

## **NATALIE ROGERS' PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH ROBIN: CRITIQUE AND ANALYSES**

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***Abstract.** Master's candidates in counseling psychology, along with their seminar supervisor discuss, debate, and summarize their reactions to Natalie Rogers' therapy demonstration video. Responses are candid and cover a broad range of perspectives. The reviewers address various philosophical and practice issues that converge on two central themes: What is person-centered therapy, and what is good therapy. Following the dialogue, reactions to the video and to the critique process are presented.*

### **Introduction**

The lead author of the article contacted Natalie Rogers during the Summer of 1999, and in this personal communication learned that Dr. Rogers had a video production of her person-centered expressive therapy available for purchase through Allyn and Bacon. Natalie and I spoke about various possibilities for the video, one of which included a screening and analysis, like the one presented here, for a counselor training group. I am grateful to Natalie for rushing my video order out in the mail. It has been an excellent counselor training resource.

On December 9, 1999, students in their master's degree internship seminar class viewed Natalie Rogers' (1998) person-centered expressive arts therapy demonstration video. Also observing was the supervision course instructor who served as facilitator of the follow-up discussion that took place on December 16<sup>th</sup>. All class members consented to view the video for the purposes of critical observation, tape-recording of reactions, and submission of the final transcript for publication in *The Person-Centered Journal*. Class members were each given a transcript of the session to review during the week between the video screening and

the audio taped discussion. The following segment presents class member dialogue and debate in response to the video. The instructor structures the discussion with her opening question.

## **Video Critique**

**Jo (1)** What kind of reactions did you have to the session and in a very open way, personal reactions philosophical, theoretical-- any kind of reaction you had to the Natalie Rogers video.

**Chip (1)** I thought it was very free flowing. The client seemed very eager to share information and very open to the type of therapy that was used. I was impressed in how freely she was able to pick up on doing the art therapy and then analyzing her own work and incorporating it into her own therapy. I didn't realize it would work that easily and made me want to try it but don't feel that I am quite ready for that yet.

**Jo (2)** You were impressed with the natural flow of the art therapy into the session. It didn't seem contrived to you.

**Chip (2)** No, it really didn't and it seemed the client accepted it real easily. There weren't any awkward pauses or questions about what this was going to be like or why she was doing it. She just seemed to accept it naturally and just go with it and that was impressive to me. I'm not used to that.

**Trudy (1)** Ted and I were kind of comparing notes after the video and we both had to laugh because right at the same point we had "abrupt"--how did we phrase it? How did you have it Ted?

**Ted (1)** A major shift--very abrupt in the flow of the session; was voicing some frustration; a point where she actually brought in the idea of the art therapy. It just seemed there was a sudden shift in the session at that point.

**Trudy (2)** And I had put, all of a sudden, because it seemed like they were on quite a roll and the client was beginning to disclose in her style and her fashion which you could kind of learn about the client just by the way she was disclosing and then suddenly we went into this other venue which seemed somewhat contrived.

**Alison (1)** I agree with you. I also thought that. I jotted down the suggestion of using art didn't flow with the session and I also noted that, as Chip said, it was really easy for that client to deal with. I think you have to have a creative, insightful, willing participant as a client in order to use that technique.

**Melanie (1)** I agree with Alison, Trudy and Ted. That's exactly what I was thinking when she brought up the art therapy. It was all of a sudden that she seemed to be flowing right along and then stopped for a second. Also, in the beginning, I thought there were a few times that I felt kind of awkward because there were some strange moments where it wasn't

really flowing. But , overall, she was a good client for this. It seemed to work well for her. But, similar to some of my clients, there is no way that this would work. You have to have a client that can deal with this kind of thing.

**Jo (3)** You don't have to worry about saying things like I'm saying right now because what we will do is edit out the ums and errs. You will make the choice as to which are significant.

**Jordis (1)** I think I must have had a preconceived notion of the personality of the counselor-- what she might be like-- being person centered, and when I was watching Natalie, I was taken back at her personality because I felt she was kind of awkward about it as though she wasn't really warm and soft. She was kind of-it seemed contrived to me. It seemed she was a little nervous in front of the camera or what not. Maybe that's all it was. I didn't really feel like she was really reaching out with herself to the client. So, I was kind of disappointed in that although I liked the way she handled things with the client. So that was kind of a surprise to me that she wasn't real warm and real nurturing.

**Betsy (1)** I was struck by how still she was. I wrote down that she looked like a mannequin because she just seemed so-- there was no energy there. I think what she said was incredible; I mean she reflected very well and she obviously got the client to open up. But her body language seemed lifeless. It could be construed as maybe not caring. She barely moved and sat with her hands folded in her lap. The whole time her head didn't even nod.

**Tina (1)** I also agree with Betsy. I thought that she was really still and I kind of thought that the client was moving around a lot and I did not think that Natalie was following the gestures of the client. This is something that I look at and try to work on in myself. I thought that she was really stiff and I think that would make me uncomfortable. I was wondering if the client felt the same way. I am not sure if it was because it was being video taped, but it did seem like it was rehearsed and it did not flow very smoothly at times.

**Jo (4)** I got a really different impression after I left the video with regard to the stillness aspect. I was really impressed with how focused she seemed to me. She seemed very still but focused-- and very open-- and I did see her, perhaps, more cognitive than emotional. She doesn't wear emotions on her sleeve, appears more controlled, but I just got the impression that that was part of her personhood, and to me I did walk away feeling very impressed with her stillness rather than looking at it as an awkwardness or a stiffness. I saw it as a very deep focus. I got a different impression of that.

**Karen (1)** I thought that she brought the client to a peaceful place at the end of the session. I really don't know exactly how it happened but as I was listening to everyone and I was wondering if, by her being so still or by her introducing this art technique, she got the client to almost deal with a lot of issues in one session. I am wondering if that was her focus, to get a clear idea about the nature of this client's frustrations and joys in life. I think about different ideas for working in the first session. It's hard for me to start working in the first session and she really did. So I don't know if it's because some of those techniques she used helped that work in the first session.

**Trudy (3)** I was thinking about if she could switch gears into art therapy, I almost felt like I wanted to switch gears into exploring the client's cognition and I wanted to switch gears into exploring her from a psychoanalytical standpoint. I thought you could go anywhere and it kind of, for me, then lost the focus of the session. But I would have liked to have had that client and thought more about her childhood and thought more about what brought her to that point and what were her relationships with men in the past and why was her relationship like this with her husband and all the things could have been looked at from a different standpoint.

**Ted (2)** I think one of the problems I have with it happened early on. When I am looking at something here the therapist response No. 4-- "Well, let's just put our feet on the floor and close our eyes for a minute and take a deep breath"-- my real problem is that it seems to stray outside of what I call person-centered or client centered. It is something more I'd expect from Eugene Gendlin called "clearing a space." It is more experiential and I do have a concern with that. If it is person-centered, client centered, I would like it to be a little more pure form. It was a good technique (art therapy). But I am not sure that it fits. But the biggest rupture for me was the point in the dialogue where Natalie's client was expressing an inner conflict. It was a rift between wanting something more out of life now vs. later vs. staying where she is. It was a very real in the moment experience and what I felt when I put myself in the client's shoes was I felt shut down because I wasn't allowed to explore and sit with this frustration and since the counselor wasn't okay with sitting with this, I started to get the impression that, well, then my feelings aren't okay, then this really doesn't count; therefore, I don't count. I just felt very much shut down by the idea of bringing in an "alternate form of language;" I believe she called it. It was the art work and I was very surprised and disappointed. I guess I expected a Carl Rogers clone and maybe that's really not what I should have been expecting with it. So it's really what I did expect.

**Jo (5)** I wanted to follow up with what Trudy had said. As you see it, the way that she introduced the art therapy-- there was a piece of what the client was talking about which dealt with "my frustrations now," and "where do I want to go in the future"—And, Natalie extracted this from her affective and meaning-making process in a way [art therapy] that would be like any other extraction; like a psychoanalytic extraction might say, "well, let's take some time to look at your childhood history and how that's involved in where you come to now." This was something different, as you saw it, from an ongoing processing where the client may have developed more clarity (that I think she achieved in working with Natalie) about some of the attitudes and behaviors that she can be engaged in to bridge that gap between how she'd like to behave and how she is currently behaving—and that she may have otherwise chosen something even more significant from a person-centered point of view. Am I understanding accurately?

