The author of ON BECOMING A PERSON and founder of the human potential movement expands his ideas on personal growth

CARL R. ROGERS

A WAY OF BEING

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Introduction

Sometimes I am astonished at the changes that have occurred in my life and work. This book encompasses the changes that have taken place during the past decade—roughly, the seventies. It brings together diverse material which I have written in recent years. Some of these thoughts have been published in a variety of journals, some have never been published. Before I endeavor to introduce you to the contents, I would like to look back at a few landmarks of my own change.

In 1941, I wrote a book on counseling and psychotherapy, published the next year. It was spawned by my awareness that I was thinking and working with individuals in ways which were quite different from other counselors. The book was completely focused on verbal interchange between a helper and a person in need of help; it contained no suggestion of broader implications.

A decade later, in 1951, this point of view was presented more fully and more confidently in a volume on client-centered therapy. In this book there was a recognition that the principles of therapy had application in other fields. In chapters written by others, or

drawn largely from the experience of others, there was discussion of group therapy, group leadership and administration, and student-centered teaching. The field of application was widening.

I cannot believe how slow I was in facing the ramifications of the work that I and my colleagues were doing. In 1961, I wrote a book to which I gave the title, "A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy," indicating that the focus of all the papers was individual work, though actually various chapters dealt with the ever broadening fields of application. Fortunately, the publisher was not impressed by the title and, modifying one of the chapter titles, suggested that I call it *On Becoming a Person*. I accepted the suggestion. I had thought I was writing for psychotherapists, but to my astonishment discovered I was writing for *people*—nurses, housewives, people in the business world, priests, ministers, teachers, youth—all manner of people. The book, in English and in its many translations, has now been read by millions of people all over the globe. Its impact forced me out of my parochial view that what I might say would be of interest only to therapists. The response broadened my life as well as my thinking. I believe that all of my writing since contains the realization that what is true in a relationship between therapist and client may well be true for a marriage, a family, a school, an administration, a relationship between cultures or countries.

So now I wish to return to this book and what it holds. I have grouped together at the outset five papers which are very personal—revealing my experiences in relationships, my feelings as I grow older, the origins of my philosophy, my perspective on my career, a personal view of "reality." Essentially these were written

not only by me, but for me. Whether they will touch you and your experience, I cannot predict.

In this section, and throughout the book, the writings can be partially dated by my handling of the "he-she," "him-her" problem. Thanks to my daughter and to other friends with feminist leanings, I have become more and more sensitive to the linguistic inequality between the sexes. I have, I believe, *treated* women as equals, but only in more recent years have I been clearly aware of the put-down involved in the use of only masculine pronouns in statements with generic meaning. I have preferred to let the papers stand as written, rather than endeavoring to bring the language up to my present-day standards, which would seem somehow dishonest. I said what I said. Some of the papers are also dated by the references to our (in my opinion) incredibly stupid, impersonal, and destructive war in Vietnam, as tragic for Americans as for the Vietnamese.

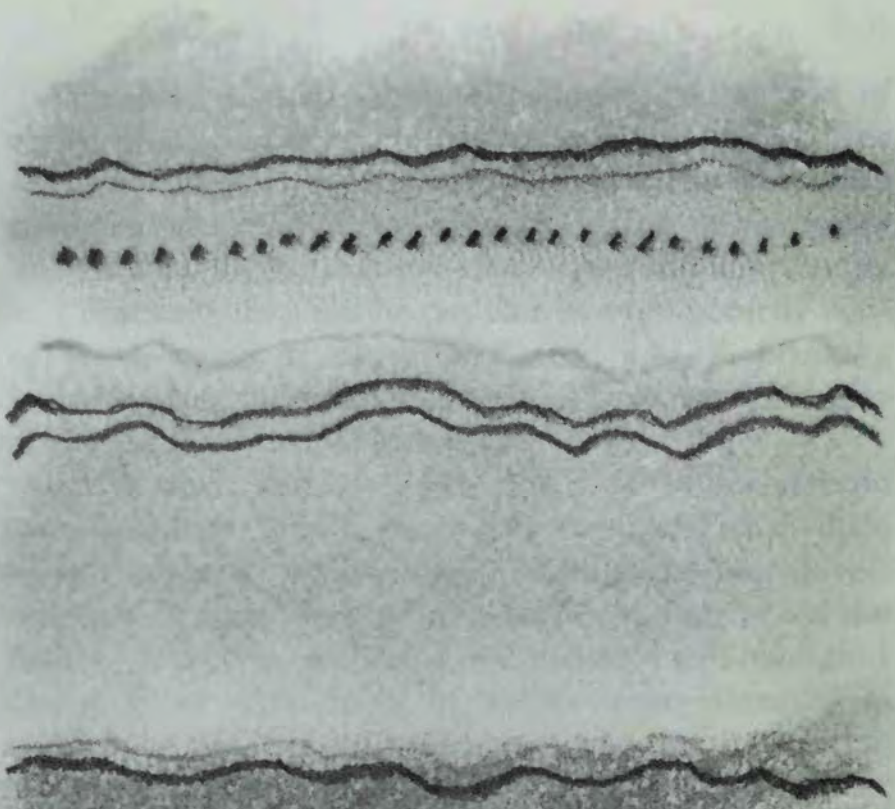
The second part of the book centers on my professional thoughts and activities. The breadth of their application is indicated by the change in the terminology categorizing my views; the old concept of "client-centered therapy" has been transformed into the "person-centered approach." In other words, I am no longer talking simply about psychotherapy, but about a point of view, a philosophy, an approach to life, a way of being, which fits any situation in which *growth*—of a person, a group, or a community—is part of the goal. Two of these papers were written during the past year, while others were produced somewhat earlier, but taken together they present the major facets of my work and thought as of today. Personally I am fond of the chapter containing six vignettes—snapshots of experiences from which I have learned deeply.

The third section deals with education, a field of application in which I feel some competence; I offer some challenges to educational institutions and some thoughts about what we may be facing in the years ahead. I am afraid that my views are quite unorthodox and that they may not be popular in a temporarily conservative mood in education, in an era of shrinking budgets and short-range views. These are thoughts about the far future of learning.

In the final section I give my view of the drastic transformation which faces our culture due to little known advances in scientific thinking and new developments in many other fields, and I speculate about the manner in which the shape of our world will change. I also give my views as to the nature of the person who can live in that transformed world.

Several chapters have been published previously in different form. Chapter 4, "Growing Old: Or Older and Growing?" Chapter 9, "Building Person-Centered Communities: The Implications for the Future," and Chapter 15, "The World of Tomorrow, and the Person of Tomorrow," are published here for the first time.

The theme holding the book together is that every chapter expresses, in one form or another, a way of being toward which I strive—a way of being which persons in many countries, in many occupations and professions, in all walks of life, find appealing and enriching. Whether this will be true for you, only you can determine, but I bid you welcome, as you journey through this "way."



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES

Experiences in Communication

In the autumn of 1964, I was invited to be a speaker in a lecture series at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, one of the leading scientific institutions in the world. Most of the speakers were from the physical sciences. The audience attracted by the series was known to be a highly educated and sophisticated group. The speakers were encouraged to put on demonstrations, if possible, of their subjects, whether astronomy, microbiology, or theoretical physics. I was asked to speak on the subject of communication.

As I started collecting references and jotting down ideas for the talk, I became very dissatisfied with what I was doing. The thought of a demonstration kept running through my mind, and then being dismissed.

The speech that follows shows how I resolved the problem of endeavoring to *communicate*, rather than just to speak *about* the subject of communication.

I have some knowledge about communication and could assemble more. When I first agreed to give this talk, I planned to gather such knowledge and organize

it into a lecture. The more I thought over this plan, the less satisfied I was with it. Knowledge *about* is not the most important thing in the behavioral sciences today. There is a decided surge of experiential knowing, or knowing at a gut level, which has to do with the human being. At this level of knowing, we are in a realm where we are not simply talking of cognitive and intellectual learnings, which can nearly always be rather readily communicated in verbal terms. Instead we are speaking of something more experiential, something having to do with the whole person, visceral reactions and feelings as well as thoughts and words. Consequently, I decided I would like, rather than talking *about* communication, to *communicate* with you at a feeling level. This is not easy. I think it is usually possible only in small groups where one feels genuinely accepted. I have been frightened at the thought of attempting it with a large group. Indeed when I learned how large the group was to be, I gave up the whole idea. Since then, with encouragement from my wife, I have returned to it and decided to make such an attempt.

One of the things which strengthened me in my decision is the knowledge that these Caltech lectures have a long tradition of being given as demonstrations. In any of the usual senses what follows is not a demonstration. Yet I hope that in some sense this may be a demonstration of communication which is given, and also received, primarily at a feeling and experiential level.

What I would like to do is very simple indeed. I would like to share with you some of the things I have learned for myself in regard to communication. These are personal learnings growing out of my own experience. I am not attempting at all to say that you should learn or do these same things but I feel that if I can report my own experience honestly enough, perhaps

you can check what I say against your own experience and decide as to its truth or falsity for you. In my own two-way communication with others there have been experiences that have made me feel pleased and warm and good and satisfied. There have been other experiences that to some extent at the time, and even more so afterward, have made me feel dissatisfied and displeased and more distant and less contented with myself. I would like to convey some of these things. Another way of putting this is that some of my experiences in communicating with others have made me feel expanded, larger, enriched, and have accelerated my own growth. Very often in these experiences I feel that the other person has had similar reactions and that he too has been enriched, that his development and his functioning have moved forward. Then there have been other occasions in which the growth or development of each of us has been diminished or stopped or even reversed. I am sure it will be clear in what I have to say that I would prefer my experiences in communication to have a growth-promoting effect, both on me and on the other, and that I should like to avoid those communication experiences in which both I and the other person feel diminished.

The first simple feeling I want to share with you is my enjoyment when I can really *hear* someone. I think perhaps this has been a long-standing characteristic of mine. I can remember this in my early grammar school days. A child would ask the teacher a question and the teacher would give a perfectly good answer to a completely different question. A feeling of pain and distress would always strike me. My reaction was, "But you didn't hear him!" I felt a sort of childish despair at the lack of communication which was (and is) so common.

I believe I know why it is satisfying to me to hear someone. When I can really hear someone, it puts me in touch with him; it enriches my life. It is through hearing people that I have learned all that I know about individuals, about personality, about interpersonal relationships. There is another peculiar satisfaction in really hearing someone: It is like listening to the music of the spheres, because beyond the immediate message of the person, no matter what that might be, there is the universal. Hidden in all of the personal communications which I really hear there seem to be orderly psychological laws, aspects of the same order we find in the universe as a whole. So there is both the satisfaction of hearing this person and also the satisfaction of feeling one's self in touch with what is universally true.

When I say that I enjoy hearing someone, I mean, of course, hearing deeply. I mean that I hear the words, the thoughts, the feeling tones, the personal meaning, even the meaning that is below the conscious intent of the speaker. Sometimes too, in a message which superficially is not very important, I hear a deep human cry that lies buried and unknown far below the surface of the person.

So I have learned to ask myself, can I hear the sounds and sense the shape of this other person's inner world? Can I resonate to what he is saying so deeply that I sense the meanings he is afraid of yet would like to communicate, as well as those he knows?

I think, for example, of an interview I had with an adolescent boy. Like many an adolescent today he was saying at the outset of the interview that he had no goals. When I questioned him on this, he insisted even more strongly that he had no goals whatsoever, not even one. I said, "There isn't anything you want to do?" "*Nothing*. . . . Well, yeah, I want to keep on living." I

remember distinctly my feeling at that moment. I resonated very deeply to this phrase. He might simply be telling me that, like everyone else, he wanted to live. On the other hand, he might be telling me—and this seemed to be a definite possibility—that at some point the question of whether or not to live had been a real issue with him. So I tried to resonate to him at all levels. I didn't know for certain what the message was. I simply wanted to be open to any of the meanings that this statement might have, including the possibility that he might at one time have considered suicide. My being willing and able to listen to him at all levels is perhaps one of the things that made it possible for him to tell me, before the end of the interview, that not long before he had been on the point of blowing his brains out. This little episode is an example of what I mean by wanting to really hear someone at all the levels at which he is endeavoring to communicate.

Let me give another brief example. Not long ago a friend called me long distance about a certain matter. We concluded the conversation and I hung up the phone. Then, and only then, did his tone of voice really hit me. I said to myself that behind the subject matter we were discussing there seemed to be a note of distress, discouragement, even despair, which had nothing to do with the matter at hand. I felt this so sharply that I wrote him a letter saying something to this effect: "I may be all wrong in what I am going to say and if so, you can toss this in the wastebasket, but I realized after I hung up the phone that you sounded as though you were in real distress and pain, perhaps in real despair." Then I attempted to share with him some of my own feelings about him and his situation in ways that I hoped might be helpful. I sent off the letter with some qualms, thinking that I might have been ridiculously

mistaken. I very quickly received a reply. He was extremely grateful that someone had *heard* him. I had been quite correct in hearing his tone of voice and I felt very pleased that I had been able to hear him and hence make possible a real communication. So often, as in this instance, the words convey one message and the tone of voice a sharply different one.

I find, both in therapeutic interviews and in the intensive group experiences which have meant a great deal to me, that hearing has consequences. When I truly hear a person and the meanings that are important to him at that moment, hearing not simply his words, but him, and when I let him know that I have heard his own private personal meanings, many things happen. There is first of all a grateful look. He feels released. He wants to tell me more about his world. He surges forth in a new sense of freedom. He becomes more open to the process of change.

I have often noticed that the more deeply I hear the meanings of this person, the more there is that happens. Almost always, when a person realizes he has been deeply heard, his eyes moisten. I think in some real sense he is weeping for joy. It is as though he were saying, "Thank God, somebody heard me. Someone knows what it's like to be me." In such moments I have had the fantasy of a prisoner in a dungeon, tapping out day after day a Morse code message, "Does anybody hear me? Is anybody there?" And finally one day he hears some faint tappings which spell out "Yes." By that one simple response he is released from his loneliness; he has become a human being again. There are many, many people living in private dungeons today, people who give no evidence of it whatsoever on the outside, where you have to listen very sharply to hear the faint messages from the dungeon.

If this seems to you a little too sentimental or overdrawn, I would like to share with you an experience I had recently in a basic encounter group with fifteen persons in important executive posts. Early in the very intensive sessions of the week they were asked to write a statement of some feeling or feelings which they were not willing to share with the group. These were anonymous statements. One man wrote, "I don't relate easily to people. I have an almost impenetrable facade. Nothing gets in to hurt me but nothing gets out. I have repressed so many emotions that I am close to emotional sterility. This situation doesn't make me happy, but I don't know what to do about it. Perhaps insight into how others react to me and why will help." This was clearly a message from a dungeon. Later in the week a member of the group identified himself as the man who had written that anonymous message, filling out in much greater detail his feelings of isolation, of complete coldness. He felt that life had been so brutal to him that he had been forced to live a life without feeling, not only at work but also in social groups and, saddest of all, with his family. His gradual achievement of greater expressiveness in the group, of less fear of being hurt, of more willingness to share himself with others, was a very rewarding experience for all of us who participated.

