

A CLIENT-CENTERED DEMONSTRATION INTERVIEW WITH MS S.

Therapist: Barbara Temaner Brodley, Ph.D.
Illinois School of Professional Psychology - Chicago

The following transcript was made from a video recording of a one hour client-centered therapy demonstration interview. The client, a young woman acquaintance, agreed to do the session and gave permission for a transcript to be published for educational and research purposes. The transcript has been slightly edited in order to omit identifying information and some hesitations in speech.

The session is an example of my work with clients who feel motivated to talk about themselves, and who are exploring experiences that trouble them. My overall intentions as a therapist are, of course, to help my clients as best I can. My immediate intentions in sessions, as in this one, are to be fully present, attentive, receptive and responsive, to acceptantly follow and understand the client from within his or her own frame of reference, and to find out from the client whether or not my inner understandings are accurate.

As is typical in my work, I had no intention to guide my client's way of communicating with me, nor any intention to influence her in the content or the manner of her thinking or feeling. I did, however, unintentionally at times fail to follow her accurately, which may have had momentary directive influence. Nevertheless, I had, in fact, no opinions or, for the most part, feelings of my own about what she had done, what she wanted, how she was looking at her experience, nor about her feelings. I did feel warmth towards her, I liked her, and I was moved by her pain at times during the session. Some readers might be interested in commenting on my work in this session, for publication in the next issue of the Journal.

T: ... and I'll keep time.

C: Okay.

T: All right. So, (C: um) something you have on your mind.

C1: Yeah. It's a recurring pattern in my life, when it comes to relationships. Relationships with males that I can't seem to get myself out of, when it comes to choosing someone romantically. (T: Mhm hm) Um, That we go through the friendship phase and sometimes the friendship is, is tainted with, flirtation, and stuff like that. (T: Mhm hm) And I can't seem to hold down a long distance, long-term relationship with a male. One of the reasons is that I've been... They either are seeing someone else at the time, that I don't know about.

T1: Oh...

C2: Or that they've supposedly broken up with and then they meet me and they go out with me and then they decide to go back to this other person. So, I always feel somewhat like I'm the "mistress." (T: Mhm hm) I'm always the "mistress." (T: Mhm hm) That...

T2: Not the woman who's **really**, (C: Sighs) embraced as his own. (C3: Right) The one on the side. (C: Yeah) Mhm ham.

C3: I'm the one to, to be taken on for... like in a chess game the queen would be sacrificed in order to get the mate.

T3: Mhm hm. And you're like the queen who gets sacrificed. (C: Mhm hm) Is that what you mean?

C4: Yeah. That, you know, "Here's a woman that I can go out with that I'm interested in. Not as long-term relationship. Maybe short-term so I can get this other person jealous (T: Mhm hm) or, or to find somebody better or..."

T4: ...Fill in, or something like that.

C5: **Yeah**. And if I'm in the type of disposition where I'm putting my self-esteem or validating my self-esteem by relationships then, that's so painful. And I can't seem to, to get out of this **role**, with men, that I'm more of the person that they want to just have sex with. (T: Mhm hm) Then when, "there's **no way**," when I won't **do** that, then they're **gone**. (T: Mhm hm) So that hurts me really bad because I'm not taken seriously (T: Mhm hm) as a person. (T: Mhm hm)

T5: What you're telling me is very **hurtful** and this has, I guess, been happening a number of times (C: Mhm hm) where you were "extra" or you were "fill in" or it felt like you were just wanted for sex, as a sexual partner. (C: Mhm hm) Right. And **what you want** is a long, a, a **deep** relationship in which you're the one...

C6: When...

T6: **You're the one**, for the man.

C7: Yeah. The **primary** person, (T: Mhm hm) not secondary or third. I haven't been in that place for anyone (Voice wavers) in over two years, (T: Mhm hm) since I was engaged. (T: Mhm hm) So I don't know if there's some hidden...thing within me that wants to sabotage, you know, that by not getting into good relationships. I can analyze it intrapsychically, and all that stuff. But that doesn't do me any good.

T7: I understand. You, you wonder sometimes if **you're** doing something to make this happen. (C: Mhm hm) You have that, question. But you're also saying that somehow you're not **aware** of doing that?

C8: Right.

T8: So it's just a, a fruitless sort of hypothesis... (C: Mhm hm) or something.

C9: The search doesn't end up with a change.

T9: It doesn't **help**. It hasn't **helped**. And the other thing I guess that, that stood out for me, was your saying "it's been **two years**." You've had the kind of relationships you've just been describing to me for **two years**. (C: Mhm hm) It's a **long time** to not feel that you were valued in the way you want to be valued, by a man, right? (C: Mhm hm) That aspect of the last two years has been painful, (C:Mhm hm) very painful.

C10: Yeah it is. It's very **lonely**.

T10: Mhm hm. **Lonely** and hurtful.