**Trudy (4)** It seems like once she left the process of the person-centered core conditions, it left you wide open for any other possible approach you could have fit in there and that's what seemed to break the thing up for me. I began to wander into--well, look at the client's cognitions and look at her rational thoughts and what happened in her childhood that got her there. But I think if you are honed in on the person-centered approach, you're not feeding that to the client; the client is disclosing that to you.

**Jo (6)** So, to clarify, you're not suggesting that it wasn't an effective approach. In fact, I think you said that it seemed to be an effective technique. You just called to question whether or not it's an appropriate person-centered demonstration.

**Trudy (5)** Correct.

**Jordis (2)** I got the feeling right at the point where she switched to the art therapy that right before that point the client was just on the verge of revealing that she doesn't want to wait for the future; she wants to change now. She wants her life to change now. She wants these changes now, when all along she is saying, well, you know, I don't want this to be like this in the future. Right now it's this way and I know it won't be this way forever. But I really think what she was trying to say was I want it to change right now and I think switching at that particular time stopped her and I really hurt for her when I saw that happen because I thought she just missed such an opportunity to bring some of that pain out and to help her with that.

**Betsy (2)** Maybe some of the frustration that we all are having can be mediated or tempered by remembering that at the very beginning of the video Natalie Rogers identified herself as a person-centered expressive art therapist. That's how she describes herself. So, maybe this is more a demonstration of person centered art therapy alone. I thought I would say that for a point of clarification.

**Trudy (6)** I also appreciated the part about art and its expansiveness in dance and movement and other ways to be artistic and I want to think about dance therapy or art therapy. It seems like a good technique to use but, like Alison and Melanie said, it seems like it could be used effectively but not with every client. There has to be a particular kind of client that works well at that level. I think it would work well with kids particularly. As a matter of fact, after the video, I've had some children clients and we did some things like that-- like what color are you feeling today? And we talked a little bit about that and it was just fun for me to play with. I'm not saying how effective it was for the client. It seemed like fun for them too. But it's something you have to practice a little bit too and explore and experiment with so you know what works for you and the client. Most likely Dr. Rogers had years of training, so for us to use art therapy as a technique just out of a bag of tricks may be ineffective unless we practice it more.

**Jordis (3)** I was impressed at the end when they compared the girl's art---how she is right now and how she wants to be. She didn't seem to have great artistic ability but she knew what colors she liked; she knew what those colors meant to her and comparing the two pictures and the questions that Natalie asked her about the pictures and how she would describe the pictures-- I thought that was really neat. That was impressive to me because it really did bring some feelings out in the girl that she was able to express after using the chalk pastels and the magic marker. I think that it did bring something out that maybe otherwise would have been a little more difficult pulling out. It seemed to relax her.

**Jo (7)** I remember that Heidi had commented before we watched the video-- just after the introductory segment-- that she was very curious to see how the artistic discussion and expressiveness would take place without interpretation because she wouldn't expect that it could be done without anything but interpretation and I would have to agree that despite its

being directive, it was done without interpretation. It was done in a very empathic way I thought. She didn't interpret the work for her. She generated through her reflective responses and questions, I thought, expressiveness that came pretty much entirely from the client.

**Chip (3)** What I was impressed with was that at the very start she said that "I don't interpret the artwork." "This is just a technique I use and feel free to do it any way you want to," but what I saw through the session then was that the client was very eager to interpret their own work and it kind of freed them up to talk about things that they might not have talked about if they weren't self-interpreting the art. It gave them a vehicle to talk about those issues and I think they could have done five or six different drawings and they still would have put their feelings and emotions into the interpretation and that's what I was impressed with. It created an atmosphere where they were eager to explain why they had done different things but their feelings and emotions came out through their explanation.

**Karen (2)** Why I liked the art session is that it seemed to have a full circle effect for the client. I worry myself when I start in a session to have the client release the frustration, that I'll end up with the frustration level being high and it's fifty-eight minutes later and now, what am I going to do? So I think that it really gave Robin the opportunity to actually make a plan, per se, with her second art drawing of what she wants to aspire to. It seemed to organize all the things she needed to deal with or to start to deal with. That's why I really overall liked the session very much. And a part of me just says, well, some of the things that weren't client-centered, such as challenging the client to work on issues to gain perspective on things.

**Trudy (7)** I think this client had a lot more pain than she was able to reveal and I am wondering if the session would have proceeded without the art therapy if more of that pain could have been explored.

**Chip (4)** For me, I guess that's part of the client or person-centered type of therapy, that they are more directing how the session goes and what they are comfortable dealing with and exposing at any one time and I guess that's why I liked the session because the client was able to express their feelings and feel safe and I would think it would be good as far as the client coming back and being willing to divulge more and explore more in the future. I think sometimes as therapists we're eager to take on all the issues at once and really push the envelope and we can scare the client away. They may divulge a great deal in a session kind of because we direct it, but then they'll go home and say, I didn't feel comfortable with that and may not come back and with this the client felt very comfortable and relaxed and left the session feeling some relief--at least that was my interpretation and I could readily see them coming back and being willing to explore more issues in the future and I think it is okay to take little steps and develop a little bit at a time.

**Tina (2)** I'm wondering if what I'm hearing is that this is a good technique to use, but at the same time, maybe only use it if you are at a crossroads with the client. This technique can be utilized to bring out inner thoughts and feelings that they may have been unable to express. Maybe the transition would have been less difficult if there is an extreme amount of silence, or the client responds with "I don't know," or asks the therapist the question rather than

answering it themselves. Maybe this would ease the transition. It sounds as if people didn't like the fact that the client was readily talking and then the transition was made.

**Melanie (2)** I just have a few comments listening to everybody talk. I thought at the end she was able to see some things in herself that she hadn't been able to see. She was able to actually put words to things which was probably good for her at that point. In regards to using this with children, I do think this would be a really good technique to use with some children, not all, because a lot of the kids aren't able to express the way they are feeling and they have all kinds of different angry and frustrated types of feelings. In drawing a picture or something like that they'd be able to at least think about how they feel and maybe the therapist could get a few words out of them pointing to different areas or something like that as was shown in the video. The demonstration might be useful to get started with kids, or with adults who can't put things to words. I also think it could be useful in going back to--like pulling out the pictures a few sessions later and going back to it and see if things have changed or if they see it a different way.

**Betsy:** Another observation I had about the technique was not only was it a really neat way for her to express herself, like Chip was saying, but also there is something therapeutic about drawing in itself--not only what the client's interpretation of the drawing was, but how it felt just to draw things. For example, in client response 55 through 58, it was kind of neat how she did that. She said, "How did it feel to draw the red after she defined that red was frustration, and then the client said it felt releasing to do that. So it was kind of like there were two things going on with the technique. I thought it was interesting. Another interesting thing, on a lighter note, was in the beginning of the tape. I don't know if anybody noticed Natalie refer to Abraham Maslow as "Abe" Maslow? That stuck out in my mind because I thought it was funny--you know he's like so famous but she obviously knows him well enough to nonchalantly refer to him as "Abe".

