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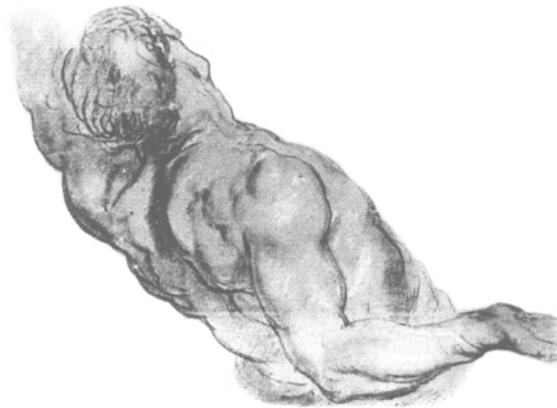


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The USABP believes that integration of the body and mind is essential to effective psychotherapy, and to that end, its mission is to develop and advance the art, science, and practice of body psychotherapy in a professional, ethical, and caring manner in order to promote the health and welfare of humanity. (revised October 1999)

# Carl Rogers: Body-Oriented Psychotherapist

Peter S. Fernald, Ph.D.

## Abstract

Carl Rogers's person-centered approach is essentially body-oriented. This thesis is considered in four contexts: 1) the moments and dimensions of change in psycho-therapy; 2) person-centered theory; 3) Rogers's activities as psychotherapist; and 4) similarities between Rogers's and Wilhelm Reich's thinking about human nature. . . . psychotherapy is a process whereby man becomes his organism — without self-deception, without distortion ... (It seems to mean a getting back to basic sensory and visceral experience (Rogers, 1961, p 103).

## Keywords

Body oriented psychotherapist - Person-centered approach - Wilhelm Reich - Carl Rogers

Forty-five years ago, while pursuing a master's degree, I was introduced to the client-centered approach of Carl Rogers. I was deeply moved by Rogers's words. Later, I entered a doctoral program which was more eclectic, emphasizing psychodynamic, social learning, and existential approaches. I did not return to Rogers's writings until 20 years later, when for the first time I taught a course in counseling. Once again, Rogers's writings had a strong impact on me. This time his words seemed more like poetry than prose, poetry that elicits new meanings and deeper understanding with each reading.

It was not until recently, however, that I was able to appreciate and comprehend even more fully Rogers's ideas. My enhanced and, I believe, more accurate understanding of his writings came through my study of and training in bioenergetic analysis, a form of psychotherapy having a body-mind focus (Lowen, 1975, 1980, 1990). With its emphasis on the body, bioenergetic analysis prompted me to see Rogers's approach from a different perspective. As the title of this article suggests, I believe Rogers's primary intention as psychotherapist was to facilitate the client's being more in touch with his or her body. In attempting to demonstrate my thesis, I address four topics: 1) Rogers's descriptions of the moments and dimensions of change in psycho-therapy; 2) fundamental questions pertaining to any theory of human nature; 3) Rogers's various activities during a psychotherapy session; and 4) some similarities in thinking between Rogers and Wilhelm Reich.

## Moments and Dimensions of Change in Psychotherapy

The essence of psychotherapy is change. Factors that produce change, as Rogers described them, are considered below. The focus is on both the moments and dimensions of change as they occur for the client.

### Moments of Change

Rogers believed he could recognize "moments of movement," those instances when change actually occurred. One such moment involved a young man who wished his parents would disappear or die.

Client: *It's kind of like wanting to wish them away, and wishing they had never been ... And I'm so ashamed of myself because then they call me, and off I go -- swish! They're somehow still so strong. I don't know. There's some umbilical -- I can almost feel it inside me -- swish (and he gestures, plucking himself away by grasping at his navel.)*

Therapist: *They really do have a hold on your umbilical cord.*

Client: *It's funny how real it feels ... It's like a burning sensation, kind of, and when they say something which makes me anxious I can feel it right here (pointing). I never thought of it quite that way.*

Therapist: *As though if there's a disturbance in the relationship between you, then you do just feel it as though it was a strain on your umbilicus.*

Client: *Yeah, kind of like in my gut here. It's so hard to define the feeling that I feel there. (Rogers, 1961, p. 148).*

Another moment of movement occurs in a man exploring some previously unrecognized feelings of fear, neediness, and loneliness, which suddenly evolve into an intense physical response resembling prayer and supplication.