C11: Mhm hm. Cuz I don't want to be **alone**. (Voice cracks) (T: Mhm hm) I can handle being alone, but I'd rather have a partner. (T: Mhm hm) I think it'd be nice to find someone. Maybe it's harder to find somebody now because of the way I **am**. I think it's getting harder every **year**, the more I find out who I **am**. That it's... narrowing down the kinds of things that I'll **take**, you know... (Almost tearing)

T11: Mhm hm. That you'll put up with, uh huh.

C12: **Right**. And I'm **not** going to compromise myself, especially sexually. (T: Mhm hm) And it's a continual hurt when I find out that, that's really... That the apex of the triangle is sex and that's where most relationships want to **balance** it. And that's not stable enough for me. And it's **hard** I think to find somebody that can handle intense intimacy with a woman who's not totally **needy** (T: Mhm hm) and doesn't need to be taken care of. (T: Mhm hm) I have **needs**, but the men that have left me for other women, to women that, are **extremely needy**. (T: Mhm hm) Like they need to take care of someone. I don't really need to take care of someone, or be **cared** for. I want to walk side by side...

T12: Mhm hm, Mhm hm. I see. You have been becoming more of your own person and out of that more assertive, and also establishing limits, that ... seem ... right ... for you, like not being **sexual**, just because its wanted but, by the other person. (C: Mhm hm) Is that partly what you meant? (Nods) And then you come across as more independent or more autonomous. It looks like the men have **preferred** women who are...

C13: Totally dependent.

T13: ...who are **more** dependent, and more **needy**. And what are you going to **do**? You're really this **person** who is more assertive, and um...

C14: Apart

T14: And that's part of what you're saying isn't it, that you're afraid that it cuts down your...

C15: My chances.

T15: Your chances.

C16: Yes.

T16: Is that..?

C17: Maybe I'm just attracting the wrong type of people. (T: Mhm hm) And I get tempted sometimes to be real manipulative (Laughs) and play... (T: Play) the wounded puppy role that "I need you, I need you" so they'll stay with me. But I can't do that (Big sigh).

T17: You can't, (C: Sighs) even really do it in the short run, (C: Sniffles) anymore.

C18: No. Well, I probably could. (Laugh) But I don't see... That's not being **honest**. I don't think, if playing **games** just...Just I don't like that. I **like** to be straightforward and honest. (T: Mhm hm) Maybe I **should** play games.

T18: Mhm hm. It's tempting, given what happens.

C19: Yeah. (T: Mhm hm) I like being honest and at first, men are really attracted to that – my honesty (T: Mhm hm) and, ...my intelligence. But (Sighs) then (Sighs) it seems like, ...in a way they, they're really attracted to it, but then they're **fearful** of it? (T: Mhm hm) I don't know...

T19: Your observation is they change in respect to that very characteristic at some point... (C:Mhm hm) Where it seems to be part of their attraction initially but then it seems later to be part of their withdrawal.

C20: Yeah. Because I guess it's the expectation that if I'm like this, and I do expect it, then they need to be just as honest with me.

T20: Mhm hm, you mean that's part of the problem for the men – that you have that expectation, that they'll meet you in honesty. (C: Mhm hm) But they may not be comfortable with that or able to do that.

C21: Right.

T21 It makes you someone who's demanding something of them that they can't meet or that's the way they may perceive it... (C: Mhm hm) Is that?

C22: I think...

T22: It's a speculation. (C: Yeah) Yeah, you're exploring this and you're not **clear** or **sure** what's a problem, right?

C23: Yeah.

T23: But this is one direction of feeling, you're **too much** your own person somehow, for many of these men.

C24: I'm too **intense** and, I've been told that I'm too intense. When it comes to, honesty and intimacy, **sharing** (Sniffles) (T: Mhm hm) ...and that's what maybe...

T24 That's the criticism – "You're too intense."

C25: Yeah. I thrive on intensity. (T: Mhm hm) I just have to find somebody else that does...

T25: ...that does...

C26: ...too. And, you know, maybe I'm just too impatient to wait for the right person to come along. 'Cause, I figure there's **got** to be somebody out there (T: Mhm hm) that's (Sniffs)...

T26: That can **meet** you, (C: Yeah) and love you as you are.

C27: Exactly.

T27: And ... mean it.

C28: Mhm hm. And be as in touch with themselves.

T28: As you try to be.

C29: Yeah. And willing to **grow**. That's another problem. (Sighs) Some of the men that I've met are just pure unhappy being where they're at and not learning more. (T: Mhm hm) Not contemplating life more and **growing** and having **goals**, and stuff and it's (T: Mhm hm) really frustrating. (Short pause) I've been blaming myself. I just realized that something must be **terribly characteristically wrong with me**.

T29: With you, Mhm hm. (C: And...) Now you're wondering...

C30: Wondering if there isn't...? I hate to say that I'm more advanced for my age, because that sounds really narcissistic, but...

T30: But, maybe you in fact feel that you are. (C: Yeah) And that some of these men are not, (C: Yeah) up to you in that sense, in development. (C: Mhm hm) And that's hard to say because you don't want to sound like you're tooting (C: Yes) your own horn.

C31: Yeah, everybody wants to be modest right?

