

Excerpt from *Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Rogers, C. R. Boston: The Riverside Press Cambridge, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942, vii – ix.

*In listing the many experiences and people who have influenced his thinking, Carl demonstrates his deep sense of humility that was consistently a part of his personality from his earliest writings to his final words.*

The steadily increasing interest in the individual and his adjustment is perhaps one of the outstanding phenomena of our times. Even the mass struggles and mass programs of wartime have served to emphasize as a part of our war aims the basic concept of the significance of the individual and his right to the elements of a satisfying adjustment.

In the period of the 1920s the interest in the adjustment of the individual was primarily analytical and diagnostic. In social work it was the period of the flowering of the case history; in psychology there was a lush tropical growth of tests; in educational guidance both records and tests grew apace; in psychiatry multi-syllabled diagnostic labels blossomed into elaborate diagnostic formulations. Never had so much been known about the individual. As time has gone on, however, these groups, and others with similar interests, have given more consideration to the dynamic processes through which adjustment is improved. *The balance has definitely shifted from diagnosis to therapy, from understanding the individual to an interest in the processes through which he may find help* [italics added]. Today the professional worker who is concerned with the adjustment of the individual wants to know how he may become more effective in therapeutic ways in assisting the individual to readjust.

The writer has lived through and been a part of this shift in thinking and interest. An initial interest in diagnosis has become subordinate to a much stronger interest in the process of counseling and therapy. During a period of years in child-guidance work, as director of a child-guidance clinic, as counselor on student and family problems, he has developed a viewpoint regarding these treatment processes in which whatever is original is so blended with the thinking of others as to defy separation. Hence, while the present book represents his own viewpoint, it has also drawn, both consciously and unconsciously, from the experience of many groups. For the better orientation of the reader, and to express his own sense of obligation, the writer would like to indicate some of these groups to whom he feels indebted, and some of the professional relationships which have had a significant part in shaping the concepts which underlie this volume.

Experience in the short-lived Institute for Child Guidance in New York City provided a stimulating situation in which a range of viewpoints extending from ultra-psychoanalytic to ultra-statistical challenged every worker to select and develop his own orientation.

Twelve years of association with a growing and changing staff in the field of clinical psychology and child guidance helped in the formulation of a treatment viewpoint. Most of the members of that staff will recognize in this volume concepts and practices which they have had a part in formulating. The close relationships with social workers and psychiatrists, both those on the clinic staff and those outside, have enriched the viewpoints here expressed.

Particularly stimulating has been the thinking that has come from the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic and the Pennsylvania School of Social Work. Through the writings from this source, and through working with staff members who have had training in these organizations, the writer has greatly profited.

The challenge of student counseling has been a fresh field in which to test and amplify, with a most promising group, the concepts of counseling which originated in the child-guidance field.

The writer owes a special debt to the searching and discriminating questions of graduate students – clinical psychologists in training – who in developing their own counseling and therapeutic skills have raised basic issues for consideration and have assisted in clarifying the principles and practices of counseling.

Another contribution has been made by a research program in which counseling and therapeutic interviews have been *phonographically recorded. These phonographic accounts, and the typescripts which have been made from them, have exposed the processes of counseling and therapy to an objective and microscopic examination which has illuminated the principles and problems of counseling in significant ways which thus far have been only partially utilized. This procedure holds much promise for the future* [italics added].

Finally, and most deeply, the author is indebted to the multitude of individuals whom it has been his privilege to try to help. Children in trouble, disturbed parents, discouraged students, unhappy husbands and wives – all have contributed, the failures as well as the successes, to the learnings about the treatment process. In and through their struggles for growth and mature development has come an increasing certainty that we have too little, rather than too much, faith in the growth capacities of the individual.

Out of such a background comes this book, which attempts to state *the author's conviction that counseling may be a knowable, predictable, understandable process, a process which can be learned, tested, refined, and improved* [italics added]. It is presented with the hope that it will lead counselors and therapists, both in the field and in training, to undertake further investigation, in theory and in practice, which will enable us to deepen and perfect our knowledge of ways of enabling the individual to develop a more satisfying adjustment.

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