Client: *I get a sense of -- it's this kind of pleading little boy. It's this gesture of begging. (Putting his hands up as if in prayer).*

Therapist: *You put your hands in kind of a supplication.*

Client: *Yeah, that's right. 'Won't you do this for me?' kind of. Oh, that's terrible! Who, Me? Beg? ... That's an emotion I've never felt clearly at all -- something I've never been --- (Pause) ... I've got such a confusing feeling. One is, it's such a wondrous feeling to have these new things come out of me. It amazes me so much each time, and there's that same feeling, being scared that I've so much of this (Tears) ... I just don't know myself. Here's suddenly something I never realized, hadn't any inkling of -- that it was some thing or way I wanted to be. (Rogers, 1961, p. 149)*

Moments of change always involve the body, having, in Rogers's words, "obvious physical concomitants" (Rogers, 1961, p. 130). The latter typically involve physiological loosening, for example, moistness in the eyes, tears, sobbing, sighs, and muscular relaxation. For the individuals described above, physiological loosening occurred as a burning strain on the umbilicus and as a bodily experience of fear and pleading suddenly emerged into consciousness. Rogers believed that over the course of successful psychotherapy physiological loosening occurred throughout the organism. He even speculated that if appropriate measures were employed, improvement in both circulation and conductivity of nervous impulses would be observed (Rogers, 1961).

An individual may subsequently distance him- or herself from a moment of movement, as seems to be evident above in the statement, "Who, Me? Beg?" But, as Rogers points out, such a moment is irreversible, meaning once such an experience has occurred, it thereafter is available for future reference. Feelings and meanings attributed to feelings during a moment of movement may subsequently shift. Nonetheless, a moment of movement provides a point of reference, "a clear-cut physiological event" (Rogers, 1961, p. 150), to which the individual can return again and again until satisfied as to exactly what the experience means to him or her -- or, stated otherwise, until the experience is fully integrated into awareness.

### **Dimensions of Change**

In his process conception of psychotherapy, Rogers details various dimensions of growth: openness to experience, internal rather than external locus of evaluation, willingness to be a process, experiencing oneself as subject rather than as object, and trust in one's organism (Rogers, 1961). Rogers does not explicitly state that one dimension is more important than another. His discussions of the dimensions, however, suggest that trusting one's organism is a, if not the, central and generic process that includes the others.

For example, since all experience is organismically based, openness to experience involves trusting the organism. Similarly, an internal locus of evaluation always involves the organismically-based sense of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or both. Because all organisms exist in a continuous moment-to-moment process of change, trusting one's organism indicates a willingness to be a process. Lastly, in those moments when one fully trusts and accepts organismic experiencing, one experiences him or herself as subject, not object. In the cases mentioned above, for example, it would be incorrect to say the strain on the umbilicus and the feeling of pleading were perceived, because such a statement suggests these feelings are objects. In such existential moments, one does not have an experience. Rather, trusting one's organism, one is the experience. And accordingly, self is subject, not object, (Rogers, 1961).

I see constructive outcomes in therapy...as possible only in terms of the human individual who has come to trust her own inner directions, and whose awareness is a part of and integrated with the process nature of her organic functioning...the functioning of the psychologically mature individual is similar in many ways to that of the infant, except that the fluid process of experiencing has more scope and sweep, and the mature individual, like the child, trusts and uses the wisdom of her organism, with the difference that she is able to do so knowingly. (Rogers, 1977a, p.248)

To summarize, the moments of change that occur over the course of psychotherapy are physiologically based, and the fundamental direction of change is toward increased trust in the organism. Rogers's emphasis on the body is evident.

### **Fundamental Questions for any Theory of Human Nature**

Five questions that any theory of human nature must address are the following: What are the units of study, or stated otherwise, the structures of interest? What energizes and directs human behavior? How do human beings develop? What are the various types and causes of human dysfunction? How is dysfunction either eliminated or diminished? More simply stated, the questions pertain to several concerns: structure, motivation, growth, psychopathology, and change. Referring to Rogers's person-centered approach, I shall answer these questions. I do so in an effort to demonstrate that each answer makes clear and direct reference to the body or, more specifically, to organismic experiencing. (Rogers, 1951, 1959, 1961, 1980a).

