

# A Client-Centered Review of Rogers With Gloria

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Carl Rogers's nondirective theory and his response style with Gloria (E. L. Shostrom, 1965) are discussed in reply to S. A. Wickman and C. Campbell's (2003) "An Analysis of How Carl Rogers Enacted Client-Centered Conversation With Gloria." Client-centered studies of C. Rogers's transcripts give context for reformulating S. A. Wickman and C. Campbell's "devices" (p. 179) in a manner consistent with C. Rogers's nondirective attitude. Awareness of varying views of C. Rogers's Gloria session as an example of his work can enrich training use of the film.

The Shostrom (1965) film *Three Approaches to Psychotherapy* contains a demonstration session between Carl Rogers and a client named Gloria. This article is a response to Wickman and Campbell's (2003) article "An Analysis of How Carl Rogers Enacted Client-Centered Conversation With Gloria." Wickman and Campbell's purpose in analyzing Rogers's speaking style with Gloria was to show that his conversational style implements the necessary therapeutic conditions he espoused and to deepen counselor educators' use of the Gloria film (p. 179). Their refreshing analysis invites a reopening of discussion concerning the Rogers portion of this famous training tool. The intention here is to reply to and complement that article through three discussions.

The first discussion shifts the emphasis from the technical, the likely impacts of Rogers's "devices" (Wickman & Campbell, 2003, p. 179), to the attitudinal, how the nondirective attitude informed Rogers's responses to Gloria. Wickman and Campbell connected Rogers's behaviors to the core conditions but left out the nondirective attitude. Because client-centered counselors are defined not by techniques but by the embodiment of certain attitudes, a shift in emphasis can enhance the utility of the Gloria tape for teaching client-centered counseling and the common therapeutic factors. The intention here is to highlight the paradigm shift set in motion with Rogers's (1942) conception of a nondirective approach to counseling and to share with the wider professional counseling community the salience of the nondirective attitude throughout Rogers's career as well as in contemporary client-centered practice.

The second discussion supplements Wickman and Campbell's (2003) depiction of Rogers's therapy with the thoughts of present-day client-centered writers. Rogers initiated the practice of recording and analyzing counseling sessions and left a concrete legacy of at least 158 recordings and transcripts of sessions that occurred between 1940 and 1986 (Lietaer & Brodley, 2003). Client-centered analyses of Rogers's response style with real and demonstration clients (Bozarth, 2002; Bradburn, 1996; Brodley, 1994, 2001; Brody, 1991; Merry,

1996) buttress one's understanding of Rogerian theory and practice and can clarify Rogers's likely therapeutic intent with Gloria. Wickman and Campbell found distinguishable dialogue styles, "devices" (p. 179), in Rogers's session with Gloria. These devices are reformulated here in the light of Rogers' deemphasis of technique and his concentration on therapist attitude (Rogers, 1951, 1957, 1959, 1961).

The third discussion examines whether the Rogers portion of this commonly used training film is a worthy example of client-centered therapy or of Rogers's best practice. Within contemporary client-centered circles, the modeling value of Rogers with Gloria is questioned by some (Brodley, 2004; Zimring, 1996) and heralded by others (Bohart, 1991; Moon, 2005b; Raskin & Rogers, 2005; Shlien, 2003). To enrich educational discussions of the film, this client-centered controversy is brought to light. I also share my own thoughts, which are based on an informal phenomenological study (Moon, 2005a) of the session.

## An Attitudinal Approach

Wickman and Campbell's (2003) article analyzed Rogers's session with Gloria primarily with an eye to counselor enactment of the facilitative conditions rather than to counselors' experiences of the conditions (Rogers, 1959, p. 213). In contrast, this discussion aims to highlight the attitudinal thrust of Rogers's (1959, pp. 213–215, 1980, p. 115) theory with an emphasis on the counselor's nondirective attitude.

The task of the client-centered counselor is attitudinal in nature. Rogers revolutionized psychotherapy by conceptualizing the individual not as an object constrained by personality traits but as a person in process (Rogers, 1961, pp. 186–187; Van Belle, 1980, pp. 70–71), a client as a teleological agent, who, within a humanistic, phenomenological paradigm, is entitled to direct his or her own therapy.