**Jo (8)** I have a couple of comments that I have been trying to organize as a cohesive whole and I guess the general theme of what I want to say is that there were some surprises to me about Natalie's responses being maybe "non-traditional" and having some therapeutic value, but, I guess, falling in the category of what a lot of person-centered therapists or people training in person-centered therapy might question as pure person-centered responses, technically person centered. The first place I'll draw attention to where the client poses a question-- she guesses her question is, "Is it normal for a woman to always want that security..." in Client 22. "...Can't roles sometimes be reversed?" What Natalie does is respond by saying "Yes, these roles can sometimes be reversed." which is, to a certain extent not typical of person-centered therapists to provide a factual, if you will, response or information for the client-- although, I thought that that was acceptable to just acknowledge that yes, that could be the case-- and then she followed it with the second part of her response, "And I am wondering how this relates to you personally in your own marriage. Where are you on this?" So, while I think that she follows up by inquiring as to what relevance this has for the client's marriage, her directive question follows reasonably from the client's query and uncertainty. As a listener who is focusing in on the underlying meaning presented by the client. I probably would neither have answered her question nor followed up with a direct question. I probably would have responded by understanding that this is a concern of hers--whether this is a normal process and whether or not it is normal in her marriage. It probably

doesn't even make any difference. I really think Natalie was with her and I think her response was just a genuine, respectful kind of follow up-- "Yes, that does happen," and then her question was very directed to what specifically the client's concern was and so then the client's follow up response to her question was probably very similar to what the client would have responded if I had responded to her with a reflection. So it was really interesting to me that while maybe it wasn't a traditional kind of reflection, it had that same effect of being focused on [a reflection of] what the client's central issue was and might have been more respectful, in a way, in that it provided a response to the question like a social more--to respond, I ask a question; I guess I am wondering is that normal?-- Well, yes, that can happen sometimes and what I am wondering is, how does that affect you? Because, really, that is underlying as a person-centered therapist--underlying my response is the attention of pulling back because I am interested in what that means to her.

**Trudy (8)** So, in other words, there may be more than one way to achieve a means is what I think you said; right?

**Jo (9)** Well, maybe the theme is non-traditional in the sense of being more directive, but has some of the same qualities that the client in Client 28 says—"Actually there have been a lot of positive things going on lately." She is talking about her husband opening up to her and taking in her opinion and then she says, "Of course, there is always a bad too but, and how he responds too, I'm open to hearing both. And the client says, "Well, let's see...the bad things." Again it seemed to me to be another directive response, maybe within the category of immediacy, like the previous one was, "Well, what I'm interested in is how does this affect your marriage?" And now she says, "Well, I'm open to hearing both" and the response of the client, it seems to me, is to feel a sense of obligation to respond to the bad things whereas I probably would have, after the client said, "Actually there have been a lot of positive things going on here lately; of course, there's the bad too but--and then there's a pause. I probably would have responded with something like, "But it seems to you that there really has been a lot of forward movement in your relationship lately" because that seemed to be the direction that the client was talking about. So, I am wondering if these therapist-centered responses--her previous one, "Well, I'm interested in how this affects your marriage" and this one, "Well, I'm open to hearing both" do direct the client, or is Natalie more deeply attuned to the conflict being expressed, while I'm more on the surface [listening only to words]?

**Female (X)** Yes, I wonder if those two responses in particular have to do with the fact that it was a demonstration video because I wrote down a note too that her response when she said, "Will it sometimes be reversed the client with her talking, right before that was this big, huge, long explanation of some video that she saw and it was very vague and unclear. She was just saying some women think that but I don't, and like it was in focus, and I'm thinking the client was trying to make small talk to get comfortable in the session and I actually thought that Natalie was frustrated with that and I didn't know if maybe she's always like that or if she was really trying to focus the session because it was a demonstration video and the same thing when she talked about how great her marriage is; now here she is in therapy so it's like, well, okay, what's the problem? Why are you here? This seemed non-traditional—definitely, and I don't know, maybe it's because she was trying to get to the demonstration.

Jo (10) The client responds to Natalie's being open to hearing both, which I respect because, consistent with her other response and her beginning, I think is a part of her genuineness. I think this is a way that she presents herself. She is focused. I sense she is not deliberately directing the client but the client says, "Of course, there's the bad too," and Natalie says, "Well, I'm open to hearing both" and the client says, "Well, let's see ...the bad things, well"--and then Natalie says, "Well, the things that are troubling you, if there are things that are bothering you." Again it suggests to me the possibility of limited acceptance; some limitation on the full unconditional positive regard of the way a client thinks of things. There seemed to be a reframing-- the client sees it as the bad things. Natalie then says, "Well, the way I see it is they are troubling things, things that are bothering you," rather than "the bad things." [Maybe she helps to soften it a bit-- as Albert Ellis might intentionally decatastrophize. Or perhaps, as Alfred Adler might have done, she deliberately minimizes the intensity. It's also possible that she is deeply understanding Robin's "bad" experience, more accurately reflecting its troublesomeness. Its being bothersome. I could imagine other qualities of "badness" that might more accurately describe Robin's experience, for instance, irritation, frustration, chagrin. Robin begins the session by discussing her preference for an open honest way of being; not living a facade. She continues to recognize herself and more so others, a person who sometimes charades as one who "have it all together." She partly concludes that she basically gets along well with others, and then requests an opening to which Natalie responds that she may use this time for dealing with vulnerabilities or not. I am impressed with Natalie's sensitivity to the client's self-perceived strength. Here, before the "troublesome" issue, is an instance where Dr. Rogers may be paying homage to the client's strengths rather than perhaps assuming a "problematic" stance]. A further departure from what I have considered to be a basically non-directive stance in Client 63 when Natalie's focus shifts into the art, the client begins to say, "because, I mean, people can't have it either or. I mean you have to be somewhat flexible." She is beginning to get into this conflict about not wanting to be all one way, not all frustrated, and not all her way, but also not all accepting of the other person's point of view. She's looking for some flexibility in this. Interpreting her first drawing she says, "Yeah, because, I mean, you can't, people just can't have it either, or. I mean you have to be somewhat ". Natalie (64) says "Mhm, Maybe if you put that in the first person, Try that." It sounds Gestalt to me. Not that Gestalt is bad-- I'm not at all meaning to imply that. I am just questioning whether it ought to be called person-centered experiential when such a large component of person-centered, as I see it, is the trust and the self-actualizing tendency of the client and along with that, the empathic positive regard. I am of the opinion that when you direct the client to putting something in the first person, there is an element of conditionality in your acceptance about the way the client speaks, and in this instance, also about the client's partly externalizing process. Maybe these several examples that I am giving of her directiveness, the way she sees it, or what she wonders, represent a limits on unconditional positive regard. Does Natalie really trust the self-directiveness of the client? [I believe that Natalie is responding to the client's desire for, in Natalie's words "mixing" of the red and blue—that is, in CL (62) "peace [v. frustration] without giving up all of me." (Rogers, 1998, p. 18). I probably would have proceeded down the "split" path, Robin's experience as "torn in knowing (how to have both)." So, I see Natalie as more "positively directed."] I generally proceed with more sensitivity to the difficulties than the ways out, versus what Natalie does. That's a central part of person-centeredness for me-- not that Natalie's responses were not productive or helpful, and most importantly, genuine.

**Trudy (9)** So, I imagine then one could question whether it is possible to have a pure person-centered approach and art therapy successfully working together.

**Chip (5)** Actually, I was feeling just the opposite. I was feeling that the session became more person-centered when the art therapy started. That the conditional status that I was seeing with the therapist kind of went away when the client was given free reign to do their art work and interpret it as they saw fit and were encouraged to do that and were accepted with whatever they said, and what I was thinking when Jo was speaking was that maybe this is the way Natalie has found she can do person-centered therapy. That maybe she couldn't do it the way her father did it but she had talent as far as art and found that when she let a client express themselves, that way, then she could be more unconditional and accepting of the client in allowing them to express themselves the way they sought to.

**Jo (11)** That's very interesting.

**Trudy (10)** I was thinking about some of the content of what the client was saying and, you know, if I were to have this client, there were some indications that this husband is less than a congenial fellow. She states, "I feel like I have to get out of the house. If I don't..."and then it is left go and I don't know that Natalie acknowledges this, which somehow seems like, for me, would be a red flag that the client is throwing up; things like, "He doesn't want me to go out of the house all week while he's at work. I'm not supposed to go out of the house." A lot of these are almost indicators I would want to try to assess at some level. Are we in an abusive situation here? How that would play out in a person-centered approach I'm not sure but what I'm saying is I'm not so sure that some critical issues were explored, we were so busy drawing pictures.

