

# WHO'S WHO OF CLIENT-CENTERED THERAPY

*Darryl A. Hyers*  
*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

As Client-Centered therapists, we seek to understand the world through the words and stories of our clients. What about our peers, our leaders — the "Giants" in our profession? Who are they? How did they become the leaders? What are their views of the world, of psychotherapy, and of the future?

During the last few years, as a student of counseling, I've read the words and observations of many past leaders in psychotherapy such as Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner, Jack Bardon, Donald Super, and others. Now, I look to learn more about the current persons of influence among Client-Centered theorists. We have the opportunity now to record the words, thoughts, and observations of C. H. Patterson, Fred Zimring, Barbara Brodley, Nat Raskin, Jerold Bozarth, and the list goes on. I would like to propose that the journal seek to obtain and record a "Who's Who of Client-Centered Therapy." To initiate and encourage this venture, I offer a beginning by sharing with you, a biographical interview with C. H. Patterson. I can't think of a better place to find an interview of this outspoken advocate for the Person-Centered Approach than in the *Person-Centered Journal*.

This interview was conducted by Jane E. Myers, a professor in the Department of Counseling and Educational Development at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. An earlier issue of this journal reported on a portion of the interview that pertained to the philosophy and practice of Client-Centered Therapy with older persons. The portion, edited and presented now, is more biographical in nature and begins with Dr. Jane E. Myers (JEM) asking Dr. C. H. Patterson (CHP) to talk about who he is, how he entered the counseling profession, and how he became interested in Client-Centered Therapy.

CHP: I graduated from high school in 1931, as valedictorian of my class. After three years, during which I became active in young peoples' work in the Methodist Church, I decided to go to college because I thought I wanted to go into the ministry. In the fall of 1934, from Massachusetts, where I was born and grew up, I went to the University of Chicago.

Well, I didn't end up in the ministry, as you can see. I got side-tracked. I got interested in sociology and social sciences, and received a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1938.

But in 1938 there were no jobs in sociology. But I was fortunate. I had worked for a man who was a post-doctoral fellow in the College of Education of the University of Chicago on a big project that he was doing, the development of the Chicago Mental Health Battery. It was on that project that I had the opportunity to learn my statistics, test construction, and to supervise undergraduate students. So this man, Dr. M. A. Wenger, left to take a job at the Fels Research Institute of Child Development at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. When he came to Chicago in December, after I graduated, to help get the tests ready for the publishers, he probably asked me if I had a job and I said "No," and he said "Well, there's a job at the Fels Research Institute if you would be interested." I said, "Of course, I would!" Well, I went down there in December, 1938, and was offered a job. The title of the job was Research Assistant in Psychology with the rank of Instructor in the College. So, overnight, I became a psychologist. Very easy in those days. I lectured in some of the courses taught by my colleagues at Antioch College. So, here I was, in child psychology. I had never had a course in child psychology. I often say that I started at the bottom in psychology as a child psychologist. After a while, I figured that I needed graduate education to advance professionally. So I applied at several universities for graduate work in child psychology. I ended up at the University of Minnesota with John Anderson, who was director of the Institute of Child Welfare. I began my graduate work in September of 1941 as Senior Teaching Assistant.

Well, 1941, what happened? The war. I finished my course work for the masters in 1942 and in July enlisted in the Air Force. The Air Force had a program in psychology for testing cadets to determine their assignment to bombardier school, navigator school, or pilot school. I enlisted because I knew I was going to get in that program. I never went through basic training.

So I changed from being a child psychologist to aviation psychologist. Then, the Army decided they needed clinical psychologists, so I applied and got a direct commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Adjutant Generals Service as a clinical psychologist. We had a five week training course to teach us all about clinical psychology. I learned a lot from some well-known people in the field of psychology and clinical psychology. In July, 1945, I found myself on a ship going to the Philippines with a group of other psychologists and psychiatrists.

We all ended up in Manila, assigned to different hospitals around the city. We didn't know it then but we were on our way to Japan, to follow up the invasion of Japan, which never came off. The atomic bomb fell, the war ended, and I came back and was discharged in early 1946.

I applied for a position with the Veterans Administration (VA) as a clinical psychologist. I decided on the Veterans Administration Hospital in Canandaigua, New York, which was close to my wife's family in Cortland, New York, and I was hoping I would be able to do graduate work at the University of Rochester. Well, that didn't work out because the hospital manager didn't want to give his people time off to take courses. I had been there only a few months when another of the situations that have turned my life came along. The Veterans Administration opened a new program. They realized that veterans, non-disabled and disabled, who were in education and training programs under the GI bill or Disabled Veterans Bill had problems, psychological problems, and needed counseling. So the Veterans Administration established a new position with the title of Personal Counselor, later changed to Counseling Psychologist.

