

Carl Rogers
The Quiet Revolutionary, An Oral
History

Excerpts included in
Carl Rogers, A Daughter's Tribute
CD-ROM

Family Values

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 1:

An indication of the flavor of home was the fact that every morning—as far back as I can remember, and up to the time when I left home—we had what they called morning worship. The whole family was assembled for breakfast, after which we sat around in a circle and each of us in turn read one or two verses from the Bible. And then we all got down on our knees, and either mother or father gave a prayer. That was the flavor of our home. It sounds very strict, yet it was not strict in the usual sense of regulations.

My family was so much more conservative than the [Congregational] church we went to. I suppose I heard good and scholarly sermons. They didn't make much of an impression on me, but I know that [the pastor] and the church and the doctrines were very suspect. My family felt he was much too radical. I don't understand where they got their religious conservatism and why it was so strong, but it certainly was.

I would like to present a somewhat different side, too, to give a more rounded picture of them. My father, when he went to college in the 1880s, went on to do graduate work in civil engineering. Nobody did graduate work in those days; that was quite unusual, and it probably carried over into his interest in scientific agriculture when they bought the farm. My mother went to college, although she didn't complete it, and I think that, too, is somewhat unusual. Then I think of the fact that my father used to read to us children, and that was clearly something he loved to do. He read Indian stories and would stop in the middle of the most exciting part and say, "Okay, that's it. Now we go to bed"—so it was always continued the next time. I remember one series of articles that he came across that had to do with man-eating lions, and just as the lion was creeping up outside the corral, "Okay, that's all for tonight." And he had a book about the establishment of Fort Dearborn, which became Chicago, and again, just as things got very exciting, it would be cut off for the night. He thoroughly enjoyed tantalizing us and treating us to exciting stories.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8-9:

I think that life had been hard for [my parents], and I feel that people who have a hard time tend to focus on what has to be done and not on how you feel about it. They disregarded feelings. That was true about illness, too. You tended to push that to one side and carry on in spite of it. Work had a central emphasis, and a very high value was placed on it and achievement—but not especially school achievement. They were pleased when we got good marks, but book learning was second to actually getting the work done. They had a certain amount of scorn for book learners. That's why having my nose in a book, which was nearly always true, was a matter for reproof. I mean, when my mother would find me reading a book in the morning, she'd say, "Well, have you done your chores yet?" and so forth. The fact that I was devouring four or five books a week, mostly on frontier life and trappers, Indians and scouts, didn't seem to make that much of an impression.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

We bought the [Warwood] farm in 1914 and spent the next two summers in a little shanty built on the place by father's construction workers. It really wasn't a shanty, but it was very crude. For instance, the roof was an arch roof because he would bend sixteen-foot boards over the arch, and that made the roof, with a little tarpaper on top. For father, the farm was a hobby. He had a farm foreman who was a Germanic sort, and good. I didn't like him particularly. We all worked, and the first work I did, I remember, was pulling mustard weeds out of the fields, which was an unending job on this farm, that had not been well taken care of. Then, gradually, I graduated to milking cows and taking care of the pigs. I was in charge of the pig house, and we had quite a lot of pigs. When I was going to high school, I would get up at five o'clock in the morning to milk the cows. But my hands never got quite used to it. I suppose I was doing too much, because my hands were asleep most of the day—tingling. Then I would come home at night and milk the cows again.

Love of Literature

Oral History Excerpt,, Chapter 1:

I was reading good books when I went to first grade. So the principal, Miss Hood—a very kindly person—came and took me to second grade. And yes, I could read the second-grade reader, and the third-grade reader, and in the fourth grade, yes—I could even read the fourth-grade reader. But she wisely put me in second grade with Miss Littler, who was a very attractive young woman, and I loved her. That was a good placement because it was probably suitable for my social development and was moderately challenging as far as work was concerned.

Reading! I read Ruskin and Carlyle and Emerson and Poe and Victor Hugo and Dumas and Scott. I gave myself a liberal education and loved it. I couldn't wait to get back to the books. I really lived in books that summer.... I just read and worked.

I think I learned a lot [reading literature during the summer working in North Dakota in the lumber yard]. I think I learned a lot about human nature vicariously that way. I remember being particularly impressed by Victor Hugo and Jean Valjean—all the tragedy and sorrow, and also the way he built up a plot and then everything gradually came together. I was much affected by Emerson—I think all the writings of the transcendental school had a deep influence on me, and not only then but later—the deeply democratic ideals, the idealism of the approach. Yes, I learned my philosophy and a lot about human nature from books.