I was both amused and pleased when, in a letter a few weeks later asking me about another matter, he also included this paragraph: "When I returned from [our group] I felt somewhat like a young girl who had been seduced but still wound up with the feeling that it was exactly what she had been waiting for and needed! I am still not quite sure who was responsible for the seduction—you or the group, or whether it was a joint venture. I suspect it was the latter. At any rate, I want

to thank you for what was a meaningful and intensely interesting experience." I think it is not too much to say that because several of us in the group were able genuinely to hear him, he was released from his dungeon and came out, at least to some degree, into the sunnier world of warm interpersonal relationships.

Let me move on to a second learning that I would like to share with you. I like to *be heard.* A number of times in my life I have felt myself bursting with insoluble problems, or going round and round in tormented circles or, during one period, overcome by feelings of worthlessness and despair. I think I have been more fortunate than most in finding at these times individuals who have been able to hear me and thus to rescue me from the chaos of my feelings, individuals who have been able to hear my meanings a little more deeply than I have known them. These persons have heard me without judging me, diagnosing me, appraising me, evaluating me. They have just listened and clarified and responded to me at all the levels at which I was communicating. I can testify that when you are in psychological distress and someone really hears you without passing judgment on you, without trying to take responsibility for you, without trying to mold you, it feels damn good! At these times it has relaxed the tension in me. It has permitted me to bring out the frightening feelings, the guilts, the despair, the confusions that have been a part of my experience. When I have been listened to and when I have been heard, I am able to reperceive my world in a new way and to go on. It is astonishing how elements that seem insoluble become soluble when someone listens, how confusions that seem irremediable turn into relatively clear flowing streams when one is heard. I have deeply appreciated

the times that I have experienced this sensitive, empathic, concentrated listening.

I dislike it in myself when I can't hear another, when I do not understand him. If it is only a simple failure of comprehension or a failure to focus my attention on what he is saying or a difficulty in understanding his words, then I feel only a very mild dissatisfaction with myself. But what I really dislike in myself is not being able to hear the other person because I am so sure in advance of what he is about to say that I don't listen. It is only afterward that I realize that I have heard what I have already decided he is saying; I have failed really to listen. Or even worse are those times when I catch myself trying to twist his message to make it say what I want him to say, and then only hearing that. This can be a very subtle thing, and it is surprising how skillful I can be in doing it. Just by twisting his words a small amount, by distorting his meaning just a little, I can make it appear that he is not only saying the thing I want to hear, but that he is the person I want him to be. Only when I realize through his protest or through my own gradual recognition that I am subtly manipulating him, do I become disgusted with myself. I know too, from being on the receiving end of this, how frustrating it is to be received for what you are not, to be heard as saying something which you have not said. This creates anger and bafflement and disillusion.

This last statement indeed leads into the next learning that I want to share with you: I am terribly frustrated and shut into myself when I try to express something which is deeply me, which is a part of my own private, inner world, and the other person does not understand. When I take the gamble, the risk, of trying

to share something that is very personal with another individual and it is not received and not understood, this is a very deflating and a very lonely experience. I have come to believe that such an experience makes some individuals psychotic. It causes them to give up hoping that anyone can understand them. Once they have lost that hope, then their own inner world, which becomes more and more bizarre, is the only place where they can live. They can no longer live in any shared human experience. I can sympathize with them because I know that when I try to share some feeling aspect of myself which is private, precious, and tentative, and when this communication is met by evaluation, by reassurance, by distortion of my meaning, my very strong reaction is, "Oh, what's the use!" At such a time, one knows what it is to be alone.

So, as you can readily see from what I have said thus far, a creative, active, sensitive, accurate, empathic, nonjudgmental listening is for me terribly important in a relationship. It is important for me to provide it; it has been extremely important, especially at certain times in my life, to receive it. I feel that I have grown within myself when I have provided it; I am very sure that I have grown and been released and enhanced when I have received this kind of listening.

Let me move on to another area of my learnings.

I find it very satisfying when I can be real, when I can be close to whatever it is that is going on within me. I like it when I can listen to myself. To really know what I am experiencing in the moment is by no means an easy thing, but I feel somewhat encouraged because I think that over the years I have been improving at it. I am convinced, however, that it is a lifelong task and that none of us ever is totally able to be comfortably close to all that is going on within our own experience.

In place of the term "realness" I have sometimes used the word "congruence." By this I mean that when my experiencing of this moment is present in my awareness and when what is present in my awareness is present in my communication, then each of these three levels matches or is congruent. At such moments I am integrated or whole, I am completely in one piece. Most of the time, of course, I, like everyone else, exhibit some degree of incongruence. I have learned, however, that realness, or genuineness, or congruence—whatever term you wish to give it—is a fundamental basis for the best of communication.

What do I mean by being close to what is going on in me? Let me try to explain what I mean by describing what sometimes occurs in my work as a therapist. Sometimes a feeling "rises up in me" which seems to have no particular relationship to what is going on. Yet I have learned to accept and trust this feeling in my awareness and to try to communicate it to my client. For example, a client is talking to me and I suddenly feel an image of him as a pleading little boy, folding his hands in supplication, saying, "Please let me have this, please let me have this." I have learned that if I can be real in the relationship with him and express this feeling that has occurred in me, it is very likely to strike some deep note in him and to advance our relationship.

Let me give another example. It is often very hard for me, as for other writers, to get close to my self when I start to write. It is so easy to be distracted by the possibility of saying things which will catch approval or will look good to colleagues or make a popular appeal. How can I listen to the things that I really want to say and write? It is difficult. Sometimes I even have to trick myself to get close to what is in me. I tell myself that I am not writing for publication; I am just writing for my own satisfaction. I write on old scraps of paper so that I

don't even have to reproach myself for wasting paper. I jot down feelings and ideas as they come, helter-skelter, with no attempt at coherence or organization. In this way I can sometimes get much closer to what I really am and feel and think. The writings that I have produced on this basis turn out to be ones for which I never feel apologetic and which often communicate deeply to others. So it is a very satisfying thing when I sense that I have gotten close to me, to the feelings and hidden aspects of myself that live below the surface.

I feel a sense of satisfaction when I can dare to communicate the realness in me to another. This is far from easy, partly because what I am experiencing keeps changing every moment. Usually there is a lag, sometimes of moments, sometimes of days, weeks, or months, between the experiencing and the communication: I experience something; I feel something, but only later do I dare to communicate it, when it has become cool enough to risk sharing it with another. But when I can communicate what is real in me at the moment that it occurs, I feel genuine, spontaneous, and alive.

It is a sparkling thing when I encounter realness in another person. Sometimes in the basic encounter groups which have been a very important part of my experience these last few years, someone says something that comes from him transparently and whole. It is so obvious when a person is not hiding behind a facade but is speaking from deep within himself. When this happens, I leap to meet it. I want to encounter this real person. Sometimes the feelings thus expressed are very positive feelings; sometimes they are decidedly negative ones. I think of a man in a very responsible

position, a scientist at the head of a large research department in a huge electronics firm. One day in such an encounter group he found the courage to speak of his isolation. He told us that he had never had a single friend in his life; there were plenty of people whom he knew but not one he could count as a friend. "As a matter of fact," he added, "there are only two individuals in the world with whom I have even a reasonably communicative relationship. These are my two children." By the time he finished, he was letting loose some of the tears of sorrow for himself which I am sure he had held in for many years. But it was the honesty and realness of his loneliness that caused every member of the group to reach out to him in some psychological sense. It was also most significant that his courage in being real enabled all of us to be more genuine in our communications, to come out from behind the facades we ordinarily use.

I am disappointed when I realize—and of course this realization always comes afterward, after a lag of time—that I have been too frightened or too threatened to let myself get close to what I am experiencing, and that consequently I have not been genuine or congruent. There immediately comes to mind an instance that is somewhat painful to reveal. Some years ago I was invited to be a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. The Fellows are a group of brilliant and well-informed scholars. I suppose it is inevitable that there is a considerable amount of one-upmanship, of showing off one's knowledge and achievements. It seems important for each Fellow to impress the others, to be a little more assured, to be a little more knowledgeable than he really is. I found myself doing this same thing—playing

a role of having greater certainty and greater competence than I really possess. I can't tell you how disgusted with myself I felt as I realized what I was doing: I was not being me, I was playing a part.

I regret it when I suppress my feelings too long and they burst forth in ways that are distorted or attacking or hurtful. I have a friend whom I like very much but who has one particular pattern of behavior that thoroughly annoys me. Because of the usual tendency to be nice, polite, and pleasant I kept this annoyance to myself for too long and, when it finally burst its bounds, it came out not only as annoyance but as an attack on him. This was hurtful, and it took us some time to repair the relationship.

I am inwardly pleased when I have the strength to permit another person to be his own realness and to be separate from me. I think that is often a very threatening possibility. In some ways I have found it an ultimate test of staff leadership and of parenthood. Can I freely permit this staff member or my son or my daughter to become a separate person with ideas, purposes, and values which may not be identical with my own? I think of one staff member this past year who showed many flashes of brilliance but who clearly held values different from mine and behaved in ways very different from the ways in which I would behave. It was a real struggle, in which I feel I was only partially successful, to let him be himself, to let him develop as a person entirely separate from me and my ideas and my values. Yet to the extent that I was successful, I was pleased with myself, because I think this permission to be a separate person is what makes for the autonomous development of another individual.

I am angry with myself when I discover that I have

been subtly controlling and molding another person in my own image. This has been a very painful part of my professional experience. I hate to have "disciples," students who have molded themselves meticulously into the pattern that they feel I wish. Some of the responsibility I place with them, but I cannot avoid the uncomfortable probability that in unknown ways I have subtly controlled such individuals and made them into carbon copies of myself, instead of the separate professional persons they have every right to become.

From what I have been saying, I trust it is clear that when I can permit realness in myself or sense it or permit it in another, I am very satisfied. When I cannot permit it in myself or fail to permit it in another, I am very distressed. When I am able to let myself be congruent and genuine, I often help the other person. When the other person is transparently real and congruent, he often helps me. In those rare moments when a deep realness in one meets a realness in the other, a memorable "I-thou relationship," as Martin Buber would call it, occurs. Such a deep and mutual personal encounter does not happen often, but I am convinced that unless it happens occasionally, we are not living as human beings.

I want to move on to another area of my learning in interpersonal relationships—one that has been slow and painful for me.

I feel warmed and fulfilled when I can let in the fact, or permit myself to feel, that someone cares for, accepts, admires, or prizes me. Because of elements in my past history, I suppose, it has been very difficult for me to do this. For a long time I tended almost automatically to brush aside any positive feelings aimed in my direction. My reaction was, "Who, me? You couldn't

possibly care for me. You might like what I have done, or my achievements, but not me." This is one respect in which my own therapy helped me very much. I am not always able even now to let in such warm and loving feelings from others, but I find it very releasing when I can do so. I know that some people flatter me in order to gain something for themselves; some people praise me because they are afraid to be hostile. But I have come to recognize the fact that some people genuinely appreciate me, like me, love me, and I want to sense that fact and let it in. I think I have become less aloof as I have been able to take in and soak up those loving feelings.

I feel enriched when I can truly prize or care for or love another person and when I can let that feeling flow out to that person. Like many others, I used to fear being trapped by letting my feelings show. "If I care for him, he can control me." "If I love her, I am trying to control her." I think that I have moved a long way toward being less fearful in this respect. Like my clients, I too have slowly learned that tender, positive feelings are not dangerous either to give or to receive.

To illustrate what I mean, I would like again to draw an example from a recent basic encounter group. A woman who described herself as "a loud, prickly, hyperactive individual" whose marriage was on the rocks, and who felt that life was just not worth living, said, "I had really buried under a layer of concrete many feelings I was afraid people were going to laugh at or stomp on which, needless to say, was working all kinds of hell on my family and me. I had been looking forward to the workshop with my last few crumbs of hope—it was really a needle of trust in a huge haystack of despair." She spoke of some of her experiences in

the group and added, "The real turning point for me was a simple gesture on your part of putting your arm around my shoulder, one afternoon when I'd made some crack about you not really being a member of the group—that no one could cry on *your* shoulder. In my notes I had written, the night before, 'My God, there's no man in the world who loves me.' You seemed so genuinely concerned the day I fell apart, I was overwhelmed. . . . I received the gesture as one of the first feelings of acceptance—of me, just the dumb way I am, prickles and all—that I had ever experienced. I have felt needed, loving, competent, furious, frantic, anything and everything but just plain *loved*. You can imagine the flood of gratitude, humility, almost release, that swept over me. I wrote, with considerable joy, 'I actually felt love.' I doubt that I shall soon forget it."

This woman, of course, was speaking *to* me, and yet in some deep sense she was also speaking *for* me. I too have had similar feelings.

Another example concerns the experiencing and giving of love. I think of one governmental executive in a group in which I participated, a man with high responsibility and excellent technical training as an engineer. At the first meeting of the group he impressed me, and I think others, as being cold, aloof, somewhat bitter, resentful, and cynical. When he spoke of how he ran his office, it appeared that he administered it "by the book," without any warmth or human feeling. In one of the early sessions he was speaking of his wife, and a group member asked him, "Do you love your wife?" He paused for a long time and the questioner said, "O.K. That's answer enough." The executive said, "No. Wait a minute. The reason I didn't respond was that I was wondering, 'Have I ever loved anyone?' I don't really think I have ever *loved* anyone."

A few days later, he listened with great intensity as one member of the group revealed many personal feelings of isolation and loneliness and spoke of the extent to which he had been living behind a facade. The next morning the engineer said, "Last night I thought and thought about what he told us. I even wept quite a bit myself. I can't remember how long it has been since I have cried, and I really felt something. I think perhaps what I felt was love."

It is not surprising that before the week was over, he had thought through different ways of handling his growing son, on whom he had been placing very rigorous demands. He had also begun to really appreciate the love his wife had extended to him—love that he now felt he could in some measure reciprocate.