### **Structure**

Rogers postulates two "structures" or processes, organismic experiencing and self. Experience refers to everything potentially available to awareness occurring within the organism at any given moment. Such experience includes both conscious (symbolized) and unconscious (unsymbolized) processes. Organismic experiencing, therefore, includes all sensory experiences, conscious and uncon-sciuous (Rogers, 1959).

Self refers to that portion of organismic experiencing that becomes differentiated and contains the sense of "I" and "me." Differentiation refers to perceptions of "I" or "not I" and "me" or "not me." Rogers describes two types of differentiation, external and internal. External differentiation involves identifying oneself as a physical being different from other physical entities. The young infant who alternately sucks his thumb and the mother's breast, for example, soon learns the thumb is "me" and the breast is "not me." Such physical differentiation presumably occurs very early in life and is non-verbal (Rogers, 1959). A second type of differentiation occurs internally. The process is similar to that just described. Accordingly, some organismic experiences become identified as "I" and "me"; other organismic experiences are relegated to the nonconscious, to "not I" and "not me." Consider the young boy who is told, "Little boys are tough; they don't cry!" Organismic experiencing relating to anger becomes identified as "me." Organismic experiencing that pertains to sadness and hurt is "not me."

To summarize, the two basic structures or processes in Rogers's person-centered approach are organismic experiencing and self. Since self is a derivative of organismic experiencing, the latter is both fundamental and primary.

### **Motivation**

What energizes and directs human behavior? Rogers offers a simple and straightforward answer to this question: the actualizing tendency.

There is one central source of energy in the human organism. This source is a trustworthy function of the whole organism rather than of some portion of it; it is most simply conceptualized as a tendency toward fulfillment, toward actualization, involving not only the maintenance but also the enhancement of the organism (Rogers, 1980a, p.123).

Noteworthy for our purposes here is that Rogers might have used the words "human being," "individual," or "person." Instead, he refers to the "human organism" or simply "organism," which suggests a close link between the actualizing tendency and body.

Rogers also postulates a need for positive regard, which is both universal (i.e., present in everyone) and persistent. Positive regard refers to warmth, caring, respect, and sympathy. Healthy development requires that significant others provide these qualities (Rogers, 1959). However, a problem occurs with positive regard, namely, that positive regard expressed by a significant other can become more compelling than organismic experiencing. This is where conditions of worth warrant consideration.

### **Growth**

Conditions of worth refer to attitudes that are conditional - i.e. judgmental, evaluative, and critical. A child's self-concept emerges through interaction with significant others who hold and espouse conditions of worth. Accordingly, various positive and negative values are attached to the child's perceptions of self, and organismic experiences are differentiated as worthy (approved) or unworthy (disapproved). The child acts so as to enhance the former and deny, minimize, or distort the latter, which necessitates a split between organismic experiencing and self (Rogers, 1959).

Under ideal conditions, the infant or child, feeling fully prized, introjects no conditions of worth. The child's feelings are fully accepted and respected by caretakers, though certain behaviors are not permitted. The parental attitude, theoretically speaking, might be something like this: "I understand how "when you are angry," kicking your sister (or urinating when and where you please) feels satisfying to you. I am most willing for you to have such feelings, and I love you. I also have my feelings. I feel upset and distraught when your sister is hurt (or when I have to clean up after you)." Both the child's and parents' organismic experiencing are important (Rogers, 1959).

It is a rare and fortunate child who receives unconditional positive regard (i.e., no conditions of worth) from significant others. In the ideal situation no organismic experience is considered bad or denied awareness. The child's self concept includes all organismic experiencing. Such a child, theoretically, develops into a healthy, fully functioning adult.

### **Psychopathology**

The more common circumstance is one in which conditions of worth are present, or often even omnipresent. Such a circumstance is fertile ground for the development of personality dysfunction.

In the human being...the potentiality for awareness of functioning can go so persistently awry as to make one truly estranged from organismic experiencing. One can become self-defeating, as in neurosis; incapable of coping with life, as in psychosis; unhappy and divided, as in the maladjustments that occur in all of us. Why this

division? How is it that a person can be consciously struggling toward one goal while his or her whole organic direction is at cross purposes with this? (Rogers, 1977a, p.244).

