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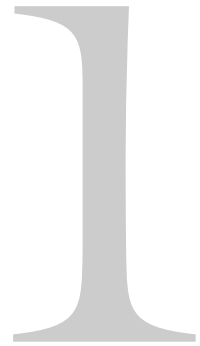
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Introduction



If you see this book in a bookshop or on a friend's bookshelf, you may well ask yourself: 'Why another book on the person-centred approach?' and 'Why an introductory book?' These are interesting questions and, given the personal and ecological costs of producing books, important ones to consider and address.

Why another book on the person-centred approach?

The short answer to this question is that this isn't *another* book on the person-centred approach! There are many texts that cover with depth and clarity the legacy of Carl Rogers (1902–87) in the fields of psychology, psychotherapy and counselling. In the past 15 years particularly, there has been a renaissance of interest in his contribution to these fields and, more broadly, to the *approach*. This is reflected in:

- Publications by Combs (1989), McIlduff and Coghlan (1991b), Teich (1992), McIlduff and Coghlan (1993b), Schmid and Wascher (1994), Merry (1995), Du Toit, Grobler and Schenck (1997/1998), Barrett-Lennard (1998), Heron (1998), Hirayama (1998), Merry (1999a, 1999b), Stillwell (2000), Tudor and Merry (2002), Barrett-Lennard (2003) and Tudor and Worrall (2004, in press).
- Books specifically about Rogers, the man and his ideas: De Carvalho (1991), Thorne (1992, 2003 (Second edition)), Suhd (1995), Cohen (1997), N. Rogers (2002) and Rogers and Russell (2003).
- The publication of collections of papers by Rogers: Kirschenbaum and Henderson (1990a,b), and of transcripts of some of his clinical and demonstration work, together with commentaries: Farber,

Brink and Raskin (1996); and by some of the most experienced writers and practitioners in the field: Bozarth (1998), Patterson (2000), Natiello (2001c), Shlien (2003) and Raskin (2004, in press).

- Publications specifically concerning the field of counselling and psychotherapy: Mearns and Thorne (1988, 1999 (Second edition)), Fusek (1991), Thorne (1991), Duncan, Solovey and Rusk (1992), Brazier (1993), Merry and Lusty (1993), Mearns (1994), Prouty (1994), Boy and Pine (1995), Graham *et al.* (1995), Esser, Pabst and Speierer (1996), Gendlin (1996), Mearns (1997), Rennie (1998), Thorne (1998a,b), Boy and Pine (1999), Morton (1999), O'Leary (1999), Hughes and Buchanan (2000), Pörtner (2000), Mearns and Thorne (2000), Gaylin (2001), Prouty, Van Werde and Pörtner (2002), Thorne (2002), Worsley (2002), Keys (2003), Sommerbeck (2003), Tolan (2003), Wilkins (2003) and Tudor and Worrall (2004, in preparation).
- The publication of collections of papers from person-centred and experiential conferences: Lietaer, Rombauts and Van Balen (1990), Hutterer *et al.* (1996), Marques-Teixeira and Antones (2000) and Watson, Goldman and Warner (2002).
- The publication of themed collections of papers edited by Thorne and Lambers (1998), Fairhurst (1999), Lago and MacMillan (1999), Merry (2000b), Bozarth and Wilkins (2001), Haugh and Merry (2001), Wyatt (2001), Cain (2002) and Wyatt and Sanders (2002).
- A collection of person-centred literature in the International Archives of the Person-Centered Approach at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico (website: www.aiep.bib.uia.mx/aiep); as well as other comprehensive collections available online at www.pce-world.org (developed by Germain Lietaer) and www.pca-online.net (by Peter Schmid).¹
- The formation of the Network of European Associations for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling (website: www.pce-europe.org); and a new World Association for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling (website: www.pce-world.org), and its journal *Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy*.