Because of having less fear of giving or receiving positive feelings, I have become more able to appreciate individuals. I have come to believe that this ability is rather rare; so often, even with our children, we love them to control them rather than loving them because we appreciate them. One of the most satisfying feelings I know—and also one of the most growth-promoting experiences for the other person—comes from my appreciating this individual in the same way that I appreciate a sunset. People are just as wonderful as sunsets if I can let them *be*. In fact, perhaps the reason we can truly appreciate a sunset is that we cannot control it. When I look at a sunset as I did the other evening, I don't find myself saying, "Soften the orange a little on the right hand corner, and put a bit more purple along the base, and use a little more pink in the cloud color." I don't do that. I don't *try* to control a sunset. I watch it with awe as it unfolds. I like myself best when

I can appreciate my staff member, my son, my daughter, my grandchildren, in this same way. I believe this is a somewhat Oriental attitude; for me it is a most satisfying one.

Another learning I would like to mention briefly is one of which I am not proud but which seems to be a fact. When I am not prized and appreciated, I not only *feel* very much diminished, but my behavior is actually affected by my feelings. When I am prized, I blossom and expand, I am an interesting individual. In a hostile or unappreciative group, I am just not much of anything. People wonder, with very good reason, how did he ever get a reputation? I wish I had the strength to be more similar in both kinds of groups, but actually the person I am in a warm and interested group is different from the person I am in a hostile or cold group.

Thus, prizing or loving and being prized or loved is experienced as very growth enhancing. A person who is loved appreciatively, not possessively, blooms and develops his own unique self. The person who loves nonpossessively is himself enriched. This, at least, has been my experience.

I could give you some of the research evidence which shows that these qualities I have mentioned—an ability to listen empathically, a congruence or genuineness, an acceptance or prizing of the other—when they are present in a relationship make for good communication and for constructive change in personality. But I feel that, somehow, research evidence is out of place in a talk such as I have been giving.

I want to close instead with two statements drawn again from an intensive group experience. This was a

one-week workshop, and the two statements I am quoting were written a number of weeks later by two members of the workshop. We had asked each individual to write about his current feelings and to address this to all the members of the group.

The first statement is written by a man who tells of the fact that he had some rather difficult experiences immediately after the workshop, including spending time with

a father-in-law who doesn't care much about me as a person but only in what I concretely accomplish. I was severely shaken. It was like going from one extreme to another. I again began to doubt my purpose and particularly my usefulness. But time and again I would hearken back to the group, to things you've said or done that gave me a feeling that I do have something to offer—that I don't have to demonstrate concretely to be worthwhile—and this would even the scale and lift me out of my depression. I have come to the conclusion that my experiences with you have profoundly affected me, and I am truly grateful. This is different from personal therapy. None of you had *to care about me, none of you needed to seek me out and let me know of things you thought would help me, none of you* had *to let me know that I was of help to you—yet you did, and as a result, it has far more meaning than anything I have so far experienced. When I feel the need to hold back and not live spontaneously, for whatever reason, I remember that twelve persons, just like these before me, said to let go and be congruent, to be myself, and of all unbelievable things, they even loved me more for it. This has given me the* courage *to come out of myself many times since then. Often it seems, my very doing of this helps the others to experience similar freedom.*

I have also been able to let others into my life more—to let them care for me and to receive their warmth. I remember the time in our group encounter when this change occurred. It felt like I had removed long-standing barriers—so much so that I

deeply felt a new experience of openness toward you. I didn't have to be afraid, I didn't have to fight or fearfully pull away from the freedom this offered my own impulses—I could just be *and let you* be *with me.*

The second excerpt is taken from the report of a woman who had come with her husband to this workshop in human relations, although she and her husband were in separate groups. She talks at some length about her experience in revealing her feelings to the group and the results of taking that step.

Taking the plunge was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I have hidden my feelings of hurt and loneliness from even my closest friends while I was feeling them. Only when I had suppressed my feelings and could speak jokingly or casually could I share painful things at all, but that didn't help me work through them. You knocked down the walls that were holding back hurt, and it was good to be with you and hurt—and not withdraw.

Also, before, it had been so painful to me to be misunderstood or criticized that I chose not to share truly meaningful events, good or bad, most of my life. Only recently have I dared risk the hurt. In the group I faced these fears and was relieved beyond measure to find that my feelings in response to your criticism and misunderstanding (so blessedly devoid of hostility, I felt) were not *deep hurt, but more curiosity, regret, irritation, perhaps sadness, and [I felt] a deep sense of gratitude for the help I experienced in looking at part of me I had not seen nor wanted to face before. I am sure my perception of your concern and respect for the person, even when my behavior might irritate or alienate you, makes it possible for me to accept all of this and find it helpful.*

There were times I felt very afraid of the group, *though never of you individually. I needed very much at times to talk with just an individual, but during the course of the week discovered that most of you at some time or other were a real*

help to me. What a release to find so many instead of just the leaders. This experience opened me to a deeper trust in people, increased my ability to be open with others.

One of the nicest results is that now I can completely relax. I didn't realize how much constant tension I was under until I suddenly wasn't! I am now much more sensitive to the times when my emotions or fatigue make me a poor listener, for I find that my own inner hurts and anxiety, even suppressed, interfered with my really listening to another. Since then I have been able to listen better and to respond more helpfully than ever before in my life. I have been far more aware of what I was feeling and experiencing myself—an openness to myself I never had before.

Congruence was more an ideal than reality to me. Frankly, I found it disconcerting to experience and frightening to express. This was the first really safe place I had found to see what I was like, to experience and express myself. I now find that a lack of congruence in myself is painful. The release and joy in my being open to what I was experiencing within and being able to keep this openness between us was new and uplifting. I am deeply grateful to you who have made it possible for us to be so much more open with each other.

I trust that you will see in these experiences some of the elements of growth-promoting interpersonal communication that have had meaning for me. A sensitive ability to hear, a deep satisfaction in being heard; an ability to be more real, which in turn brings forth more realness from others; and consequently a greater freedom to give and receive love—these, in my experience, are the elements that make interpersonal communication enriching and enhancing.

My Philosophy of Interpersonal Relationships and How It Grew

This is a strictly autobiographical paper. I hope it will give some clues to the way my belief system has developed and altered, until it is now almost the antithesis of what I was taught—and believed—in my youth. It endeavors to point to the factors that have been responsible for the continual changingness of my views. Some of these factors are external, some internal, and some grew out of relationships. I first presented this paper at the August 1972 meeting of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in Honolulu, Hawaii. The audience seemed genuinely to be touched by it. I hope it will have meaning for you.

I wish to discuss the development and changes in my attitudes and approaches toward other persons. I will cover not only my professional approach, as it has changed over the years, but my personal approach as well.

Let me begin with my childhood. In a narrowly fundamentalist religious home, I introjected the value attitudes toward others that were held by my parents. Whether I truly believed in these I cannot be sure. I

know that I acted on these values. I think the attitudes toward persons outside our large family can be summed up schematically in this way: "Other persons behave in dubious ways which we do not approve in our family. Many of them play cards, go to movies, smoke, dance, drink, and engage in other activities, some unmentionable. So the best thing to do is to be tolerant of them, since they may not know better, but to keep away from any close communication with them and to live your life within the family. 'Come ye out from among them and be ye separate' is a good Biblical text to follow."

To the best of my recollection this unconsciously arrogant separateness characterized my behavior all through elementary school. I certainly had no close friends. There were a group of boys and girls my age who rode bicycles together on the street behind our house. But I never went to their homes, nor did they come to mine.

As to the relations with the others in my family, I thoroughly enjoyed being with and playing with my younger brothers, was jealous of my next older brother, and greatly admired my oldest brother, although the age gap was too great for much communication. I knew my parents loved me, but it would never have occurred to me to share with them any of my personal or private thoughts or feelings, because I knew these would have been judged and found wanting. My thoughts, my fantasies, and the few feelings I was aware of I kept to myself.

I could sum up these boyhood years by saying that anything I would today regard as a close and communicative interpersonal relationship with another was completely lacking during that period. My attitude toward others outside my home was characterized by the dis-

tance and the aloofness that I had taken over from my parents.

I attended the same elementary school for seven years. From this point on, until I finished graduate work, I never attended any school for longer than two years, a fact that undoubtedly had its effect on me.

Beginning with high school, I believe my hunger for companionship came a little more into my awareness. But any satisfaction of that hunger was blocked first by the already mentioned attitudes of my parents, and second by circumstances. I attended three different high schools, none for more than two years, commuting long distances by train to each one, so that I never was able to put down any social roots and was never able to participate in any after-school or evening activities with other students. I respected and liked some of my fellow students, and some of them respected and probably liked me—perhaps partly because of my good grades—but there was never time enough to develop a friendship, and certainly I never had any close personal interaction with any of them. I had one date during high school—to attend a senior class dinner.

So, during the important years of adolescence I had no close friend and only superficial personal contact. I did express some feelings in my English themes during the two terms when I had reasonably understanding teachers. At home I felt increasingly close to my next younger brother, but an age difference of five years cut down on any deep sharing. I was now more consciously a complete outsider, an onlooker in anything involving personal relationships. I believe my intense scientific interest in collecting and rearing the great night-flying moths was without doubt a partial compensation for the lack of intimate sharing. I realized by now that I was

peculiar, a loner, with very little place or opportunity for a place in the world of persons. I was socially incompetent in any but superficial contacts. My fantasies during this period were definitely bizarre, and probably would be classed as schizoid by a diagnostician, but fortunately I never came in contact with a psychologist.

College represented the first break in this solitary experience. I entered the college of agriculture at the University of Wisconsin, and almost immediately joined a group of fellows who met in a YMCA class. Starting with this narrow interest, we developed into an ongoing, self-directed group carrying on all sorts of activities. Here I first discovered what it meant to have comrades and even friends. There was lively, enjoyable, and interesting discussion of attitudes and ideas about moral and ethical issues. There was even some sharing of personal problems, especially on a one-to-one basis. For two years this group meant a great deal to me, until I shifted to majoring in history in the College of Letters and Science and gradually lost contact with them.

During this period, I suppose I could say that I began my first gropings toward a professional life. I was the leader of a boys' club, and enjoyed the experience. My concept of what to do was limited completely to *activities* in which we could engage—hikes, picnics, swimming, and the like. I don't recall that I ever encouraged, or that we had, any discussions on any matters of interest to the boys. The possibility of communication was evidently beginning to dawn on me so far as my peers were concerned, but I doubt if I ever dreamed of it as a possibility for these twelve-year-olds.

I was also a camp counselor in a camp for underprivileged youngsters during the summer, with eight counselors and one hundred boys under my supervision.

The cherry-picking work in which we engaged part-time and the athletic activities afterward constituted my idea of a suitable program. Here I have my first memory of a most dubious attempt at a "helping" relationship. Some articles and money had disappeared in our dormitory. The evidence pointed to one boy. So I and several of the counselors took him off by himself to get a confession from him. The term "brainwashing" had not then been invented, but we had real expertise at it. We cajoled, we argued, we persuaded, we were friendly, we were critical—some even prayed for him—but he withstood all our attempts, much to our disappointment. As I look back on this embarrassing scene, I gather that my concept of helping another person was to get him to confess his evil ways so that he might be instructed in the proper way to go.

In other directions, however, I was becoming more of a social being. I began dating girls, fearfully to be sure, but a start. I found I could express myself more freely with older girls, and as a freshman I dated several seniors. I also began going with Helen, the girl who later became my wife, and here an increasingly deep communication of hopes, ideals, and aims gradually began to take place. I discovered that private thoughts and dreams of the future could actually be shared on a mutual basis with another person. It was a very growing experience.

After two years of college we were separated by distance, but the courtship and frequent contacts continued for two more years before we were married. As I look back, I realize this was the first truly caring, close, sharing relationship I had ever formed with anyone. It meant the world to me. During the first two years of marriage we learned a vitally important lesson. We learned, through some chance help, that the elements

in the relationship that seemed impossible to share—the secretly disturbing, dissatisfying elements—are the most rewarding to share. This was a hard, risky, frightening thing to learn, and we have relearned it many, many times since. It was a rich and developing experience for each of us.

Meanwhile, in graduate school at Union Theological Seminary in New York, we were sharing in several courses as well as pursuing our own separate directions—she becoming more of an artist until motherhood occupied much of her time, while I continued my studies. Although I became more and more turned off by the academic courses in religion, there were two experiences that helped to shape my way of relating to others. The first was a self-organized, self-directed seminar of students with no faculty leader. Here we shared responsibility for the topics we considered and the way we wanted to conduct the course. More important, we began to share our doubts, our personal problems with our work. We became a mutually trusting group, discussing deep issues, and arriving at understandings which changed the lives of a number of us. The second experience was a course on "Working with Young People" conducted by Dr. Goodwin Watson, who, before his death, was a prominent and active NTL* trainer and a progressive leader in education. While taking this course, I had my first clear realization that working closely with individuals might be a profession. This possibility offered me a way out of religious work, and as a result of these two experiences I shifted "across the street" (literally) to Teachers College, Columbia, where Goodwin Watson became my thesis supervisor, and I began taking work in clinical psychol-

*National Training Laboratories, an organization of group leaders that is especially active in business groups.

ogy. I was also exposed to the thinking of John Dewey, through William Heard Kilpatrick.

I had by this time made tentative steps toward understanding relationships with others. My learnings were to be important to me later. I had learned that deep sharing with others was possible and enriching. I had learned that in a close relationship the elements that "cannot" be shared are those that are most important and rewarding to share. I had found that a group could be trusted to move in the direction of highly significant and relevant personal learnings. I was even beginning to learn that an individual faculty sponsor could trust the student he was supervising, with only growthful effects. I had discovered that persons in trouble could be helped, but that there were very divergent ideas as to how this could be done.

In my graduate training in clinical psychology, I was learning two major ways of relating to individuals who come for help. At Teachers College the approach was to understand *about* the individual through testing, measurement, diagnostic interviews, and prescriptive advice as to treatment. This cold approach was, however, suffused with warmth by the personality of Dr. Leta Hollingworth, who taught us more by her person than by her lectures. Later, when I interned at the then new and affluent Institute for Child Guidance, I was exposed to a very different atmosphere. Dominated as it was by psychoanalysts, I learned more about the individual. I learned that he cannot be understood without an exhaustive case history seventy-five pages or more in length, going into all the personality dynamics of the grandparents, the parents, the aunts and uncles, and finally the "patient" himself—possible birth trauma, manner of weaning, degree of dependency, sibling relationships, and on and on. Then there was the elaborate testing, including the newly imported

Rorschach, and finally many interviews with the child before deciding what sort of treatment he should have. It nearly always came out the same: the child was treated psychoanalytically by the psychiatrist, the mother was dealt with in the same fashion by the social worker, and occasionally, the psychologist was asked to tutor the child. Yet I carried on my first therapy case there. It started with tutoring but developed into more and more personal interviews, and I discovered the thrill that comes from observing changes in a person's behavior. Whether those were due to my enthusiasm or my methods I cannot say.