T31: Mhm hm. But candidly, maybe there's some truth, (C: Sighs) maybe. (C: Yeah) But you've been feeling at fault. I mean, after **this thought** it's been generally, as you've experienced this,

it's the **hurt** of losing the relationships, the **hurt** of feeling undervalued, or secondary. But also a feeling of somehow you're fucking up.

C32: Yeah. What am I doing **wrong**?!! (T: Mhm hm) You know, **why, what**... makes this other person so much better than me? What do I lack?

T32: This other woman, what makes her so more desirable for a **big** relationship?

C33: For long-term or marriage. (T: Mhm hm) Yeah.

T33: Thinking there's a deficit in you. (C: Mhm hm) While the other thought here is that maybe they are just not as developed and so they're oriented towards something that's less evolved in their own personalities, so, they're finding their level (C: Yeah) as another...

C34: Yeah. That's a...

T34: That's a tentative,

C35: ...much nicer way to look at things. You can project it on, the blame, on the other person. (T: Mhm hm) I know that I have a lot to do with these things. I take responsibility in the things I get into.

T35: Mhm hm. Conflicts with the man for example. Is that what you mean, or?

C36: Yeah, or the um...

T36: Oh, the relationship.

C37: The relationship. Yeah. You know, I haven't had really conflictual relationships. It's just "I'm in love with somebody else." They come out with that and, and yet they want to spend all their time with **me**, but are in love with somebody **else**.

T37: Mhm hm. I see. That's the **story** you get. They want to be **with** you, **make love** with you, but they love **her**.

C38: Mhm hm. I have a friend who said it sounds like the madonna whore syndrome. That they want to marry the virgin and stuff and they have a sexual relationship with you. (T: Mhm hm) And I will **not** subject myself to even get into that anymore. (T: Mhm hm) It's just as hard even if I **don't** have sex with them, it **still happens**. (Crying softly)

T38: Mhm hm. Even if you hold back sexually, the same thing, of their being interested, attracted, drawn to you, but **in love** with the other woman. (C: Mhm hm) So what hurts is you didn't let it get that far that you got kind of feeling of **used**, literally, sexually, but still there's a sense of not, not being **valued** and...

C39: Loved.

T39: **Loved**, loved.

C40: Yeah, the search...the endless search for love. Maybe I'm looking too hard.

T40: You said before you **could** be **alone**, but it's also true you have a **strong** desire for a real love relationship. That's what you're looking (C: Mhm hm) for.

C41: Mhm hm. That's what I would really **like**. And I don't think that I've ever **really** had one. Besides the guy that I was going to marry. He really loved me, but not in the **way** that I needed to be loved. Sometimes I wonder if I should lower my expectations? (T: Mhm hm) But I can't. (Voice wavering)

T41: Mhm hm. You don't know how to do that.

C42: And I don't think that I should **have** to, but if I'm not going to lower my expectations, I better be patient (Laughs) and wait around, till someone comes along.

T42: Those are the only choices you have, to not suffer so much. To either be really patient or to lower your expectations. (C: Mhm hm) Otherwise...

C43: Patient and lonely or (T: Mhm hm) lower my expectations, compromise myself and end up feeling used or abused or (T: Mhm hm) whatever, and **unsatisfied**.

T43: You feel like you've never been in relationship with a man where you have been truly deeply loved in the way that was **right** for you. The one man, the man you were engaged to loved you – you have to give him that or (C: Mhm hm) simply acknowledge that, but somehow it wasn't the right kind and there's something about expectations of what you **want**. There's a discrepancy in your experiences about (C: Mhm hm) what you expect and feel you need to have.

C44: Mhm hm. It's like, it's all superficial, it's all surface love. And what I want is something deeper, (T: Mhm hm) something more spiritual or emotional.

T44: Mhm hm. Something more intense? Uh...

C45: Yeah. Somebody who can be as intense as I am, and I can love very **freely**... And without **fear** so much. Maybe that's why I get hurt so many times because...

T45: You can go into it (C: Mhm hm) without being afraid. (C: Mhm hm)

C46: (Pause) I don't remember what I was going to say. I get into it and, and (Sigh) it's not reciprocated. (T: Mhm hm) That's what I really want is... reciprocity.

T46: Mhm hm. Reciprocity of passion and reciprocity of love (C: Mhm hm) feelings. That combination of passion and love.

C47: Yeah. **Gosh** it's hard to find passion in the first place I think. (T: Mhm hm) I mean true, not lust, but (T: Mhm hm) **passion** and um...

T47: Mhm hm. The emotional response.

C48: Yeah. (T: Mhm hm)

T48: It doesn't pop up too often.

C49: No.

T49: Even on **your** side, you mean.

C50: Yeah, yeah. Mhm hm. Well, there are men that are very passionate for me that I don't want. (T: Mhm hm) I mean I attract all sorts of men. In cafes they come up to me **all the time**. (T: Mhm hm) I don't even **want** it really, I don't want...

T50: Mhm hm. You're not asking for that kind of attention.

C51: Right.

T51: Mhm hm. The problem's far from people coming towards you. It's what they're coming with or what they're after, (C: Yeah) what they're coming **for**.