Work and Money

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 1:

My brothers and I had a whole hen house full of chickens. We had an egg business, we sold eggs and chickens. ...At one point, we also had a large garden patch a few blocks away where we raised sweet corn and vegetables and sold those. With regard to money, I feel my parents were very wise: we had an allowance; if we earned money, that was our money; we were encouraged to have separate enterprises, and sold things, as I recall, to our parents as well as to others. So we got the notion of earning money very early in the game, and that you could do things with earned money.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 1:

The manager and I were the sole crew of the lumberyard, and I worked hard that summer: I unloaded lumber that came in on the trains; I filled orders; I piled lumber; I shoveled coal. This interests me: the siding came right up beside the lumber yard and they had to shovel the coal over the side of the gondola car into the bins in the lumber yard. That was terribly hard work. As I recall, there were fifty tons of coal in a freight car, and I would unload the whole car, shoveling it over the side. I was grimy and dirty, and I think when I die they'll find coal dust in my lungs, but I was rather proud of the fact that I could do the work. Then I hosed myself off.

Sibling Relationships

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 1:

It seemed as though the major mode of family communication was teasing. We were continually snipping at each other. Making life miserable for another person seemed to be quite the accepted thing. For example, when my sister had a boyfriend visit, the teasing she got before and after was just incredible. I look back on that as an awful thing that we did to her. It seems, though, at the time, that's what you did. My younger brother, Walter, and I made life miserable for John, the youngest one. I remember one thing—this was during wartime and we were always making up nicknames for each other.

I struggled with my brothers and we fought, but I recall only tussling—not real fist-fights. The only fist-fight I have ever had in my life occurred when I was ten or twelve, on my way home from school with a group of boys. Two of us had an altercation which developed into a fight with onlookers. I was absolutely terrified, but I did my best. It was not much of a fight, and I think neither of us won. The fact that this was the *only* time I ever used my fists makes me, I think, definitely an atypical boy.

Science, Mysticism, and Sex

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 1:

Sometime before the big house [Warwood] was built I had an experience of which I have a very vivid memory. I came upon a pair of luna moths—beautiful, pale green trailing tails on their wings, obviously just fresh out of their cocoons. (I didn't realize all that at the time.) Here was this miraculous sight of two beautiful creatures on the dark side of a black oak tree. It was an awesome thing. I suppose it was kind of a religious experience to come across those and look at them. It was some time before I understood fully what I had seen, but I was somewhat prepared for them because I had been reading Gene Stratton-Porter's books *Freckles* and *Girl of the Limberlost* which mention the night-flying moths. And these big creatures, six or seven inches across, were just gorgeous in the sunlight! It really was a religious experience of awe to see them. So that doubled my interest in moths. I learned later that I had seen a male and female. That really surprises me—that a male and female had come out together; they must have been from the same brood. You can tell them apart by the male's very broad antennae for picking up the scent of the females.

Anyway, that got me started on looking for moths and reading about them. I got a book by Fabre, a French entomologist, and really studied up on it. I collected caterpillars; I raised them through their different molting periods; I'd find the leaves that they required for food—each species eats different kinds of leaves. Polyphemus and Cecropia ... I knew all the night-flying moths. I'd raise them to the point where they spun their cocoons, keep the cocoons over the winter, have the moths struggle out in the spring, and see them come out of the cocoon with their wings tiny—not much bigger than one's thumbnail. And within an hour or so, the fluid has gone into the wings and they stretch out to six or seven inches total width.

So I really was an expert on that, and it never occurred to me that that was particularly unusual. It certainly never occurred to me to share it with people. My folks knew about it. It was sort of my strange operation. I had all the boxes of caterpillars in the basement, and I don't remember any particular approval for that. It was just what I was doing.

There were some aspects that I felt I certainly couldn't share with my parents. I'd read in the books that if you tied out a female moth, that would attract the males. Well, s-e-x was something not mentioned in our household, and so I was a little uneasy as to whether they would understand what I was doing. But anyway, I tied out a Cecropia moth—put a soft string around its belly and tied it outside the window—and sure enough, in the morning here were male moths fluttering all around. That was very exciting.