This was a crucial time in my career, because, as part of this new position, the Veterans Administration had asked the University of Chicago to set up a training program for those

appointed to the new position so they could learn something about psychotherapy. I knew little about psychotherapy in those days. I was a psychologist, not a psychotherapist. So in 1977 I went to the University of Chicago for a short-term training program with Carl Rogers. I was inoculated with Client-Centered Therapy and have been client-centered ever since.

Then, I enrolled in the counseling program in the College of Education at the University of Minnesota, with Gilbert Wrenn. In April, 1955, I got my Ph.D., at 43 years of age, with five children. I went through this because I wanted to work in academia.

Then another opportunity came along. The Federal Government, the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, was setting up training programs for rehabilitation counselors. The University of Illinois had a program, but they didn't have a director. In December, I was at the banquet honoring John Anderson's 25 years as the Director of the University Institute of Child Welfare when I met a man from the University of Illinois, Frank Finch, who had taken his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota many years earlier. We discovered that I was looking for the job they had and he was looking for me for the job. So, I was offered the position, and went back to Minnesota to tell Gilbert Wrenn that I had the offer.

In May, 1956, I established the Rehabilitation Counseling Program and also a program in rehabilitation psychology at the doctoral level. I was not interested in doing what many did in rehabilitation counseling, that is, setting up a separate program apart from the existing counseling program. The College of Education had at that time just enlarged their counselor education program and I was the fourth full-time person. So I familiarized myself with the other faculty members, who were scattered over the campus. I found a temporary building from WWII and got the faculty together. I'd worked for the Veterans Administration from 8 to 5 for almost ten years, so I was always in the office at 8:00 o'clock. So, I became de facto chairman of the program. I answered the telephone, I had the secretary and I was there whenever students and applicants came in. After several years, we decided to make it official and it became a Division of the Department of Education and Psychology. I was elected chairman for two years. Two years came and went. After 6 years, I think, I declined to continue as chair. I wasn't interested in administration. I just wanted to teach and write. So that's where I started my academic career, at the University of Illinois.

Most people in academia move around a lot. The University of Illinois College of Education was very democratic. It was so democratic that when we needed a dean, a Harvard applicant turned the job down because he said we were too democratic. Well, that was fine, and I stayed and advanced, becoming a full professor in 1960.

But things began to change in the early 70's. What was happening then is what is happening to the Universities here in North Carolina and many other places. State funding was drying up. So they were cutting programs. My program was one that was cut, because I made the mistake of training high-level competent professionals rather than researchers. I have supervised 75 doctoral dissertations. All of them were competent in research; they had to have been to do research dissertations. But they were all interested in practice or teaching. Since I was not training researchers, my program was one of the ones that didn't get support even though there were no jobs for researchers and there were for practitioners.

In 1971 I was invited to go to England on a Fulbright to inaugurate the first program in England for preparing counselors to work in higher education, at Aston University in Birmingham. I accepted when they found a house for me to live in with my family. So

from '72 to '73 I was in England. When I came back, I found I was out of the professional loop. I was out of things. Before that I was travelling all the time, lecturing, consulting, on committees, national committees, some in both the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) of which I was a member since 1944. I joined APGA in 1956. I was President of the APA Division of Counseling Psychology in 1971-72. So I came back and just dropped out of professional activities.

I haven't been to a conference or convention since then, except for once, in the Spring of 1986, when I was Distinguished Visiting Professor at California State University in San Bernardino. I went to that meeting because the president of the group counseling division was a former student of mine, and he invited me to give their luncheon address. I also had been asked and agreed to be on a program with Carkhuff, Aspy, and Wrenn. But I didn't attend the whole convention. I had been very active in APGA. I was one of the founders of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, and President in 1962-63. I was a candidate for president of APGA in 1965, and I lost to Ken Hoyt. We disagreed about the basic science of counseling. His position was that the basic science of counseling was education and I was saying that the basic science of counseling *and* education was psychology. The election, I was told, was very close. At that time they didn't publish the votes as they do now. Afterwards, I realized I was fortunate, because my wife died of cancer in 1966 when I would have been president. That would have been pretty tough.

