

Discriminative Aspects of the Rogers' Propositions for the Validation of Change in the Client

G rard Mercier*

Doctor of Psychology, Psychotherapist authorized AFP-ACP, France

Abstract

Testifying the move of the client such that "he is tending towards a state of a more comprehensive internal agreement" is doubly advantageous [1]. For the client himself, this understanding has given him a "nearly latest improved looping of empowerment (...) by the production of himself by himself" [2].

As for the therapist often challenged to "justify the worthiness and the effectiveness of psychotherapy in general or one of its methods as a way to better understand and use a psychotherapeutic method (commonly associated with its academic background), or even as a rigorous way of studying motivations and conditions of the psychotherapeutic effect" [3].

Understanding this integration and reunion mechanism, very well balanced and finely-shaded, and identifying in it significant milestones and precipitates is the focus of this article which a clinical illustration will be used to illustrate. I will show here that among 19 propositions of the personality and behavior theory laid down by Rogers, the nineteenth is a solid result for the validation of indicators from the clinic.

Keywords: Internal agreement; Deformation of Me; Effectiveness of psychotherapy; Move the customer structure of the self; Personality theory; Trend actualization; Validation of the therapeutic process

Baselines and Benchmarks: Construction of the Ego According To Rogers

Prior to the publication of the article - Principles Underlying the Base of the Person-Centered Approach [1,4]. I found in Chapter 11 of "Client Centered Therapy" [5], a formulation enlightening the understanding of the personality change through the therapeutic process. Among the corpus of 19 propositions, two complementary dimensions are in synergy. One falls under the developmental and genetic aspect of the self-construction that the clauses VIII and IX argue. Thus, the proposition VIII argues that, as the child grows up, a part of his personal world will be recognized as "Self", "Myself". The Self "being a part of the total perceptual scope which will be gradually differentiated" [6].

The proposition IX will further clarify this trend. "This is as a result of interactions with the environment, particularly as the results of evaluative interactions with others that the structure of the Self is formed as a conceptual outline, organized, fluid, but consisting of perceptions, characteristics and relationships of the "I" or "Self", together with values attached to these concepts.

The other comprehensive dimension by an experiential reading is the constitution of this architecture of the Self. Thus, the proposition X will clarify the impact of differentiating influences that produce significant referents in its construction: "Values attached to experiences and values that are part of the structure of the Self are some of the values directly experienced by the body and for others introjected or borrowed values from other but perceived in a distorted way, as if they had been experienced directly".

The key to understanding the proposition X given indicates that the Self-development is organized around values reorientating, by positive or negative weight, the tone and the symbolization of the experience in children and adults (see following clinical illustration).

I would point out that the constructivist dimension of the Person Centered Approach appears highlighted here; the child builds a model

of reality (the concept of the Self) experienced from stimuli being positively or negatively reinforced. While he is interacting with his environment, the child gradually builds a representation of the Self, of his environment and on referent persons with whom he interacts. In a Piagetian language, I could tell that the driving force "Assimilation - Accommodation" inflects its constructions according to rewarding weights of which it undergoes the differentiating influences, traumatic at times.

As long as stimuli from the environment remain consistent with the internal evaluation of the developing person, there is enhancement of the actualizing tendency and congruence between the experience and its symbolization. However, Rogers wrote "The evaluation of the Self by others will enter in the scene: "You are a nice baby", "You're a naughty boy". Such assessments, addressed to him by his parents and by others, get to be a significant part of his phenomenal field (...); it is at this stage of the development where takes place probably a distorted symbolization of the experience and a refusal to let the experience become conscious. This affects the development of the subsequent psychological maladjustment "[7].

The realization movement in its conceptual expression to the conscious level are selectively derived and distorted in accordance with outlines of a conditional representation of oneself and of the experience that follows, "One of the consequences is the refusal to have to let to the consciousness the satisfaction the child experienced when, previously, his behaviors and inclinations had not yet been scrutinized by the external evaluation.

*Corresponding author: G rard Mercier, Psychotherapist authorized AFP-ACP, rue de Belfort, Besan on, France, Tel: 03 81 52 69 39, E-mail: gerardmercier25@yahoo.fr

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Gradually parental images condition the construction of the Self. Introjected, they become mixed up with the percepts of personal reality as if the attitude of others was based on the reality of his own sensory and visceral equipment."The conditional Self is the result of this differentiation that causes the insularisation "from a portion of the experience in response to attitudes of referents. This radical differentiation finds its pattern in what Professor Joao Hippolito from the Lisbon University called "the fundamental structuring trauma, caused by the conditions of values originating from the perception of the "significant Other One".

The Self, based on this reformatted reality requires, in order to comply with the existing structure, an organization that the individual strives to maintain.