I never shared that at school. I don't think my teachers had any idea I was engaged in anything like this. I don't remember sharing it with other students at school. I realize my life was a very, very private thing. And I guess the underlying idea was that I simply knew somehow that what most interested me would not be of interest to other people and might be sort of scorned or thought of as very strange by other people.

War and Peace

***Oral History* Excerpt, Chapter 1:**

[My parents] were absolutely in favor of the war and I adopted the family attitude. I guess that's best expressed by the fact that my younger brothers and I played war games. We made wooden rifles, and the enemy was the Huns. We couldn't say bad enough things about the Germans, and the notion that there were two sides to it never entered my mind, except once when my grandfather Cushing was at our house. He made some remarks indicating that he'd read Nietzsche and that he thought Nietzsche had some good ideas. That fell like a bombshell. I think it was greeted by silence. To think that anyone would think well of any German writer was just unheard of.

Religious Convictions

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 2:

It was during the middle of my freshman year that I went to a conference in Des Moines: the World Student Christian Federation's Conference. And I'm embarrassed when I look back and read what I wrote at that time. I evidently kept a journal, and thanks to Kirschenbaum's book, [On Becoming Carl Rogers], I'm reminded of things that I would otherwise have forgotten. But my commitment to a really religious faith and following Jesus Christ and committing myself to religious work and so on—it does embarrass me now and I wonder why, because I'm not embarrassed by the fact that I was interested in farming, which isn't a very high-grade occupation itself. I think possibly the fact that I'm embarrassed by it is due to the fact that possibly I hold similar convictions now but they're not religious. My firm belief in the fact that the core of the person is constructive, not evil, is a faith about what seems to me to be based on experience. The fact that persons are capable of constructive change is another belief, again based on a lot of evidence, but still, it's a belief that I hold very deeply. So possibly it's the fact that I have convictions now that are just as strong but are quite different from those—that may be what embarrasses me. I'm not quite clear. At any rate, I know it does embarrass me to read the journals of those days about my religious views where it doesn't embarrass me to read adolescent things on other topics.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 3:

[A] high spot was the discussion as to what attitude the student Christian Movements should take toward followers of other faiths, Hinduism, Confucianism, etc. I think that that evening was one of the most inspiring of the whole session. I know that you would have liked to hear Mr. Paul of India, tell what he believes about Christianity and Hinduism. He said that Christianity is no longer being taught as being a faith that destroys Hinduism, or as an opposite to Hinduism. Christ is regarded instead, as the fulfiller of all that is good in Judaism. Somehow it gave me a new vision of the completeness and wonderfulness of Christ, to consider Him as being not only the Messiah of the Jews, but also the crown of Hinduism. Dr. Lew and Mr. Koo, in speaking

for the Chinese, said that the conflict in China was not between Christianity and other religions, but between religion and no religion. From all that we hear and read in the papers, he is certainly right.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 3:

At some point I began to think [about becoming a psychologist] not because psychology was so attractive, but because religious work became less attractive.... You had to believe in a creed. You had to agree to certain doctrines. And it gradually struck me—I suppose during my first year there [at Union Theological Seminary] it began to strike me—that my religious thinking had gone through so many changes in just a few years that I simply couldn't possibly commit myself to a religious point of view that would extend through my whole professional life. I didn't know what would happen or what I would believe or what I would not believe, and I didn't want to tie myself down. And then I began to see, for example, in a course called *Ways of Working with Young People* that one could do the kind of thing that I was drawn to, namely, helping people to change—not that I would have put it in these terms at that time—but helping people to change, grow, develop, live more satisfying and better lives. That didn't have to be done in a church.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 3:

[The student-run seminar put together at Union Theological Seminary] makes me stand back and look with awe at Union. It must have been an outstanding graduate school. There were several of us—sort of rebels at heart—and we enjoyed the courses that we were taking but we hadn't had enough time to think about and integrate what we had learned. Also, there wasn't room to raise all the questions we had or sometimes the questions were deflected by some of the instructors so we came up with the idea that we would like to have our own seminar. Certainly we could have had a group that met together, but we also wanted to have it for credit so it would show on our transcripts. What really strikes me with great surprise is that Union said okay. But to protect their own interests or for various sensible reasons they would like to have a faculty member

sit in. They appointed a young faculty member who could sit in with us and he would take part only if called upon. Those were his instructions.