**Chip (6)** What I was thinking the last three or four comments was that if each one of us had this client, they'd get completely different therapy and that's not necessarily a bad thing, but it's a very interesting thing to look at--that we all see different things in what the client presents and I'm not saying that any are more wrong or more right than others, but we have a different approach. The thing that I liked about this session was when the art therapy started, it was client centered, it was client directed and the client's calling the shots.

**Chip (7)** Following up on that, just a few sentences later I noticed Natalie actually says, "Well, if you put some of this into "I language, like I as though you actually managed to--almost Gestalt in nature, to say that" I didn't realize that at the time I was watching the video, almost directing her to come to a conclusion that fits well with the art, the cocoon butterfly image is a nice image so let's agree on that.

**Jo (12)** I also wanted to acknowledge that it was very impressive to me to see the client gain some real clarity about the issue of wanting to express her frustrations in a way that was more moderate, where she made more discerning judgments and where she seemed to be clearer at the end of that session about having a choice about making some things an issue or letting some things go. I mean, that seemed to be one of the key resolutions that she had through that process. Somehow it became clearer to her that she would like to let some issues go between herself and her husband--not make issues of them and have a greater sense of choice about which battles to fight. I was impressed with that--that she seemed to have a clearer sense of

that moderate ground--I don't have to be all the time frustrated or at peace. I can experience the frustration but it doesn't have to be at this great big intensive level. I had a sense that she had a big awareness about that.

**Trudy (11)** I was just thinking about a comment as the session ends the therapist said, "Sounds wise. Well, it's time to wrap this up." Sounds wise is a judgment and I wonder if the client felt judged and did the client feel-- have I accomplished whatever the therapist wanted me to accomplish? I got more of a feeling of that than the client feeling like--I have accomplished what I wanted to accomplish and I don't know that the client is going to run home and pick up crayons and start coloring, although it was suggested that she do this at home. I can't imagine that she would. She just seemed to be appeasing Natalie by saying, "Yes, that's a good idea. I'll do that." So, it's a marvelous technique but I think it may work for some people but somehow I think it's a tough combination. If I would see someone like Albert Ellis or Aaron Beck or someone like that using art therapy, I would feel differently, but something like the pureness of the person-centered approach and the directiveness of picking up materials and being given direction as to what to do seems incongruent.

**Jo (13)** I'm looking uncomfortably at client and therapist interaction at 73 and 74 where therapist 73 says, "So there is an element of you that is like in something of a cocoon but has the potential to become this butterfly. Does that ring true to you?" The client responds, "Yeah, probably. [Mhm] But you know I almost think it does to everybody because it's sort of like..." (pause; she is getting her thoughts together) philosophizing 'this is the meaning'. As I was listening to the client I was envisioning her placing herself into a developmental sequence of sorts; that this is where she sees herself, actualizing at some point to an extent you might say, confirming for herself or accepting for herself that this is a stage that others go through and it seems to be natural. But Natalie has a bit of a problem with that. She doesn't want her philosophizing about being at an appropriate developmental stage or coming to some value decisions about where she is--that she has this potential. She says, "Well, we're just talking about you now." which again sounds more directive to me. You know, let's only use "I" statements. Let's just talk about you. Let's not philosophize. So, on the one hand she does seem really interested in bringing the client closer to herself rather than generalizing about others; on the other hand she puts limits on how the client is permitted to talk...and she interrupted.

**Jordis (4)** Well, it seemed just her calling it a person-centered approach and all of the things that she directed the client to do and to say and how to speak, that was an incongruency. Just the whole thing to me, now that I'm seeing it in black and white and hearing everybody talk, the whole thing seemed so incongruent with what I've been taught is considered person-centered.

**Ted (3)** One of the big problems I had again was the overuse of questions and I can't exactly find the dialogue now but it kept coming up and I wrote it down in my notes. "Why don't you ask yourself, who am I?" This question keeps coming up in the session. Who am I? I would have said, "So you're sometimes wondering who you are with all the other hats you wear. By asking the client a question I am worried the client will get the idea that "I don't have what it takes to explore this myself." I am concerned that the therapist is sending the message that they really don't believe in what I would call the self-actualizing tendency or a formative

tendency. If that message gets sent to the client, then the client will begin to think, “yeah, well I don’t believe in that either so, here, it’s your ball. You just direct this.” That’s my major concern. That self-actualizing tendency is really at the ground of this whole approach—if we’re talking person centered. That (self-actualizing tendency undergirds everything. Another one I saw was “Do you want to say a little bit more about some of the lack of communication?” This concerned me with what seemed to be a lot of questions that could have just been maybe turned around into a rephrasing or a reflection of what the client was struggling with or maybe just a little bit more silence in sitting with her.

**Trudy (12)** I noticed Natalie even mentioned in her introduction, before she was sitting with the client about that inner resource that we all as humans have, that inner resource to be productive human beings. Is the therapist creating the condition? Is the client creating the condition? So I am wondering in all of this directiveness was the therapist creating the condition?

**Betsy (3)** When they made that analogy in the beginning about creating the conditions with the plant, I interpreted it as they were talking about the three core conditions. It’s the therapist who needs to create the conditions and the client is the plant so that the plant can grow and realize its full potential. That’s how I interpreted it. The therapist does create the conditions.

**Jo (14)** Just following up on Ted’s concern about all the questions, I note that around 113-114 on page 28 of the transcript the client is talking about, “Well, I do think it’s important.” She is talking about exploring or having her own individuality but ‘I also have a lot of other people telling me it’s important too.’ To me, not that I have the goods on what a client’s meaning is, nevertheless-- it seems *relatively* clear to me that her meaning is that she has difficulty sometimes differentiating what’s important to herself, given that she has a lot of input from others and expectations from others about what’s important for her to do. And I probably would have said that and Natalie poses a question, “So what do you think of it, of that?” So I just wanted to point out this instance of a question that I thought may have been unnecessary in leading a client closer to her experience--“What do you think of that?”-- as you point out could communicate that the client didn’t have the answer within, querying her in a very specific way, directing her to evaluate, when she had already indicated discouragement, perplexity and difficulty with “discerning my individuality because I have lots of definitions of what that is.”

#### THE GROUP TAKES A FIFTEEN MINUTE BREAK

During the break some members continued discussing their reactions to the video and to the process of analysis. Karen, who introduces the second half of the discussion had been sharing some personal reactions with the instructor who suggested that she might make her interest known to the group.

**Karen (3)** I guess one of the things I was thinking about was that we’re critiquing the analysis, and talking about various positives and weaknesses and I was thinking where do we go from here in our own approaches? I think one of the things I came up with for myself was I’d like to take some things from it and particularly maybe those points of concern on one hand and also the points of strength. The points of concern for me is that rough shift and how

to work that in with applying core conditions in a person-centered approach is how can I enlist that using art therapy? I want to say basically I'd like to see where everyone would go with that.

**Jo (15)** You would like to get some feedback from others as to what they took from the session in terms of how it may impact their work as counselors. What did you learn as a counselor from that process? Evaluating it. Maybe, what impact it has on your work.

**Ted (4)** One of the things that I came away with is since I put myself in the shoes of the client and tried to feel what the client was feeling and trying to go with my own reactions, I am now beginning to see how it is possible to use the experience of a client to be a supervisor, whether it be a supervisor to yourself, your own internal supervisor or a peer supervisor to another counselor because I am able to go back and look at what I felt like as a client and ask myself how would I like to have been heard? What did I want to hear from the counselor at this point instead of what I did hear? And I can use that and shift out of that and use that as a mentor and not a counselor.

**Jordis (5)** It gave me some better idea as to how I might use art therapy if I were to use art therapy so that it wouldn't be quite so directive and imposing on the client. And we were talking about it a little bit during the break and I had thought that, perhaps, if you're going to call yourself a person-centered art therapist that what you might want to do instead of this approach to it is to have your paper laying out handy to the client--to have your media handy to the client and then, before the session begins, explain to the client that if they are so inclined that at any time during the session they could grab their tablet, a piece of paper, grab whatever medium they are interested in using and express themselves on paper rather than saying--well, if you don't want to do this then you can say no and then telling them to do this and them doing it because they feel funny not doing it. I think that that would be less of an imposition to do it that way with the client than to be as directive as Natalie was.