C52: **It's so frustrating**.

T52: Mhm hm. That you get all that attention and passion of that sort, but not the real...

C53: The real love.

T53: ...the love.

C54: Just sexual love. That's all I get. And that's all... I come in contact with that **too** often. I mean it's not an everyday experience. (T: But...) People don't come up to me and ask for sex or anything. (T: Mhm hm) **Thank goodness**, (With sarcasm) but...

T54: But men come on a lot to you when you're just around.

C55: Yeah. They want to talk to me.

T55: What's behind it is, (C: Yeah) a sexual interest.

C56: I don't know if I misinterpret that **often**, but when they start asking me **out** and stuff, and you go out and then they, what I want to do is just have a friendship and have it evolve and um...

T56: They want to get you in bed right away.

C57: (Laughing) Yeah. It's so ridiculous. I mean it's like the 80's **mentality**.

T57: Get it. (C63: Yeah) Get what you want.

C58: Mhm hm. It's, "sex is no problem, it's casual, and no big deal." But I don't **believe** that sex is casual. And I can't just jump into a relationship and have sex because I think it **taints** the friendship. I mean I think it is a **lovely thing**, of course, but when it's **time**. And I **don't want** just casual sex. I want it to be more of a union. (T: Mhm hm) Something deeper (T: Mhm hm) than just screwing.

T58: **With** the other person something... (C: Yeah)

C59: Yeah. (Pause) **Goll - leg**.

T59: Excuse me, I have a tic that's bothering me. (Rubs her eye)

C60: I get those from time to time.

T60: I've been getting them recently so I have to massage it. Sorry for the interruption.

C61: Ham. (Pause) I don't know if I'm getting anywhere with this. I just know that I'm **hurt** and I'm **frustrated** and I'm so **angry**... and at the bottom of the anger is **hurt**, (T: Mhm hm) of course, but...

T61: You feel angry at the way you've been misled, and disappointed, or kind of misused.

C62: Yeah, led on, to believe that there was something...

T62: More.

C63: ...**here**. But then I find out that there's **not**. (Voice wavers)

T63: Mhm hm, Mhm hm, and the basic feeling is being hurt by that again and again.

C64: Mhm hm. (Sighs) I don't know what to do. I think it's go back, (T: Mhm hm) go back...

T64: What do you do...

C65: ...to blaming myself. But, of course there is some blame **here**. There's some blame **out there too**. (T: Mhm hm) And it's...(small pause) I wish I could solve it because it's, it's been too long.

T65: (Small pause) You're feeling the deprivation and the loneliness.

C66: Mhm hm. 'Cause I've been more or less alone, no matter how many relationships I have... (Tearful)... (T: Mhm hm) (Pause) My relationships **are** getting **better** though. I mean the ones that I **do have**, even though they don't end up being long-term, they **are better**. (T: Mhm hm) And they're slowly but surely becoming more intimate, less abusive, (T: Mhm hm) and less the user-type men, **or** the manipulative (T: Mhm hm) and stuff like that so...

T66: You mean, you work with them. Men who are... I'm not clear, I guess. It has turned out that the men you've been with were in a sense using you. That is, because you weren't primary, you were filling in or (C: Mhm hm) making someone else...

C67: Mistress.

T67: ...jealous, the mistress role. But you feel the relationship's been getting better in the sense that **you** have been able to work with these men in a way that has resulted in better treatment, in the relationship, (C: Mhm hm) than before, (C: Yeah) than used to be.

C68: And I get more of my needs met. Um...

T68: Mhm hm, Mhm hm, Mhm hm. Despite the disappointment, something is going on in you that's affecting a better quality of relationship even with men who are really not totally there or totally available.

C69: Mhm hm. 'Cause they're, I mean more often, oh, well when it comes to primary, being primary or secondary, in the **physical** sense, when it comes to **time spent** with whoever, I **am** the primary person.

T69: You're chosen. Mhm hm. Literally, they want to be with you more than the other woman – they **are** with you more.

C70: Mhm hm. We speak more to each other. They come over more.

T70: Talk to you more, visit.

C71: Talk to me more, yeah. (T: Mhm hm) And yet when it comes down to the line, it's like, "Oh well, you know I really just want to be friends with you now." Even after a **kiss**, or something. (T: Mhm hm) He's just like, "Oh my gosh, I need to be friends." This (T: Mhm hm) last relationship, just yesterday.

T71: As of yesterday? (Suprised)

C72: **Yeah**.

T72: Oh.

C73: So this is...

T73: Very present, very immediate, (C: Mhm hm) that you've been disappointed. (C: Yeah) That's what you were. What you experience is this ambivalence of the person – that they're there wanting to kiss you and then pulling back.

C74: Well, yeah. We **did** kiss. And it was, we really had a **nice** time. It was like being in junior high. (T: Mhm hm) First kiss kind of stuff. We were supposed to go out last night and then he came over and said, "I'm sorry but I'm going out with my old girlfriend." It's right **there** again. (T: Huh) And I went, "Oh my gosh."

T74: Again. Mhm hm.