That was quite an amazing seminar. We organized it well. We took up different topics at different meetings. And certainly, I think of the memories of that with a lot of pleasure. There were all men in the seminar, but their wives accompanied them. All of those people played a part in our lives then and later, and we became very, very close. *Several of us thought our way right out of Union Theological Seminary, but I don't remember being rebuked or scolded for that. Some people went into sociology. I think perhaps half of the group left the seminary after that,* [italics added] and I suppose that's one reason why Henry Sloane Coffin, when he became president, was more restrictive in his approach. At any rate, that was a very free-wheeling seminar where we raised deep philosophical and religious issues and thought about them in great depth. I think that has helped me. Well, the whole experience at Union has helped me ever since to feel free to take a philosophical stance. I feel many people in professional disciplines do their work, but are frightened to death of taking any philosophical stand. Many people do their professional work or their technical work but are frightened to death of taking any philosophical stance—that's a different field—on values they're skittish about. I have felt, on the basis of my background at Union, that I have thought about values; I know what I believe and what I hold to. It was very good training in that respect. I've never regretted in any way the time that I spent at Union nor that I left it. I did not leave with any feeling of dislike for the seminary. I regard it very highly and treasure the time that I spent there.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 3:

It strikes me that the two major rebellions of my life were made easy by circumstance, and that seems a little incredible. I really left my home values by taking a trip to China. I left Union Theological Seminary by walking across the street to Teachers College [Columbia University] where I had already taken courses, where I knew some of the faculty, where the interchange was very easy. I never considered any other place to take my degree, and that's what I say—it was extremely easy. We didn't move our place

of living; we didn't change our way of life. It was simply that instead of taking courses on the other side of Broadway, I took courses on this side of Broadway.

***Oral History* Excerpt, Chapter 14:**

Politically we're moving backward. In religion, the most fundamentalist of the fundamentalists was just inducted yesterday as head of the Southern Baptists. The whole development of the Moral Majority, the right wing ... Not a question of whether [children are] learning something, but do they have homework? I think and hope it is simply a swing of the pendulum back from the adventurous sixties.It's a paradoxical thing: We are much more liberal than we ever were before, and also much more conservative. But certainly, the dominant force today seems to be the conservative aspects, and I trust that at some point in the future it will swing back again.

Falling in Love

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 2:

Helen lived a block away from me in Oak Park and in grammar school we were part of a group of kids that rode our bicycles together on Oak Park Avenue. I don't remember that I had any special feeling for her at that time except that I knew her; I was very shy in the girl department.

I was interesting to [senior girls] and they were interesting to me; I mean, I expect we were a better match on that level than freshman girls would have been. Anyway, I enjoyed some of those dates with the senior girls more than with some of the younger girls. I didn't have a great many dates except with Helen, and I did have those pretty consistently—quite unusual ones, too. Since I didn't dance well and didn't play cards I tried to think of novel things to do. We went out on breakfast picnics, for example, where I'd cook breakfast out along the shores of Lake Mendota. Really very nice times...I became more and more seriously attached to her and I did propose before I went to China. She had many reservations.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 2:

When I came back I really renewed my courtship, and on October 22, 1922, we became engaged. By that time, she had a job in Chicago. I only saw her when I was home on weekends and so forth.

I was very much in love with her, and I wrote a moderate amount of poetry.... One of the poems that I still feel some pleasure in was entitled

“To A Gray-Eyed Goddess”:

In Sappho's time, and Sophocles'
The gray-eyed goddess men sought to please
And lyrics, rhymes, and satires keen

They dedicated to fair Athene.

No lofty lyrics mine—yet deep
Within my heart of hearts, I keep
Love, and hope, and great desires,
The stuff, I think, for lyric fires.

And if from that heap a flickering light
Lifts a white arm to the night
And smoky threads of fragrance rise,
I dedicate them to your sweet gray eyes.

Gender Roles

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 2:

She was very feminine yet very down-to-earth. That was a quality that she retained all through life—very practical. She'd had to take care of her own family because her mother was ill for a long time. She could cook; she knew housework; she knew everything about making a home; she had very good taste; she was physically attractive. She had long, tapered fingers—very artistic looking hands—and she was a good artist. She was not an intellectual, and that used to bother me sometimes—wondering whether she was up to the kind of interests that I had. But that was always more than compensated for by the fact that she was steady and could be counted on; she had good judgment. It was really true that when I was dating other girls I continually compared them to Helen and she always came out well. Some of them were flighty and temperamental, and some of them were brilliant but couldn't do anything. Somehow the practical aspect of being able to do things is important to me for myself, and is important in someone I'm with. I think spiritual is not a term you would apply to her. She had high ideals, but the spiritual life, or that sort of thing, was really not for her. She was wise in having reservations about being a minister's wife.