The stressing between the concept of the Self, framed and fitted, and the experiences that depart from it and sometimes cross the threshold of consciousness, will cause a sense of discomfort and incongruence, as "in traumatic contradiction with the concept of the Self". This shift, when it is a source of discomfort and vulnerability will result in the second condition for the therapeutic process to have a chance to operate: "The first person we will call the client is in a state of inner disagreement, vulnerability or anxiety" [4].

The eleventh Condition comes then to synthesize here this whole process: "As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are:

- a – either symbolized, perceived and organized in relation to the Self;
- b – either ignored, because no any relationship to the Self is perceived;
- c – either denied from the symbolization or supplied with a distorted symbolization because the experience is not compatible with the structure of the Self".

The denial of symbolization can be known powerful, the vigilance so fussy, that behavior can arise outside the reference scope of the conditional Self:

In a very large number of cases of psychological disorders, the thing that causes the most concern to the person is that certain types of behavior arise outside one's control and without any possibility of control on one's part. "I do not know why I did it" is a quite common finding".

The expression of censored needs will operate in the blind spot of the Self structure, acting, reminding us here of the so-called "shift from words to action" behaviors that take place at a low level of experiencing.

The fourteenth and sixteenth propositions enlighten particularly the scene of the settled discomfort. The dissociative "mechanism" felt led to such a level of the disagreement between the Self and the experience that the person, whom I will mention hereinafter the thought process, will push the door of this ????. This clinical example will be set against the lighting provided by the fourteenth proposition:

"The psychological maladjustment exists when the body denies significant sensory and visceral experiences, the access to the consciousness, and therefore they are neither symbolized or nor organized into a gestalt at the structure level of the Self. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension." (Rogers, p. 23 ref. Cited)

Clinical Illustration

Samuel (name changed), 60 years old, came initially for consultation encouraged by his wife. For several months, he feels a tension that will move up several notches during our first sessions. The request for assistance is based on a permanent sense of anger and shame towards his father, because of a relatively old event in which he had "lost face" in the presence of his daughters after an intrusive conduct of his father in his private sphere.

Gradually, the therapeutic process will be directed towards personal foundations. His retirement is in few months. Samuel is heavily involved in his work as an instructor in a school of agriculture. The confidentiality with his wife is a dreaded perspective after he retires.

Anamnesis elements

In the early 70s, Samuel is a host at holiday camps and is actively involved in youth movements. In those days, he is establishing a romantic relationship with a girl, Pauline (name changed), also strongly involved in hosting.

One morning, while Samuel is in his room upstairs, Pauline went to Samuel's home. Her mother receives very coldly and made her to believe that Samuel is absent, turned her back, continued with her housework, and dismissed the girl. This incident will have intense bitterness in Samuel, accusing her mother of lying, who replied that "she was not a girl for him". Pauline then distanced herself from him which was accompanied by a very intense grief in Samuel. The shame followed in addition to the tough feeling, Samuel accusing himself still many years later, of failing to hold back Pauline. Samuel came to feed a strong resentment of underestimating himself.

Consequently, the conventional Self won the battle by the realization of a marriage approved by the Samuel's mother. He had five children, including a daughter who after her adolescence became his confidante of facts and experiences ranging far beyond what he could share with his wife.

Thirty years later, during a broadcast on a local radio station, Pauline recognized Samuel and then began a satellite relationship through which one day, following a letter discovered by the wife, "drove" Samuel to the counseling initiated with me, hoping he would break his silence towards Pauline and of course, stop all contact with her.

Pauline in turn is married and a mother of a 20 year old boy.

The relationship with Samuel is casual and based on hiking and many visits in the Jura and Vosges Massif. Samuel is still much tensed; the threat is present, the pervasive shame, mixed with very acute resentment toward his wife: "The experiences are perceived or anticipated as incongruent with the structure of the Self." (Rogers, p. 24). They intensify the grief and pain when Samuel tells the end of the relationship to which he should compel himself to relive the forced break-up of 30 years ago.

The anxiety, this emotional response to the threat is very real. Samuel expresses the double threat which will come from the confession to his wife of his affair with Pauline, and of the personal and marital meltdown that the confession would cause, which would break the barrier of the structure of the conventional self. Samuel is also caught between the "betrayal" (the word is his) toward his wife and the vital aspect that invests the relationship with Pauline. I would also like to point out that the hypothesis of divorce has never been envisaged neither by him nor requested by Pauline.

The defenses are expressed by the deformation of feelings toward Pauline: friendship, educational support in her role as mother, "social" counseling in her problems with her son ... As if the conventional Self sorted itself out to float the relationship in the eyes of Samuel in the category of a helping relationship! ...