C75: And it's **always**. (T: Mhm hm) But I don't want to lose our friendship. (Crying)

T75: Mhm hm. So he didn't want to lose you and yet he didn't fully want you, he wanted her, it seems.

C76: And I don't know... I'm so angry. (Crying)

T76: Are there any Kleenex around? No....

C77: (Opens up her purse to get out some Kleenex) I'm so angry that I feel like I want to be punishing and say, "To hell with you! You can't have my friendship. All or nothing."

T77: Mhm hm, you're **angry**.

C78: Yeah. (T: Mhm hm) But the friendship is (T: Is...) important to me **also**, (Crying) (T: Mhm hm) But then I don't know how much I can take. (Pause) How do you forget about the romantic side? And though we haven't slept together or anything which, thank **goodness**, (T: Mhm hm) because it would be that much harder, to detach.

T78: Yes.

C79: But romance has, um... taint is not the word I want to use 'cause that's so negative, been in our relationship (T: Mhm hm) since the first day we **met**.

T79: Mhm hm. The basic exchange has been a romantic one. Then a friendship developed and it was not sexual (C: Mhm hm) But that romantic quality gives you of course the pain when he says he's going to go out with his old girlfriend. (C: Mhm hm) He hasn't chosen to stay with that (C: Mhm hm) quality in the relationship.

C80: Yep. And it was... Maybe it's because – **no**, it's not because I wouldn't sleep with him 'cause it was a **mutual** decision. (T: Mhm hm) We talked about the importance of establishing a firm intimate friendship before going in that room. Yet there's his old girlfriend that's **not at all that way**. So maybe I am the virgin. No, that's a **bad** analogy. My friend put that in my head – the madonna whore thing is..

T80: Doesn't really apply, either way. Is that what...?

C81: Well you can look at it like that but I don't think that's a **positive** way to look at it, um...

T81: I'm not clear. You were talking about this particular relationship that just hurt you as of yesterday. That the other woman is sexual with him? (C: Mhm hm) Mhm,hm, so that...

C82: Or they were,

T82: Or they were, Mhm hm, Mhm hm. And in a way that's an extraneous point that you weren't, and she was.

C83: Yeah. Well who knows? Whenever we get together and stuff, maybe it's too frustrating for him so he has to - that's so **stupid**.

T83: Mhm hm. The thought there is that if that's true, there's still not enough being given to **you** – enough **value** and enough **feeling**. Otherwise, he could hold out until it's right for both of you to make love.

C84: Mhm hm. Actually **he** was saying no.

T84: **He** was.

C85: Um, the first time we went out he wanted me to come over to his place, but I said, "No." (T: Mhm hm) We can speak honestly about our feelings and stuff. (T: Mhm hm) So I told him how I felt about it and we talked about it. Then it turned out to be a mutual decision but...

T85: I see.

C86: We've had the **flirtations** with it. (T: Mhm hm) But then he comes and he says he just wants to be friends. I think this was two days before the last time we were together. And **that** I don't understand. Well, he's having a hard time detaching from his old girlfriend. Maybe I am the substitute. Maybe he came to me because he's wants to get over this other girl. (T: Mhm hm) I can look back at relationships and see that **after the fact**. (T: Mhm hm) that that's what they **were doing**. They find an attractive young woman that will go out with them, while they're trying, and she becomes the **substitute**. (T: Mhm hm).

T86: It's a kind of a distraction, but they're still tied up in (C: yeah) the other person.

C87: Yeah. **Why?** I don't know **why**. I can't even **count** how many relationships that they've been emotionally tied to the **other woman**. (T: Mhm hm) Yet **I'm** the other woman.

T87: Yeah, Mhm hm, I understand...

C88: And um...

T88: ... you don't understand. It's really been **a lot** of times. (C: **Yes**) It's happened a lot. Where the man has wanted you, but really was tied up with, involved, **attached** to another woman.

C89: Yeah. "I really want to be with you but she needs me **more**." (T: Mhm hm) "I can't leave **her**. **Really**, it's not a very good relationship but I can't leave her."

T89: Mhm hm. That's what some of them have said, literally.

C90: Mhm hm. Yeah. Well it's like, "She needs me more."

T90: She needs him more. So you're out, huh?

C91: Yeah. It's like, "Wait a minute. Don't I have any needs? Don't I express these things?"

T91: Mhm hm. The way it's stated, if you **needed** him more maybe he'd at least be in a dilemma (Laughs) or something, right? It's as if you **don't** and she **does** and therefore, "I have to go with her"...

C92: Yeah. Yeah. Which...

T92: ...but, then you ask, "Don't I make myself fully clear?" or "Don't I let myself be known in that way?"

C93: Yeah. But then, I don't, in the way **they need him** (T: hm) by being **helpless** – not able to care about, for, themselves, or totally lost, or ... (T: Mhm hm, Mhm hm) or **spilling out** these tragedies (T: Mhm hm) of their lives and saying, "you can't leave me now because I'm totally vulnerable because I told you this and this and this (T: Mhm hm) and showed you all my wounds so you can't leave me now." (T: Mhm hm, Mhm hm) and (T: Mhm hm) I don't think that's a good avenue for intimacy. (T: Mhm hm) **I've** been like that before. (T: Mhm hm) You tell a person about all the bad stuff and "Now will you accept me?" It's like a test I think. I don't think that's a good avenue.