**Jo (16)** That's really an interesting question raised, Jordis. "Can you ever give a client a choice in the moment to do some kind of technique or not?" I know that Hans Peters talks about the vulnerability of clients and being in a position of relative authority just by virtue of being therapists. It is really important to be sensitive to any type of any directivity just being the role of the therapist as an expert. So then the question comes up, can I give the client an option at a juncture that I think some technique might be useful--like systematic desensitization, or an expressive art approach and have that be presented in a way that is a true choice for the client?

**Chip (8)** Well, I was just thinking listening to this of teaching because in my teaching one of the things that I have been real clear on, especially since I work with special needs students, is that different people learn different modalities and they have different strengths and they have different ways of taking information in or processing information and it occurred to me that for this therapist this is the way that they work best and so they would be a good therapist for someone who is like in kind to them as far as processing information and dealing with things. They might not be as effective a therapist for someone who is resistant to this. But as therapists in general I think we need to be attuned to our clients and how they deal with things best and try to work toward their strengths and their modality so that they can express

themselves and they can process the information and especially in person-centered therapy we want to look towards as a person what they are feeling and how they can relate it to us and not necessarily self-impose the way that we feel comfortable with, but try to find a way that they feel comfortable with. It might be art therapy, it might be traditional auditory talking therapy. It could be a number of other ways and in listening to everyone, I realize that I was more comfortable with this because I'm a more hands on, tactile type person and that I need to be attuned too--that everyone is not the way that I am and wouldn't be as comfortable with this and in the same light someone who is more comfortable with traditional client therapists in an auditory type counseling session might want to look at that every client isn't comfortable with that and every client can't express themselves that way or process that way. Maybe they need that medium of the art or of the play therapy or of the other things to get those feelings, emotions or thoughts out that they can't express any other way.

**Trudy (13)** So maybe an idea would be to have the client come into the second session and the therapist says, "You know, we did some work with crayons last week, or the chalks whatever, and I was just wondering if you would just like to talk with me this week, or would you like to get those things out again in case you would like to use them?" That gives the client the choice. and it also gives the client the opportunity to say, "Well, that was fun, but lets just talk this week" Let that be an option for the client.

**Karen (4)** Sometimes I think about the fact that some people are intimidated by using art material or some people don't challenge themselves to experience different things. How do you introduce it? One of the things I think about is that I'm open to new things and I don't know if a lot of people are open to new tasks, but when it happens, then how do they feel? Has it been a positive experience? Would she have done it on her own or have missed that experience if she wasn't given some kind of cue?

**Alison (2)** I'm just thinking whether it was or was not a person-centered technique--that it may have been more comfortable for the client if the relationship would have been developed a little bit further before it was introduced. If the client would have felt more comfortable with the therapist and a little further along the line bring that technique into play....

**Jo (17)** Along that line I'm thinking that having these materials is something that is, and a variety of materials, is something that we often provide for children and adolescents and we tend to be, I think, a lot more flexible with children and adolescents recognizing the fluidity of processing that comes about through a number of medium, whereas, with adults we do tend to stick to that sit down, one on one dialogue. And as you were saying, Chip, it doesn't necessarily honor all the different modes of expression that might be more reflective or deeper reflections of the person's experience. And as you said, Karen, it might not contribute as much in the way of openness to whatever might be a better way to have a client express himself. I'm thinking to have a variety of materials and to say that these materials are here for your use and to feel; I think this is on the lines of what you're saying, Alison, to feel free to use that if it seems appropriate. Perhaps, because it was a demonstration interview, and the client was probably told this is the type of therapy, there might have been some setup in terms of an expectation. But, when not doing a demonstration interview to show others how that might be a part of what you do, it might occur or might not occur. I didn't see this client as being particularly stuck, and it seemed as though Natalie's agenda was imposed. It was

contrived to the extent of meeting her agenda. Nevertheless, there might be more natural places to introduce it. For instance, if a client is perpetually stuck with some issue and isn't really making progress and isn't able to get deeper, isn't able to clarify, you might say, "Do you think that uncertainty could be expressed through paper? Would you like to try that or..."

**Trudy (14)** It almost seems like in the first session the client needs to be revealing of what is the presenting problem and somehow the art in the first session directed the client to begin to be almost esoteric about what is going on rather than concrete about what is the presenting problem. I think that Alison had the right idea that maybe moving it into another session, or as Jo said, if the client is stuck, it's a good technique to explore but that first session seems the place just to establish a rapport and that the therapist trust that the client can come up with these things themselves rather than through directiveness. I think the whole session would have probably gone somewhere else without the art and I think that first session needs to have that spontaneity.

**Alison (3)** But if it didn't have the art, then we would not have seen her practice her technique and I was thinking that was the point.

**Chip (9)** I was just thinking, too, that this therapist is renowned for this. This is her specialty and if we're not looking at this as just another therapy session, but this particular individual, you probably wouldn't go to this therapist without knowing that she uses art in her therapy. You buy into that concept because she probably has a limited clientele to begin with. You'd either hear about it and say that's something I really want to be a part of and I would feel comfortable with or you would say no, I prefer some other type of therapy and, therefore, using it in the first session is okay because the client has already bought into the concept and has agreed that that's what they'd like to try. I agree with Trudy that the session could have gone in a completely different direction but that would have been when another therapist uses another technique and the client chose this type of therapy. The client had free choice to choose another type that would have gone in a different direction and if they feel uncomfortable with it after the first session, better to have them feel uncomfortable in the first session and say this is not for me. I want to go somewhere else than to go through several sessions and then say, "Well I wasted my time."

**Trudy (15)** I guess I wasn't real clear on this or can I assume that Natalie uses art therapy in every session? Because she is a person-centered art therapist, does that mean every session she uses art? I guess I had assumed when I looked at the video that this is what she does each time. But, are we clear on whether this is something she uses each session?

**Jo (18)** I wanted to respond to the assumption or expectation that Trudy and then Chip conveyed which was that the session would have probably gone in a different direction. And, again, as I said earlier, I thought that the client's awareness and insight regarding the issue of frustration with various circumstances and blowing up and having choices was very important to her. My sense is that the client learned something really significant about herself and the decision that she wanted to make about expressing her individuality and still working on her marriage--so I don't know that the client would have gotten to a different place. I'm not sure about that.

**Trudy (16)** That's almost like saying I'll go down Green Street, make a left on Main to get over to the school instead of going left on Brown Street and making a right and getting over to the school. In other words, I think the session would have another direction because it would have been client directed. So I don't see how it could have possibly been the same.

**Jo (19)** I don't mean to imply that the process would have been the same. I do believe that there were some contradictions to a person-centered philosophy and intention in the way it was carried out, but I also believe that the client tends to bounce back from almost anything to where they need to be and although I wouldn't put it in terms of "despite the therapist, the client got there. I do think Natalie was instrumental in facilitating the client to move forward. I put a lot of value and trust on the client's getting to where she needed to get which I am not sure would have been that different if the process would have been more client directed. In many ways it was client directed.

**Trudy (17)** My gut feeling tells me that the client would have addressed some other issues. For example, I think what happened with the art is she became very internalized whereas I think without the art she would have externalized about her relationship with her husband--maybe just some more of those kind of things that were prevalent issues, like I said, more concrete issues than where she went with it. That was the impression I got.

**Jo (20)** I would agree. That was my understanding of the client's focus. It would have been more on her interpersonal relationship and what was happening rather than to focus internally.

**Chip (10)** I wouldn't agree. I think it would have gone in that direction if it had become more therapist directed. If the therapist had picked up on those things and asked her to expound on them further. I think what you said a moment ago, Jo, about the client going to where she needed to go rang true here. She touched on those things but she wasn't ready to deal with those issues and I think she came kind of full circle and wanted to talk about herself and where she was at the moment and I think I said earlier on the tape, in another session she might talk about her issues with her husband and relationships and those types of things but I think what the art therapy did was bring out what she really wanted to focus on in this session and get her to talk about herself which is what she was feeling at the moment and not just to have her meet the therapist's needs by talking about issues. That's what I saw.