As I look back, I realize that my interest in interviewing and in therapy certainly grew in part out of my early loneliness. Here was a socially approved way of getting really close to individuals and thus filling some of the hungers I had undoubtedly felt. The therapeutic interview also offered a chance of becoming close without having to go through what was to me a long and painful process of gradual and deepening acquaintance.

By the time I had completed my work in New York, I *knew*—with all the assurance of the newly trained—how to deal with people professionally. In spite of the wide differences between Teachers College and the Institute, they both helped me arrive at somewhat the same formula, which could be stated as follows: "I will gather an enormous amount of data about this individual: his history, his intelligence, his special abilities, his personality. Out of all this I can form an elaborate diagnostic formulation as to the causes of his present behavior, his personal and social resources for dealing with his situation, and the prognosis for his future. I will endeavor to interpret all this in simple language to the responsible agencies, to the parents, and to the

child if he is capable of understanding it. I will make sound suggestions which, if carried out, will change the behavior, and I will reinforce those suggestions by repeated contact. In all of this I remain thoroughly objective, professional, and personally aloof from these persons in trouble, except insofar as personal warmth is necessary to build a satisfactory rapport."

This sounds a bit incredible to me now, but I know it is essentially true because I can recall the scorn I felt for one psychiatrist, not an analyst, who simply dealt with problem children as though he *liked* them. He even took them to his home. Clearly he had never learned the importance of being *professional*!

Thus when I went to Rochester, New York, as a member of the Child Study Department—really a child guidance clinic for delinquent children and those who were wards of the social agencies because of their poor home environment—I knew what to do. I was so sure, that I remember (painfully) telling PTA and community groups that our clinic was rather similar to a garage: you brought in a problem, received an expert diagnosis, and were advised how the difficulty could be corrected.

But my views were gradually eroded. Living in a stable community, I found I had to live with the consequences of my advice and recommendations—and they did *not* always work out. Many of the children I worked with were housed temporarily in the detention home next door, so I could see them day after day. I was astonished that sometimes, after a particularly "good" interview where I had interpreted to a boy all the causes of his misbehavior, he refused to see me the next day! So I had to win him back to find out what had gone wrong. I began to learn, experientially.

Then as director of the new and independent Rochester Guidance Center, which replaced the Child Study

Department, we had more self-referrals, where we had no authority whatsoever over child or parent and had to build a relationship if we were to be of help.

Then came a few incidents which markedly changed my approach; I shall tell you about the one that stands out most vividly in my mind. An intelligent mother brought her very seriously misbehaving boy to the clinic. I took the history from her myself. Another psychologist tested the boy. We decided in conference that the central problem was the mother's rejection of her son. I would work with her on this problem. The other psychologist would take the boy on for play therapy. In interview after interview I tried—much more softly and gently now, as a result of experience—to help the mother see the pattern of her rejection and its results in the boy. All to no avail. After about a dozen interviews I told her I thought we both had tried but were getting nowhere, and we should probably call it quits. She agreed. Then, as she was leaving the room, she turned and asked, "Do you ever take adults for counseling here?" Puzzled, I replied that sometimes we did. Whereupon she returned to the chair she had just left and began to pour out a story of the deep difficulties between herself and her husband and her great desire for some kind of help. I was bowled over. What she was telling me bore no resemblance to the neat history I had drawn from her. I scarcely knew what to do, but mostly I listened. Eventually, after many more interviews, not only did her marital relationship improve, but her son's problem behavior dropped away as she became a more real and free person. To jump ahead a bit, she was the first client I ever had who continued to keep in occasional touch with me for years afterward, until her boy was doing well in college.

This was a vital learning for me. I had followed *her* lead rather than mine. I had just *listened* instead of trying to nudge her toward a diagnostic understanding I had already reached. It was a far more personal relationship, and not nearly so "professional." Yet the results spoke for themselves.

At about this time came a brief two-day seminar with Otto Rank, and I found that in his therapy (not in his theory) he was emphasizing some of the things I had begun to learn. I felt stimulated and confirmed. I employed a social worker, trained in Rankian "relationship therapy" at the Philadelphia School of Social Work, and learned much from her. So my views shifted more and more. This transition is well captured in my book, *Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child*, written in 1937–1938, in which I devote a long chapter to relationship therapy, though the rest of the book is largely a diagnostic–prescriptive approach.

At Ohio State University, where I went in 1940, I was greatly enriched as I presented my views of clinical work to bright and questioning graduate students. Here too, I began to realize that I was saying something new, perhaps even original, about counseling and psychotherapy, and I wrote the book of that title. My dream of recording therapeutic interviews came true, helping to focus my interest on the effects of different responses in the interview. This led to a heavy emphasis on technique—the so-called nondirective technique.

But I was finding that this new-found trust in my client and his capacity for exploring and resolving his problems reached out uncomfortably into other areas. If I trusted my clients, why didn't I trust my students? If this was fine for the individual in trouble, why not for a staff group facing problems? I found that I had

embarked not on a new *method* of therapy, but a sharply different *philosophy* of living and relationships.

Some of these issues I worked out while at Ohio State, and when I was given an opportunity to start a new Counseling Center at the University of Chicago, setting my own policies and selecting my own staff, I was ready to formulate and act on what was for me a new approach to human relationships. I think I can again state it in summarized fashion:

"I have come to trust the capacity of persons to explore and understand themselves and their troubles, and to resolve those problems, in any close, continuing relationship where I can provide a climate of real warmth and understanding.

"I am going to venture to put the same kind of trust in a staff group, endeavoring to build an atmosphere in which each is responsible for the actions of the group as a whole, and where the group has a responsibility to each individual. Authority has been given to me, and I am going to give it completely to the group.

"I am going to experiment with putting trust in students, in class groups, to choose their own directions and to evaluate their progress in terms of their own choosing."

Chicago was a time of great learning for me. I had ample opportunity to test out the hypotheses I have just stated. I greatly expanded the empirical testing of our therapeutic hypotheses, which we had begun earlier. By 1957 I had developed a rigorous theory of therapy and the therapeutic relationship. I had set forth the "necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change" (Rogers, 1957), all of them personal attitudes, *not* professional training. This was a rather presumptuous paper, but it presented hypoth-

eses to be tested and sparked much research over the next fifteen years, which has in general been confirming.

It was a period when, at the urging of my students, I became acquainted with Martin Buber (first in his writings and then personally) and with Sören Kierkegaard. I felt greatly supported in my new approach, which I found to my surprise was a home-grown brand of existential philosophy.

Finally, it was a period of great learning in my personal life. A badly bungled therapeutic relationship—really nontherapeutic—thrust me into a deep internal personal crisis, and finally into therapy with one of my colleagues. I now learned just what it was like to experience on one day a tremendous surge of fresh insight, only to seem to lose it all the next in a wave of despair. But as I slowly came out of this, I at last learned what many people, fortunately, learn first. I learned that not only could I trust clients and staff and students, but I could also trust myself. Slowly I learned to trust the feelings, the ideas, the purposes that continually emerge in *me*. It was not an easy learning, but a most valuable and continuing one. I found myself becoming much freer, more real, more deeply understanding, not only in my relationships with my clients but also with others.

All of these learnings I have mentioned carried over increasingly in my relationships with groups—first the workshops we started in Chicago as early as 1946, then in groups with which I have been so much involved in recent years. They have all been encounter groups, long before the term was coined.

I will quickly cover the years at the University of Wisconsin and in La Jolla. At Wisconsin I rediscovered what I had learned in Chicago—that by and large most psychologists are not open to new ideas. Perhaps this is

true of me too, though I have struggled against that defensive tendency. But students, as before, were most responsive.

In one experience at Wisconsin, I violated one of the learnings I had so painfully acquired, and discovered what disaster that can bring. In the large research team assembled for the task of studying psychotherapy with schizophrenics, I gave over the authority and responsibility to the group. But I did not go far enough in establishing the climate of close, open, interpersonal communication which is fundamental for carrying such responsibility. Then, as serious crises developed, I made the even more fatal mistake of trying to draw back into my own hands the authority I had given the group. Rebellion and chaos were the very understandable results. It was one of the most painful lessons I have ever learned—a lesson in how *not* to carry on participative management of an enterprise.

In La Jolla, my experience has been much happier. A highly congenial group eventually formed the Center for Studies of the Person, a most unusual and exciting experiment. I will describe only its interpersonal aspects, because it would be impossible to describe all the activities of its members, which range from Kenya to Rome to Ireland, from New Jersey to Colorado to Seattle, from psychotherapy to writing to esoteric research, from consulting with organizations to leading groups of all kinds, from learning group facilitation to igniting revolutions in educational methods. Psychologically, we are a close community, supporting each other but criticizing each other just as openly. Although our director has routine responsibilities, no one is in authority over anyone else. Everyone can do as he wishes, alone or in concert with others. Everyone is responsible for his own support. Currently we have

only one small grant, and that from a private foundation. We do not like the strings—often initially invisible—that are attached to large or government grants. There is absolutely nothing holding us together except a common interest in the dignity and capacity of persons and the continuing possibility of deep and real communication with each other. To me it is a great experiment in building a functioning group—a nonorganization really—entirely based on the strength of interpersonal sharing.

But I could easily go on too long in my enthusiasm. There has been one other input to my learning which I should like to mention. It was first brought to my attention many years ago by Leona Tyler, who, in a personal letter, pointed out to me that my thinking and action seemed to be something of a bridge between Eastern and Western thought. This was a surprising idea, but I find that in more recent years I have enjoyed some of the teachings of Buddhism, of Zen, and especially the sayings of Lao-tse, the Chinese sage who lived some twenty-five centuries ago. Let me quote a few lines of his thoughts to which I resonate very deeply:

It is as though he listened
and such listening as his enfolds us in a silence
in which at last we begin to hear
what we are meant to be.

One statement combines two of my favorite thinkers. Martin Buber endeavors to explain the Taoist principle of *wu-wei,* which is really the action of the whole being, but so effortless when it is most effective that it is often called the principle of "nonaction," a rather misleading term. Buber, in explaining this concept, says:

To interfere with the life of things means to harm both them and oneself. . . . He who imposes himself has the small,

manifest might; he who does not impose himself has the great, secret might. . . .

The perfected man . . . does not interfere in the life of beings, he does not impose himself on them, but he "helps all beings to their freedom (Lao-tse)." Through his unity, he leads them too, to unity, he liberates their nature and their destiny, he releases Tao in them. (BUBER, 1957)

I suppose that my effort with people has increasingly been to liberate "their nature and their destiny."

Or, if one is seeking a definition of an effective group facilitator, one need look no further than Lao-tse:

A leader is best
When people barely know that he exists,
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,
Worst when they despise him. . . .
But of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will all say, "We did this ourselves."

(BYNNER, 1962)

But perhaps my favorite saying, which sums up many of my deeper beliefs, is another from Lao-tse:

If I keep from meddling with people, they take care of themselves,
If I keep from commanding people, they behave themselves,
If I keep from preaching at people, they improve themselves,
If I keep from imposing on people, they become themselves.

(FRIEDMAN, 1972)

I will admit that this saying is an oversimplification, yet for me it contains the sort of truth which we have not yet appreciated in our Western culture.

CONCLUSION

I trust I have made it clear that over the years I have moved a long way from some of the beliefs with which I started: that man was essentially evil; that professionally he was best treated as an object; that help was based on expertise; that the expert could advise, manipulate, and mold the individual to produce the desired result.

Let me, in contrast, try to summarize the learnings in which I currently believe and by which I would like to live. As I have indicated, I frequently fail to profit by these learnings, failing many times in small ways and occasionally in enormous blunders. I will list the learnings, not in the order in which they occurred in me but in what appears to be a more natural order.

I have come to prize each emerging facet of my experience, of myself. I would like to treasure the feelings of anger and tenderness and shame and hurt and love and anxiety and giving and fear—all the positive and negative reactions that crop up. I would like to treasure the ideas that emerge—foolish, creative, bizarre, sound, trivial—all part of me. I like the behavioral impulses—appropriate, crazy, achievement-oriented, sexual, murderous. I want to accept all of these feelings, ideas, and impulses as an enriching part of me. I don't expect to act on all of them, but when I accept them all, I can be more real; my behavior, therefore, will be much more appropriate to the immediate situation.

On the basis of my experience I have found that if I can help bring about a climate marked by genuineness, prizing, and understanding, then exciting things happen. Persons and groups in such a climate move away from rigidity and toward flexibility, away from static living toward process living, away from dependence

toward autonomy, away from defensiveness toward self-acceptance, away from being predictable toward an unpredictable creativity. They exhibit living proof of an actualizing tendency.

When I am exposed to a growth-promoting climate, I am able to develop a deep trust in myself, in individuals, and in entire groups. I love to create such an environment, in which persons, groups, and even plants can grow.

I have learned that in any significant or continuing relationship, *persistent* feelings had best be expressed. If they are expressed as *feelings*, owned by *me*, the result may be temporarily upsetting but ultimately far more rewarding than any attempt to deny or conceal them.

I have found that for me interpersonal relationships best exist as a rhythm: openness and expression, and then assimilation; flow and change, then a temporary quiet; risk and anxiety, then temporary security. I could not live in a continuous encounter group.

For me, being transparently open is far more rewarding than being defensive. This is difficult to achieve, even partially, but enormously enriching to a relationship.

It is necessary for me to stay close to the earthiness of real experience. I cannot live my life in abstractions. So real relationships with persons, hands dirtied in the soil, observing the budding of a flower, or viewing the sunset, are necessary to my life. At least one foot must be in the soil of reality.

I like my life best when it faces outward most of the time. I prize the times when I am inward-looking—searching to know myself, meditating, and thinking. But this must be balanced by doing things—interacting

with people, producing something, whether a flower or a book or a piece of carpentry.

Finally, I have a deep belief, which can only be a hypothesis, that the philosophy of interpersonal relationships which I have helped to formulate, and which is contained in this paper, is applicable to all situations involving persons. I believe it is applicable to therapy, to marriage, to parent and child, to teacher and student, to persons with high status and those with low status, to persons of one race relating to persons of another. I am even brash enough to believe that it could be effective in situations now dominated by the exercise of raw power—in politics, for example, especially in our dealings with other nations. I challenge, with all the strength I possess, the current American belief, evident in every phase of our foreign policy, and especially in our insane wars, that "might makes right." That, in my estimation, is the road to self-destruction. I go along with Martin Buber and the ancient Oriental sages: "He who imposes himself has the small, manifest might; he who does not impose himself has the great, secret might."

