

# A Dedication to C. H. Patterson

**Jerold D. Bozarth**  
University of Georgia

C. H. “Pat” Patterson was a major contributor to my professional life. He was considered one of the “Big Four” academic leaders in Rehabilitation Counseling when I started my career in the 1950’s. Pat and two of the others were in Illinois. The other two were Guy Renzaglia and John Muthard. Guy became Godfather to my daughter. John became my advisor in graduate school. I was personally close to both of them. It seemed to me more likely that Pat and I would have been closer since we were among the few whom identified ourselves as client-centered therapists. I mention this because I believe that Pat was somewhat of a loner. He was, similar to Carl Rogers, more apt to be writing about something while others were meeting or socializing. Perhaps, he was also shy. In any event, our relationship was more professional and friendly rather than personal. Pat was certainly active beyond his writings. He was a visible force in professional areas including rehabilitation counseling, mental health counseling, school counseling, educational psychology, and psychotherapy.

Other than Rogers, C. H. Patterson (2000) was the most prolific author in the theory of client-centered therapy for nearly sixty years. Pat authored 22 books and nearly 200 articles, book chapters, and technical reports. He was not only a prolific author of client-centered therapy but authored several theory books and books on testing. He had an exceptional grasp of and empathy for other theories of therapy as well as client-centered theory.

During the early 1960’s, I had the opportunity to supervise graduate students from Southern Illinois, Illinois, Iowa, and the University of Chicago when they interned at the Illinois State Psychiatric Institute in Chicago. The interns from the University of Illinois were students of Dr. Patterson. This gave me the opportunity to work with Pat and, as well, to know how students reacted to him. All of the students had great admiration for him and also felt very comfortable with him. One remark I remember from a student was that “We don’t ask Pat what he’s read lately; we ask what has he written?” Somehow this statement—both the content and the way it was expressed—stayed with me over the years. It was a statement that represented the admiration, respect and the warmth between Pat and his students.

There were several things in addition to his remarkable accomplishments that have intrigued me about C. H. Patterson and his life.

First, I admired the way he handled the death of his wife when, I believe, he was in his 40's. He had eight children and took full responsibility for them. This seemed to me to be a remarkable feat along with his very active career of teaching and writing.

Second, I learned in the late 1980's that Pat and John Shlien were psychologists in the Army Air Force during WW II. They were both involved in the evaluation and testing of service men. They knew each other there but lost contact after the war. Separately, they became involved with the client-centered approach. John became a student and colleague of Rogers and was an internationally renowned psychologist in his own right and own works. At the same time, Pat earned his master's degree in child psychology and his doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota.

Pat and John connected again during the last few years of John's life.

Pat lived to the age of 93, often contributing comments and sending copies of his papers to the client-centered/person-centered e-mail networks up to a few months before his death.

Pat actually had little contact with Rogers with the exception of taking a seminar with Rogers in the late 1940's. It was from this experience that Pat was inspired to become one of the more prolific advocates of client-centered therapy as a teacher, author and person.

Third, C. H. Patterson is a name that comes up in a host of writings related to the client-centered approach. He wrote more articles, book chapters, and books about different aspects of client-centered therapy than any other person except Carl Rogers. He also, like Rogers, had the respect of the academic community and was a contributing member of professional organizations of counseling and psychology. He seemed particularly proud of receiving the Leona Tyler Award. However, it was somewhat ironical that Pat received recognition as a client-centered advocate but was seldom given much attention by the client-centered community. That is, he is not widely cited in writings on the client-centered approach. Even his classic article, *Empathy, warmth, and genuineness in Psychotherapy: Review of the Reviews* (In *Psychotherapy*, 21, 1984) that clarifies the extensive evidence from research that supports Rogers' postulate of the "Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for Therapeutic Personality Change" (1957) is not widely reported in client-centered literature. It was my view that Dr. Patterson did not receive appropriate recognition for his contributions in general and specifically in the client-centered community. A couple of years ago, Pat expressed his puzzlement and, I thought, disappointment that it did not seem to him as

though he was appropriately recognized for his contributions. To the extent that this is true, individuals interested in client-centered theory have missed a rich source about the meaning and practice of client-centered therapy.

Finally, I think that Pat more than any other individual went to the core of client-centered theory when he said that the approach is centered in love—agape. Interestingly, Rogers referred to therapy being a “kind of love” in his comments about the Miss Mun session in the early 1950’s. Rogers was absorbed in discussions about love at the University of Chicago Discussion Groups; especially, noting the views of Oliver Bown. Rogers decided on the term, “Unconditional Positive Regard” in his theory. Pat’s observation of agape love was a gentle reminder that there might be more to client-centered therapy than expressed in the scientific vernacular of theory.

For those interested in better understanding the substance and scope of client-centered theory, the reading and/or review of C. H. Patterson’s writings offers enlightenment and increased understanding of the approach. C. H. Patterson’s work lies in wait for discovery by neophytes and for re-discovery by experienced client-centered individuals.