A foundational hypothesis of client-centered theory is the actualizing tendency from which the counselor infers

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that every client has an innate living capacity and movement toward self-enhancement and fulfillment (Bozarth, 1998; Brodley, 1999a; Rogers, 1959, 1977). Through attention to the sovereignty of client choice and client self-direction and through dedication to respecting the rights of every human being, client-centered counseling radically departs from the medical model paradigm in which clients are assessed, diagnosed, and treated.

The full import of working within a phenomenological model is commonly misunderstood and underestimated (Bozarth, 1998; Brodley, 1997, 2002; Grant, 2004). A counseling theory founded on a holistic viewpoint and respect for each individual's unique experience demands of the counselor an attitude of nonjudgment and noninterference. Rogers's theory of therapy continued in the nondirective spirit through the final 45 years of his career. As late as 1985, 20 years after the Shostrom (1965) film, Rogers said,

Many therapists today have not had enough experience in farming . . . too many therapists think they can make something happen. . . I like much better the approach of an agriculturalist or a farmer. . . I can't make corn grow, but I can provide the right soil and plant it in the right area and see that it gets enough water; I can nurture it so that exciting things happen. I think that's the nature of therapy. It's so unfortunate that we've so long followed a medical model. . . A growth model is much more appropriate to most people, to most situations. (Rogers & Russell, 2002, p. 259)

Late in life, Rogers (1980) summed up his growth-model theory of therapy, stating, "Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided" (p. 115). The facilitative attitudinal conditions to which he referred are congruence, empathic understanding, and unconditional positive regard.

Congruence is the integrated internal state of the counselor, the counselor's readiness for setting aside concerns and personal preoccupations and for being available and open in relationship with the client. Rogers at varying times referred to this condition as genuineness, openness, authenticity, or transparency. These synonyms can be misleading unless understood as complementary to the therapeutic intention to be present and empathically receptive of the client's communications and experience. Shlien (2003) described congruence as "the ability to listen . . . without being impeded by the reverberations in oneself" (p. 15). The other two facilitative conditions depend on the counselor's congruence, the counselor's ability to attend to the client.

Empathic understanding refers to the counselor's devotion to following and grasping the client's communications, intentions,

and meanings. "Thus it means to sense the hurt or the pleasure of another as he senses it, and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them" (Rogers, 1959, p. 210). Years later, Rogers (1980) said, "To be with another in this way means that, for the time being, you lay aside your own values in order to enter another's world without prejudice" (p. 143). The counselor's empathic understanding is not automatic. Often, it arises from an interactive process wherein the client speaks, and, as necessary for following and understanding (Brodley, 1998; Raskin, 2005, pp. 330-331; Rogers, 1951, p. 29), the counselor tentatively checks his or her understanding with the client.

Unconditional positive regard is closely related to the nondirective attitude of the counselor. It is the counselor's *acceptant willingness to receive any and all communications* from the client as being the client's experience, the client's perceptions, intentions, wishes, and worries, all without judgment. Unconditional positive regard was also referred to by Rogers (1959) as acceptance and prizing (p. 208). "It means a caring for the client as a *separate* person, with permission to have his own feelings, his own experiences" (Rogers, 1957, p. 98). This form of caring is communicated through empathic reception, attunement without prejudice, interest, the wish to understand, and a willingness to be a companion to the client on the client's journey (Bozarth, 1998; Brodley & Schneider, 2001).

Rogers's (1959) exact instructions to counselors in his most formal theory statement are that "the therapist is *experiencing unconditional positive regard* toward the client [and] that the therapist is *experiencing an empathic* understanding of the client's *internal frame of reference*" (p. 213).