I feel that she was an excellent mother of very young children.

She very much had my interests at heart, always. That was true all through her life. This goes ahead of where we are now, but in moves that we made, if it was good for me professionally, then she was willing to make that shift even though it might not have been her primary choice or her highest priority....[She was] very supportive.

The Radical

***Oral History* Excerpt, Chapter 2:**

I would say that I was usually more radical than Helen was in most respects, but she was not shocked by radical ideas. Her mother, especially, was quite a liberal person, and she'd grown up in a liberal family. None of my ideas shocked her though I often went beyond where she was at the time.

Approach to Therapy: Rochester

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 4:

My approach to therapy at the end of [my] stay in Rochester was quite eclectic. I don't like that word; it's usually a word of scorn for me, but I readily used environmental means if that seemed to be the most sensible way of affecting behavior. I was interested in treatment interviews but that was not my primary focus. I would say that one of the key elements was not that we were so ingenious in devising therapy plans but that we were effective in getting them put into practice. I think the case conference system that I developed at Rochester was one of the best things I did. It was not uncommon to have five or six agencies represented in the case conference and I did develop my skill as a discussion leader so that when we got through there usually was a consensus. "All right, the school will do this; the court will do this; the social agency dealing with the family will do that," and they did it. So that sort of blanket approach really was often very effective. I look back on those case conferences and think (at the time it seemed to be the natural way to go about it) how rare it is that treatment plans are really put into effect in that complex kind of way. I would speak of that as one of the key elements of what we did there.

My teaching was always an opportunity to express what I was learning in my work and that made it exciting to me and exciting to my students. One thing I learned at Ohio State and later at Chicago and probably at Rochester, too, was that to give unfinished material to students was an absolutely ideal way of teaching. If I was working on a paper or working on a chapter for a book or something, I'd have it duplicated and made available to students. Oh my, it was so exciting because here was something they could discuss and have some impact on themselves. And so I've always enlisted students in whatever teaching I was doing. Every class I taught became a seminar type of experience, even in a large class.

Teaching

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 5:

Professionally, it is interesting to me to read what former students thought of [the Psychological Clinic]. They speak of the fact that the Psychological Clinic was set on Saturdays in order to be inconvenient, but I welcomed that because Saturday meant the students didn't have other classes so we could run overtime and spend the whole day at it. For quite a long while I was blissfully ignorant of the fact that I was making so many enemies on the faculty. I just was having such a good time—my first full-time teaching experience and bright graduate students.

At some point—I think it was the first year I was there—five graduate students from CCNY arrived, and I can tell you they were a new breed of individual for me—except for Nat Raskin, who was a very mild-mannered individual. They were intent on challenging the professor at every corner. These were bright Jewish boys who were accustomed to questioning anything that was said. It was good for me. I enjoyed them and was a little shocked by them, and certainly the other students were shocked by them, too. I just thoroughly enjoyed teaching and being with students.

One thing that applies to Ohio State and to all other aspects of my teaching career is that with one exception I never taught undergraduate courses. (I've taught courses that were open to undergraduates and graduates.) And I have never taught a required course, so the notion of teaching resistive students who don't want to be there is really foreign to my experience.

In its prime, students were recording their interviews. In order to be *the* student at this week's seminar you had to transcribe one interview and duplicate it for all members of the seminar so that we could follow the transcription and listen to the recording, making comments and so on. It was the world's best course in psychotherapy. I've often thought if some promising young analyst had been a member of that group we'd have come out of it totally changed people with regard to viewpoint, because we became very sensitive as a group to the flow of an interview. And there either is a flow of an interview, or there is not a flow. You can tell when things are really progressing, or

whether it's just choppy conversation, or whether the client is running away from something he was starting to face. We became very adept at recognizing responses and attitudes that furthered the flow—where the person kept going deeper and deeper and giving more and more—and responses that suddenly cut off the flow. For example, questions which seemed so innocent and so natural from the point of view of the therapist almost always stopped the flow, even though the question was an entirely innocent one: “I didn't quite understand that. Do you want to explain the situation?” So the person drops the inner flow and starts to explain the externals to the therapist. Interpretations almost invariably bring a halt to the immediate progress, even though it might be temporary. A very good, subtle, cautious interpretation might be accepted, but it would definitely impede the progress of therapy.