Whilst there is a wealth of literature on the various applications and influences of the person-centred approach, no one book has, to date, introduced

¹ We are aware that we have cited English language publications and that there is a significant literature in others languages (Dutch, German, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish) for further details of which see Peter Schmid's website: www.pca-online.net.

the person-centred approach as an *approach* to life both in and beyond *therapy*, which is a generic term we use throughout to include psychotherapy, counselling and counselling psychology. This book offers such an introduction to the philosophy, principles, theory and key concepts of the approach. We look at person-centred approaches to human development, personality and sexuality; relationships, parenting and family life; education and learning; citizenship and the personal, local and global issues of justice, peace and conflict; the wider social systems of couples, groups, communities and organisations; and the environment. We also present or re-present a person-centred approach to therapy. The person-centred approach has also been extensively researched and indeed has made a contribution to ideas about research (see Rogers, 1985; Barrineau and Bozarth, 1989; Moustakas, 1990). Barrett-Lennard's (1998) excellent book also provides references to and summaries of other pertinent research studies in many of the fields of application which we consider in this book. We do not claim to be experts in all these areas, and there are many aspects of life which we do not explore here. We do claim a passion for the approach and for the applicability of its principles to all aspects of life.

Two principal concerns inform our writing:

- 1 That the person-centred approach is often misrepresented and misunderstood, even by its proponents. In this book, we want to represent the approach accurately and thoroughly. Despite popular and usually uninformed opinion, the approach is rigorous, robust and relevant to modern and postmodern life.
- 2 That, conversely, person-centred practitioners can be too precious about the purity of the approach. Debates about whether something – or someone – is or is not person-centred are intellectually and clinically sterile, and leave person-centred practitioners defensive, in a ghetto of their own making.

Accordingly, we assume, and argue, the following:

- That the person-centred approach offers a comprehensive, coherent and holistic *approach* to human life and concerns.²

² In this book we focus on the human organism and human life. We are also aware of the potential of applying the approach to relationships with other forms of life such as animals (see Birch, in preparation).

- That we live in a complex and diverse world. Philosophically, professionally and personally we welcome the challenges that come with complexity and even chaos. Whilst holding the integrity of the approach, we also acknowledge the existence and relevance of other philosophies, theories and practices.
- That we need to be thoroughly familiar with the history and roots of the approach in order to deepen our understanding of it; and that we need to compare it with other approaches in order to widen and sharpen our appreciation and understanding of it. Throughout the book we have referred to literature within and beyond the approach in order to locate it within, alongside, and sometimes apart from other theories and theorists.

Why an introductory book?

The short answer to this question is that, given its scope, this book can be only an introduction! This said, at the same time as introducing the person-centred approach, we are also giving an overview of its scope and application. Given limitations of time, deadlines, word counts, cover price, and so on, we have wanted to balance our wish to be comprehensive with the need to be accurate and readable. Ultimately only you can assess our success.

As practitioners, trainers and writers who identify with the person-centred approach, we have a strong motivation to ensure its ‘fair representation’, especially as it is often misconceived and misrepresented. For examples of this, and responses, see Barrett-Lennard (1983), Tudor and Merry (2002) and Wilkins (2003). Some articles are positively hostile and, more insidiously, many are inaccurate, even in the main journal of the approach. We are aware that no one has the monopoly on truth or representation, and that, within the person-centred approach, different traditions or tribes emphasise different concepts, theories and practice (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, it seems important to us to have a book which acts as both an introduction and an overview to the approach, and which is committed to philosophical consistency, historical accuracy, and theoretical rigour.

This said, we do not want to reify or concretise person-centred theory, precisely because this would be antithetical to its philosophy. In the principal presentation of his theory Rogers (1959) hopes that we will see his work as ‘a fallible, changing attempt to construct a network of gossamer threads which will contain the solid facts’ (p. 191). He goes on to say that if we can do this, then theory will ‘serve, as it should, as a stimulus to further creative thinking’ (*ibid.*, p. 191). Rogers’ emphasis on creativity and fluidity parallels

his belief in the constant movement of organisms and in the quest of human organisms for more complex stimuli and understanding. It is for each of us to find our own way to be with the ideas and principles and not simply to mimic his way of being. Echoing Jung, Rogers is reported to have said that he was glad that he didn't have to be Rogerian! The broader point is that none of us has to be 'Rogerian'. Our task is to become fully ourselves. In an interview with Rogers, Frick (1971) elicits this point:

Frick: You would like to wipe away the slate of theory and encourage a fresh look?