The nondirective attitude is both cause and consequence of the three therapeutic attitudes. On the one hand, for a counselor whose first premise is the choice to work nondirectively with clients (Brodley, 1997; Grant, 1990, 2004; Levitt, 2005; Moon, 2005b), Rogers's necessary and sufficient conditions serve as attitudinal vehicles or guides that give the counselor a way to be, a way to behave. Such counselors have an attitude "of being humbled before the mystery of others and wishing only to acknowledge and respect them . . . [and have] an almost aesthetic appreciation for the uniqueness and otherness of the client" (Grant, 1990, p. 83).

On the other hand, any counselor who regards the core conditions as sufficient as well as necessary and, therefore, is devoted entirely to striving for empathic understanding and acceptance of the client, cannot help but be nondirective toward the client. A counselor with directive intent might try to use empathic understanding as a tool for assisting in the diagnosis of a client, but such use of empathic understanding would be inconsistent with unconditional positive regard. A counselor who is continually engaged in empathically understanding and accepting the client has no room for any directiveness (Bozarth, 1998).

It is not surprising that counselor educators are interested in teaching the time-proven therapeutic attitudinal conditions



of congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding to students. Therapeutic relationship variables, alongside the inner and outer resources of the client, have been established as intrinsic to successful outcome (Bozarth, 1998; Bozarth, Zimring, & Tausch, 2002; Cornelius-White, 2002; Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 1997; Patterson, 2000).

Rogers's (1951) contention from the beginning was that the relationship and client resources were the critical variables. . . . Rogers's (1957, 1959) postulates of the necessary and sufficient therapeutic conditions emerge even from the specificity research [of recent decades] as a phoenix of the abiding thread of successful therapy. (Cornelius-White, 2002, p. 221)

There is a dilemma, however, for counselor educators of other approaches who wish to provide students with skills derived from the Rogerian conditions as foundation for erecting an edifice of eclectic therapeutic interventions. As Glauser and Bozarth (2001) suggested,

over three decades of graduate students have observed the "Gloria" tapes. . . . The focus of these tapes is on . . . what the counselor says and does. . . . Rogers's demonstration was characteristic of this interpretation as students learned "how to" reflect and "to do" relationship-oriented therapy. . . . Rogers (1986) indicated that the greatest distortion of his work was the misunderstanding of the *method* of "reflection." He added that this distortion was in large part the result of his own early emphasis on method rather than on the counselor's *attitudes*. (p. 143)

Rogers's therapist conditions are attitudinal in nature; their implementation is based on trusting the client's ability and right to self-determination and on viewing the conditions as sufficient for therapeutic change without the imposition of assessments or techniques. Viewing the conditions as necessary but not sufficient renders the counselor unable to fully embody the attitudes. If in an eclectic, or mixed-model, context, the counselor is using the conditions manipulatively to set the relationship stage for an intervention of choice, then the conditions being used are not the conditions defined by Rogers. "The nondirective attitude . . . exists in the therapist's intentions to experience the values of respect and trust as consistently and deeply as possible and to act in relation to clients only in ways that express these values" (Brodley, 1997, p. 19).

The phenomenological and nondirective thrust of client-centered counseling privileges attitude, not behavioral devices, and points in a different direction concerning counselor training. Study of Rogers's session with Gloria can illuminate his therapeutic attitude and response style. I advise counselor educators to highlight the attitudinal rather than the technical thrust of Rogers's way of being with Gloria. The following section integrates Wickman and Campbell's (2003) findings concerning Rogers's response style with Gloria with those

of client-centered researchers who have examined additional sessions of Rogers.

## ■ Rogers's Response Style: Attitudinal and Not Technical

Examination of Rogers's career-long manner of responding to clients can inform discussion of client-centered theory in general and as practiced by Rogers with Gloria in particular. Client-centered analyses of Rogers's transcripts (Bozarth, 2002; Brodley, 1994, 2001; Brodley & Brody, 1990; Brody, 1991; Merry, 1996) have noted various category names for classifying the responses Rogers made to client statements.

