

## READING ROGERS: AN EDITORIAL ASSISTANT'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

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It is with honor and enthusiasm that I accept Dr. Jeanne Stubbs's invitation to be Editorial Assistant for *The Person-Centered Journal*. Part of the responsibilities associated with this appointment are to handle some of the correspondence with authors submitting manuscripts for publication and to address general concerns by the readership. This being the case, Dr. Stubbs thought it would be appropriate for me to introduce myself to the readers of the journal.

As many in this profession who find themselves enamored with "third-force" psychologies, my training as an undergraduate psychology major in a traditional experimental program left me with an uneasy feeling that something was missing in the vision of humanity held by the dominant paradigms in psychology. Firmly grounded in the natural scientific attitude, traditional psychology did not seem to address the issues that human beings directly deal with in their lived relations, dismissing these phenomena as subjective distortions that are not amenable to quantification and measurement. I found myself thirsting for an approach that would not reduce my experience to stimulus-response units or cognitive maps, but would offer a vision of hope and possibility for what I could become. My attention was always drawn to the page or two dedicated to the "Humanistic Approach" in my undergraduate psychology textbooks. Rogers's approach to personality and psychotherapy immediately resonated with my intuited yet unarticulated grasp of what the appropriate subject matter of psychology should be. One of the most compelling aspects of his theory was his depiction of the neurotic struggle to overcome the chorus of voices, both cultural and familial, that alienate people from their own lived experience, creating painful contradictions between the "self-I-should-be" and the "self-I-experience." Rogers's incredible capacity to attune himself to the clients feeling-life breathed humanness and compassion back into a discipline that hitherto relegated the study of subjectivity to the poets and philosophers. The role of the Rogerian therapist is to embody a particular type of *presence* that creates a therapeutic ambiance of openness, warmth, and acceptance, giving rise to the possibility of one's authentic-organismic self to emerge through the muck and mire of others desires and beliefs. The transformational power of this type of presence was convincingly validated for me through the experience of my own therapy as a undergraduate and now as a therapist myself.

Among other pioneers in the field of humanistic psychology such as Abraham Maslow and Rollo May, Rogers stands out for me as one of my original beacons of inspiration and

due to his influence I have continued to explore various schools of psychological thought that fall under the umbrella of the humanistic movement. My passions for the humanistic approach makes this appointment as Editorial Assistant for *The Person-Centered Journal* all the more exciting and I look forward to interacting with and learning from all those involved in the effort to increase awareness of the value and implications of the person-centered approach.

## **Policy Statement**

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