Well, back to the University of Illinois. Shortly after I returned from England, I was invited to go to Turkey for another Fulbright. In 1976 I had enough time for a one-semester sabbatical, so I told them I could only come for a semester, rather than a year. So I was there for a semester, 1976-77, at Hacettepe University in Ankara. At that time there was turmoil in Turkey. There were the rightists and the leftists. Students were organized by the extreme political parties. They were armed on campuses and were shooting at each other. The campus I was on was outside the city, and was under the jurisdiction of the country, not the city police. So they were under the federal government. I'd go to my office between squads of a dozen men, each armed with rifles. There was no shooting on that campus. There was some rock throwing which I saw from my office window.

Returning from Turkey, in the spring of '77, I decided that I was going to retire, because I saw the program that I had built up from four full-time staff members to twelve, go back down to six, and I said I was not going to stay to see the death of that program. It did die. It has revived in a quite different form now. It's quite a different program. It was not APA approved when I was there, although I was on the APA roster of consultants and site visitors for some 15 years. I did consult with a number of universities and I was chairman of several site visit teams, including the University of Florida a few years ago. Maybe that was the last one. Finally, I took myself off that roster. I retired at the end of the summer of 1977. I stayed on at the University while my youngest son finished high school and I did the third revision of my theories of counseling and psychotherapy book.

Now I live in Asheville, North Carolina. Why did I come to Asheville? I was in Asheville once for a conference. I think it was 1960 - in October. If you've ever been in Asheville in October, of course, you know how beautiful it is, and I just fell in love with Asheville. So that was in the back of my mind when I retired. I have seven children and they were scattered then, but I didn't want to leave without any of my children. I knew I was going to bring my youngest son with me, but I had a daughter who was in Michigan. She wanted to get out of the cold winter weather. She was going on a trip to Florida and

I said "Stop by Asheville on the way." She did. She liked it, bought a house and settled in Asheville a year before I got there. I moved there in June 1978. Should I go into my other career?

JEM: Oh Yes!

CHP: I've had all kinds of careers in various fields of psychology. Some people think I'm an abnormal psychologist, and I'm sure I am. I had a son who was in Colorado, a chef and restaurant manager. He visited me in Asheville, and I said "You know, if you'd like to own a restaurant, I'll help you get it if you come to Asheville." He said he would. He moved there, and four or five months later we found a little sandwich shop, which we took over and renovated. My son, my daughter, and my son-in-law bought the little building it was in. What year was that? 1982, I think. I told my son, "We need somebody to greet people, welcome people." I said "I think I can learn that job." My only restaurant experience was as a bus boy in college. So, I started being a maitre 'd and have been a maitre 'd ever since. I work about twenty hours a week now, when I'm in Asheville.

How did I get in touch with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro? That is interesting. Dr. Nicholas Vacc and Dr. Jack Bardon were editing a special issue of the *Journal of Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling*. I was invited to do an article. A doctoral student of the University of Tennessee, who was coming to me in Asheville every week, said he would be interested in doing it with me. I had met him when I was at Western Carolina University as a Visiting Scholar. He came to the sessions from the University of Tennessee, because he had a masters from Western Carolina University and he had read about everything I had written, I guess. Later I got a letter from him. Would I be interested in supervising him and what would I charge for supervision? I wrote back saying I would be glad to supervise him. There will be no charge, if you are willing to drive 115 miles each way to come to Asheville. And so, he came down every week on a Friday afternoon and we spent about three hours together.

I told him what I would like to be covered in the article, and he knew all the references and he essentially constructed the article and became co-author. The outcome of that was that Dr. Vacc invited me for a special course in the summer of '83 - a one month's intensive course. I don't know what it was called. Counseling, Theory, and Practice, something like that. It was a very interesting group of people. I used material from a book I was writing (*The Therapeutic Relationship*). After that course, he wanted me to become a Distinguished Visiting Professor. For the first two years, until the fall of '86, I was supervising interns and supervising supervisors. I did a lot of that. I took the spring of '86 off to go to California and developed a course to teach at California State University at San Bernardino. When I returned in the fall of 1986, I started teaching my advanced theory course here, at UNCG, and have been teaching it ever since. I've had three doctoral assistants working with me. The first one, Nil Moore, was with me for six semesters and the second one, Suzanne Freeman, was also with me for six semesters. My new assistant is Darryl Hyers and I hope it will be a long association.

JEM: Well, you certainly have had a long and distinguished career. As you talked, I was aware of several people you mentioned who have influenced you along the way. Who would you say are the two or three most influential people, in terms of your own career, and your own theory development?

CHP: I would say that there has been only one: Carl Rogers. I became client-centered in 1947 and I've been consistently client-centered every since. I've read a lot of other theorists,

but have never deviated from the narrow path. In fact, some people have said I am more client-centered than Carl Rogers.

## **Policy Statement**

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