

**In Memoriam**  
***Barbara Temaner Brodley***  
**October 4, 1932 – December 14, 2007**  
**Marjorie Witty**

I remember moments of good fortune in my life—finding a lady slipper in the Maine woods; finding a perfect brain coral on the island of Cozumel. Meeting Barbara was my greatest good fortune. I first met her in the early 1970s at the Chicago Counseling and Psychotherapy Center, where she had come to present. It didn't take her long to realize that client-centered therapy as she knew it was not much in evidence at the center. At that time, the staff was greatly influenced by the work of Eugene Gendlin and was representing it as an evolution of client-centered therapy. She perceived this as a deviation from what she understood to be real client-centered practice, so she set about educating the staff. This marked the beginning of Barbara's monumental efforts to clarify Rogers' practice and theory and to distinguish it from other humanistic therapies.

Preceding her efforts at education was her personal commitment to the practice of client-centered therapy while in her early twenties. She began her own practice under the tutelage of Dr. Ruyard Probst, whom she married. Her own grasp of the theory and her devotion to the practice led to her brilliant realization of Carl Rogers' values and theory. Barbara esteemed Carl as a theorist and as a therapist whose practice exemplified self-awareness, respect, and deep empathic understanding of the inner world of the person. Barbara was a master in the sense that her mastery of the implications of Rogers' theory was deeply explored in her work and later in her theoretical writings and teaching.

The ongoing, day-to-day work of a therapist necessarily takes place in private. It is easy to forget (unless you're doing it) how much energy and discipline and constancy are involved in this work. Barbara

Author note: Remarks delivered at the South Shore Cultural Center in Chicago, Illinois, on January 13, 2008. Due to permission restrictions, only the last two lines of the quoted poem could appear in print.

*The Person-Centered Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1-2, 2008  
Printed in the United States. All rights reserved.

helped hundreds upon hundreds of clients in thousands of hours of therapy. She reflected on and studied her own work, which enabled her to educate a new generation, really several generations, of client-centered therapists.

I see Barbara Brodley as chiefly responsible for restoring Rogers' legacy, a practice fundamentally grounded in the person as a trustworthy architect of the therapy process and as the ultimate authority on his or her own life. In an era that increasingly generates new categories of pathology—thereby instilling and legitimating a tyranny of mental and moral hygiene—Barbara gave clients and students the ability and courage to resist relinquishing or thieving their own or the other person's inner authority. She helped each of us to find our own ways, our own autonomous voices. She deeply resisted mysticism, religion, psychology—any system of thought and behavior that codified or diminished human possibility. Freedom, autonomy, and self-authority were critically important to her and led her to oppose all kinds of interference with persons, including circumcision, male and female. She supported the freedom of infants to breastfeed and to self-wean. She objected to theoretical constructs represented as facts; she wanted convincing evidence, but she was clear that evidence must meet the test of moral values.

Barbara did not attempt to win people to her way of thinking. She wanted arguments on merits. She angered a number of people who felt she discounted their work and ideas. She simply disagreed with them. She championed engagement in debate, uncouched and unsoftened. In this Orwellian era of “spin,” Barbara's voice was a pure signal. She gave us an unparalleled example of intellectual clarity and moral courage.

I would like to dedicate to Barbara the poem titled “I Think Continually of Those Who Are Great” by Stephen Spender, which concludes

The names of those who in their lives fought for life who wore  
at their hearts the fire's centre.  
Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun,  
and left the vivid air signed with their honor.