We learned all kinds of things. It was fascinating. Some of the best students, the ones most sensitive, where I thought, Oh, this is going to be an excellent therapist, their clients would come twice, perhaps, then stop—three times, then stop. And we were so mystified because the interviews looked good, sounded good. I remember Nick Hobbs as one of that group and others who were very sensitive, fine people. We began to listen to those more closely and we realized as we studied the interviews that they had been so sensitive to what was going on in the client that they had responded to feelings that weren't yet conscious—responses like, “Oh, I guess you really, really hate your mother”—things which the client found frightening and wasn't ready to accept. As we realized what was happening, two or three of them called themselves the blitz therapists because their blitzkrieg frightened the client away. But then they modified their approach. We learned all kinds of things like that.

It is true that, because we were recording, we tended to focus on the immediate verbal response. Therefore, we got too wound up in technique, but at the time it was incredibly exciting to realize that each thing you did or said and—I would add now—each attitude you hold, makes a real difference in the therapy in progress. It was something that had never been done before. It was putting therapy under a microscope, and it was a very good microscope—we learned all kinds of things.

I think one thing that I would like to put in here is that looking back on it, I realize, Wow; that was a historical step that was really fantastic. At the time, each step seemed entirely natural. We had the technology to record our sessions, and if you had recordings, the thing to do was to study them. It all just seemed very ordinary from the external point of view. We knew it was a very exciting group to be in and very profitable to all concerned—profitable to me, profitable to the students. But it took me a long time to realize that those seminars were a historical event.

While I was in Rochester I got excited about the idea of recording [therapy sessions], so the idea of the usefulness of recording was an idea I'd had for quite a while. Then Bud Covner brought the technology that I was lacking. I can't exaggerate the difficulty of that. I still remember sitting in a closed room with a microphone in another office, hidden in a lamp. And since it was wartime, we couldn't get metal disks for our recording; they were glass-based disks which were breakable and coated with something. And you'd turn on the recording and the stylus would cut an actual groove in the material, which would create shavings. You had to keep brushing away the shavings. And the records had to be turned each two to three minutes, and so you had to have two machines in order to have one that you could turn on when you were flipping the record on this one, which meant great difficulty in transcribing because face one was on one disk, face two on another, face three back on the first, face four ... I tell you, we went through complicated procedures in getting our recordings of interviews, but it was marvelous, too. And I will say the quality of the recording was good. It was very, very exciting to have the actual words.

I looked back on it and I realized some of the flaws, but I've always been a person who felt if the idea seemed significant to me right now, then I would like to share it with others. I don't pretend it's the last and final and perfect idea. But if it has a lot of significance for me, why don't I share it? That way it could probably get good feedback. And I've encouraged students to do that—please, get it out. Don't wait for perfection; get it out now. Every place I've been I've tried to promote what at Chicago we called discussion papers, where people would get out papers before they were ready to be published—the tentative ideas—and I think there's great virtue in that. So I think

Counseling and Psychotherapy was really quite a landmark because it was new, but it was far from perfect and far from being the ultimate flowering of my ideas.

Seneca Lake: A Communal Venture

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 4:

Seneca Lake was a high point. When we were in theological seminary, the group of us who were friends talked about how we could continue our association. We had this dream of a summer place....

We found a place on Seneca Lake: a strip of land about 900 feet along the lakeshore, a road strip down to it that we could buy from the neighboring farmer, and a house on it which had been built as a sort of a summer place. It hadn't been used much except to house transient workers. The whole thing cost \$1,000 and we looked at it and liked it and got other people to look at it and they liked it. And then four of us decided to buy it together but we couldn't raise \$250 a piece—this was in 1931, I think—so we took out a mortgage for \$450.

Anyway, Helen and I built our cabin. All of us built cabins on the place. My son David later found the expenses [list] of the cabin. It cost me \$155 in material. The cabin was built of white pine log siding cut to be curved so it looks like a log cabin from the exterior. White pine, which these days would be priceless. Anyway, the whole cabin: logs, beams, roofing, windows, everything, cost \$155. The group included Ted Newcomb and his wife, Mary. They didn't stay. They never really joined the group because Mary didn't like the primitive nature of camp. Bill Montgomery and his wife from Union Theological Seminary joined. He was a minister, a very amusing guy. He'd come back from a funeral dancing and say, "Best funeral I've ever attended." Or one of his favorite sayings when we were about to leave somewhere was, "Off in a cloud of whale manure." Anyway, Ray Gibbons was a minister. Bill Seeman was the new dean of students at Oberlin College. He and his wife, Fran, are very close friends. Leonard Cassidy and his wife, Louise, had been at Union. So it was really a collection of Union groups. And I think Leonard and Louise joined later. Anyway, there were four of us.