In each of these analyses, the preponderance of responses by Rogers, generally about 89%, were categorized as "empathic following" responses (Bozarth, 2002; Brodley, 1994, 2001; Brodley & Brody, 1990; Brody, 1991; Merry, 1996). These analyses tend to highlight a distinction between counselor responses that, regardless of syntax, are tentative formulations made within or responding within the client's frame of reference and responses that are statements arising from the counselor's frame of reference. These studies lead to the conclusion that "Rogers' talk in therapy is predominantly *responsive in a nondirective manner*" (Brodley & Brody, 1990, p. 4). His "empathic checking responses" were "statements expressing the *client's frame of reference, not the therapist's frame of reference*" (p. 4). As Tony Merry (1996) said, "Rogers successfully attempted empathically to understand his clients as deeply as he could, [in a] spirit of open communication. . . . Nothing more, and nothing less" (p. 281). Merry further noted that although Rogers

was not averse to communicating something of his own emotional state, or his own experience, (and both of these, by definition, lie outside the client's frames of reference), actual examples of him doing this are quite rare. . . . The transcripts do not reveal a systematic application of "skills" or "techniques." . . . [H]is communication was simple, economical and idiosyncratic in the sense of personal or individual. One does not get the impression that Rogers' method was to employ a specific linguistic device in response to a specific form of client statement. (p. 280)

Bozarth (2002) analyzed three transcripts (including the transcript of Rogers's session with Gloria) that spanned Rogers' career and concluded that, throughout his career, Rogers was

dedicated to the client's pace, direction, and way of being. . . . His responses . . . were predominantly dedicated to the unspoken question, "Is this the way it is in you?" (Rogers, 1986, p. 376). . . . He remained dedicated to discovering the perceptual world of the client. (pp. 45-46)

In sum, transcript analyses by client-centered scholars tend to depict Rogers's therapy style as responsive and nondirective.

These findings point toward an attitudinal and nontechnical view of Rogers's therapy with clients.

Wickman and Campbell (2003) categorized Rogers's dialogue style into the following categories: nonexpert language, meta-statements, affiliative negative assessment of the difficulty of the process, first-person quotes externalizing Gloria's internal dialogue, invitations for repair, withholding direct responses to requests for advice, and problem reformulation. Wickman and Campbell asked, "How did Rogers's conversational devices function to enact empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard?" (p. 179). These authors recognized that a lot more is going on in the Gloria film than can be gleaned from an unfocused viewing of the film. However, use of the concept devices can be construed as reducing Rogers to a technician manipulating his clients. Another way to examine Wickman and Campbell's findings concerning Rogers's manner of responding to Gloria is to examine each of their found devices in light of the nondirective attitude. Each of Wickman and Campbell's findings is examined in turn.

### Nonexpert Language

Wickman and Campbell (2003) noted Rogers's nonexpert language as being supportive of the conditions genuineness and unconditional positive regard (pp. 179–180). Examples of such language include "I really don't know what we will be able to make of it, but, uh, I hope we can . . ."; "I'd be glad to know whatever concerns you . . ."; "I sure wish . . ."; and "And I guess . . ." The latter two examples are responses to direct questions asked by Gloria. Wickman and Campbell recognized Rogers's nonexpert language as communicative of curiosity, tentativeness, and acknowledgment of not being an expert about what is best for the client. This manner of speaking is expressive of a nondirective, interested, and respectful attitude.

Brodley (2001) has described both her own and Rogers's style of responding to clients as "plain" (p. 20), meaning that she has no other agenda for the client. In an analysis of therapist responses in 20 of her own sessions and 7 previously unanalyzed sessions of Rogers, she categorized what Wickman and Campbell (2003) described as nonexpert language as "therapist references to self" (Brodley, 2001, p. 29; see also Merry, 1996). Brodley (2001, pp. 29–30) pointed out that a number of these sorts of statements by Rogers occur during the introductory and concluding remarks of demonstration sessions. Each of Wickman and Campbell's nonexpert language examples either invites Gloria to discuss whatever is of concern to her or is a reaction to questions from Gloria.

### Meta-Statements

Wickman and Campbell (2003) categorized some of Rogers's statements as meta-statements, which, they suggested, can enable the counselor to soften risky remarks and communicate genuineness (p. 180). Examples are "I guess I'd like to say . . .," "I sure wish I could . . .," or "One thing I might ask . . ."