Rogers: That's right and then the student would have to start to figure out, 'Well, what do I think makes sense out of this?' even though his theories were crude and incomplete and so on. He would get a great deal from the experience. (p. 100)

Thus, each generation needs its own introduction, reconstructing the gossamer threads of theory, reviewing and renewing the approach, especially in a changing world. Rogers wrote his key works between 1951 and 1980, between a quarter and a half a century ago. Inevitably much of it has dated and needs, literally, updating, particularly in the context of changing ideas and understandings of relationships, and in the light of new discoveries and developments in a variety of disciplines. It is a tribute to Rogers that, after more than 60 years of the person-centred approach, people still find his work refreshing and relevant. In many ways he provided the threads, the theory and, perhaps most importantly, the philosophy of an *approach* to life.

The readership

We anticipate that this book will be of interest to people across a broad spectrum:

- If you are unfamiliar with the approach, this book may act as an introduction, a guide and a reference for ideas: in all, an overview of the applicability of the person-centred approach to a number of areas and arenas.
- If you are already familiar with the approach, or a version of it, we hope this book will interest, stimulate and challenge you. We hope you will read freely, subjectively and with a willingness to see something new in

the ideas. We have written it so as to offer you opportunities:

To increase, develop and reassess your *knowledge* and *comprehension* of the approach;

To widen the fields of its *application*, especially beyond therapy;

To encourage both the *analysis* and *synthesis* of ideas; and, ultimately,

To stimulate your ability to reflect on the philosophy and theory of your practice, whether as a therapist, supervisor, student, teacher, facilitator, consultant or activist, and to *evaluate* both what you know and do as well as the approach itself.

In this we are explicitly drawing on and aiming to meet Bloom *et al.*'s (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives. Some educationalists may argue that such a taxonomy (as above) has all but withered away in the light of modern concerns with learning outcomes, quality assurance and customer satisfaction. However, we think that it is precisely the ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate ideas, based on comprehension and knowledge of a given field and its applications, that marks a reflective, critical and independent thinker and practitioner.

- If you are seeking to train or develop, as a psychotherapist or counsellor, as a teacher or educator, groupworker or organisational consultant, as a practitioner in health and related professions, or if you are involved in conflict resolution, mediation or the peace movement, this book may help orient you towards an appropriate and satisfying training course or stimulate your participation in your current training.

The process and structure of the book

Collectively and individually the person-centred approach is our passion and inspiration. As a group of writers we have a common denominator in our lives: Temenos, an independent psychotherapy and counselling training organisation located in Sheffield, England. Temenos means 'a piece of land, marked off from common uses'; for more about the history and philosophy of Temenos the organisation see Embleton Tudor and Tudor (1999), Tudor and Embleton Tudor (1999) and Horsfield (1999) and the website www.temenos.ac.uk. As a training organisation and as a business we strive to embody the person-centred approach in all our activities and endeavours. Our training introduces students to the *approach* (in a first year) before they specialise in clinical, organisational or educational applications, all of which routes lead to graduate and postgraduate diploma qualifications.

As a group of writers we comprise a graduate, directors/partners, tutors and facilitators of Temenos. We came together as equals in this writing venture, reflecting a key principle we hold dear: to share power and to flatten hierarchies. Some of us are more experienced as writers than others. This has served as an advantage and a treasured learning experience for all of us. The book grew from its inception as a concept through to its conception, since when it has (almost) taken on a life of its own: as an organism tending to actualise, flowing and developing as new chapters have emerged from discussion and writing. As the idea gestated it became clear that we could visualise a final text (albeit that this changed!) about which we would feel passionate: a text which would place the approach in its historical context, and which would provide a thorough and rigorous introduction or re-presentation to the subject. The book, eventually, was born!

During the months that we have been writing it, our relationship with the emerging book had been filled with excitement and fear, joy and despair, anguish and satisfaction. The group of co-authors have changed during the process. The original group formed and then re-formed as one dropped out, another came and went and, in the final stages, one more withdrew, all for valid and pressing reasons. To those who were involved and left, thank you for your contribution to the life and energy of this book, for your interest and support, and for ideas, which have had an influence on the final version. Arranging meetings with seven, six and even five people has proved a logistical nightmare and our group time has been limited. The process has brought with it experiences of intimacy, as we revealed our writing to one another, and a sense of togetherness which feels greater than the amount of actual time we spent all together. This is a genuinely co-authored book. Although clearly one or two of us have, at any one time, initiated a phrase, a paragraph, a section or a chapter, we have all contributed to the whole and 'stand by', if not entirely agree with, every word. Inevitably the style of writing changes, and whilst we have edited it thoroughly, we have not wanted to smooth out differences of style. Occasionally, one of us individually has written a particular passage or section, and where it has made sense to do so we have noted this. We vary the use of personal pronouns.