Rogers's answer to his question has to do with conditions of worth, evident in such statements as: "Don't be so scared," "Put on a happy face," and "Little boys don't cry." Through such conditions of worth, parents and the culture reward behaviors that are perversions of the natural directions of the actualizing tendency. The individual becomes alienated from organismic experiencing, behaving consciously in terms of introjected, rigid constructs (i.e., conditions of worth) that define his or her self concept and unconsciously in terms of the actualizing tendency (Rogers, 1959).

Rogers eschewed complex classifications of psychopathology, such as those involved in the various editions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Rogers, 1959). In fact, he believed that diagnosis of any type is not only unnecessary but also unwise and frequently detrimental. Even inadvertent "diagnoses" such as is implied in the statement, "I wonder if this is the best time for you to move," Rogers believed, could undermine both trust in organismic experiencing and ultimately progress in psychotherapy. This is so because any statement that carries with it even an implicit evaluation establishes the psychotherapist as the expert, the one who knows. The locus of evaluation then is in the hands of the psychotherapist, thereby undermining the client's taking responsibility for understanding and working through his or her difficulties and struggles. For Rogers, diagnosis is appropriate only when it is based entirely on the organismic experiencing of the client, not the intellect of the psychotherapist (Rogers, 1951).

### **Change**

A clear statement of Rogers's perspective on the factors that bring about change is evident in his fundamental hypothesis, which consists of three parts (each in italics): *If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person will discover within her - or himself the capacity to use the relationship for growth, and personal development will occur* (Rogers, 1951, 1961). The certain type of relationship, which includes the three qualities for which the person-centered approach is well known-- empathy, unconditional positive regard, genuineness--is considered below. The capacity to use the relationship for growth, which refers to the actualizing tendency, was described above under the question of motivation.

The focus here is on the third part of the hypothesis, personal development. Changes occur when an individual, experiencing the three qualities just mentioned, allows actualizing forces to take over. The learning that occurs through actualizing forces is "...a total, organismic, frequently non-verbal type of thing..." (Rogers, 1961, p.86). Denial and distortion of experiencing diminish and, as change continues, self includes more and more organismic experiencing. With little or no censorship from a conceptual self-filter, the person becomes the full potential of the human organism, including full awareness of basic sensory and visceral reactions.

The person comes to be what he is, as clients so frequently say in therapy. What this seems to mean is that the individual comes to be -- in awareness -- what he is -- in experience ....in other words, a complete and fully functioning human organism (Rogers, 1961, pp. 104-105).

A brief review and summary of answers to each of the five questions is as follows:

What are the basic structures? Answer: Organismic experiencing and that portion of organismic experiencing called "self." What energizes and directs human behavior? Answer: The actualizing tendency, "the central source of energy in the human organism."

How do human beings develop? Answer: Human potential is realized (i.e., personality is fully functioning) to the extent that organismic experiencing is neither denied nor distorted.

What are the various causes of dysfunction? Answer: Dysfunctional behavior occurs whenever conditions of worth prompt estrangement from organismic experiencing. How is dysfunction modified? Answer: When certain conditions (empathy, unconditional positive regard, genuineness) are present, actualizing forces take over, and the person becomes a more fully functioning human organism.

The answer to each question makes clear and direct reference to the organism or, consistent with my thesis, to the body.

### **Rogers as Psychotherapist**

It is Rogers's extraordinary capacity to listen empathically, his willingness to respond personally and genuinely, and his warmth and non-judgmental caring, I believe, that elicit deep organismic experiencing in his clients. I believe too that a most salient aspect of Rogers's non-judgmental caring, his unconditional positive regard, is his persistent reluctance to offer interpretations or employ techniques. In an effort to demonstrate this claim I shall discuss a film-recorded interview conducted by Rogers in the mid 1970s.

### **The Case of Mr. J**

The interview was conducted with Mr. J, a highly articulate, African-American male who had had leukemia which was in remission (Rogers, 1980b; Rogers, 1977b). Rogers meets with the young man for approximately an hour-long session on two consecutive days. Over the course of the two sessions, Mr. J moves from being a highly talkative, rambling, defensive individual to one who is brimming over with painful feelings and at a loss for words.

Forty minutes into the second session, he is unable to tolerate the intensity of organismic experiencing, and he requests that the session be ended.

In the first session, Mr. J talked about his anger. In the following verbatim excerpts, taken from the second session, Mr. J begins to experience his anger.