The cumulative message of client-centered literature suggests that these sorts of fragmentary counselor references to self, statements that refer to the immediate client-therapist

relationship or to the counselor's intention of the moment or comment on present within-session circumstances or events, are not intended to communicate genuineness or to serve as a way to insert a different idea into the conversation. Instead, by rendering transparent whatever the counselor is indeed up to in the moment, they communicate an intention to respect and follow the client's experience and the client's lead, and they share with the client the counselor's immediate motivations within the interaction.

Wickman and Campbell (2003) described a "one step removed" (p. 180) frame that can be reformulated as Rogers's "attitude of perception" (Rogers, 1961, p. 341). According to Rogers, a congruent therapist tends to speak in words that communicate the therapist's attitude of perception. This means that, when making a metacommunication concerning the therapy or an observation about the client, the counselor is likely to speak in language that conveys the subjective nature of the counselor's words. The effect of speaking in this manner may have the side effect of communicating genuineness. The point, however, is to be politically transparent in the relationship, expressive of the counselor's empathic, phenomenological, nonauthoritative stance (Moon, 2005b).

The fundamentally expressive character of client-centered work . . . sometimes does not appear to be understood by therapists . . . when they refer to "using empathic responses" or "using the self", or "using congruence". Such statements of "use" suggest that the therapist . . . is employing an instrumental attitude. (Brodley, 2002, p. 59)

When Rogers says, "I guess I'd like to say . . .," he is saying that, although he is inserting a comment of his own, he is aware that it is merely a personal thought or feeling he is urged to share and that it is not more important or more expert than what the client has been saying. It is merely a human utterance arising from the therapist who is feeling moved to disclose his own thought, feeling, or concern. Moreover, when Rogers says, "One thing I might ask . . .," he is saying that he does not presume that he has a right to interrogate the client or to demand a response from the client. He is saying, one human being to another, "What you say does lead me to wonder if or why . . ." Between the lines, one can infer that, with humility and tentativeness, Rogers is saying, "It is entirely up to you to decide whether my question is of interest to you or worthwhile for you." A "therapist-frame" (Brodley, 1994, 1999b) statement risks having a directive effect on the client. Rogers's language of perception somewhat mitigates the risk (Moon, 2005b; Pildes & Moon, 2004).

### Affiliative Negative Assessment

Wickman and Campbell (2003) categorized affiliative negative assessment statements as evaluative responses displaying understanding of "Gloria's predicament" (p. 180). *Assessment* is a misnomer, because it implies evaluation from outside the



client's frame of reference. These sorts of responses are better understood as empathic following responses.

For example, Rogers's T28 in the following dialogue is categorized (Wickman & Campbell, 2003, p. 180) as negative affiliative:

C27: Right. . . . But when things do seem so wrong for me and I have an impulse to do them, how can I accept that?

T27: What you'd like to do is to feel more accepting toward yourself when you do things that you feel are wrong. Is that right?

C28: Right.

T28: (smiling) It sounds like a tough assignment.

Although literally a therapist-frame declarative sentence, in spirit, T28 is an expression of compassionate acceptance of the sense of predicament Gloria expresses in her C27 question to Rogers, "How can I accept that?" T28 is an "empathic understanding response" (Brodley, 1999b; Temaner, 1977), which could be restated as "To you it sounds like a tough assignment" or "Is that how it is? A really tough assignment?"