T93: Mhm hm. Aren't you, in effect, saying you really can't compete with **that** kind of neediness because **that** isn't **true** for **you** at this **point** in your **life**. (C: Mhm hm) So if that's the kind of neediness that these men have to respond to, you're out. (C: Mhm hm) Because "Don't they know I have needs?" Because in fact, you **do**, but it's as if yours aren't of the right kind.

C94: Mhm hm. 'Cause then they can't be my therapist or my caretaker.

T94: Mhm hm, Mhm hm. Because that isn't what you need, it just isn't what you need. It isn't the **condition you're in**. (C: Yeah) Mhm hm.

C95: I don't want a boyfriend that's a therapist to me and I don't want to be a therapist (T: Mhm hm) to a boyfriend. (T: Mhm hm) I want a **partner**, to **share** with, (T: Mhm hm) to grow with. Not that growth will be dandy all the time. It **will** be painful.

T95: Mhm hm. But that's different than what it appears to be in the women in relationships these men are choosing. It is more that they're the nurturer, the caretaker (C: Mhm hm) and you don't have that to offer them, the need for that.

C96: Yeah. I **could**. I mean I've got plenty of **material** but...

T96: Mhm hm. You **could** bring out your own suffering and your own past in ways that have wounded you or what have you. Right? (C: Mhm hm) But you don't. It's just not the leading edge for you in (C: Mhm hm) a relationship with a man (C: Yep) at this point.

C97: I think it'd be really manipulative (T: Mhm hm) if I were to...

T97: You'd be using it.

C98: Yeah and I just don't think that's a way. (T: Mhm hm) Obviously it's a good way because that's the way...

T98: It works --(Both laughing)

C99: ...that their choosing. **Damn.** (Both laughing) (T: Mhm hm) But I don't need that kind of cure. (T: Mhm hm) I've dealt with my past as well as I could (T: Mhm hm) or have been able to so far (T: Mhm hm) in my **wounds**. It does me no purpose to be throwing it out on the floor (T: Mhm hm) in front of somebody else to, to sweep up or (T: Mhm hm) help me clean up. (T: Mhm hm) I need more than that. (T: Mhm hm) I need something different. (T: Mhm hm) Yes. That's good to know. (Small pause, then, sigh)

T99: Mhm hm. That's good to know, that you don't need that kind of painful bringing out of yourself for someone else to lift you up (C: Mhm hm) or hold you up. (C: Yup) You really don't at this point (C: Yeah) need that.

C100: That feels, I mean to realize that, **that** feels really good. (T: Mhm hm) I can't, I can't really tell you what the big difference is, (T: Mhm hm) but...

T100: Thinking that, realizing that clearly, just made you feel better.

C101: It's like something **that** was lifted. (T: Lifted, Mhm hm) 'Cause, if this guy last night, if that's what he wants, then he's not the right person for me. (T: Mhm hm) He can't fulfill my needs (T: Mhm hm) on a higher level. (T: Mhm hm) But then I think, "Oh, man, we have so much in common." (T: Mhm hm) We have the same spiritual beliefs. Which is really hard to find 'cuz I don't have traditional beliefs. Well, I have beliefs in the first place, (T: Mhm hm) and strong spirituality and stuff which is hard to find. (T: Mhm hm) And that's what I need from a person. (T: Mhm hm) So I'm getting closer to – what? The perfect man. But, (T: Mhm hm) frustrated that it's not him. (T: Mhm hm) I read this in a book just yesterday, "Looking through a prism of hope." That this might be the right person (T: Mhm hm) and then being disappointed continually, (T: Mhm hm) time after time that no, this is not...there's some strong, um...

T101: Some element is missing (C: Yeah) but getting closer in the sense that there's more compatibility in the man yesterday. There's so many ways you really **are** compatible (C: Mhm hm) so it's such a shame.

C102: Yeah. It's like, "Wake up!"

T102: Mhm hm. "Grow up a little in that (C: Yeah) dimension." Mhm hm.

C103: Yeah. It's 'cause I mean, I'm frustrated and it makes me really want to get into that controlling aspect. Now I've really changed in the way that I used to deal with relationships and breakups. I used to become very manipulative and controlling (T: Mhm hm) and just holding on. "You **can't** leave me", just like maybe his girlfriend is doing, **you know**. That's when **I** was the wounded girlfriend. (T: Mhm hm) "You **know** this about me. I'm too vulnerable for you to leave me."

T103: "How can you?"

C104: Yeah. "How can you leave me like this, uh." (T: Mhm hm) Huh, that's **really** true. (T: Mhm hm) And, oh, it's so good to realize I don't do that anymore. And I don't have to be the controller... Gosh. But I'd like to be able to say, "Wait a minute. You know I deserve much more than that" (T: Mhm hm) and, and sometimes he'll say ... (T: To him) "What?"