Mr. J.: *And there's nobody that I can put my finger on. There's nobody ... the person that started the whole thing, that process. That would probably be a lot better for me that I probably would try to do that person in.*

Rogers: *Yes. If you could pin it on one person, then your rage would be justified and you could really get after that person.*

Mr. J.: *But how do you blame somebody else that's sick? And I think that people who do that to other people are ... they're really sick ... I know there's a lot of anger there. But it's not my nature to be angry. Not my nature to be angry, but I feel angry.*

Rogers: *So I hear you explaining and explaining that "it's not my nature to be angry ... it's just that I am angry right now."*

Mr. J.: *For sure. And to be angry in a productive ... I don't know how you can be angry in a productive way. (Rogers, 1980b, p. 2156)*

Rogers's ultimate interest is to facilitate organismic experiencing. However, he does not push for either greater intensity or particular types of organismic experiencing. Rather, his empathic responses simply acknowledge whatever organismic experiencing is present, including both feelings (e.g., rage and anger) and inhibitions of feelings (e.g., needing to justify and Mr. J's nature). For Rogers the organic movements of contracting or tightening are no less important than those of expanding and loosening. That Rogers's empathic responses track organismic movements equally in either direction, opening or closing, is testimony to his providing unconditional acceptance.

Rogers: *I get what you're saying. And I also feel quite strongly that I want to say, "It's O.K. with me if you're angry here."*

Mr. J.: *But it's hard to know how to be angry.*

Rogers: *Sure. I'm not saying you have to be. I'm just saying it's O.K. with me. If you feel like being angry, you can be angry.*

Mr. J.: *You really do believe that.*

Rogers: *Damn right. (Long pause. Client sighs.)*

Mr. J.: *I'm not sure how to respond to that at all. Because a part of that anger is all the hurt. Maybe what's happening is that, if I become angry and I really let it hang out, then I really will see how hurt I am. And that just came to me as you were talking.*

Rogers: *Perhaps at the deeper level you are afraid of the hurt that you may experience if you let yourself experience the anger. (Rogers, 1980b, 2156)*

Here, in his first three statements we see Rogers being highly personal and genuine, his transparent self. The statements stop Mr. J in his "emotional anger tracks," catalyzing him into a deeper level of feeling, his hurt. By itself, Rogers's next response may appear to be an interpretation, yet it is simply an empathic reflection of what Mr. J just said. Mr. J subsequently goes on to acknowledge and explore his deeply buried hurt.

Mr. J.: *I'd really like somebody to tell me how to let out that hurt ... in about 5 minutes and be through, and it'd be like living the rest of my life in peace. You know what I mean?*

Rogers: *Sure. It would be awfully nice if somebody could say, "Now, if you do this and this, all your hurt will come out, and it'll be gone forever."*

Mr. J.: *For sure.*

Rogers: *Be great, wouldn't it?*

Mr. J.: *I have a suspicion that maybe you know some things that I don't know.*

Rogers: *No. I'm not holding out on you.*

Mr. J.: *Yeah, I believe that ... it feels like I'm holding out on myself. (Rogers, 1980b, 2156)*

In his first two responses Rogers again is empathic and in the third response he is genuine. In another psychotherapeutic approach, the psychotherapist's response might have been a retreat to silence, the interpretation that Mr. J. does not trust Rogers to be forthright, or perhaps the interpretation that Mr. J believes Rogers knows more about Mr. J than Mr. J knows about himself. Interestingly, Rogers's genuine response prompts an "interpretation" by Mr. J, an interpretation that amounts to Mr. J's owning his projection of "holding out."

Mr. J.: *My body really must have gone through some changes or whatever because there's something there just keeping it, keeping that hurt ... and I know all those reasons, but I can't seem to muster that power to get that out, to really ...*

Rogers: *Still too much locked in.*

Mr. J.: *For sure. But it really helps, 'cause it's incredible. This is the first time I've ever talked to anybody that I haven't really been in control. To some extent, I've really given up a lot of control ...*

Rogers: *Sort of letting things loose. Rather than keeping them under your control.*

Mr. J.: *For sure.*

Rogers: *That's a new experience.*

Mr. J.: *A very new experience for me. A very new experience. (Rogers, 1980b, 2156)*

Implicit throughout the session is Rogers's warmth and acceptance, his unconditional positive regard for whatever Mr. J says and feels. Mr. J's acknowledgment of giving up control suggests that he has been deeply touched and moved by Rogers's warmth and non-judgmental caring.