Wickman and Campbell's (2003) highlighting of Rogers's negatively stated empathic responses (p. 180) is interesting given charges (May, 1982; Rogers, 1960; Rogers & Buber, 1989) that Rogers's trust in clients' growthful tendencies biased his responses in a positively valenced direction. Bradburn (1996) analyzed 25 transcripts of Rogers and found "a strong positive association between the valence of client statements and that of Rogers' responses ( $p < .005$ )" (Brodley & Bradburn, 1999, p. 11). Bradburn found that Rogers

offers positively valenced responses to positively valenced client statements, negative to negative, mixed responses to mixed client statements, and neutral responses to clients' neutral ones. This is what the data overwhelmingly show that Rogers did. (Brodley & Bradburn, 1999, p. 11)

#### First-Person Quotes

Wickman and Campbell (2003) noted and attributed Rogers's first-person responses as intending to externalize the client's internal dialogue (p. 180). Merry (1996) found that about 10% of Rogers's "accurate empathic reflection" statements were first-person responses. In her study, Brodley (2001) found that 17% of Rogers's accurate empathic reflection statements were first-person responses and described this manner of speaking as "an immediate and dramatic way to express oneself to a client. . . . The therapist states an AER [acceptant empathic response] exactly as the client might express what he or she has been intending to communicate" (p. 29). Although it would be inconsistent with client-centered theory and an acceptant nondirective attitude to speak from the first person as a device for externalizing client dialogue, this style of responding is a natural, automatic speaking style for counselors responding spontaneously while engrossed in capturing a client's experience and meaning.

#### Invitations for Repair

Wickman and Campbell (2003) gave three examples of what they termed *invitations for repair*: "Is that right?" "Is that what you are saying?" and "I think that's putting it a little too strongly" (p. 181). They suggested that these responses highlight genuineness and transparency. Alternatively, these responses can be viewed as attempts by Rogers to check the accuracy of his understanding. They are a natural expression of what Rogers described as "sensitive and sincere 'client-centeredness'" (Rogers, 1946, p. 421, 1951, p. 30) and part of what Raskin (2001) described as the implicit client-centered attitude, "Did I understand you correctly?" (p. 2):

Counselor participation becomes an active experiencing with the client . . . the counselor makes a maximum effort to get under the skin of the person with whom he is communicating, he tries to get *within* and to live the attitudes expressed instead of observing them, to catch every nuance of their changing nature. . . . Because he is another, and not the client, the understanding is not spontaneous but must be acquired, and this through the most intense, continuous and active attention to the feelings of the other, to the exclusion of any other type of attention. (Raskin, 2005, pp. 330–331; as cited in Rogers, 1951, p. 29)

The only task of the client-centered counselor is to experience unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding (Bozarth, 1998; Rogers, 1959).

#### Withholding Advice

Wickman and Campbell (2003) stated that, to the extent Rogers refused to answer Gloria's questions, this was an expression of his unconditional positive regard for her in the sense that he was respecting her expertness (as opposed to his) over matters pertaining to herself (p. 181). Some client-centered therapists agree with this view (Sommerbeck, 2003).

Bozarth (1998), Brodley (1997, 1999b), Grant (1990), Moon (2005b), and Witty (2005) took the opposite view; the values of client-centered theory require that the client's voice be respected and trusted, even when voicing a direct question. Unconditional positive regard, from this point of view, means that the counselor assumes that the client is the best guide for determining whether or not the client will benefit from the counselor's knowledge or opinions. "Living the [nondirective] attitude means being open and responsive to clients' requests and indications for other types of response" (Grant, 1990, p. 81). Responding to client questions and requests can entail direct answers and accommodations as well as empathic following responses (Brodley, 1999b).

Gloria asked Rogers a considerable number of questions—nine that were direct questions and others that were implicit requests for advice. Client questions can be challenging to practitioners desiring to be responsively present while seeking to accept and understand the client's frame of reference. Being

responsive to client questions can require the counselor to exit the client's frame of reference and represent the therapist's. Claudia Kemp's (2004) dissertation details Rogers's career-long responses to client questions. Further in-depth analysis clarifying how Rogers responds to Gloria's questions in Shostrom's (1965) widely viewed film is needed.