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In Retrospect: Forty-Six Years

There is no such thing as a free lunch. This profound truth was the motivation for this paper. I was deeply honored to be awarded the Distinguished Professional Contribution Award by the American Psychological Association (APA), accompanied by a generous check. But along with the honor came the obligation to produce a paper for the convention, which was held in Montreal in August of the following year, 1973. I remember my perplexity as to a topic, and I recall writing another paper, then discarding it because it did not seem appropriate. Instead, I chose to review some of the threads of my professional life, looking back forty-six years to my fledgling experience as a Fellow ("Intern" would have been the more accurate term) at the Institute for Child Guidance in New York City. This Institute was lavishly supported by the privately run, New York–based Commonwealth Fund, to provide training for workers in child-guidance clinics, which were then rapidly gaining popularity. (Samuel Beck and I both learned the Rorschach that year, which had just been brought from Europe by Dr. David Levy, a psychiatrist.) At the end of the year, and the completion of my internship, I took a position in Rochester, New York, at the modest salary of $2,900 per year! This position is described in the chapter.

In what follows I mention a number of countries in which I have had influence. In the years since this was written I

would have to add many more, including a recent fascinating workshop of ninety persons in Poland, my first experience behind the so-called Iron Curtain.

This is a very subjective chapter—my picture of my professional life as seen from the inside. It is as I understand it. I am sure a view from the outside would be quite different.

From 1927 to the present time I have been a practicing psychologist. I have made diagnostic studies of children and have developed recommendations for treatment of their problems; in 1928 I developed an inventory of the inner world of childhood which—may Heaven forgive me—is still being sold by the thousands. I have counseled with parents, students, and other adults; I have carried on intensive psychotherapy with troubled individuals—normal, neurotic, and psychotic; I have engaged in and sponsored research in psychotherapy and personality change; I have formulated a rigorous theory of therapy. I have had forty years of teaching experience, fostering learning through both cognitive and experiential channels. I have engaged in facilitating personal development through the intensive group experience; I have tried to make clear the processes of both individual therapy and the group experience through recordings, demonstrations, and films; I have tried to communicate my experience through what now seem to me to be countless writings, tapes, and cassettes. I have played my part as a worker in professional associations of psychologists; I have had a continuous, varied, controversial, and richly rewarding professional life.

So it has occurred to me that there might be some interest in the question: What does such a psychologist

think about as he looks back on close to a half-century of study and work? It is to that question that I will address my remarks. What is my own current perspective on these years, thinking both about my professional life and its various periods of development and change?

AN ASTONISHING IMPACT

I believe the major element of my reaction as I look back on my work and its reception is *surprise.* Had I been told, thirty-five or forty years ago, of the impact it would have, I would have been absolutely unbelieving. The work that I and my colleagues have done has altered or made a difference in widely different enterprises, of which I will mention several. It turned the field of counseling upside down. It opened psychotherapy to public scrutiny and research investigation. It has made possible the empirical study of highly subjective phenomena. It has helped to bring some change in the methods of education at every level. It has been one of the factors bringing change in concepts of industrial (and even military) leadership, of social work practice, of nursing practice, and of religious work. It has been responsible for one of the major trends in the encounter group movement. It has, in small ways at least, affected the philosophy of science. It is beginning to have some influence in interracial and intercultural relationships. It has even influenced students of theology and of philosophy.

My work has, to my knowledge, changed the life directions and purposes of individuals in France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa; in twelve foreign countries readers can find some of my work in their own language; if someone wishes to read a complete collection

of everything I have written, he will find it—in Japanese. I look with utter astonishment at this long list of statements.

A Tentative Explanation

Why has my work had such a pervasive impact? I certainly do not attribute it to any special genius of my own, and most assuredly not to any far-sighted vision on my part. I give full credit to my younger colleagues throughout the years for their expansion and deepening of my thought and work, but even their efforts do not account for this far-reaching influence. In a number of the fields I have mentioned, neither I nor my colleagues have ever worked, or been involved in any way, except through our writings.

To me, as I try to understand the phenomenon, it seems that without knowing it I had expressed an idea whose time had come. It is as though a pond had become utterly still, so that a pebble dropped into it sent ripples out farther and farther and farther, having an influence that could not be understood by looking at the pebble. Or, to use a chemical analogy, as though a liquid solution had become supersaturated, so that the addition of one tiny crystal initiated the formation of crystals throughout the whole mass.

What was that idea, that pebble, that crystal? It was the gradually formed and tested hypothesis that the individual has within himself vast resources for self-understanding, for altering his self-concept, his attitudes, and his self-directed behavior—and that these resources can be tapped if only a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.

This hypothesis, so new and yet in a way so old, was not an armchair theory. It had grown out of a number of very down-to-earth steps.

First, I had learned through hard and frustrating experiences that simply to listen understandingly to a client and to attempt to convey that understanding were potent forces for individual therapeutic change.

Second, I and my colleagues realized that this empathic listening provided one of the least clouded windows into the workings of the human psyche, in all its complex mystery.

Third, from our observations we made only low-level inferences and formulated testable hypotheses. We might have chosen to draw high-level inferences and to have developed abstract, untestable, high-level theory, but I think my own earthy agricultural background deterred me from that. (Freudian thinkers chose this second course, and this marks, in my estimation, one of the most fundamental differences between their approach and the client-centered approach.)

Fourth, in testing our hypotheses, we uncovered findings regarding persons and relationships between persons. These findings and the theory that embraced them were continually changing as new discoveries emerged, and this process continues to the present day.

Fifth, because our findings have to do with basic aspects of the way in which the person's own capacities for change can be released and with the way in which relationships can foster or defeat such self-directed change, it was discovered that they had wide applicability.

Sixth, situations involving persons, change in the behavior of persons, and the effects of different qualities of interpersonal relationships exist in almost every human undertaking. Hence, others began realizing that perhaps the testable hypotheses of this approach might have almost universal application, or might be retested or reformulated for use in an almost infinite variety of human situations.

Such is my attempt to explain an awesome and otherwise incomprehensible spread of ideas which began with a very simple question: Can I, by carefully observing and evaluating my experience with my clients, learn to be more effective in helping them to resolve their problems of personal distress, self-defeating behavior, and destructive interpersonal relationships? Who could have guessed that the groping and tentative answers would spread so far?

Psychology's Ambivalence

You may have noticed an omission in the listing of the areas of impact of my work. I did not say that I and my colleagues have affected academic, or so-called scientific, psychology. This was not an oversight. I believe an accurate statement would be that we have had very little influence on academic psychology, in the lecture hall, the textbook, or the laboratory. There is some passing mention of my thinking, my theories, or my approach to therapy, but, by and large, I think I have been a painfully embarrassing phenomenon to the academic psychologist. *I do not fit.* Increasingly I have come to agree with that assessment. Let me amplify.

The science and profession of psychology have, I believe, profoundly ambivalent feelings about me and my work. I am seen—and here I must rely mostly on hearsay—as softheaded, unscientific, cultish, too easy on students, full of strange and upsetting enthusiasms about ephemeral things like the self, therapist attitudes, and encounter groups. I have defamed the most holy mysteries of the academic—the professional lecture and the whole evaluation system—from the ABCs of course grades to the coveted hood of the doctor's degree. I can best be handled by most writers on psychology in one paragraph as the developer of a

technique—the "nondirective technique." I am definitely not one of the ingroup of psychological academia.

The other side of the ambivalence is, however, even more striking. Psychology as a whole, science and profession together, has showered me with honors—many more, I believe, than I deserve. To my amazement I was awarded one of the first three awards for scientific contribution, and this was back in 1956 when I was much more controversial than I am at present. I had been chosen president of the American Association for Applied Psychology. I had been elected president of the American Psychological Association. I had been appointed or elected chairman of important committees and divisions, and these honors often touched me. Yet, never have I been so emotionally affected as I was by the scientific contribution award and its accompanying citation. When I was elected to an office it could have been partly due to my ambition, for I was ambitious to get ahead in my profession. But this award was to me, in some sense, the "purest" recognition I had ever received. For years I had been struggling to objectify knowledge in a potential field of science that no one else seemed to be concerned about. It was not ambition or hope of any reward that pushed me on. In the empirical research itself there was more than a little desire to prove something to others—clearly not a scientific goal. But in the basic phases of the work—the careful observation, the recorded interviews, the hunches as to hypotheses, the development of crude theories—I was as close to being a true scientist as I ever hope to be. But it was clear, I thought, that my colleagues and I were just about the only ones who knew or cared. So my voice choked and the tears flowed when I was called forth, at the 1956 APA Convention, to receive, with Wolfgang Köhler and Kenneth Spence, the first of the

awards for a *scientific* contribution to psychology. It was a vivid proof that psychologists were not only embarrassed by me, but were to some extent proud of me. It had a greater personal meaning than all the honors that have followed, including the first award for professional contribution, given last year.

I did enjoy last year's citation, especially the honesty of the statement that I was a "gadfly" to the profession—only now that statement promotes me to the status of "respected gadfly." I liked that expression of the ambivalence.

TWO STRUGGLES

As I look back over the years, I realize I have engaged in two struggles that have professional significance.

Struggle with Psychiatry

The first struggle has to do with the determination of many members of the psychiatric profession that psychologists should not be allowed to practice psychotherapy, nor to have administrative responsibility over "mental health" work, especially if this involved psychiatrists. I first met this opposition in Rochester, New York, when our highly successful Child Study Department, a branch of a social agency, was being reorganized in 1939 into a new and independent Rochester Guidance Center. A vigorous campaign, partly aboveboard and partly behind the scenes, was made to discontinue my services as director and to substitute a psychiatrist. There seemed to be no question about the quality of my work. The argument was simply based on the view that a psychologist could not head up a mental health operation—it was simply "not done." Although

the Child Study Department had employed psychiatrists on a part-time basis for years, the psychiatrists had now decided it was out of the question for psychologists to have the power to employ them. I could not point to any important precedent, nor could I claim the support of any professional group. It was a lonely battle. I am very grateful to the board of directors, who were almost all laymen, for eventually deciding the dispute in my favor. It had been a life-and-death struggle for me because it was the thing I was doing well and the work I very much wanted to continue.

After an interim lull of five years at Ohio State University, the struggle was renewed with even more vigor at the University of Chicago, where I went in 1945. Not one of the rapid succession of chairmen of the Department of Psychiatry was willing to cooperate with the unorthodox fledgling Counseling Center. Finally, one of these men demanded of the University administration that the Counseling Center be closed, since its members were practicing medicine (namely, psychotherapy) without a license. There was still no professional support for our activities from the APA or any other psychological organization. I mounted a blistering counterattack, with all the evidence I could muster. Again I am grateful, this time to the chancellor of the University, for his fair-minded consideration and his suggestion to the Department of Psychiatry that they drop their demand, which they did. These are the only two times I engaged in open combat with psychiatrists. For the most part, my strategy has been twofold. I have endeavored to reconcile the two professions in their pursuit of a common goal. I have also tried to move ahead so rapidly and so far that the right of psychologists to practice in a field in which they were preemi-

nent in research, and fully equal in practice and in theory building, could not be challenged.

But when pushed into a corner, as on these two occasions, I can fight with all the effectiveness that one develops in a family of six children. People who know only my thoughtful or gentle side are astonished at my attitude and behavior in a situation of all-out war. I should, in warning, have raised the banner of the early Colonies, on which was emblazoned a rattlesnake and the motto, "Don't tread on me!"

In 1957 I went to the University of Wisconsin, where, I am happy to say, my joint appointment in psychology *and* psychiatry was a pleasant resolution of these struggles. Indeed, I initiated the formation of a group of psychologists and psychiatrists who gradually defused an incipient legal and legislative battle which was splitting the two professions in that state.

Struggle with Behavioristic Psychology

The other struggle of my professional life has been on the side of a humanistic approach to the study of human beings. The Rogers–Skinner debate of 1956 is one of the most reprinted writings in the psychological world. It would be absurd of me to try to review that continuing difference in any depth. I will simply make a few brief statements as I look back over these years.

To avoid misunderstanding, let me say immediately that I concur with the idea that the theory of operant conditioning, its development and its implementation, has been a creative achievement. It is a valuable tool in the promotion of certain types of learning. I do not denigrate the contribution it has made. But this is not the basis of divergence.

Let me also say that I have a great personal respect for Fred Skinner. He is an honest man, willing to carry his thinking through to its logical conclusions. Hence, we can differ sharply, without damaging my respect for him. I was invited by several periodicals to respond to *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Skinner, 1971) and declined primarily because I felt he had a right to his views. My one disappointment in regard to Skinner is his refusal to permit the nine-hour confrontation we held at the University of Minnesota in Duluth to be released. It was all taped and is the deepest exploration in existence of the issues between us. All of the other parties to the meeting had understood that it was agreed that the tapes, or transcripts of them, or both, would be released. After the meeting, Skinner refused his permission. I feel the profession was cheated.

I have come to realize that the basic difference between a behavioristic and a humanistic approach to human beings is a *philosophical* choice. This certainly can be discussed, but cannot possibly be settled by evidence. If one takes Skinner as of some years ago—and I believe this is his view today—then the environment, which is part of a causal sequence, is the sole determiner of the individual's behavior, which is thus again an unbreakable chain of cause and effect. All the things that I do, or that Skinner does, are simply inevitable results of our conditioning. As he has pointed out, man acts as he is forced to act, but as if he were not forced. Carried to its logical conclusion, this means, as John Calvin concluded earlier, that the universe was at some point wound up like a great clock and has been ticking off its inexorable way ever since. Thus, what we think are our decisions, choices, and values are all illusions. Skinner did not write his books because he had chosen to present his views, or to point to the kind of

society he values, but simply because he was conditioned to make certain marks on paper. Amazingly to me, he admitted as much in one session in which we both participated.

My experience in therapy and in groups makes it impossible for me to deny the reality and significance of human choice. To me it is not an illusion that man is to some degree the architect of himself. I have presented evidence that the degree of self-understanding is perhaps the most important factor in predicting the individual's behavior. So for me the humanistic approach is the only possible one. It is for each person, however, to follow the pathway—behavioristic or humanistic—that he finds most congenial.

Saying that it is for the individual to decide is not synonymous with saying that it makes no difference. Choosing the humanistic philosophy, for example, means that very different topics are chosen for research and different methods for validating discoveries. It means an approach to social change based on the human desire and potentiality for change, not on conditioning. It leads to a deeply democratic political philosophy rather than management by an elite. So the choice does have consequences.

To me it is entirely logical that a technologically oriented society, with its steady emphasis on a greater control of human behavior, should be enamored of a behavioristic approach. Likewise, academic psychology, with its unwavering insistence that "the intellect is all," has greatly preferred it over the humanistic approach. If the university psychologist accepted the latter view, he would have to admit that he is involved, as a subjective person, in his choice of research topics, in his evaluation of data, in his relationship to students, in his professional work. The comfortable cloak of

"objectivity" would necessarily be dropped, exposing him as a vulnerable, imperfect, subjective being, thoroughly engaged, intellectually *and* emotionally, objectively *and* subjectively, in all his activities. This is understandably too threatening.