Mr. J continues, indicating how very difficult, almost impossible, it is for him to describe how badly he has been hurt. He comments, "... it's like somebody knocking you down... stomping on you and spitting on you ...feeling like garbage ...like somebody took a big god dam tree and just rammed it up ..." (Rogers, 1980b, 2156)

Rogers: *And it's that kind of pain that you've suffered.*

Mr. J.: *Yeah. I just can't let it happen again. I really don't know how to tell you how badly I've been hurt. I really don't.*

Rogers: *Goes beyond words.*

Mr. J.: *Yeah But I know it's there, and I think maybe I should attend to it a little bit more. But God damn it, it just ... Oooooooh! (A groan of pain.)*

Rogers: *You're feeling some of that hurt now.*

Mr. J.: *Yeah. I am. (Rogers, 1980b, 2156)*

Deep organismic experiencing, Rogers suggests, initially is described metaphorically (e.g., garbage and big God damn tree). When fully experienced, it is wordless, in this instance a groan (Oooooooh!) of excruciating pain. Rogers's full acceptance, genuineness, and empathy has initiated an intensity of organismic experiencing that is more than Mr. J can bear, or at least, wants to bear.

Mr. J.: *I think that, if I show you how much I've been beaten or whatever, like I'd probably become nothing in this chair, you know.*

Rogers: *You might practically disappear, if you really let me know how hurt and beaten and awful you feel?*

Mr. J.: *For sure. I could tell you some things that would just maybe blow you away. Funny. It's really too much for me.*

Rogers: *Too much. I think you feel like, "I've gone about as far as I can go at this point."*

Mr. J.: *Yeah, really. When I start smiling, I know I have ... But I'm being truthful about it anyway.*

Rogers: *Yes. I feel that, too. You've walked around that pit of hurt and pain and beatenness, and you've felt some of it; and perhaps that's as far as you can go right at this moment ... even though you know there's more there. You know that you're keeping some of it down. And to know those things may be helpful too.*

Mr. J.: *(Sighs and groans.) Phew! ... Oh! ... Whew! I have to stop. O.K.?*

Rogers: *O.K. All right. You've gone about as far as you can go.*

Mr. J.: *That's right. (Rogers, 1980b, 2157)*

In this excerpt all of Rogers's responses are empathic, though one ("Yes, I feel that , too") involves Rogers being genuine too. Both Mr. J and Rogers know there are more painful feelings to be explored. However, Mr. J clearly states that the process has become too much for him. He must stop. Agreeing to end the session, Rogers acts on his conviction that the best guide for Mr. J's therapeutic process is Mr. J.

### Interpretation and Techniques

Throughout the two sessions Mr. J provides Rogers with numerous opportunities for offering interpretations. Never once, however, does Rogers offer an interpretation. For example, when Mr. J struggles and puzzles over his inability to express his anger Rogers neither suggests nor probes for former experiences or current circumstances that might contribute to Mr. J's difficulty. Perhaps the most opportune instance for interpretation occurs when Mr. J says, "I have a suspicion that you may be holding out on me." A classic interpretation here would make reference to Mr. J's transference, possibly transference based on childhood experiences with a withholding parent. But Rogers's response involves no interpretation. Rather, his response is person-to-person, genuine, and straight forward: "No. I'm not holding out on you."

Suppose Rogers had made an interpretation of transference, stated tentatively perhaps in the form of a question: "Do you recall either of your parents holding out on you?" Very possibly Mr. J's response would have been one of resistance, resistance that Mr. J and Rogers then would have to address. But such a circumstance, as the following statement clearly indicates, would never occur.

To deal with transference feelings as a very special part of therapy...is to my mind a grave mistake. Such an approach fosters dependency and lengthens therapy. It creates a whole new problem, the only purpose of which appears to be the intellectual satisfaction of the counselor - showing the elaborateness of his or her expertise. I deplore it. (Rogers, 1987, pp. 187-8)