We used the existing house on the lot as a community place. We built our cabin quickly so we could [use it]. We could go to the lake on weekends. One week my wife would be in charge of the food and the rest of us would be helpers, and the next week somebody

else's wife would be in charge of the food. It was quite a communal enterprise at the start. And it was marvelous for the children and their social friendships. It was a great place, being close to nature. The lake was ice-cold. Seneca Lake is a very, very deep lake—bottomless, according to the natives.

We spent our summer vacations there for a number of years, and would go down weekends in spring and fall. It was a place the children remember with a great deal of love. The family turned it over to Dave—he owns it now—and his son loves it, so it's being passed on in the family. They've improved on it. When we were there, there was a concrete lined spring up in the orchard above our lot. There was a pipe down to our place so there was running water—of dubious cleanliness, but it was running water. There were outhouses, a kerosene stove, kerosene lights, and so forth. Gradually, electricity, a water pump from the lake, and a shower were put in. But it was a very enjoyable spot and very constructive in our family life and personal lives. It was a great place to get away to.

Parenting

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 5:

In my relationship with my two children I think I've been both a poor influence and a good one. For example, with David I don't ever remember suggesting in any way that he should work harder and get better grades. Maybe I did, but I don't recall it. Certainly I've not pushed for high achievement, but I suppose because I'm a high achiever myself, that has put pressure on David. I feel high achievement means more to him than it does to me. It's just seemed sort of a natural thing. I never felt pressured to be a high achiever, but I suppose the atmosphere of the home and my own work had the kind of influence on him that my parents did on me—namely, sort of a subliminal influence toward high achievement, where their influence was toward moral behavior. Anyway, I really don't feel too pleased with that.

However, I really was a good counselor to him in his early pre-professional and professional years. He was so hard on himself. I remember one point, particularly, when he had been chosen as intern or resident at Johns Hopkins and he felt, They don't really know me; they put me in a position in which I'm more responsible than I'm capable of being; I don't have the qualifications. He just felt very inadequate to the position he'd been placed in. And I said to him in a conversation I think we both remember, "Well, Dave, you're a very good carpenter. You're doing some sculpture work. You don't have to be a doctor. You could earn your living in a variety of ways. If you were a good carpenter, I think you would enjoy that." Somehow that conversation really relaxed him and he's said oftentimes that that kind of knowledge—that he didn't have to be a doctor; he didn't have to achieve as a physician; he didn't have to meet these requirements; and he didn't have to get through—gave him an attitude which he found very rare among his fellow students. And, of course, being relaxed about it, he did marvelously well.

With Natalie, one of the big learnings with her was that adolescents do need to rebel even if there's not much to rebel against. I'm now giving my perceptions; I think they're quite different from hers. We did a good job of rearing Natalie, I feel. She was a very independent, self-reliant adolescent girl, and she rebelled against us much more than David had. I felt at the time and since that it was just necessary—it was a necessary part of life to really kick against something, and so she'd find plenty of things to kick against. At times that was amusing. I remember I recognized it at the time; I thought, Okay, you've got to say everything's all wrong from some point of view just to establish your own independent identity. And I feel that with her I've been a counselor over the years off and on, when she's needed it. And sometimes she's been a counselor for me, too.

Research

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 2:

Soon I was able to get funds for the research I had wanted to do for a long time: a study of psychotherapy at a state hospital with psychotic individuals. The best opportunity to do that was in the state hospital at Mendota. I decided to make it a study of psychotherapy with those who'd been labeled as schizophrenics. I was so eager to undertake that research, but I made a major mistake: I did not take the time to really build a group with good interpersonal relationships, and I paid very heavily for that later even though I gathered a good staff, including Charlie Truax and others. The other big mistake I made was that the research we had done at Chicago had been criticized for small numbers, lack of adequate control groups, and so on, so this time we were going to do research to end all research—that's the way it looks to me now. We certainly wanted it to be perfect research. For every schizophrenic in therapy we had a matched individual from the state hospital who was not in therapy. Then, in addition to that, we tried what was really a weird sort of thing: we recruited a group of normal individuals to come in for interviews and take all the tests but not undergo therapy. That soon petered out, as it should have. The research was so overloaded with the mechanics of trying to make it the perfect research that, in that respect, it suffered.