Let me simply add that what is really at issue is the confrontation of two paradoxes. If the extreme behaviorist position is true, then everything an individual does is essentially meaningless, since he is but an atom caught in a seamless chain of cause and effect. On the other hand, if the thoroughgoing humanistic position is true, then choice enters in, and this individual subjective choice has some influence on the cause-and-effect chain. Then, scientific research, which is based on a complete confidence in an unbroken chain of cause and effect, must be fundamentally modified. I, as well as others, have attempted partially to explain away this dilemma—my own attempt was in a paper entitled "Freedom and Commitment" (Rogers, 1964)—but I believe we must wait for the future to bring about the full reconciliation of these paradoxes.

In all candor I must say that I believe that the humanistic view will, in the long run, take precedence. I believe that Americans are, as a people, beginning to refuse to allow technology to dominate our lives. Our culture, increasingly based on the conquest of nature and the control of man, is in decline. Emerging through the ruins is the new person, highly aware, self-directing, an explorer of inner, perhaps more than outer, space, scornful of the conformity of institutions and the dogma of authority. He does not believe in being behaviorally shaped, or in shaping the behavior of others. He is most assuredly humanistic rather than technological. In my judgment he has a high probability of survival.

Yet, this belief of mine is open to one exception. If we

were to permit one-man control, or a military take-over of our government—and it is obvious we have been (and are) perilously close to that—then another scenario would take place. A governmental–military–police–industrial complex would be more than happy to use scientific technology for military and industrial conquest and psychological technology for the control of human behavior. I am not being dramatic when I say that humanistic psychologists, emphasizing the essential freedom and dignity of the unique human person, and his capacity for self-determination, would be among the first to be incarcerated by such a government.

But enough of this issue. I have strayed into the future. Let me return to my retrospective look and to some less serious reflections.

TWO PUZZLEMENTS

There are two very different issues that have puzzled me: one of minor, the other of deeper concern.

Regarding Theory

By 1950, I wondered increasingly if my thinking could be put into a coherent theoretical form. At about this time came a request from Sigmund Koch to contribute to his monumental series of volumes, *Psychology: A Study of a Science* (1959–1963). This was just the slight nudge I needed, and for the next three or four years I worked harder on this theoretical formulation than on anything I have written before or since. It is, in my estimation, the most rigorously stated theory of the process of *change* in personality and behavior that has yet been produced. As one young psychologist with a background in mathematics said to me recently, "It is so

precise! I could restate it in mathematical terms." I must confess this is close to my opinion.

I was very pleased that it would be in Koch's series, because I felt sure that these volumes would be studied by graduate students and psychologists for years to come. I do not have exact data, but I suspect these volumes are in fact very little used. Certainly my chapter "A Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-Centered Framework" is the most thoroughly ignored of anything I have written (Rogers, 1959). This does not particularly distress me, because I believe theories too often become dogma, but it has, over the years, perplexed me.

Regarding Creative Leadership

The second puzzlement is of a different order. In my younger years, although I was not a hero-worshiper, I definitely looked up to a number of men whom I felt were "*real* psychologists," whereas I existed on a poorly accepted fringe. I remember the community and professional furor when Leonard Carmichael was brought to the University of Rochester in 1936 as chairman of psychology: a special laboratory equipped to his specifications, a cluster of fellowships provided for his students, every acknowledgment paid to his brilliance and leadership. There was probably some envy in my attitude, as I labored away in a ramshackle frame building set aside for the Child Study Department of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, but my feeling was mostly one of admiration and expectancy. I felt the same way toward perhaps a half-dozen others—better trained in psychology than I, in my judgment more brilliant, with books and research studies already to their credit. Here were the men who would

produce the great ideas in psychology, who would exert the same kind of intellectual and world leadership as that of outstanding chemists, physicists, and astronomers. I had no doubt at all that I had picked those who, a generation later, would be the preeminently creative and productive leaders of our science.

In every case I have been mistaken. Carmichael, since I have mentioned his name, has gone on to become a revered administrator, operating in the highest levels of the establishment. The others I selected have also had perfectly reputable careers, some outside of and some in psychology. But the dazzling promise of their younger years has not been fulfilled. For some reason this has puzzled me very deeply, because they have one attribute in common. They have lost any truly vital *creative* interest in psychology. Why? Were their interests too narrow and unsatisfying as they grew older? Did they lack any basic conviction or philosophy which might have guided their work? Did their efforts come to seem to them irrelevant to the larger social scene, their contributions too picayune? Was their initial work done primarily to impress their fellow psychologists, a motive that declines in importance with age? Did they endeavor to stand on and defend their early work, thus inhibiting themselves from reaching out into the creative unknown? I do not know. It has thoroughly perplexed me and made me very wary indeed of trying to pick prospective leaders of creative thought.

THE SOURCES OF MY LEARNINGS

As I try to review all of the rich streams of thought and experience that have fed and are feeding my professional life, I can discriminate several of the most important sources.

Clients and Group Participants

First and overwhelmingly foremost are my clients in therapy and the persons with whom I have worked in groups. The gold mine of data that resides in interviews or group sessions staggers me. There is, first of all, the gut-level experience, which absorbs the statements, the feelings, and the gestures, providing its own complex type of learning, difficult to put into words. Then there is the listening to the interchanges in the tape recording. Here are the orderly sequences that were missed in the flow of the experience. Here, too, are the nuances of inflection, the half-formed sentences, the pauses, and the sighs, which were also partially missed. Then, if a transcript is laboriously produced, I have a microscope in which I can see, as I termed them in one paper, "the molecules of personality change." I know of no other way of combining the deepest experiential learning with the most highly abstract cognitive and theoretical learnings than the three steps I have mentioned: living the experience on a total basis, rehearing it on an experiential–cognitive basis, and studying it once more for every intellectual clue. As I said earlier, this type of interview is perhaps the most valuable and transparent window into the strange inner world of persons and relationships. I feel that if I subtracted from my work the learnings I have gained from deep relationships with clients and group participants, I would be nothing.

Younger Colleagues

The second most important source of stimulation for me is my symbiotic relationship with younger people. I do not understand this mutual attraction. I just feed

upon it. In my youth I surely learned many things from my elders, and at times I have even learned from colleagues in my own age bracket, but certainly for the last thirty-five years any real learnings from professional sources have come from those who were younger. I feel a deep gratitude to all the graduate students, younger staff members, and inquiring youthful audiences who have educated and continue to educate me. I know that for many years, given the chance to associate with professional colleagues of my age, or with a younger group, I inevitably drift to the latter. They seem less stuffy, less defensive, more open in their criticism, more creative in suggestion. I owe them so much. I started to write down examples, but to give a few would be unfair to the hundreds who have so freely contributed their ideas and their feelings in a relationship which has also lighted sparks of creative thinking in me. They have excited me, and I have excited them. It has, I hope, been a fair exchange, though I often feel I have gained more than I have given. I feel a great pity for those persons I know who are growing into old age without the continuing stimulation of younger minds and younger lifestyles.

Scholarly Reading

Then, much farther down the scale, I would put what is often regarded as a major source of learning, the printed page. Reading, I fear, has most of its value for me in buttressing my views. I realize I am not a scholar, gaining my ideas from the writings of others. Occasionally, however, a book not only confirms me in what I am tentatively thinking, but lures me considerably further. Sören Kierkegaard, Martin Buber, and Michael Polanyi, for example, would fall in that category. But I must

confess that when I wish to be scholarly, serendipity plays a very important part. Serendipity, in case you have forgotten, is "the faculty of making fortunate and unexpected discoveries by accident." I have an eerie feeling that I have that faculty. Let me give you the latest example. In preparing a current paper, "The Emerging Person: A New Revolution," I was aware of a few of the writers who were presenting similar views. But then Fred and Anne Richards (1973) sent me a copy of their book *Homonovus*, just off the press. It was most timely. John D. Rockefeller III (1973) likewise sent me a copy of his book *The Second American Revolution*, which was also highly pertinent. Then I was talking with a friend from northern California about my fantasies for my APA paper and he said, "Did you read the article by Joyce Carol Oates in the *Saturday Review?*" I had to confess complete ignorance not only of the article but of the author. His Xerox copy of the essay not only gave support to my view, but opened my eyes to a whole new facet of modern fiction. So, while one section of that paper may make it appear that I spent days or weeks researching in the library, at least half of that impression is due to serendipity. It has been a very frequent aid in my life.

MY CONCERN WITH COMMUNICATION

Still peering back—though my neck is getting stiff from that posture—I can see what is perhaps one overriding theme in my professional life. It is my caring about communication. From my very earliest years it has, for some reason, been a passionate concern of mine. I have been pained when I have seen others communicating past one another. I have wanted to communicate myself so that I could not be misunderstood. I have wanted to

understand, as profoundly as possible, the communication of the other, be he a client or friend or family member. I have wanted to *be* understood. I have tried to facilitate clarity of communication between individuals of the most diverse points of view. I have worked for better communication between groups whose perceptions and experiences are poles apart: strangers, members of different cultures, representatives of different strata of society. To give adequate examples would compass the length of my career. I will cite only one. The filmed experience of a group involved in the drug scene included "straight" individuals, such as a narcotics agent, and "stoned" individuals, including a convicted drug pusher. There were blacks and whites, the young and middle-aged, people from the ghetto and members of the middle class. The group process by which communication and closeness became a living part of this diverse group is an experience I shall never forget. It is unfortunate that the film's title, *Because That's My Way,* chosen for us, catches so little of the vivid interchange that occurred (Station WQED, 1971).

This obsession with communication has had its own unexpected rewards. I held a half-hour interview with a young woman named Gloria (some of you may have seen the film [Shostrom, 1965]) and a deeply communicative contact was established. To my complete surprise, she has kept in occasional touch with me for eight years, primarily in appreciation for the closeness we achieved. With Randy, the convicted drug pusher in the drug film, I was in constant correspondence for more than a year. Mr. Vac, one of my clients in our complex research on psychotherapy with schizophrenics, tracked me down after eight years with a "Hi, Doc," to let me know that he was still doing well and had never returned to the state hospital, even for a day.

I think such rewards are savored more as the years go by.

IN SUM

So I can sum up my informal look at my professional past by saying:

I am amazed at the impact of our work;

I have a dim comprehension that the time was ripening for it;

I look with amusement and affection at the ambivalence I have created in psychology;

I see with satisfaction the war with psychiatry concluding;

I am pleased to have played a part in the continuing drama of the behavioristic versus the humanistic philosophy;

I am puzzled and humbled by the disregard of what I see as my theoretical rigor;

I am perplexed by the later careers of some of the truly shining lights I have seen;

I am especially grateful for the gift of vital learnings from the people whose development and growth I have endeavored to facilitate;

I have confidence in the young, from whom I have continuously learned;

I discern more sharply the theme of my life as having been built around the desire for clarity of communication, with all its ramifying results.

THE NOW—AND THE FUTURE

I should stop here, but I cannot. It is always a strain for me to look backward. It is still the present and the

future that concern me most. I cannot close without a quick overview of my current interests and activities.

I am no longer actively engaged in individual therapy or empirical research. I am finding that after one passes the age of seventy, there are physical limitations on what one can do. I continue to engage in encounter groups when I believe they might have significant social impact. For example, I am involved in a program for the humanizing of medical education. Up to the present, more than two hundred high-status medical educators have been involved in intensive group experiences which appear to be more successful in facilitating change than we had dared hope. Perhaps more humanly sensitive physicians will be the result. Such group experiences certainly represent a new area of possible impact.

I have also helped to sponsor, and have taken some part in, interracial and intercultural groups, believing that better understanding between diverse groups is essential if our planet is to survive. The most difficult group was composed of citizens of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Represented in the group were militant and less militant Catholics, militant and less militant Protestants, and English. The film of that encounter portrays the participants' difficult and partial progress toward better understanding—a first step on a long road. I see this encounter group as a small test-tube attempt, which might be utilized in greater depth and much more widely.

I continue to write. I recognize that while my whole approach to persons and their relationships changes but slowly (and very little in its fundamentals), my interest in its application has shifted markedly. No longer am I primarily interested in individual therapeutic learning, but in broader and broader social implications. As I say this, the question arises in my mind, as it

often has in the past, "Am I spreading myself too thin?" Only the judgment of others can answer that question at some future date.

And then I garden. Those mornings when I cannot find time to inspect my flowers, water the young shoots I am propagating, pull a few weeds, spray some destructive insects, and pour just the proper fertilizer on some budding plants, I feel cheated. My garden supplies the same intriguing question I have been trying to meet in all my professional life: What are the effective conditions for growth? But in my garden, though the frustrations are just as immediate, the results, whether success or failure, are more quickly evident. And when, through patient, intelligent, and understanding care I have provided the conditions that result in the production of a rare or glorious bloom, I feel the same kind of satisfaction that I have felt in the facilitation of growth in a person or in a group of persons.

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Growing Old: Or Older and Growing

This chapter completes a trio of autobiographical papers. In Chapter 2, I present something of my own growth and the development of my thinking. Chapter 3 takes a backward look at my professional life. What follows tells of a recent decade in my life, from age sixty-five to age seventy-five. Since I am seventy-eight years old as I write this, I have written an "Update," which is placed at the end of this account.

This paper has gone through several stages. I presented one version early in 1977 to a large workshop in Brazil. A somewhat revised version was presented later to a small audience in San Diego. I gave the paper in the form that follows as part of a program entitled "Living Now: A Workshop on Life Stages" in La Jolla in July 1977.

I had been invited to give a talk on the older years. I realized, however, that I was poorly informed about aging in general, and that the only older person I really knew was myself. So I spoke about that person.

What is it like to be seventy-five years old? It is not the same as being fifty-five years old, or thirty-five, and

yet, for me, the differences are not so great as you might imagine. I'm not sure whether my story will be of any use or significance to anyone else, because I have been so uniquely fortunate. It is mostly for myself that I am going to set down a few perceptions and reactions. I have chosen to limit myself to the decade from age sixty-five to seventy-five, because sixty-five marks, for many people, the end of a productive life and the beginning of "retirement," whatever that means!

THE PHYSICAL SIDE

I do feel physical deterioration. I notice it in many ways. Ten years ago I greatly enjoyed throwing a frisbee. Now my right shoulder is so painfully arthritic that this kind of activity is out of the question. In my garden I realize that a task which would have been easy five years ago, but difficult last year, now seems like too much, and I had better leave it for my once-a-week gardener. This slow deterioration, with various minor disorders of vision, heartbeat, and the like, informs me that the physical portion of what I call "me" is not going to last forever.