The structure of the book also developed and emerged over the course of its writing, changing as the result of feedback and further consideration. In many ways it is difficult to represent in a linear book an approach which values fluidity, and in which the individual cannot be understood outside of the context of their environment. Living with the inevitable limitations of book form, we begin in Part 1 by discussing first principles. In Chapter 2 we give an overview of the philosophical values which underpin the

approach, and a brief history of the approach, as well as its context, theoretical scope, and key concepts. We follow this with two chapters on therapy, as that's where the origins of the person-centred approach lie. In the first we present a brief history of the person-centred approach to therapy; its theory of therapy, including the conditions, processes and outcomes of therapy; the implications of other theoretical perspectives for the approach; and some comments about the context of therapy. In Chapter 4 we discuss the person of the therapist, including their education, training, personal development, personal therapy, and supervision. We look also at some key issues in training and practice, and at the context and organisation of therapy. Although we all live and work in the United Kingdom, we think that the discussions in this chapter have a wider relevance and application.

In Part II we focus on the person at the centre of the approach. In Chapter 5 we explore the emerging person. Person-centred therapists and theorists have largely ignored the areas of infant and child development and we are pleased to begin to fill this gap in the literature. We continue this exploration of continuing human needs in Chapter 6 and give an overview of person-centred personality theory. The person or organism cannot be understood (let alone analysed) outside of her environment. In Chapter 7 we explore the person in context and develop the theme, which runs throughout the book, of the necessity for us as human beings both to differentiate *and* to integrate experiences.

Having established the inevitable and necessary interplay between individual organism and environment, we discuss in Part III a number of implications and areas of the approach. In Chapter 8 we present the contribution Rogers and others have made to our understanding of personal relationships and, in Chapter 9, focus on the relationship between parent and child. In Chapter 10 we consider person-centred thinking about education, schools, schooling and life-long learning. Rogers' work has had a profound impact on education, especially in the understanding and theory of education and learning based on relationship, a perspective which appears somewhat under attack in an age of 'standards' and tests. We are particularly critical of what we see as 'schooling', as distinct from education, in many spheres, and of unnecessary regulation and testing in education and training. As educators ourselves we are supportive of students and teachers and, at the end of this chapter, we provide some supportive suggestions for teachers. In the last chapter in this part (Chapter 11) we link Rogers' ideas about the 'emerging person' to interest in and concern about citizenship, and follow this with two discussions about justice and restorative justice, and about peace in the context of Rogers' work on conflict resolution, discussions which are all too topical today.

In Part IV we move beyond the individual person and individual therapy to apply the approach to systems. We begin in Chapter 12 with the couple or dyad and move through group (Chapter 13), community (Chapter 14) and organisation (Chapter 15) to the wider social and natural environment itself (Chapter 16). In each chapter in this part of the book we give a brief overview of the person-centred approach to the particular system; consider the implications for the system of the approach, and vice versa; and include a ‘case study’ of some work with the system from a person-centred perspective. Some discussions in this part of the book are less well developed than others, notably (for us) on the environment. In part, this is because the application of person-centred principles to this subject is relatively unformed and new. Rather than not tackle it at all, we prefer to acknowledge this and, we hope, to provide some stimulus for further, creative thinking. We conclude each chapter in the book with a summary of points made in the chapter.

We have taken a number of chapter headings from the title of Rogers’ own works. Whilst this honours our inspiration and our roots, we move within each chapter beyond the writings of Rogers and his contemporaries in the hope of making this a book relevant to our contemporary world. Our interest in the history of ideas is reflected in the fact that, when we refer in the text to key figures in the development of ideas, we have followed the first reference to them with their dates, such as Carl Rogers (1902–1987). We hope this will be of interest to you and help you locate the chronology of people, their ideas and influences in this significant and exciting development of psychology in social context.

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