**Karen: (5)** In thinking about what the client would take away from it, I was thinking she may go back into her world with this experience of some self evaluation that would help her to put into perspective her relationships and not dwell so much on what the other person does but what she does within the relationships. I think it is really positive. Sometimes if a client talks about others or about what others are doing, one can really lose sight of the person's own feelings and thoughts because it becomes a focus of others' behaviors in the relationship. So I thought if she could take this self awareness back, her next session can be a productive one and not one of ruminating over how others seemed to contribute to some of her frustrations.

**Trudy (18)** I agree that you can get stuck with a client with them externalizing--I guess it goes back to the need to identify the problem in the first session that I think that left a spot,

maybe, in the client disclosing and directing themselves somehow .You may even get things that the client didn't even think about before or just seems to come out just in being able to continue to be reflected, reframed, and encouraged rather than directed.

**Jo:** (21) I've been looking at my transcript here, and, in terms of reflecting what the client is saying, I think that there are some failures to do that, or breaches in the traditional non-directive process, if you will, for instance when the client says, "what I consider to be a major issue ...." despite not being focused in on the client's verbal process-meaning I am inclined to think, like Chip said, that Natalie has this capacity to facilitate her awareness through the drawings that maybe she does better than through the dialogue process. The client's talking about herself being very structured and her husband being very passive and laid back in client response number 46. She says one of the things she has learned is that she needs to somehow work to be more like him or otherwise she will just kill herself trying to make him be like her. I think a more verbal process model would be to reflect that goal that she is setting for herself to find some kind of a medium between being more like him and not trying so hard to get him to be like her because it is just too frustrating to make him be like her. But instead Natalie says, "well, that's true". She provides agreement, which is not, in my way of thinking, a typical response in therapy. I'd be more inclined to accept the frustration being too much, versus agree that it is and imply that a solution must be sought. I might say, "I understand that--you feel like you lose yourself." But I wouldn't tend to say, "Well, that's true. You'll kill yourself if you try to make him be like you." So Natalie says that, and the client responds, "Well, its easier said than done. It's harder to try to find this happy medium or be more like him than it is to simply say I'm going to have to be more like him. Old habits are hard to break." Then, rather than to acknowledge this idea that she believes it to be very difficult for her to break her habits of being so structured and try to be more flexible, Natalie says, "So what is it that you would like for yourself in this?" She asks her the question which, again, I think would not have been a necessary question if she would have heard the client say that being more flexible is going to be very difficult for me to do to but it is something that I desire to do. Then the client says the only way that she knows to get rid of the frustration is to become more like him, to let go of some of the schedules and so forth. Natalie reflects. "Sort of drop your expectations and do it his way"--and she says, "Right, because if I drop my expectations, I don't have any but there's a problem with that. If I do that, then I am concerned I am going to lose my individuality." And so Natalie wants to make sure she hears that right, she says "let me see if I'm right" and the client interrupts her and she lets her interrupt her and she says, "If I let go of my expectations, I'm losing myself." So this is, as I see it, the central conflict that the client is experiencing. She sees the only way toward a resolution of the conflict between she and her husband having these very different styles is for her to become more like him but doing that is something that she is really resisting because she is fearing that she is losing an important part of herself - the expectations that she has, one of which is for him to be more like her. The question is how can I achieve this and not lose myself in the process? Natalie says, "that's right. If you let go of your expectations, you lose yourself." Now, again it sounds like an agreement to me but the client says, "There has to be a happy medium in there somewhere." And then Natalie says, "Well I really hear that if you lose your expectations then, who am I?" And so here we have, I think, Natalie's deep understanding of the client's big question, "Can I do this and still be me? Can I become a more flexible person, a more scheduled person, more accepting of my husband's more laissez-faire attitude and still be me? It's a crossroads for her. Who am I becoming? Can I

become this? And she says, “I guess the frustration I have come to at this point is at what point do you give in to help the relationship”. And this is where Natalie says, “O.K., this is a key question. This is the chief problem that you presented here. Let’s draw.” I guess one of the points I wish to make is that what Natalie did do was brought in the drawing at a critical juncture. She did introduce this when the client had set out a “chief” conflict.

**Karen (6)** I guess I need more clarification on where you’re at. Are you saying that it’s really far from person-centered?

**Jo (22)** I wasn’t making a value judgment about it at this point. I was just making an observation. [I think the Karen was making a genuine inquiry into my assessment, but I responded in a defensive way, probably not wanting to call it person-centered or not].

**Chip (11)** I guess one of the things I’ve been thinking is whether we’re getting too hung up on whether it’s a person-centered approach or not and not focusing on whether it works or not and maybe she calls it person-centered art therapy because her father was Carl Rogers and makes it an easy tag to put on it and maybe she’s going into a completely different area.

**Jo (23)** I think that her designation of person-centered is not an easy tag. I think in the preamble her discussion of a democratic philosophy is one that she really fully believes in. It’s a philosophy that feels very congruent with who she is.

**Chip (12)** I wasn’t trying to be flippant. I was saying that maybe this is kind of a metamorphosis of something new and trying to put it into the parameters of something that is already established and saying that it doesn’t quite fit might not be entirely fair; that she’s using some of that and adding some of her own techniques and ways of doing things and if you look at it with that focus, does it work or doesn’t it work?

**Jo (24)** And I believe there’s evidence to suggest that it’s working. If you look at C61, the client is able through her drawing to depict this lack of a happy medium that she experiences with the frustration on one side and on the other side really allowing herself to be fully herself.

**Chip (13)** I think an interesting thing to do maybe later in therapy would be to repeat this exercise and see what art work comes out in a therapy session when it’s agreed upon that there’s been progress made and be able to look back at these pictures and see the difference and see the progress made in a way other than verbally because I think for the individual that does the art it has deep meaning for them and they’re going to feel that and they’re also going to feel the change when they see a change in their art work. And it’s not necessarily an exact science but it’s an emotional change that they’d see.

**Jo (25)** Toward the end, just to look at the client’s progress and where she’s at after this process, in client response 109 p. 27 she says “You know probably just as so goes an individual and so forth and giving up this and a lot of things have happened, I’ve made changes and adjustments and I have to continue to make changes and adjustments but eventually it’s going to make me a better person for it,” suggesting to me that she’s come to some resolution that she’s not a done deal; she sees that she wants to be more flexible than

she is and move toward the middle and though it doesn't feel like her just now, maybe she doesn't have to lose herself. She can evolve into this--the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly. It seems like a lot of progress to me. Karen said I thought so too from the beginning.

**Ted (5)** I was just looking at the dialogue and I saw here at CL 70 the person, the client is saying "No. I can't do a butterfly because butterflies are always free so I put the glue in to keep my feet on the ground." And you can see she's going through this process and if there's any place where I would have to agree that the art therapy is getting at the person's in the moment experience and what she's really feeling, it would have to be starting at that point. Then do you see where Natalie says that at CL72 "so there is something about a butterfly image that appeals to you." And then here you see the final part of this process at CL72. "Yeah, they're colorful; they go through a process. I'm probably somewhere in a cocoon, somewhere going to break free soon." And it almost kind of foreshadows what she says at the end there and I think if there's any place where it indicates that it speaks through her experience, I think that's where it works; that's where I found this all come together.

### Post-Critique Summaries

Class members were provided with a rough draft of the transcribed dialogue five weeks following the critique session. In addition to reviewing for editing purposes, they were requested to provide concluding, or summarizing remarks to the discussion.

