Rogers: Really?

Suzen: Yeah, and they had, but there were obstacles that had to be taken care of in relation to making that happen. And they didn’t move on those things.

[01:50:00]

So I perceived that as their lack of commitment. And I think it very well could have been my lack of commitment in addition to, or that I wasn’t quite ready or I wasn’t—

Rogers: So you are seeing the whole situation in a new lens, in a new perspective, it sounds like.

Suzen: I am.

Rogers: The glasses or the eyes through which you are viewing this has changed.

Suzen: It has.

And the element that has changed is the willingness to go into the unknown.

Rogers: That’s big.

Suzen: It is. And I see that that has always been where I have gotten hung up in the past. When I sold my business six years ago, it took me two years to get to the point where I said, “I am ready, I really want to end this. Ideally I would like to sell the business, but I really want to end this.” And that’s when a colleague found someone to buy it. It happened like that. So I see the patterns jumping into the unknown and trusting that the support is going to be there. And, whoa, that’s a tough one. But I’m seeing how true it is.

Rogers: How it works.
Suzen: Yeah. And so I really want to celebrate that, because I think that process is going to help me in what I do, in being successful in what I do and really embracing that component. I need to do that. I want to get used to that process of allowing for the unknown and continuing to stay focused on what my passion is.

Rogers: Allowing for the unknown and staying true to what my passion is.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers Commentary: Suzen has been describing the changes in her life for quite a long time here, and at this point I make a very succinct reflection to her about the emotional content. It’s often difficult for a therapist to summarize the emotional content when a client has been talking so long about the actual events in her life.

Rogers: That’s pretty incredible that you are doing that.

Suzen: Yeah. And I’m proud of myself for getting to that place again. What kind of life is it if we keep holding ourselves back and back and back and back and struggling? I know what that feels like. I have done a lot of that. And dreaming, off in the back, that someday this is what I want to do, and feeling like it is so far away that I can’t get there. There’s all these things in the way, and all of them are about responsibility.

I’ve got this person, this thing, all of them, that I am responsible to other people. And the shift is that I am becoming more focused and responsible about what I need and want.

Rogers: More responsible to yourself, “what I need and what I want.”

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: That’s because we talked last time about doing so much work for other people. How about yourself? “How about me?”

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: I also heard you use the word, “I want to celebrate.” Can you expand on that a little bit? Celebrating?
Suzen: It goes back to the gifts that I have, the light that I feel that has been such a part of me growing up to this point in my life. And it really is a celebration. If I can be in the place that I am most happy, in my passion completely, then that is a celebration of myself. And what a gift that could be to other people.

Rogers: So as I celebrate myself, it’s also a gift to others?

Suzen: Absolutely. And I think I talked a little bit last time, too, about my fear of shining and how that might affect others negatively. And I have shifted that perception a little bit, in that I really am taking care of other people’s feelings around how they might react to me. So that has shifted somewhat.

[01:55:00]

Rogers: Somewhat. That’s one of the difficult places right now, is shifting that part of you that was saying, “If I shine”—I think before you used the word, “I might be arrogant,” or something like that. Or you might feel other people might see you in some negative way.

Suzen: Right. Yeah. And I realize that the possibility also exists that, in the process of living my passion, I could be giving others the possibility to do the same rather than outshining them or showing them what they haven’t accomplished or what their—

Rogers: So this is somewhat of a shift in your perception about yourself and how you might affect others?

Rogers Commentary: Here, Suzen comes back to the issue of actually embodying or becoming her full potential or inner light, with the awareness that it could affect people negatively. This is often the case with women in our culture, because when they do become their full potential and they do let their light shine, they become threatening to many other people.

Suzen: Yeah, it is.

Rogers: That you might actually be a role model or have other people really get inspired by you doing your passion. Is that accurate?

Suzen: Yeah, it is. And when I think about it logically, it certainly doesn’t make sense to hold myself back and be frustrated in my own
place of wanting something and not living it. And there is just this feeling—that holding-back feeling doesn’t help anybody. I mean, there is no reaching out. There is no connection. There’s no expression of myself in any positive way in that.

**Rogers:** So there is absolutely no rewards for anybody in holding back you are saying.

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** We can’t see any benefits. So that is a new perception.

**Suzen:** And I didn’t see that. Yeah. And it has opened a lot of thoughts and ideas about—it has just opened up a whole lot for me.