### Problem Reformulation

Wickman and Campbell (2003) suggested that problem reformulation by Rogers "accomplish[es]" (p. 182) the core conditions of empathy and unconditional positive regard. Within the nondirective paradigm, one can instead say that the counselor expressively embodies the facilitating attitudes, and an incidental consequence can be that the client tends to become less overwhelmed by his or her problems. Frequently, through the experience of being acceptantly understood, clients will explore and reformulate a problem. Client-centered practice is expressive in nature, not instrumental (Brodley, 2002). A point that deserves emphasis is that client-centered counseling is holistic and not problem centered. "The aim is not to solve one particular problem but to assist the individual to *grow*, so that he can cope with the present problem and with later problems in a better integrated fashion" (Rogers, 1977, p. 6). Within the nondirective modality, a client-centered counselor is open and responsive to a client's wish to discuss a particular problem, but the counselor would not be the one to establish priorities or shape a problem for discussion.

According to Wickman and Campbell (2003), Rogers reformulates Gloria's problems through the use of language that maintains her as the "originator of her idea" (p. 182). Brodley and Brody (1990) described this differently. They found that 71% of Rogers's empathic checking responses to be communicative of an "action of personality" (p. 7). The "subjective activity or reactivity" (p. 7) of the client is often the subject of Rogers's verbal responses. Examples from the Gloria session include ". . . you feel you can't help," "You're concerned . . .," and "What you'd like to do is to feel . . ." In light of Rogers's holistic approach to clients and their problems, his manner of phrasing responses to Gloria is best accounted for as part of his tendency to respond to the client's perceptions, meanings, feelings, reactions, and intentions.

Consideration of Rogerian theory, along with analyses of Rogers's many tapes and transcripts, leads to the conclusion that the Gloria session demonstrates Rogers's embodiment of a nondirective attitude as well as the therapeutic attitudes of unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding, and congruence. Nonetheless, within the client-centered community, this session is not unanimously viewed as a prime example of Rogers's therapy. In the following section, I examine this debate with the purpose of enhancing the context for the use of the Gloria session as a training tool in the classroom.

## Is Rogers's Session With Gloria a Good Example of Client-Centered Counseling?

How good an example of client-centered counseling is the Rogers-Gloria session? There is some disagreement among client-centered therapists. In my experience, during group screenings with students as well as with experienced client-centered counselors, Rogers's way of being with Gloria does not come across to all students or practitioners as demonstrating crystalline client-centeredness. Some consider it to be a misleading or confusing example of Rogers's work (Brodley, 2004; Zimring, 1996).

Those giving positive reviews of the session tend to base their judgment on the question of outcome. One outcome of the session was that Gloria and Rogers went on to have a 15-year association (Rogers, 1984). According to Raskin, the session can be assessed overall as a constructive experience for Gloria:

The therapist's empathy, genuineness, and caring come through and are received by the client. . . . His acceptance helps her make important progress. . . . she begins the interview looking for an authority to tell her what to do, and by its end has much greater faith in her own ability to make decisions. She moves from trying to keep some distance from her emotions to letting them be expressed without inhibition, going so far as to focus directly on the great hurt she feels about her relationship with her father. She also starts off not accepting part of herself, and then sees greater self-acceptance as an important task for future work. Her self-concept becomes more complete, her experiencing becomes less rigid, her locus-of-evaluation moves from external to more internal, and her self-regard increases. (Raskin & Rogers, 2005, p. 160)

Shlien (2003) wrote that Gloria "feels deeply understood in a way that brings tears and a feeling she calls 'precious'. She wishes her father had been so understanding" (p. 112). Furthermore, according to Bohart (1991), "Gloria *directly learns* with Rogers how it feels to be understood and accepted" (p. 502).

Brodley (2004) and Zimring (1996) critiqued the Gloria-Rogers session in terms of demonstrated therapist attitudes and considered it to be a flawed client-centered model. They noted the atypical frequency with which Rogers speaks from his own frame of reference, the several times Gloria seems to feel misunderstood by Rogers, and the way Rogers's language risks Gloria feeling rebuked (Zimring, 1996, in reference to T43, "It is so damned hard to really choose something on your own . . .") or criticized (Brodley, 2001, in reference to T26, ". . . perhaps the person you are not being fully honest with is you . . .").