T104: To him you mean or you're saying to yourself?

C105: Yeah he needs, well myself **yes**, 'cause I'm not going to sacrifice, compromise myself and be mistress (T: Mhm hm) with, (T: Mhm hm) to this guy or to anybody else. (T: Mhm hm) I finally just...

T105: You're done with that.

C106: Yeah. I've already played it. I played it enough. (T: Mhm hm) It's not good enough, so I'm ready to go to a higher relationship that's more than just sex, more than just therapy. (T: Mhm hm) **Intimacy**. What **real intimacy** is all about which apparently not a whole helluva lot of people my age know what it is, or know themselves enough to know how to be able to do it. (T: Mhm hm) So it's so **damn frustrating**. Then I just want to say, "**Wake up**. Don't you realize what you're missing here? (T: Mhm hm) We can **fly** together. Just don't (T: Mhm hm) say it's I'll walk." (T: Mhm hm) "We can fly."

T106: So it's different. It's not saying, "Oh. How can he leave me? I've shared so much with you."

C107: Oh, I did that last night. Yeah. I cried - did my crying and stuff. But I, yeah, it's (T: Well...) over.

T107: But, aren't you saying, all right, you cried last night and you felt bad and upset, but there's still a difference it seems like. You used to somehow bring out - it was **manipulative** you said. (C: Yeah) You'd bring out a pathetic side of yourself (C: Oh yeah) in order to...

C108: I felt totally destroyed or... when, I guess when, they were my therapists, when I was the wounded person, I was using them more as a selfobject. (T: Mhm hm) In order to be **validated** as a person, or have life or (T: Mhm hm) vitality or purpose or meaning in life, (T: Mhm hm) they had to **love** me, (T: Mhm hm) they had to **stay** with me. And now it's different because I have my **own** self. I feel rooted within me in having enough power and esteem (T: Mhm hm) to not totally disintegrate if somebody leaves me. (T: Mhm hm) (Short pause) **Another** good realization.

T108: Mhm hm. The thing I was getting at was, even so, granted **that**. what you'd like to say is, "Wake up, (C: Hmm) don't you see what you've got here and don't you see that it's better (C: Mhm hm) than that."

C109: Instead of going, "You can't... oh my gosh you're leaving me." (T: Mhm hm) Yeah, and so, that's **not** manipulative, that's **not** controlling.

T109: Having that response is not.

C110: Yeah.

T110: You mean having the **assertive** one? That (C: Yeah) "**look** at me, are you sure?"

C110: Yeah. "Sure you want to lose this? We have something good" Mhm hm.

C111: And honestly, I was afraid of becoming really controlling. I guess that's not...

T111: Ah, you mean in saying that kind of thing to this man you were feeling like maybe you were being controlling.

C112: Well, I had nothing planned to say.

T112: It's more the state that...

C113: That "oh my gosh, what I'm feeling now I can become, (T: Mhm hm) or I can't." I become really extroverted. I talk before I think (T: Ah hah) and so I was really fearful of becoming...

T113: I see. You were torn that this kind of statement that was wanting to come out of you, this kind of assertive "**Look at me**. Don't you appreciate this? Don't you know what you're gonna **miss**?" That was the impulse, to come out with that, but...at the same time you felt "maybe I shouldn't be so directive" or something.

C114: Yeah. It's **scary** (T: Mhm hm) especially when there's another woman involved. You can say, "well, you know well, well..."(Laugh). Actually, what my impulse was to say, "Why are

you looking at her?" and stuff like that (T: Mhm hm) instead of saying, "You're missing something big in me" (T: Mhm hm) More in shoving her down (T: Mhm hm) and **that's** bad, **that's** manipulative, **that's** controlling.(T: Mhm hm) Throw mud on the other person so maybe I'll look better. (T: Mhm hm) But **that's sabotage**, is what it is (T: Mhm hm) more. If I'm going to be putting down the person that he's choosing then he's just gonna turn on me. But... (Therapist talking at same time, inaudible.) I didn't realize that until today about the "Wait a minute, look what you're missing." (T: Mhm hm) It sounds so **vain** though, to say something like that. (T: Mhm hm) to, think that I might be better than somebody else (T: Mhm hm) (C: Inaudible).

T114: "More desirable, more advanced" (C: Yeah) seems vain.

C115: Yeah, like you're not supposed to be.

T115: Mhm hm. You're not supposed (C: Or) to be so sure of what you are and state it so boldly. (C: Mhm hm) It's not...

C116: Isn't that ridiculous?

T116: It's not modest enough or something.

C117: Yeah. You can't say that, the good qualities – you can't tell, you can't tell anyone about the good qualities. Isn't that weird? Do you find that often?

T117: Hm. I don't know that I happen to have that foible. (Laughing) At least not for a long time. But I **hear** it often. Yeah. (C: Mhm hm) You understand what I mean. That I have been pretty sure of myself (C: Mhm hm) for quite a while.