**Rogers:** I hear that. That’s a huge shift.

**Rogers Commentary:** This is a good example of an empathic response. People often misconstrue the person-centered approach, thinking it is just parroting back the words that the client says. What’s missing from this understanding is that the words must come from the heart, and that the client experiences the heartfelt connection.

**Suzen:** Yeah. The creative energy seems like it is contagious. Because all of these people that I am collaborating with, the energy is just—

**Rogers:** Contagious. That is a good word for it. The energy is contagious.

**Suzen:** Yeah. And I’m saying yes. I’m saying yes, yes, yes, without even thinking.

**Rogers:** Without the self-doubt or holding back.

**Suzen:** Right. One of the things that came up was an offer to go, all expenses paid, to this place in British Columbia that is really well known in this field that I am working in. And for me to leave the ranch and my responsibilities here and my clients in the accounting department, normally the first impression, when someone said, “I want you to come for seven days with me. I need you here to do this amazing work and get paid for it,” initially the first thing would be, “Oh gosh, I don’t know if I can do that. Let me check. Let me see.” And the struggle would take place of, “I really want that, but shoot, I don’t know if I can swing it.”
Well, I instantly said, “Yeah. Let’s do it. I will figure out—” So I said yes first.

**Rogers:** You say yes first and then figure it out. That’s a huge—

**[02:00:00]**

**Suzen:** And then in the figuring it out, this is what is so amazing. When you make that shift and you open up the possibilities, then I have someone who is completely willing to cover for me the whole week that I am gone, to take care of the horses and the ranch and everything. Someone I completely trust and depend on and have no qualms about. And leaving the bookkeeping clients is not a problem for me.

And so I am going to this amazing opportunity.

**Rogers:** I want to celebrate with you.

**Suzen:** I know! It’s so exciting.

**Rogers:** That’s really incredible.

**Suzen:** Yeah.

**Rogers:** Well, I do. I celebrate with you. That’s really wonderful. As you are talking and I see the excitement in your face, I wondered if you would like to try some artwork.

**Suzen:** Sure. Absolutely.

**Rogers Commentary:** As usual, I offer the client the opportunity to use any media, and also, I do not tell her or dictate to her what she should focus on in terms of the content of her art. In this case, she chose to use clay.

**Suzen:** What are we going to do?

**Rogers:** Well, that’s totally up to you. And there is clay or there is color as usual. So take your choice, whatever you’d like.

**Suzen:** Well, I have never worked with clay before. Is that something that we have time for in this framework? I would love to try that.

**Rogers:** All right. So we will take this out and bring this over here. So we can cut it—have as much as you want.
Suzen: Okay.
Rogers: You are going to try something new.
Suzen: I am! See, I said yes to that.
Rogers: I didn’t ask you to do it. That was your choice. You cut how much you think you would like.
Suzen: Maybe a piece like that.
Rogers: There you go. Cut what you want.
Suzen: Oh, that’s kind of cool.
Rogers: Maybe more than that, probably.
Suzen: Yeah, a little bit more.
Rogers: Take as much as you want. There you go.
Suzen: That feels good.
Rogers: There’s more here if you want it, too.

So one of the things I suggest to people that they start with their eyes closed or just feel the texture and you can twist it and touch it and pound it and see what happens. And then whenever you want, you can open your eyes.

Suzen: It’s tough for me to begin something that I don’t have planned out how I know it is going to end, you know what I mean?
Rogers: Expressive arts, that is what it is. So that is tough for you.
Suzen: But it feels good because again, going into that kind of unknown, I have all of this kind of self-doubt, self-judgment stuff that comes up around it. And it is a new place for me. I welcome that, though.
Rogers: So this is another way of going into the unknown for you.
Suzen: Yeah.
Rogers: It brings up that kind of questioning and fears. And I heard you say you welcome it.
Suzen: Yeah. I’m learning to be okay with not knowing exactly how it is going to look to other people. Like I said, I plan a lot. I plan so that
I don’t have any surprises. And I realize that holds me back a lot from just being.

Rogers: So your planning and needing to know where you are going, you are saying, holds you back from really being—

Suzen: In the moment.

Rogers: And being fully yourself.

Suzen: Yeah. And I think a lot of the opportunities are missed as a result of that, because I’m so busy kind of making sure everything is safe.

Rogers: Being that concerned about your safety and the plans, you are saying you are missing some real opportunities.

Suzen: I think so.

[02:05:00] And it feels good just to keep going, not knowing, and not judging what it is going to—

Rogers: That’s not easy.

Suzen: It’s not. Yeah.