**Ted:** As everyone was sharing their perceptions of our group critique of Natalie Rogers' work, I got the sense that many thought that we were uncaring, judgmental, or inappropriate in our comments the week prior. I do not feel that any of what was said was disrespectful in any way or offered in any spirit other than that of inquiry into what constitutes the Client-Centered approach. I feel as though Carl Rogers would have invited such discussion of the approach which he fathered inasmuch as he was not interested in formulating static dogma. It is consistent with this approach to be ever evolving and "becoming" - never being finished. The actualizing tendency, on which the entire theoretical structure of this way of being rests, presupposes such a spirit of inquiry as was in evidence by our graduate class. We have all come to the end of a program in which we have invested untold hours to be trained as independent learners and critical thinkers. Had anything less been displayed in this classroom performance I would have felt a sense of loss for many of my peers because they had not utilized important skills they have worked so hard to develop. As a professor and faculty supervisor I would have felt ineffectual because I had failed in some way to reach my students. I expect that Natalie Rogers would be warmed by the knowledge that a small group of graduate students, many of whom indicated "person-centered" as their primary orientation, would invest the time and energy required to produce the level of analysis which we did vis-a-vis her work. I also expect that being as she is, Natalie will provide thoughtful responses to our observations.

**Ted's Literature-Integrated Response:** I started out feeling very comfortable with Natalie Rogers as she presented her approach-- during her talk with Dr. Carlson as well as during the opening minutes of Natalie's relationship with her client. The session seemed to be going as I expected Carl would have hoped-- doing all one can to create an environment facilitative of

another's unfolding; an environment characterized by respect (maybe even awe) for the presence of a formative tendency-- feeling privileged to have been invited to share another's experience of becoming. But then something happened that left me feeling surprised, embarrassed, angry, and confused.

It's not that Natalie did anything wrong *per se*; it's just that most of what she brought to the session (something over and above a simple desire to provide a facilitative environment) was incongruent with my expectations of how a person-centered counselor chooses to be. The biggest rupture, to my mind, came at the point in the encounter where Natalie's client was expressing her own inner felt experience of a conflict-- a rift between wanting something more out of life now (versus later)-- and staying where she is. This was a very real in-the-moment experience and as Natalie's client I felt that my counselor-- someone whom I took a great risk with by sharing a very deep struggle-- shut me down. She (Natalie) does not, for whatever reason, want to hear about and deal with this part of my self. I have the message that I am not OK after all because if this person-- a professional counselor with years of experience and an international following-- does not feel OK with letting me explore in an uninterrupted (yet supportive) way my most troubling conflict then it must not be acceptable. Therefore I am unacceptable. Natalie referred to expressive art work as simply another type of language, but bringing this in at this time and in this way left me feeling that it was simply a means to distract me-- to decrease my frustration rather than sit with, explore, and sort things through.

I am not a great fan of asking question- - using them only when a client indicates to me in some way that he or she wants more structure than inheres in a more pure form of a person-centered relationship. C.H. Patterson (1986) tells us to only resort to questioning when you (the counselor) do not understand what your client just said. Many of the questions Natalie asked her client were very good questions. I simply do not feel comfortable including this way of being into my personal picture of what person-centered counseling looks like. A case could be made that Natalie's use of questions fails to fit not only my own way of construing the person-centered 'approach' (way of being) but is also not congruent with a belief in the formative tendency-- the foundation of client-centered theory from the beginning (articulated as the self-actualizing tendency in human beings).

A therapist's belief in the self-actualizing tendency-- a directional tendency oriented toward greater organizational complexity and enhancement of the organism-- is manifest in the degree to which face-to-face encounters are characterized by unconditional positive regard. This is so because unconditional positive regard is present only when the therapist experiences a positive, non-judgmental, accepting attitude toward whatever and wherever the client is at that moment (Rogers, 1986). Acceptance of the client's frame of reference at any moment runs counter to such concepts as "intervening," "directing," or "confronting" the client's own moment-by-moment process. I can be willing to let my client experience confusion, resentment, fear, anger, and frustration only if I believe that to act otherwise (to intervene or direct in some way) means that I am willing to interfere with an organismic process directed toward self-actualization of human beings.

By bringing in an "alternative means of expression" re: art work, Natalie Rogers reveals a lack of confidence in the client's ability to self-actualize by means of the three necessary and

sufficient conditions for therapeutic personality change. Belief in the self-actualizing tendency as exemplified in an attitude of unconditional positive regard and conveyed to the client via empathic understanding, presupposes acceptance of the person at all phases--including his or her struggles (Stubbs, 1992). Bozarth (1996) indicates that unconditional positive regard is the primary change agent in which the client's needs for positive regard and positive self-regard are met. This results in congruence between the person's experience and his or her self-concept, promoting the actualizing tendency. A therapist demonstrates confidence in his or her client and the actualizing tendency by affirming the person-- being who he or she is at the moment-- as good enough (Bozarth, 1996).

This is the expectation that I hold for a person-centered counselor; not perfection, just a belief that if I can be all that I am and can let my client be all that he or she is (in-the-moment), then that is good enough. I am thinking that it may not have been necessary for Natalie to say or do (just be present?) anything in response to her client's confusion and ambivalence concerning "Who am I?" I may have said simply, "You're feeling a very deep struggle . . . torn between loyalty to your family and wanting something more for yourself . . . not knowing who am I?"

A person-centered therapist would work with whatever is there (in the person) now--confusion and all. Whatever was there before the focusing technique (Gendlin, 1964) would be a place to start; "empty space" is not a priori helpful to the client. The client expressed now being at a loss-- saying quite clearly, "I'm drawing a blank . . . it's all blank." The client was now empty-- the technique was very effective-- for what? This person was now hard pressed to let something emerge into awareness with which to work. This had to be very anxiety producing-- at least that was my felt experience in-the-moment. I felt invaded by this technique-- just sort of reaching in there and giving the old etch-a-sketch a shake to erase the tangle of lines. But those lines were important and deserved to be honored-- and sat with for a while.

Brodley (1996) argues that it is crucial for a correct understanding of client-centered therapy to realize that any focusing technique stimulated by empathic behavior are and should remain serendipitous. The client-centered therapist does not deliberately attempt to focus clients on their experiencing processes. Natalie Rogers did just this when she prompted her client to articulate "what it felt like just to do the process." When a therapist implements such a goal as focusing on his or her client's inner processes, that therapist has stepped outside of client-centered therapy.

**Trudy:** It seems that we touched on several issues but the essence of the discussion seemed to be whether one can successfully incorporate the directiveness of art therapy with the pureness of the person-centered approach. No conclusions were drawn, but a lively debate pursued.

I felt that we were fair in our discussion. We all seemed to agree that the art therapy in itself was a productive means to achieve an end. What was perplexing is how that fits with creating the core conditions for therapy. A few students seemed to think that Natalie's use of the art techniques did create the core conditions, while others thought it was intrusive to the core conditions. Ideally, I would like to see the same client with a purely person-centered

therapist to see how the session would unfold. For that matter, I would like to see the same client with a cognitive therapist and a psychoanalyst. What a fun experiment that would be!

I truly respect the talents of Natalie Rogers. My comments in the above article were made as a reaction to what I've learned to be a "pure" person-centered approach.

**Melanie:** This was an interesting experience, something I have never done before. The video was great to watch. It always helps to see someone in action in a therapeutic setting. Natalie was not at all what I expected, which was a female version of her father. I found the information valuable because I work with children at this time, and drawing is a great way to help children express themselves without having to verbalize. In the discussion that the class had afterwards, I learned that I was not alone in my expectations of Natalie. Many of us thought that there was a definite shift in the session from conversing to drawing. As I had mentioned in the dialogue, I felt uncomfortable just watching it. I do realize, however, that this was a demonstration and that the session had to include much more than a possible "real" session for the sake of the presentation. I would hope that a typical session for Natalie would not have such an abrupt change in content. I feel as though I benefited from this experience in gaining knowledge of a new technique as well as confirming the value of my own thoughts and ideas about another person's work.

**Chip:** Critiquing a therapy session such as this, as a group, provides valuable insight into the counseling process. It was interesting to hear the divergent views as to the effectiveness of this therapy and how it relates to Carl Rogers' work. What one realizes from an experience such as this is that as therapists we all develop into our own unique form of conglomeration of many different therapy ideologies with our own preferences and prejudices. Whatever our orientation, we can always learn from others in our field and expand our skills and awareness. This type of exercise is essential in improving our own individual skills as therapists.