Zimring (1996) wrote that

Rogers does not seem to have, as he usually would, the experience of the client at the moment as his central focus. Instead,



especially in the first part of the interview, perhaps because of the pressure of her questions or of having to make rapid progress in what is a demonstration session, he seems to be concerned with her self-configuration, that is, with the relationship of self, behavior, and self-judgment. (p. 68)

Brodley (2004) found Rogers's language with Gloria to be more distancing than usual. Also, she reported that Rogers's confrontational manner, when he says in T26, "... it seems to me that perhaps the person you are not being fully honest with is you . . .," is very unusual for him.

Rogers rarely counters or opposes a client in his client-centered work after Bryan [i.e., post-1942], right up to his death. He does disagree in Mark (South African interview), when Mark makes a statement about Rogers, to correct him [Mark]—and in Jan (South African interview) he corrects her perception of him. But with these exceptions, that tellingly have to do with clients' misunderstanding him and correcting them about him, after Bryan Rogers never confronts or challenges or disagrees (and seldom agrees) with a client. He empathically follows his clients' communications and the emotive features of his clients in the remainder of his work—at least in the examples we have left to scrutinize. (Brodley, 2004, para. 8)

Rogers fielded a number of questions from Gloria, and that perhaps in part explains why some of his responses to Gloria, such as the ones noted by Brodley (2004) and Zimring (1996), seem a bit clumsier, more confrontational or directive in feeling, than was typical for him.

In the preparation of this article, I initiated an informal analysis of Rogers's responses to Gloria. This analysis (Moon, 2005a), a phenomenological attempt to be empathic of Rogers as he responded to Gloria, assumed that his intentions with Gloria were in agreement with the nondirective nature of his counseling theory. My final impression was that a number of Rogers's therapist-frame responses with Gloria tended to occur in a context of (a) his responding to many questions from the client and (b) his resonating rather emotionally with Gloria.

A number of his therapist-frame responses occur in mixed-modality, compound responses in which he bubbles forth with an emotional reaction and then in a second sentence returns to empathic following of what tends to be a two-sentence response to Gloria (Moon, 2005b). There are other instances where he speaks from his own frame of reference while clarifying his intentions to Gloria, sometimes in direct response to her questions or in response to his sense that she is slightly misunderstanding him. Also, a few of his responses that might appear to be drawing data from Rogers's frame of reference are actually hearkening back to words or ideas expressed by Gloria several minutes earlier in the session.

Gloria frequently expresses herself as unsure and asks for guidance. It appears to me that Rogers, consistently, is respectful and attentive to her vicissitudes and follows the rationale of her questions. At times, he speaks with apparent nondirective, empathic intent, but his words and syntax could be misunderstood by either the client or the audience as directive or critical.

## Conclusion

Rogers brought recording machines into the session and *reinvented counseling by changing the counselor's role* from that of psychological expert to one who bears witness to the client's journey. Inherent in the holistic growth model of client-centered counseling are the necessary and sufficient therapist conditions of congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding. In client-centered practice, these conditions meld together in the counselor's willingness and ability to attend to and follow the client's experiences and meanings without judgment or prejudice.

Rogers's theory and practice have been widely misunderstood as a technique-based rather than attitudinal approach to counseling. An understanding of the nondirective attitude can inform one's sense of Rogers's intentions in his responses to Gloria. Studies of Rogers's transcripts consistently find that, across his career, he evidenced a devotion to experiencing the client's perceptions, meanings, intentions, and wishes and that he had no other agenda with clients.

His nondirective therapeutic intentions are necessary context for educators and students viewing the Gloria session. Client-centered therapy, infused with its nondirective promise, accommodates each client's preferred way of being in relationship with a therapist. In my opinion, Rogers accommodates Gloria's way of being in this session. He follows and accepts her experience. Counselor educators are advised to highlight the attitudinal rather than the technical thrust of Rogers's therapeutic presence with Gloria. Awareness of the session's possible shortcomings as a model for client-centered counseling can enrich educational use of the film. The relationship between Rogers's responses to Gloria's many questions and his theory of client-centered therapy is of interest and warrants further study and discussion.

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