Rogers: It’s not easy to keep going and not judge, but you are doing it.

Suzen: I am.

Rogers Commentary: It’s interesting that giving Suzen the opportunity to express anything she wants in the arts, she chose to explore the unknown. She chose to challenge herself. She might have done something about celebration. This is typical of expressive arts in that the inner feelings manifest themselves in the outer form of the clay or the color.

Suzen: It’s a continual process, too, for me. I realize to keep letting go, it is new to me, so I have to keep reminding myself it’s okay, it’s okay, it’s okay.

Rogers: And that’s what you are doing. You are telling yourself it’s okay, it’s okay to let go, to not be in charge so much.

Suzen: Yeah.

So there we have it. Don’t ask me to explain. But it feels good.
Rogers: Okay, it feels good. And you don’t want to explain. Do you want to say anything about the process? You were actually saying something about the process as you went along, but.

Suzen: Well, yeah. Like this hole here, I saw it emerge when I was playing with it. I just saw that and said, “Okay, I will go with that.”

Rogers: So something was there so you just said all right, rather than what?

Suzen: I think that typically this kind of thing could be almost distressing for me, that I could really want to have to create something that meant something to other people. And through the whole process, continually, let’s just let go of that. It doesn’t matter. It really is okay to just go with whatever. And that is such a metaphor for what I have been talking about. It doesn’t have to be anything. It doesn’t have to mean anything to anybody. Just, blah.

Rogers: A metaphor for really what you are experiencing this past week. It doesn’t have to—

Suzen: Yeah.

And just go with what is right now.

Rogers: Go with what is right now. And it doesn’t have to please anybody else.

Suzen: I think that’s a big one.

Rogers: You don’t have to please anybody else.

Suzen: Everything has gone through a filter for me, even my own expression, creative expression, goes through a filter of, “Well, are other people going to like it? Is this okay with other people? And I am really ready to let go of that?”

Rogers: So that has been part of holding back your creative expression?

Suzen: It has.

Rogers: What other people are going to think, judgments, is it going to please that?

Suzen: Yeah. Is it good enough?
Rogers: Is it good enough?
Suzen: Yeah. That’s a big one, too.
Rogers: That’s a big one.
Suzen: This is a good exercise in letting that go. It really is.
Rogers: That was your experience in the process.
Suzen: Yeah.

[02:10:00]
Rogers: So that’s really good. I’m not going to ask you what the meaning is.
Suzen: Yeah. Because I wouldn’t know what to tell you.
Rogers: And it doesn’t have to have a meaning, you know.
Suzen: It’s in process.
Rogers: It actually literally does not have to have a meaning. What you are doing in the process is just as important, in my theory, actually, as well as being here with you, that it doesn’t have to have a meaning. If you want to give it a meaning, that’s okay, but what I saw you and hear you talking about is how the process is a metaphor for what you are trying to do in life right now, which is to not care about whether it has meaning or not.
Suzen: And I see, too, that if I am trying to have it figured out before I even start, how removed from the process am I?
Rogers: That’s a wonderful statement, as far as I’m concerned. That is really what it is about.
Suzen: Because that is what I do. I start something and it is like, okay, I want to figure out how it is going to end, how it is going to be, let’s just get all of that in place, and then I start. So the process never allows—
Rogers: So it sounds, if I am understanding you correctly, like you don’t allow things to evolve, or you haven’t in the past.
Suzen: Right.
Rogers: You had to have it all figured out, what it is going to be.
Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: So now it seems like, and this is again a metaphor, you are letting things evolve more.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: And that is a big shift.

Suzen: Being in the moment and continually shedding the stuff that comes up for me around it not being okay to know what the outcome is, how it is going to work, and just continually letting that go, setting that aside and just being here now.

Rogers: And so far, that seems to be working for you.

Suzen: It feels good. It is a real freedom, you know? And I realize how much I probably have missed along the way. And I see it in so many different parts of my life, in relationships and projects that I have done and that kind of thing, that I don’t give it my all completely if I am so focused on how it is going to look in the end, or how I look in the process—that I am really not being present.

**Rogers Commentary:** Suzen very quickly grasps the connection of the art process to her larger struggle in her life. Not all clients grasp this as quickly, but it’s an important aspect of the process. My stance is the same, and I trust that the client will incorporate her experience in her own way, in her own time.

Rogers: That’s good. Let me just see what time it is. It’s probably our time to go. I think it is about up. So, unless there is more that you want to say—?