Rogers notes that many counselors working with Mr. J might have introduced a technique (Rogers, 1980b). In an effort to help Mr. J experience his anger or hurt, for example, Mr. J might have been asked to hit a pillow or let out a scream. Rogers does not employ such techniques because he believes that doing so suggests that he knows better than Mr. J what direction to proceed in next. Rather, the direction of psychotherapy is based first and foremost on Mr. J's organismic experiencing, which enhances Mr. J's trust in himself. Psychotherapy directed by Rogers, on the other hand, might undermine this trust. Rogers's commitment to unconditional positive regard, and relatedly, to Mr. J's organismic experiencing, is perhaps most evident in his omnipresent unwillingness to offer interpretations or employ techniques of any kind. Though Rogers adamantly opposes the use of techniques and interpretations, I believe, he implicitly provides recommendations as to when and how a counselor might use them in a manner reasonably consistent with his person-centered approach. Such a discussion, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

Most, if not all, body-oriented psychotherapists employ techniques. The techniques vary widely, from those involving rather intense hands-on interventions (e.g., Bodydynamics, Bioenergetics, Reichian therapy, Radix, Rolfing) to those employing less intense and more gentle, hands-on interventions (e.g., Biosynthesis, Feldenkrais, Hakomi) to those based on verbally guided or modeled physical exercises (e.g., Alexander Technique, Emotional Reintegration, Tai Chi, Yoga). Rogers's assertion about techniques raises thorny questions for practitioners of these approaches. Does use of a technique really facilitate the client's development? Or, since the technique typically is selected by the psychotherapist, not the client, does its use inadvertently undermine the client's spontaneous inner directions and movements, his or her immediate existential intentions?

One noted body-oriented psychotherapist, Rolf Gronseth, stands in very close agreement with Rogers. Trained as a vegetotherapist by Ola Raknes, Reich's closest student and friend, Gronseth for many years employed strong and intense hands-on techniques. But now, in the twilight years of his career, he refrains from using such techniques. And, going a step further, Gronseth states: "I see it as malpractice... when the body-therapist instructs his clients into doing something else than they are already doing" (Gronseth, 1995, p.8). Such therapists, he suggests, fail to recognize and respect their clients "present intentional activities" (Gronseth, 1998, p.53).

### **Body-Centering**

In less than two hours with Rogers the characterologically armored and defensive Mr. J moved into a state of greater openness and substantial organismic experiencing. Mr. J's breathing deepened. He gave up control, loosening his tight grip on himself. His body armor softened, at least for a brief time. Feelings long buried began to emerge into awareness. He became more intimately connected to both Rogers and his own inner being. These observations prompt the question: How did Rogers facilitate such openness to organismic experiencing?

The simple but incomplete answer makes reference to the three qualities mentioned above--empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. The answer is incomplete because it does not recognize that the person-centered approach first and foremost is an attitude, a way of being in relationship. For Rogers, empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard are not techniques. Rather, they are human qualities (Rogers, 1951, 1957). The emphasis is not on what the psychotherapist does; it is on who he or she is in the moment.

As psychotherapist, Rogers does not respond in a planful or analytic way. Rather, he reacts unreflectively, his non-conscious verbal responses being based on his organismic sensitivity to the client. "I let myself go into the immediacy of the relationship where it is my total organism which takes over and is sensitive to the relationship, not simply my consciousness" (Rogers 1961, p. 202). Colloquially expressed, Rogers both stays in and responds from his body.

Rogers's focus is not exclusively on the body, his own or Mr. J's. As the word "organismic" implies, Rogers's approach is wholistic, including mind, body, and their interactions. Indeed, Rogers's description of the stages of psychological process and growth detail the development and interaction of physiological and mental processes (Rogers, 1961). As Mr. J. speaks his mind, Rogers listens carefully and intently to each of Mr. J's words. Yet Rogers clearly states that he wants especially to hear the feelings just below Mr. J's words. (Rogers, 1977 b).

The primary medium of communication for Mr. J and Rogers clearly is words. However, as the preceding quotation indicates, Rogers's words emerge not just from his consciousness (i.e. his mind), but from his total

organism, his body. And, the intent of Rogers's words is to facilitate Mr. J's being more aware of his bodily states, particularly affective states. Rogers is a body-oriented psychotherapist.

### Reich and Rogers

In making the case for Carl Rogers being a body-oriented psychotherapist, it is appropriate to compare his ideas about human nature with those of Wilhelm Reich, the grandfather of body-oriented psychotherapy. Though Rogers was born only nine years later than Reich, they apparently did not read one another's work, for neither references the other. Nonetheless, their writings about human nature, science, and the nature of the universe are remarkably similar (Davis, 1997). So too are their views of society and their prescriptions for moving beyond individual and group neurosis toward a full life (Reich, 1948; Rogers, 1977a).