C118: Yeah. But it's so much easier to... or less scary to tell people about the bad stuff. It's like pointing out (T: Mhm hm) lots of flaws instead of saying, "I'm **good** at this and I am intelligent and I am self-sufficient, and (T: Mhm hm) I am powerful, yet I'm needy. (T: Yes) But I'm not totally dependent. (T: Oh) Oh boy! I feel much better. (Smiling)

T118: Do you?

C119: Yes

T119: I'm glad.

C120: I was thinking. You know, I wish I could figure this out and I haven't really.

T120: You haven't solved it, (Laughing) I mean...

C121: No, but I feel better about myself (T: Mhm hm) and so that's solving it (T: Mhm hm) in a good way. (T: Mhm hm) Because I can't come in and

T121: Well we can't make the right man (Laughing together) (C136: Yeah) for you by talking.

C122: Talk, talk up mister right. (T: Mhm hm) But, this is what I really needed.

T122: Mhm, hm, Mhm, hm. So how are we doing? (Looking at her watch) Well, we have a few more minutes. Maybe we can just give it time and see if there's anything more you want to say. But I understand that you're feeling better about yourself even though it's been a painful series of relationships and that you **are lonely** (C: Mhm hm) and want a really deep lasting relationship and you don't have it.

C123: I want it **really** bad (T: Mhm hm) and um, I guess for the last months, you know, I've been feeling like, I mean bad about myself because nothing's happened yet. (T: Mhm hm) And after trying this one out, risking at this and it still hasn't worked (T: Mhm hm) and it...

T123: It's getting you down and making you doubt yourself. (C: Yeah) Mhm hm. In **that** sense getting you down - not only the disappointment but feeling self-blaming about it. And then as we were talking I gather what you've experienced is that there are some real strong positive

feelings you have about yourself, there's a confidence that you had to kind of **hide** under a barrel in a way. You can't as fully represent yourself in the positive way (C: Mhm hm) or...

C124: Well it seems to be very threatening to people. (T: Mhm hm) I don't know, maybe it isn't, but maybe it is... very threatening when you are powerful, (T: Mhm hm) when you have it within yourself. (T: Mhm hm) Maybe there is a certain threat factor there. (T: Mhm hm)

T124: Mhm hm. That you do come across as powerful to men. You come across, **honestly you do**, in your own perception and experience, (C: Mhm hm) and it looks like so far, that men you've been with have had difficulty with it, weren't able to meet it or weren't equal to it. (C: Mhm hm) Is that what (C: Yeah) you really think?

C125: They would rather have a meek, (T: Mhm hm) meek wife (T: Mhm hm) instead of a strong one. (T: Mhm hm) Someone who's (T: Someone) totally dependent. (T: Mhm hm) Huh.

T125: And you can't get away from – the truth is you're not that way anymore (C: Mhm hm) so you can't give them that.

C126: Yeah. And I used to be like that. (T: Mhm hm) And I worked **damn hard** (T: Not...) to get out of it.

T126: Mhm hm. It wasn't good, it wasn't the way to stay.

C127: Eh-ehn. (Shaking her head) I'm much happier now. Even here, I **might** be contradicting myself. (T: Mhm hm) But even though I don't have – when I was so needy, I'd have relationships (T: Mhm hm) and stuff but I'm happier now. I'd rather be happy and alone, feel good about myself than totally needy in a destructive relationship.

T127: Mhm hm. You're happier with yourself (C: Mhm hm) being stronger in this way, right? (C: Mhm hm) And even if it's a factor that contributes, **so far**, any way to your being alone, and that's pretty painful, you're still in a certain sense **happier** than when you had the men (C: Mhm hm) but had that self-hating, self-denigrating (C: Yeah) weaker feeling. (C: Yeah) Is that right? (C: Yeah) Mhm hm. So despite that...

C128: You put that very well.

T128: Yeah, thank you. That you're really sad and you're feeling deprived. And all that's true, but there's another aspect to your experience which is very positive (C: Mhm hm) in the face of **that** even.

C129: That's good to know. (T: Mhm hm) That's good to realize (T: Mhm hm) 'cuz it's not all bad. (T: Mhm hm) I'm still lonely (T: Yeah) but, at least I love myself. (T: Mhm hm) And I guess that's the first step to find somebody that will really, can love me...

T129: In the way you **want** it to be.

C130: In the way I want, yeah. (T: Mhm hm) There's **got** to be somebody out there. (T: Mhm hm) Gotta have that faith and patience. (T: Mhm hm) Uh, I feel so much better.

T130: Oh I'm glad, I'm glad. Shall we stop then?

C131: Okay.

Comments and responses to this transcript are welcomed and will be considered for publication in the next issue of *The Person-Centered Journal*.

Policy Statement

The Person-Centered Journal is sponsored by the Association for Development of the Person-Centered Approach (ADPCA). The publication is intended to promote and disseminate scholarly thinking about person-centered principles, practices, and philosophy.

All materials contained in The Person-Centered Journal are the property of the ADPCA, which grants reproduction permission to libraries, researchers, and teachers to copy all or part of the materials in this issue for scholarly purposes with the stipulation that no fee for profit be charged to the consumer for the use or possession of such copies.