Yet I still enjoy a four-mile walk on the beach. I can lift heavy objects, do all the shopping, cooking, and dishwashing when my wife is ill, carry my own luggage without puffing. The female form still seems to me one of the loveliest creations of the universe, and I appreciate it greatly. I feel as sexual in my *interests* as I was at thirty-five, though I can't say the same about my ability to perform. I am delighted that I am still sexually alive, even though I can sympathize with the remark of Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes upon leaving a burlesque house at age eighty: "Oh to be seventy again!" Yes, or sixty-five, or sixty!

So, I am well aware that I am obviously old. Yet from the inside I'm still the same person in many ways, neither old nor young. It is that person of whom I will speak.

ACTIVITIES

New Enterprises

In the past decade I have embarked on many new ventures involving psychological or even physical risk. It puzzles me that in most instances my engagement in these enterprises was triggered by a suggestion or a remark made by someone else. This makes me realize that frequently there must be a readiness in me, of which I am not aware, which springs into action only when someone presses the appropriate button. Let me illustrate.

My colleague Bill Coulson, along with a few others, said to me in 1968, "Our group should form a new and separate organization." Out of that suggestion came the Center for Studies of the Person—the zaniest, most improbable, and most influential nonorganization imaginable. Once the idea of the Center had been suggested, I was very active in the group that brought it into being; I helped nurture it—and ourselves—during the first difficult years.

A niece of mine, Ruth Cornell, an elementary schoolteacher, asked, "Why is there no book of yours on our reading lists in Education?" This sparked the initial thinking that led to my book, *Freedom to Learn*.

I never would have considered trying to influence the status-conscious medical profession, had it not been for my colleague Orienne Strode's dream of having a

humanizing impact on physicians through intensive group experiences. Skeptical but hopeful, I devoted energy to helping start the program. We ran a great risk of failure. Instead, the program has become widely influential. Nine hundred medical educators have participated in the encounter groups, along with many spouses and some physicians-in-training, who bring in the "worm's-eye-view" of medical education. It has been an exciting and rewarding development, now completely independent of any but the most minor assistance from me.

This summer we held our fifth sixteen-day intensive Workshop in the Person-Centered Approach. These workshops have taught me more than any other one venture in the past decade. I have learned and put into practice new ways of being myself. I have learned cognitively and intuitively about the group process and about group-initiated ways of forming a community. These have been tremendous experiences, involving a strong staff which has become a close professional family. We have done more and more risking as we try out new ways of being with a group. And how did I become involved in this large and time-consuming enterprise? Four years ago my daughter Natalie said to me, "Why don't we do a workshop together, perhaps around a client-centered approach?" Neither of us could have possibly guessed all that would grow out of that conversation.

My book *Carl Rogers on Personal Power* (1977) likewise found its initial spark in a conversation. Alan Nelson, a graduate student at the time, challenged me on my statement that there was no "politics" in client-centered therapy. This led me into a line of thought that I must have been very ready to pursue, because portions of the book simply wrote themselves.

Foolhardy or Wise?

The most recent and perhaps most risky venture was the trip that I and four other CSP members took to Brazil. In this case, the organizing efforts, the vision, and the persuasiveness of Eduardo Bandeira were the factors that caused me to agree to go. Some people believed the trip would be too long and hard for me at my age, and I had a few of these qualms myself about fifteen-hour plane flights and the like. And some felt it was arrogant to think that our efforts could in any way influence a vast country. But the opportunity to train Brazilian facilitators, most of whom had attended our workshops in the United States, in order that they could put on their own intensive workshops, was very attractive.

Then there was another opportunity. We were to meet audiences of six hundred to eight hundred people in three of Brazil's largest cities. These were two-day institutes, in which we would be together for a total of about twelve hours. Before we left the United States, we agreed that with meetings of such a large size and such a short duration, we would necessarily have to rely on giving talks. Yet, as the time approached, we felt more and more strongly that to talk *about* a person-centered approach, without sharing the control and direction of the sessions, without giving the participants a chance to express themselves and experience their own power, was inconsistent with our principles.

So we took some extremely far-out gambles. In addition to very short talks, we tried leaderless small groups, special-interest groups, a demonstration encounter group, dialogue between staff and audience. But the most daring thing was to form a large circle of eight hundred people (ten to twelve deep) and permit

feelings and attitudes to be expressed. Microphones were handed about to those who wished to speak. Participants and staff took part as equals. There was no one person or group exercising leadership. It became a mammoth encounter group. There was much initial chaos, but then people began to listen to one another. There were criticisms—sometimes violent—of the staff and of the process. There were persons who felt they had never learned so much in such a short time. There were the sharpest of differences. After one person blasted the staff for not answering questions, not taking control and giving evidence, the next person said, "But when, if ever, have we all felt so free to criticize, to express ourselves, to say *anything?*" Finally, there was constructive discussion of what participants would do with their learnings in their back-home situations.

After the first evening in São Paulo, when the session had been extremely chaotic and I was keenly aware that we had but six hours more with the group, I remember refusing to talk with anyone about that meeting. I was experiencing enormous confusion. Either I had helped launch an incredibly stupid experiment doomed to failure, or I had helped to innovate a whole new way of permitting eight hundred people to sense their own potentialities and to participate in forming their own learning experience. There was no way to predict which it would prove to be.

Perhaps the greater the risk, the greater the satisfaction. In São Paulo, the second evening, there was a real sense of community, and persons were experiencing significant changes in themselves. Informal follow-up in the weeks and months since then bear out the worthwhileness of the experience for hundreds of people in each of the three cities.

Never have I felt an extended trip to have been so valuable. I learned a great deal, and there is no doubt that we managed to create a facilitative climate in which all kinds of creative things—at personal, interpersonal, and group levels—happened. I believe we left a mark on Brazil, and certainly Brazil changed all of us. Certainly we have extended our vision of what can be done in very large groups.

So those are some of the activities—all extremely profitable to me—into which I have been drawn during this period.

Risk Taking

In these activities there has been, in each case, an element of risk. Indeed it seems to me that the experiences I value most in my recent life all entail considerable risk. So I should like to pause for a moment and speculate as to the reasons behind my taking of chances.

Why does it appeal to me to try the unknown, to gamble on something new, when I could easily settle for ways of doing things that I know from past experience would work very satisfactorily? I am not sure I understand fully, but I can see several factors that have made a difference.

The first factor concerns what I think of as my support group, the loose cluster of friends and close associates, most of whom have worked with me in one or another of these endeavors. In the interactions of this group, there is no doubt that we actually or implicitly encourage one another to do the new or daring thing. For example, I am certain that, acting singly, no member of our Brazil group would have gone so far in experimentation as did the five of us working together. We

could gamble because if we failed, we had colleagues who believed in us, who could help put the pieces back together. We gave each other courage.

A second element is my affinity for youth, and for the emerging lifestyle that younger people are helping to bring about. I cannot say why I have this affinity, but I know it exists. I have written about "the emerging person"of tomorrow, and I myself am drawn toward this newer way of being and living. I have wondered if I might simply be engaging in wishful thinking in describing such a person. But now I feel confirmed, for I have discovered that the Stanford Research Institute (1973) has completed a study in which it estimates that 45 million Americans are committed to "a way of living that reflects these inner convictions: first that it is better to have things on a human scale; second that it is better to live frugally, to conserve, recycle, not waste; and third that *the inner life*, rather than externals, is central" (Mitchell, 1977). I belong to that group, and trying to live in this new way is necessarily risky and uncertain.

Another factor: I am bored by safety and sureness. I know that sometimes when I prepare a talk or paper, it is very well received by an audience. This tells me that I could give the talk twenty times to twenty different audiences and I would be assured of a good reception. I simply cannot do this. If I give the same talk three or four times, I become bored with myself. I cannot bear to do it again. I could earn money, I could obtain a positive reaction, but I can't do it. I'm bored by knowing how it will turn out. I'm bored to hear myself saying the same things. It is necessary to my life to try something new.

But perhaps the major reason I am willing to take chances is that I have found that in doing so, whether I

succeed or fail, I *learn*. Learning, especially learning from experience, has been a prime element in making my life worthwhile. Such learning helps me to expand. So I continue to risk.

WRITINGS

In thinking about this talk I asked myself, "What have I produced during this past decade?" I was utterly astonished at what I found. The list of my publications, which my secretary keeps up to date, tells me that I have turned out four books, some forty shorter pieces, and several films since I turned sixty-five! This is, I believe, more than I have published or produced during any previous decade. I simply cannot believe it!

Furthermore, each of the books is on a distinctively different subject, though they are all tied together by a common philosophy. *Freedom to Learn,* in 1969, concerns my unconventional approach to education. My book on encounter groups, published in 1970, expresses my accumulating learnings on this exciting development. In 1972, *Becoming Partners* was published; this book pictures many of the new patterns in relationships between men and women. And now, *Carl Rogers on Personal Power* explores the emerging politics of a person-centered approach, as applied to many fields.

Of the two-score papers, four stand out in my mind—two of them looking forward, two backward. [All four papers appear in this volume.] An article on empathy ("Empathic—An Unappreciated Way of Being") consolidates what I have learned about that extremely important way of being, and I think well of this paper. I also like the freshness of my statement on "Do We Need 'A'

Reality?" Then, two other papers reflect upon the development of my philosophy of interpersonal relationships ("My Philosophy of Interpersonal Relationships and How It Grew"), and my career as a psychologist ("In Retrospect: Forty-Six Years").

I look on this surge of writing with wonder. What is the explanation? Different persons in their later years have had very individual reasons for their writing. At age eighty, Arnold Toynbee asks himself the question, "What has made me work?" He responds, "*Conscience*. In my attitude toward work I am American-minded, not Australian-minded. To be always working and still at full stretch, has been laid upon me by my conscience as a duty. This enslavement to work for work's sake is, I suppose, irrational, but thinking so would not liberate me. If I slacked, or even just slackened, I should be conscience-stricken and therefore uneasy and unhappy, so this spur seems likely to continue to drive me as long as I have any working power left in me" (Toynbee, 1969). To live such a driven life seems very sad to me. It certainly bears little resemblance to my motivation.

I know that Abraham Maslow, in the years before his death, had a different urge. He experienced a great deal of internal pressure because he felt there was so much he had to say that was still unsaid. This urge to get it all down kept him writing to the end.

My view is quite different. My psychoanalyst friend, Paul Bergman, wrote that no person has more than one seminal idea in his or her lifetime; all writings by that person are simply further explications of that one theme. I agree. I think this describes my products.

Certainly, one reason for writing is that I have a curious mind. I like to see and explore the implications of

ideas—mine and others'. I like to be logical, to pursue the ramifications of a thought. I am deeply involved in the world of feeling, intuition, nonverbal as well as verbal communication, but I also enjoy thinking and writing about that world. Conceptualizing the world clarifies its meaning for me.

Yet there is, I believe, a much more important reason for my writing. It seems to me that I am still—inside—the shy boy who found communication very difficult in interpersonal situations: who wrote love letters which were more eloquent than his direct expressions of love; who expressed himself freely in high school themes, but felt himself too "odd" to say the same things in class. That boy is still very much a part of me. Writing is my way of communicating with a world to which, in a very real sense, I feel I do not quite belong. I wish very much to be understood, but I don't expect to be. Writing is the message I seal in the bottle and cast into the sea. My astonishment is that people on an enormous number of beaches—psychological and geographical—have found the bottles and discovered that the messages speak to them. So I continue to write.

LEARNINGS

Taking Care of Myself

I have always been better at caring for and looking after others than I have in caring for myself. But in these later years I have made progress.

I have always been a very *responsible* person. If someone else is not looking after the details of an enterprise or the persons in a workshop, I must. But I have changed. In our 1976 Workshop on the Person-

Centered Approach in Ashland, Oregon, when I was not feeling well, and at the 1977 workshop in Arcozelo, Brazil, I shed all responsibility for the conduct of these complex undertakings and left it completely in the hands of others. I needed to take care of myself. So I let go of all responsibility except the responsibility—and the satisfaction—of being myself. For me it was a most unusual feeling: to be comfortably irresponsible with no feelings of guilt. And, to my surprise, I found I was more effective that way.

I have taken better care of myself physically, in a variety of ways. I have also learned to respect my psychological needs. Three years ago a workshop group helped me to realize how harried and driven I felt by outside demands—"nibbled to death by ducks" was the way one person put it, and the expression captured my feelings exactly. So I did what I have never done before: I spent ten days absolutley alone in a beach cottage which had been offered me, and I refreshed myself immensely. I found I thoroughly enjoyed being with me. I *like* me.

I have been more able to ask for help. I ask others to carry things for me, to do things for me, instead of proving that I can do it myself. I can also ask for personal help. When Helen, my wife, was very ill, and I was close to the breaking point from being on call as a 24-hour nurse, a housekeeper, a professional person in much demand, and a writer, I asked for help—and got it—from a therapist friend. I explored and tried to meet my own needs. I explored the strain that this period was putting on our marriage. I realized that it was necessary for my survival to live *my* life, and that this must come first, even though Helen was so ill. I am not quick to turn to others, but I am much more aware of the fact

that I can't handle everything by myself. In these varied ways, I do a better job of prizing and looking after the person that is me.

Serenity?

It is often said or assumed that the older years are years of calm and serenity. I have found this attitude misleading. I believe I do have a longer perspective on events outside of myself, and hence I am often more of an objective observer than I once was. Yet, in contrast to this, events that touch me personally often evoke a stronger reaction than they would have years ago. When I am excited, I get very high. When I am concerned, I am more deeply disturbed. Hurts seem sharper, pain is more intense, tears come more easily, joy reaches higher peaks, even anger—with which I have always had trouble—is felt more keenly. Emotionally, I am more volatile than I used to be. The range from feeling depressed to feeling elated seems greater, and either state is more easily triggered.

Perhaps this volatility is due to my risk-taking style of living. Perhaps it comes from the greater sensitivity acquired in encounter groups. Perhaps it is a characteristic of the older years that has been overlooked. I do not know. I simply know that my feelings are more easily stirred, are sharper. I am more intimately acquainted with them all.

Opening Up to New Ideas

During these years I have been, I think, more open to new ideas. The ones of most importance to me have to do with inner space—the realm of the psychological powers and the psychic capabilities of the human per-

son. In my estimation, this area constitutes the new frontier of knowledge, the cutting edge of discovery. Ten years ago I would not have made such a statement. But reading, experience, and conversation with some who are working in these fields have changed my view. Human beings have potentially available a tremendous range of intuitive powers. We are indeed wiser than our intellects. There is much evidence. We are learning how sadly we have neglected the capacities of the nonrational, creative "metaphoric mind"—the right half of our brain. Biofeedback has shown us that if we let ourselves function in a less conscious, more relaxed way, we can learn at some level to control temperature, heart rate, and all kinds of organic functions. We find that terminal cancer patients, when given an intensive program of meditation and fantasy training focused on overcoming the malignancy, experience a surprising number of remissions.