**Karen:** I must conclude the evaluation of Natalie Rogers' art therapy session by saying that I felt very uncomfortable providing feedback, particularly criticisms, to her work. However, to summarize what the class conclusions were, I think that the main critique was the directiveness of the introduction of the art medium. Dr. Rogers' client-centered approach seemed to "switch gears" by the therapists initiation of the art medium. A second concern was Dr. Rogers' demonstration of warmth and empathy. Natalie's posture and client-following approach were not helpful in establishing rapport through warmth and empathy. However, I want to focus on her ability to begin working in the first session, and the client's self-direction by interpreting her own color and picture schemes. The therapist's skill level is a key factor in having the client begin to work in the first session. The therapist's responses are the greatest assists to the client feeling safe enough to explore therapeutic goals. I would have to say that Dr. Rogers' affect did not hinder her client's openness. I think that Dr. Rogers effectively responded to her client's issues. Most importantly, the therapist-client rapport was more influential to the client's art therapy work than the semi-directive style that Dr. Rogers may have demonstrated. The client was able to freely and with self-direction, discuss and interpret her thoughts and feelings of her self concept and world. To Dr. Rogers' credit, she finished the session with the client looking relieved and also ready to process her personal goals and family relationships. Overall, the stray from a true person-centered

approach seems minor compared to the benefits of the client's desire to bring the therapy work to her growth.

**Betsy:** I have two main reactions to our class's experience in critiquing Dr. Rogers' demonstration video on person-centered art therapy. The first is that I am pleasantly surprised that I have actually come to a point in my studies *where I am even capable of critiquing* someone as prominent and talented as Natalie Rogers, the daughter of the famous, ingenious Carl Rogers. Admittedly, it was somewhat exhilarating to examine her responses, break them down, and generate better ones. The second reaction, however, is that at the same time, I am uncomfortable with this experience; especially knowing that the critique will be published for all, including Natalie, to read. In essence, my second reaction is a question to myself and our class, who am I (are we) to have the gall to think that I (we) know better than Dr. Rogers on how to employ her own technique?!

**Alison:** After reviewing the dialogue, in the beginning our discussion about Natalie Rogers seemed to be somewhat brutal. We neglected to realize, until about midway through our discussion that Natalie Rogers was attempting to demonstrate her technique. In order to get the details of her technique across to the viewer, she may have had to be more directive than she normally is in therapy. She had to introduce the client to art therapy or we would not have seen how it worked. As educated viewers we can grasp the idea Dr. Rogers is trying to get across. And we must remember person-centered expressive therapy is a variation on person-centered therapy. So, some differences should be expected. I respect Natalie Rogers and her technique. I can see how it could be helpful to encourage client expression, especially after a solid relationship between therapist and client has been established. This was an excellent learning experience, not only because we were exposed to a new technique, but also because toward the end of the dialogue we all found aspects of it that we will be able to appreciate and possibly integrate into our own personal styles.

**Claire:** I was present during the discussion, but I was just listening because I had not seen the video yet. I agree with some people in the class that Natalie Rogers abruptly brought out the art. I feel that she did that because this is a demonstration video, and that her timing is probably smoother during normal sessions. I think the art work helped the client to see what is going on in her life and what she wanted out of life. It may have taken longer to bring that out without the use of art. Another point in the discussion that came out for me while watching the video about how people were saying she did not appear to be very person centered, like Carl Rogers. I agree that she was not exactly like her father, but I feel she was using person-centered therapy in her own way, just as she mentioned after the demonstration. I think people who watch this video may expect her to be just like her father, but maybe she is trying to be her own person. All in all, I found this tape helpful for using art for clients when appropriate.

**Brenda:** The critique of Natalie Rogers' clinical video contained a diverse quality of opinions. Various views found the introduction of art therapy into the session as a contrived attempt at counseling. The natural flow of the session was disturbed by this introduction. Others felt that this was free flowing and that the client's own interpretation of her work was very useful for forward movement of the session. Natalie Rogers' therapy skills also came

into question. At times she did not respond in a true person-centered approach. She appeared to distance herself from the client and move towards her own agenda.

Overall, her presentation was very educational and well planned. Natalie used her expertise as a way of demonstrating the effectiveness of implementing art into the treatment process. She did not make herself out to be a grand interpreter, but rather, allowed the client to come to her own conclusions. It is important for the viewer to keep in mind that this is a demonstration video. A video designed to educate the viewer about the incorporation of art therapy into a counseling session. In order to prepare the video, an art session was to occur. Perhaps without a camera present, both client and therapist would have been more relaxed and the art therapy would have appeared less contrived. We should not judge Natalie Rogers on the basis of Carl Rogers. We should judge Natalie Rogers on the basis of Natalie Rogers.

**Heidi:** This response is a reaction to the demonstration of person-centered therapy by Natalie Rogers. I viewed the tape with the class, but was not present for the critique that followed. Prior to this writing I have had the opportunity to review the transcript and to watch the demonstration a second time, alone. What I found most prominent about Dr. Rogers was her apparent deep concern for the client, in accordance with the traditional humanistic, person-centered approach developed by her father Dr. Carl Rogers. As she mentions in her interview, the person-centered approach is more of a belief system rather than a list of prescribed techniques to be applied to the client while in session. She explains how she will use the traditional philosophy and techniques of empathy, as demonstrated by conveying to the client that they are deeply heard, genuineness, as demonstrated by modeling wholeness as a person and congruence, and unconditional positive regard which she explains as almost like a feeling of love for the client as something toward which to aspire. Natalie strikes me as a person who cares deeply about people, and also is passionate about the world of expressive art. I believe the video should have been better titled, "A look at person-centered expressive art therapy." It seems to me that she was set up for undue criticism from the beginning as there may have been expectations of her style based on the title of the video and her well-known father. The audience viewing her work seemed to have the greatest concern in the area of her perceived straying from her father's original style and technique. If psychotherapy is 50% technique and 50% art, which to me is the personhood of the therapist, could any of us really be Carl Rogers? Natalie mentions herself in the interview that her father did not want disciples, but rather people to learn from his work and then apply it in their own way. She offered a demonstration of her father's philosophy, enhanced it with her own unique personhood, and added some structure by offering the client the opportunity to explore herself at perhaps a deeper level by means of "another language." She states that she combines the artistic world she had come to appreciate from her mother, and the person-centered philosophy developed by her father, culminating in an evolved technique demonstration uniquely her own. I feel she accurately conveyed her beliefs, "listening to the music of the client."

I liked and was surprised by how she began the session. My initial expectation was that Natalie would be demonstrating her father's technique as closely as another person may be able to do. I think the centering exercise, while offering a structure, was effective not only for the client but for the therapist as well allowing both to be more fully present in the moment. I found most of her responses to be quite empathic, and consistent with what I think

of as the person-centered approach. I also noticed that at times throughout the session she used questions as a means to guide the client closer to exploring her feelings, such as in TH 6, 40, 44, and 65. There is also a sense of directiveness as she instructs the client at several points in the session to personalize the material through the use of "I" statements, giving a gestalt flavor to the session. I liked how comfortable she appeared being with the client as expressed both verbally and non-verbally, but especially how comfortable she appeared with the client in silence at TH 21. I noticed a few places in the counseling session where her responses could have been more client-focused. I wonder how the session may have been altered if, for example at TH 47 she said something like "You're struggling with differences between the two of you, and wondering if it would be easier if you were more alike," versus her response, "Well, that's true." I think that she picked an opportune time to introduce the possibility of using art. I feel that it is maintaining a person-centered philosophy to offer a medium for the client to explore herself further, so both may understand her more fully. Natalie remained fully present, nonjudgmental, accepting, and encouraging of the client to explore her own interpretations of her work. I thought the closing was timely and appropriate as Natalie validated the client and her work in session, encouraging her to explore more, and giving the client all of the credit, letting her know that the answers and power come from within.

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