Several long sessions were the theater of the same scenario. Grief, bitterness, shame filled the texture, now Samuel in a discomfort zone where the official Self was maintaining a relentless guerrilla against the perception of tenderness towards Pauline.

A decision step

During a session, the sudden entrance in the consciousness of Samuel, who even today is deeply in love with Pauline and without a possible turning back, induced a very acute crisis.

Samuel has reached an impasse, and sharing this burden with his wife is simply impossible.

Samuel remained at a level of experiencing that describes the following statement: "The person who denies some experiences must continually defend herself against the symbolization of these experiences". He denied the need to continue with the relationship while nourishing a deep fear of being obliged to split up. Gradually, however, the subtle dosage of therapeutic attitudes helped soften the representation of this relationship by means of external references: adultery, guilt may just give way, "It seems that the person cannot endure such an incompatibility in the relationship with someone she is sure to be accepted."

At this stage of therapy, the nineteenth proposition is going to find its relevance: "To the extent that the individual perceives and accepts at the structure of the Self more organic experiences, he discovers that he is replacing his current system of values - based so considerably on introjections that have been symbolized in a distorted way - an organic process of ongoing validation."

Discussion

In recent sessions, the words I choose to illustrate closer this "organic process of continuous validation" described by the XI proposal were: reunion, secret garden, balance and integration.

For me, these conceptualizations are the subtle hints of a (re) composition that I played with emotion the new interpreter in the therapeutic duo.

They form the basis of my own awareness and now need clarification and explanation.

Reunion

Samuel finds with emotion the young man who had experienced humiliation, but who had never forgotten Pauline. The reunion again with the reality of his own experience became the measuring rod of his personal consistency. This new direction that he saw with confidence and that he is organizing in the crucible of a choice freed from its content of doubt and mortifying hesitation.

Secret garden

"In therapy, Rogers wrote, it seems that the reorganization is taking place on the following basis: values that are kept are those experienced

as favorable to the maintenance and enhancement of the body and as distinct from those, according to other people, would be good for him."

This crucial assertion illustrates the whole relevance of a validation based on a complexity gain of the Self, rather than on external criteria (disappearance of the complaint, improved level of self-esteem, improvement of object relations, etc.)

Samuel delineates his relationship with Pauline in an intimate and internal link that cannot be confused with moral criteria. What he saw in it is limited in time and space (e.g. hiking) reinstating impeded values and experiences in the structure of the current Self that accept "in the light of personal organic reality" that they contribute to an enrichment once interrupted.

These experiences contribute to the enhancement and development of the self, here and now, in relation with others.

Equilibrium

Samuel recognizes that the satisfaction of all his needs cannot be done in an exclusive context of his married life. The shadow of divorce, however, never came in his intentions and furthermore, no any erroneous symbolization of the relationship "lover-mistress" will never come to tarnish the value of his satellite relationship with Pauline.

"Something of me, he said in substance, is living in this relationship". Here, there is congruence between the concept of self and the correct symbolization of experiences once sidelined and dangerous.

Samuel opens up to the originality of attitudes that he offers himself, p?? se.

Integration

This property specifies that "larger values for the body enhancement occur when all the experiences and all attitudes are admitted to the conscious symbolization, and when the behavior corresponds to the significant and balanced satisfaction of all needs, these needs being accessible to consciousness".

The alleviation of guilt, the gradual disappearance of options based on the exclusive "they", constitute the most reliable indicators of this integration of the experience accessible to consciousness. Previously exhausted by an internal conflict, Samuel had interjected external values by which his experience with Pauline lay within adultery.

Gradually, the satellite relationship enrolled in a co-existence fashion between two ways of living, including hiking and snowshoeing, all converging towards a shared intimacy.

During the first 6 months of therapy, Samuel faced an episode of severe liver disease in his wife. I noted at that time that there would be much to explore about an inflammatory disease retaining him at home. Samuel put in that his relationship with Pauline is the resources of the margin related to the center which is the continuity, the experiential extension and in the field of the man he was before his marriage.

Conclusion and Opening

I chose the context of 19 propositions of Rogers as paradigm to understand and assess as finely as possible the therapeutic process. The nineteenth proposition in particular is its culmination. It addresses the content and intensity not only of the healing from the maternal rejection of Pauline and also the freeing of the person dealing with the structures of the conditional Self. The eighteenth and nineteenth

proposition indicate the genesis of a relationship of internal meeting between the direction taken by the experience, and new expressions of the Actualizing Tendency.

Self-perceptions become for Samuel “more realistic, more differentiated and more objective (...), the consideration to oneself increases.”[4].

The evaluation is located a little outside, because the emergence of the internal frame of reference, which “represents the subjective world of the individual” [4] is also an aspect that these propositions, properly placed in the therapist understanding, document and illustrate more closely the therapeutic process.

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