Suzen: Not that I can think of.

Rogers: Okay. Well, I just celebrate with you.

Suzen: Thank you.

Rogers: It’s incredible what’s happened in a week.

Suzen: Thank you.

I think what is important for me, again, to stay focused, because I don’t want—I still have some work to do.
Rogers: It’s continuous.

Suzen: Yeah, as far as the moving through this transition, I feel like, as I am going through it, I am really listening to what I can take from what I am learning, and take that and move forward. I realize that, as I face some of these difficult shifts and saying goodbye and having some feelings that I totally have to take care of and be responsible for this stuff, I can use these principles that I am getting here, which is staying in the moment through that process as well. And going forward in my life. It feels like a real internal shift as well. So that is great.

Rogers: Well, let’s just sit down for a minute. Because it is true what you are saying, of course, that you made this huge shift over the week and wonderful things have been happening, but you are also saying here that you are going to have to keep reminding yourself of how this is going to evolve.

[02:15:00]

Suzen: Right.

Rogers: And it is not always going to be easy.

Suzen: Right.

Rogers: But you have learned some principles, is what I heard you say.

Suzen: Yeah. Some core principles that if I allow—and those are available in any situation that comes up, I think. I jump to these old ways of perceiving things and working with my situation. But I can take what I am learning now and apply it going forward. For instance, this transition, yeah, it’s a little scary, but at the same time, I want to continually move forward in saying yes to what feels right, and feel the apprehension and the fear, and move through that. Working with the pastels last time really surprised me, like I said. I want to do more of that.

Rogers: Well, I’m glad you brought that up because one of the gifts that I like to give, in terms of an idea, to clients or to group members is keeping an art journal. If you buy at the art store just a spiral bound thing, you can choose whatever size you like, but 8.5 x 11 or a little larger. And then the pastels are very reasonable. And an art journal—I
have written about it in my book—but to share this process, it is the same kind of process that we did last time. Maybe feel the paper and get in touch with your feelings and just let something happen.

And if you use your nondominant hand, you are not so much in charge which is kind of what helps reestablish that kind of freedom that you felt last time. And you can do that daily, or just when you are feeling frustrated, or when you are feeling happy.

Suzen: I can see how valuable that can be.

Rogers: It doesn’t have to be a big product. And then you can also use it to write. So after you do the art you might want to say—

Suzen: Write something on the page.

Rogers: Just give it a title, or write something on the page, or put five words down as to feeling words, those kinds of things.

Suzen: And I am looking forward to that, because I feel so much power in that, it’s like giving myself permission to just be, without any kind of forethought or planning or anything. Just be. Being here in the moment with no judgment or anything.

Rogers: So that would be practicing that.

Suzen: Yeah.

Rogers: An art journal would actually be practicing.

Suzen: Yeah, it would.

Rogers: It would be reminding you that you don’t have to have it planned out. You don’t have to be perfect. And it doesn’t matter—nobody is going to look at it.

Suzen: Yeah. I can see that that would be really valuable.

Rogers: So let’s just check in how you are feeling, right here, right now.

Suzen: I feel free. I feel a real release from my own internal chaos and judgment. And I think that is something that I wasn’t completely aware of how much of that was going on. And to release that allows so much room for so much more to come in.
Rogers: And what I was saying about the art journal, too, that that will be an ongoing process. It is not a one-time, “I did it all.” But you did a lot. It is part of life shifting. We all go through these same kinds of things over and over again, but you have learned some principles and you have learned some processes, it sounds like, that you are willing to keep trying.

Suzen: Yeah. And that is important to me because there is also that little fear or voice that says, “Don’t count on this continuing forever,” kind of thing. “Don’t take it for granted.” But at the same time, the creative process is freeing, and realizing that I can continue that on my own is like a way to continually tap into that place of just being here now and allowing.

[02:20:00]

Rogers: And I also want you to know that if you need a boost, I am available by phone.

Suzen: Great.

Rogers: It’s hard to just have two sessions.

Suzen: I know. It’s like, wow.

Rogers: Wow! I feel the same way. I feel really connected to you. I am not going to be your therapist, but if you want some support, I am available by phone. We can just chat.

Suzen: Great. It’s been an amazing catalyst for me, and I was really ready.

Rogers: Yes, you were. Very ready. That’s great.

Suzen: Wonderful. Thank you.

Rogers: Well thank you.
Video Credits

Produced and Directed by Victor Yalom and Marie-Helene Yalom
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