Among Reich's many important contributions, perhaps the most significant is his objection to Freud's death instinct (Reich, 1942). Reich believed that the core of human nature is inherently life-enhancing and positive. He writes, "Beneath these neurotic mechanisms, behind all these dangerous, grotesque, irrational phantasies and impulses, I found a bit of simple, matter-of-fact, decent nature" (p. 148).

Rogers also objected to the notion of death instinct, and though strictly reared in the Christian tradition, he rejected the idea of original sin (Rogers, 1961). He notes that in psychotherapy hostile and anti-social feelings are continually being uncovered, which suggests these feelings constitute basic human nature. But such feelings, Rogers suggests, are neither the deepest nor strongest. The inner core of human personality, he suggests, "is the organism itself, which is essentially both self-preserving and social" (p.92).

Reich distinguished between the neurotic character, whose behavior is contra nature and moralistically driven, and the genital or healthy character, whose behavior is self-regulated and aligned with natural functions (Reich, 1942). Reich believed that healthy self-regulated behavior was rare. Neurotic moralistic behavior was far more common, and often it took on a collective or social form, which Reich called the "emotional plague" (Reich, 1945). The term "plague" refers to the contagious nature of moralistic acting out, blatantly evident in social or group pathology such as fascism in Nazi Germany and the Catholic Inquisition of the Middle Ages and less apparent but nonetheless omnipresent in the many repressive groups and institutions throughout society. Reich was aware of the widespread social nature of neurosis. He believed most human beings were prisoners of both society's and their own moralistic attitudes and traditions (Reich, 1948, 1953). His fervent hope was to free men and women from moral fascism.

Reich was acutely aware of the life-constraining political, educational, and childrearing practices of his times. He believed in the self-regulating capacities of the human organism, and he did what he could to eliminate repressive policies and practices that interfered with self-regulation. One such effort involved his work in sexual hygiene clinics where he affirmed both the need of adolescents to masturbate and their right to learn about and obtain contraceptives (Sharaf, 1983). Reich was very interested in educating young people in a life-affirming manner, one that supported their inherent capacity for self-regulation. He had a life-long friendship with A. S. Neill, founder and director of the Summerhill School, well known for its progressive pedagogy. In Neill's school Reich saw the application of work-democratic and self-regulatory principles which he valued (Sharaf, 1983).

Self-regulation is the red thread, to use Reich's phrase, that runs throughout Rogers's work. In fact, the term person-centered means self-regulated. Like Reich, Rogers recognized the widespread social and institutional traditions that aided and abetted neurosis. He applied concepts and principles he had discovered in his conduct of therapy to larger social issues. The student-centered approach presented in his *Freedom to Learn* (Rogers, 1969), a classic in schools of education, parallels precisely the pedagogy presented in Neill's Summerhill (Neill, 1960). In his next-to-last book, *On Personal Power: Inner Strength and Its Revolutionary Impact* (Rogers, 1977a), Rogers examines the politics of interpersonal relations, including the politics of the helping professions, marriage and partnerships, the family, administration, and international and intercultural differences. Throughout all of his work, Rogers's message is persistent and clear: The innermost core of human beings, the organism, is trustworthy, positive, life-affirming, social, rational, and self-regulating.

Reich and Rogers were men ahead of their times. Both were revolutionaries - Rogers, a gentle revolutionary who in his next-to-last book wrote, "I walk quietly through life," (Rogers, 1977, p. xii) and Reich, a not-so-quiet revolutionary, a "fury on earth," according to biographer Myron Sharaf (1983). Suppose Reich had not been ahead of his times. Suppose he had believed that human instincts were evil, that sexual and aggressive impulses were inherently unmanageable and dangerous. His psychotherapeutic efforts then might never have focused on dissolving body armor, releasing biological energy, and encouraging full emotional expression. But such was not the case. Reich believed in an inborn human predisposition toward life-affirming movement, and with this perspective he began body-oriented psychotherapy. Given Rogers's similar views of human nature, it is not surprising that his person-centered approach, initially referred to as non-directive and subsequently as a client-centered, is essentially body-oriented. Wilhelm Reich is the grandfather of our discipline. Perhaps Carl Rogers also should be granted a significant place in our genealogy. I suggest favorite uncle.

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