I am open to even more mysterious phenomena—precognition, thought transference, clairvoyance, human auras, Kirlian photography, even out-of-the-body experiences. These phenomena may not fit with known scientific laws, but perhaps we are on the verge of discovering new types of lawful order. I feel I am learning a great deal in a new area, and I find the experience enjoyable and exciting.

Intimacy

In the past few years, I have found myself opening up to much greater intimacy in relationships. I see this development as definitely the result of workshop experiences. I am more ready to touch and be touched, physically. I do more hugging and kissing of both men and women. I am more aware of the sensuous side of

my life. I also realize how much I desire close psychological contact with others. I recognize how much I need to care deeply for another and to receive that kind of caring in return. I can say openly what I have always recognized dimly: that my deep involvement in psychotherapy was a cautious way of meeting this need for intimacy without risking too much of my person. Now I am more willing to be close in other relationships and to risk giving more of myself. I feel as though a whole new depth of capacity for intimacy has been discovered in me. This capacity has brought me much hurt, but an even greater share of joy.

How have these changes affected my behavior? I have developed deeper and more intimate relationships with men; I have been able to share without holding back, trusting the security of the friendship. Only during my college days—never before or after—did I have a group of really trusted, intimate men friends. So this is a new, tentative, adventurous development which seems very rewarding. I also have much more intimate communication with women. There are now a number of women with whom I have platonic but psychologically intimate relationships which have tremendous meaning for me.

With these close friends, men and women, I can share any aspect of my self—the painful, joyful, frightening, crazy, insecure, egotistical, self-deprecating feelings I have. I can share fantasies and dreams. Similarly, my friends share deeply with me. These experiences I find very enriching.

In my marriage of so many years, and in these friendships, I am continuing to learn more in the realm of intimacy. I am becoming more sharply aware of the times when I experience pain, anger, frustration, and rejection, as well as the closeness born of shared mean-

ings or the satisfaction of being understood and accepted. I have learned how hard it is to confront with negative feelings a person about whom I care deeply. I have learned how expectations in a relationship turn very easily into demands made on the relationship. In my experience, I have found that one of the hardest things for me is to care for a person for whatever he or she *is*, at that time, in the relationship. It is so much easier to care for others for what I *think* they are, or *wish* they would be, or feel they *should* be. To care for this person for what he or she is, dropping my own expectations of what I want him or her to be for me, dropping my desire to change this person to suit my needs, is a most difficult but enriching way to a satisfying intimate relationship.

All of this has been a changing part of my life during the past decade. I find myself more open to closeness and to love.

PERSONAL JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES

In this period, I have had some painful and many pleasant experiences. The greatest stress revolves around coping with Helen's illness, which during the past five years has been very serious. She has met her pain and her restricted life with the utmost of courage. Her disabilities have posed new problems for each of us, both physical and psychological—problems that we continue to work through. It has been a very difficult period of alternating despair and hope, with currently much more of the latter.

She is making remarkable progress in fighting her way back, often by sheer force of will, to a more normal life, built around her own purposes. But it has not been easy. She first had to choose whether she wanted to

live, whether there was any purpose in living. Then I have baffled and hurt her by the fact of my own independent life. While she was so ill, I felt heavily burdened by our close togetherness, heightened by her need for care. So I determined, for my own survival, to live a life of my own. She is often deeply hurt by this, and by the changing of my values. On her side, she is giving up the old model of being the supportive wife. This change brings her in touch with her anger at me and at society for giving her that socially approved role. On my part, I am angered at any move that would put us back in the old complete togetherness; I stubbornly resist anything that seems like control. So there are more tensions and difficulties in our relationship than ever before, more feelings that we are trying to work through, but there is also more honesty, as we strive to build new ways of being together.

So this period has involved struggle and strain. But it has also contained a wealth of positive experiences. There was our golden wedding celebration three years ago—several days of fun in a resort setting with our two children, our daughter-in-law, and all six of our grandchildren. It is such a joy to us that our son and daughter are now not only our offspring, but two of our best and closest friends, with whom we share our inner lives. There have been numerous intimate visits with them individually, and similar visits with close friends from other parts of the country. There is the continuing and growing closeness with our circle of friends here—all of them younger.

For me there have been the pleasures of gardening and of long walks. There have been honors and awards, more than I believe I deserve. The most touching was the honorary degree I received from Leiden University on the occasion of its four-hundredth anniversary,

brought to me by a special emissary from this ancient Dutch seat of learning. There have been the dozens of highly personal letters from those whose lives have been touched or changed by my writings. These never cease to amaze me. That I could have had an important part in altering the life of a man in South Africa or a woman in the "outback" of Australia still seems a bit incredible—like magic, somehow.

THOUGHTS REGARDING DEATH

And then there is the ending of life. It may surprise you that at my age I think very little about death. The current popular interest in it surprises me.

Ten or fifteen years ago I felt quite certain that death was the total end of the person. I still regard that as the most likely prospect; however, it does not seem to me a tragic or awful prospect. I have been able to *live* my life—not to the full, certainly, but with a satisfying degree of fullness—and it seems natural that my life should come to an end. I already have a degree of immortality in other persons. I have sometimes said that, psychologically, I have strong sons and daughters all over the world. Also, I believe that the ideas and the ways of being that I and others have helped to develop will continue, for some time at least. So if I, as an individual, come to a complete and final end, aspects of me will still live on in a variety of growing ways, and that is a pleasant thought.

I think that no one can know whether he or she fears death until it arrives. Certainly, death is the ultimate leap in the dark, and I think it is highly probable that the apprehension I feel when going under an anesthetic will be duplicated or increased when I face death. Yet I don't experience a really deep fear of this process. So

far as I am aware, my fears concerning death relate to its circumstances. I have a dread of any long and painful illness leading to death. I dread the thought of senility or of partial brain damage due to a stroke. My preference would be to die quickly, before it is too late to die with dignity. I think of Winston Churchill. I didn't mourn his death. I mourned the fact that death had not come sooner, when he could have died with the dignity he deserved.

My belief that death is the end has, however, been modified by some of my learnings of the past decade. I am impressed with the accounts by Raymond Moody (1975) of the experience of persons who have been so near death as to be declared dead, but who have come back to life. I am impressed by some of the reports of reincarnation, although reincarnation seems a very dubious blessing indeed. I am interested in the work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and the conclusions she has reached about life after death. I find definitely appealing the views of Arthur Koestler that individual consciousness is but a fragment of a cosmic consciousness, the fragment being reabsorbed into the whole upon the death of the individual. I like his analogy of the individual river eventually flowing into the tidal waters of the ocean, dropping its muddy silt as it enters the boundless sea.

So I consider death with, I believe, an openness to the experience. It will be what it will be, and I trust I can accept it as either an end to, or a continuation of life.

CONCLUSION

I recognize that I have been unusually fortunate in my health, in my marriage, in my family, in my stimulating younger friends, in the unexpectedly adequate income from my books. So I am in no way typical.

But for me, these past ten years have been fascinating—full of adventuresome undertakings. I have been able to open my self to new ideas, new feelings, new experiences, new risks. Increasingly I discover that being alive involves taking a chance, acting on less than certainty, engaging with life.

All of this brings change and for me the process of change *is* life. I realize that if I were stable and steady and static, I would be living death. So I accept confusion and uncertainty and fear and emotional highs and lows because they are the price I willingly pay for a flowing, perplexing, exciting life.

As I consider all the decades of my existence, there is only one other, the period at the Counseling Center at the University of Chicago, which can be compared to this one. It too involved risk, learning, personal growth and enrichment. But it was also a period of deep personal insecurity and strenuous professional struggle, much more difficult than these past years. So I believe I am being honest when I say that, all in all, this has been the most satisfying decade in my life. I have been increasingly able to be myself and have enjoyed doing just that.

As a boy, I was rather sickly, and my parents have told me that it was predicted I would die young. This prediction has been proven completely wrong in one sense, but has come profoundly true in another sense. I think it is correct that I will never live to be old. So now I agree with the prediction: I believe that I will die *young*.

UPDATE—1979

I choose to fill out this chapter by concentrating on one very full year—1979—in which pain, mourning, change, satisfaction, and risk were all markedly present.

Living the Process of Dying

In the eighteen months prior to my wife's death in March 1979, there were a series of experiences in which Helen and I and a number of friends were all involved, which decidedly changed my thoughts and feelings about dying and the continuation of the human spirit. The experiences were intensely personal, and some day I may write fully about them. For now, I can only hint. The following story is mostly about Helen, but I will concentrate on my portion of the experience.

Helen was a great skeptic about psychic phenomena and immortality. Yet, upon invitation, she and I visited a thoroughly honest medium, who would take no money. There, Helen experienced, and I observed, a "contact" with her deceased sister, involving facts that the medium could not possibly have known. The messages were extraordinarily convincing, and all came through the tipping of a sturdy table, tapping out letters. Later, when the medium came to our home and *my own table* tapped out messages in our living room, I could only be open to an incredible, and certainly nonfraudulent experience.

Helen also had visions and dreams of her family members, which made her increasingly certain that she would be welcomed "on the other side." As death came closer, she "saw" evil figures and the devil by her hospital bed. But when it was suggested by a friend that these might be creations of her own mind, she dismissed them, finally dismissing the devil by telling him he had made a mistake in coming, and she was not going with him. He never reappeared.

Also in these closing days, Helen had visions of an inspiring white light which came close, lifted her from the bed, and then deposited her back on the bed.

In this chapter, I mentioned that in these last years the distance between us had grown increasingly great. I wanted to care for her, but I was not at all sure that I loved her. One day, when she was very near death, I was in an internal frenzy which I could not understand at all. When I went to the hospital as usual to feed her her supper, I found myself pouring out to her how much I had loved her, how much she had meant in my life, how many positive initiatives she had contributed to our long partnership. I felt I had told her all these things before, but that night they had an intensity and sincerity they had not had before. I told her she should not feel obligated to live, that all was well with her family, and that she should feel free to live or die, as *she* wished. I also said I hoped the white light would come again that night.

Evidently I had released her from feeling that she had to live—for others. I later learned that when I left, she called together the nurses on the floor, thanked them for all they had done for her, and told them she was going to die.

By morning she was in a coma, and the following morning she died very peacefully, with her daughter holding her hand, several friends and I present.

That evening, friends of mine who had a long-standing appointment with the medium previously mentioned held a session with this woman. They were very soon in contact with Helen, who answered many questions: she had heard everything that was said while she was in a coma; she had experienced the white light and spirits coming for her; she was in contact with her family; she had the form of a young woman; her dying had been very peaceful and without pain.

All these experiences, so briefly suggested rather than described, have made me much more open to the

possibility of the continuation of the individual human spirit, something I had never before believed possible. These experiences have left me very much interested in all types of paranormal phenomena. They have quite changed my understanding of the process of dying. I now consider it possible that each of us is a continuing spiritual essence lasting over time, and occasionally incarnated in a human body.

That all of these thoughts contrast sharply with some of the closing portions of the chapter, written only two years earlier, is obvious.

Activity and Risk

Perhaps partly in spite of, and partly because of, Helen's death, I have recently accepted more invitations than usual to participate with other staff members in workshops at home and abroad. The list includes: a workshop for educators in Venezuela; a large, turbulent workshop near Rome, with an international staff; a brief but deep experience with a Paris program for training group facilitators; a very rewarding regional person-centered workshop on Long Island (the second year with the same eastern staff); a person-centered workshop at Princeton, with many foreign participants; a fascinating workshop in Poland, held at a resort near Warsaw; and a beautifully flowing four-day workshop on "Life Transitions" in Pawling, New York. In addition to these activities, I have written some of the papers included in this volume.

I would like to comment on two of the programs mentioned above. The Princeton workshop, consisting of ninety persons, was probably the most difficult for me of any of the workshops in which I have participated. Yet, at least one of the staff feels it was the best such program we have ever conducted. For me, it was very

painful, and the group only reached the edge, I felt, of becoming a community.

I perceive a number of factors as having made the workshop a painful experience. The staff had decided that this seventh annual person-centered workshop would be our last in this series; we felt very close to one another, but we were moving in different directions individually and we did not want these person-centered workshops to become a "routine" experience. The staff, from its long experience together, was probably more acceptant of negative, hostile, critical feelings than ever before—and they were expressed in abundance by participants, directed toward one another and toward the staff. There were a large number from foreign countries, and their scorn, contempt, and anger at the United States and at the American participants was freely voiced. There were two persons who knew exactly how the workshop should be conducted. (The two views were very different, but they both were strongly against our unstructured approach, and each attracted quite a following, though not enough to change the general direction of the workshop.) There were also several participants who showed evidence of deep personal disturbance.

When all these factors were added to the usual chaos of a large group trying to develop its own program and find its own way, the result was horrendous. Frustration and anger were very frequently expressed. When some members endeavored to move in creative and positive ways, they were blocked by others. It seemed genuinely uncertain whether the trust placed in these individuals to sense and use their own power constructively would be justified. We were all our own worst enemies. Only toward the end of the ten days did the faint beginnings of a unity in divergence, and a community built on diversity, show themselves. Yet, to my surprise,

many participants wrote later to tell of their very positive learnings and changes, which emerged from the pain, the turbulence—and the closeness. I too learned, but it was difficult learning.

The Polish workshop was unusual for a number of reasons. I could hardly believe the degree of interest in my work, which drew together ninety people, both professional and nonprofessional. The Polish staff felt insecure, so the facilitation came largely from the four Americans who were present. This was a disappointment at the time, because I had hoped for more Polish leadership. In the middle of the week-long session, as individuals sensed their power and began to use it, many, especially the professionals, used it to hurt others. Hurtful labels and diagnoses, skillful put-downs, became quite prominent. To me, it resembled Princeton, and I thought, "Oh, no! Not again!" But largely due to a beautifully honest Polish woman, a staff member, people began to be aware of the consequences of such behavior, and it dropped away. By the end of the week, we were a close and loving community.

I was unaware of the full measure of what had occurred until I received a letter from a participant some months later, from which I quote: "People here talk of the 'historic event' that took place in Leskarzev—so many diverse people, so many professionals, psychiatrists and psychologists (each of them possessing the ultimate truth about the helping relationship), hating and putting each other down constantly on an everyday basis—all of them now integrated, and yes, without losing their own personality, without any imposing." I am happy that I did not know in advance of the professional rivalry and backbiting.

I found the group as a whole to be very sophisticated, intelligent, and often more scholarly than a similar