Also, none of us had ever worked in a hospital. That was a new experience. Most of the group had not worked, except occasionally, perhaps, with a schizophrenic individual who might come in as a client. So we would have done better, I realize, had we spent a year or two working with schizophrenics without any attempt to do research and then started a research project. But with the funds there was a lot of pressure to start the research right away, so that's what we did.

My biased interpretation is that the behaviorist point of view is more popular in universities because it fit in with the technology of the age. We have a technology for everything else; now we have a technology for managing human behavior. And it interested me that when a South American dictator wanted help in the administration, he called on behaviorist psychologists, which was the right approach. It also made fewer demands on the person. The humanistic approach involves the experience of the

scientist and the practitioner as well as his mind and intellect, and academicians tend to shy away from that because if you get involved experientially, it might change you, and that, I think, is a risk.

During the time I was at Wisconsin, I taught [a summer course] at Brandeis University in 1958, I think. I think I was at my best in teaching that course—in facilitating the learning in that course—and I really didn't teach it. That's what caused such enormous uproar. ... When [Samuel Tenenbaum] first wrote it up, it sounded as though it was my charisma, my special character, that made it possible for people to learn in this way. But he went home and he facilitated courses in the same way himself, and it worked the same way for him.

I once spoke of myself as someone who was a shy person who'd written messages, sealed them in bottles, and tossed them into the ocean, and it was astonishing the number of shores on which they'd washed up. I feel that way about a lot of my writings—I feel that way about a lot of the personal writing I've done. I've been able to express myself more personally in writing than I used to be able to in speaking. I think now I can do it in speaking, too. At any rate, it became my own way of putting myself out where I was too shy to put myself out in ordinary social contacts, and people have responded to that very, very deeply.

Abe [Maslow] is a good philosopher; Rollo [May] is a good scholar, but I never felt that either of them were very good at putting their philosophy into practice. I feel that the sharpest difference between us is that whatever philosophical views I hold I clearly implement in practice.

I never have been particularly fond of abstractions. Nothing exists for me unless it exists in reality. I tend to think in concrete terms. That's why I use illustrations and examples when I write. Nothing really exists for me unless it can be shown to have some reality in experience.

I've always made it clear that science is an extension of the person.

Thoughts on Receiving an Award

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 6:

One thing in this period that really touched me very deeply was the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award that was awarded to me by the APA in 1956. That was totally unexpected. (I did know about it a few hours before.) I couldn't quite believe it. I felt I had really set myself apart from the mainstream of the profession but it didn't occur to me that they would recognize me. And to be recognized by a whole body of psychologists—academic and otherwise, though academic psychologists were probably in the lead—to be recognized by them for the scientific contribution I had made was one of the most touching things that's ever happened. Other things have come along as awards that I feel grateful for and honored by but the real surprise and depth of feeling that I had at that time was probably greater than any other. I wept a few tears when that award was made. I couldn't believe that I would be recognized by my own profession. It wasn't that I felt I didn't deserve it. I felt I did deserve it. But I didn't think recognition would ever be made, and that was very touching.

Personal Life in Madison

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 2:

Helen and I found a marvelous, modern home on the shore of Lake Monona that we both loved—a very elaborate place, really—and it had an outboard motorboat that we enjoyed. And the Department of Psychiatry....gave me a canoe, which I also enjoyed. Helen was very happy there because of the home and because she rapidly made friends, particularly with the faculty wives in the Department of Education at Wisconsin, and somewhat with the Psychology Department. It was a happy time for her and a happy family time for me, which helped to balance the fact that it wasn't a very good time professionally. We continued to take our trips to the Caribbean and Mexico and, as I mentioned, a lot of writing was done on those trips.

Carl's Creativity

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 14:

[The mobiles] were all rather fragile, so I really don't have any examples of them any more, but they were a real expression of creativity which brought out both sides of me. You have to know something about the law of the lever tolet me back up a little. I don't like non-mobile mobiles. I want mobiles that float and move and change in form and so on. And you have to know how much weight to have on one end to balance what you want to hang on the other end, and a lot of really quite scientific figuring has to come into it. But the product and the dream of it have to be artistic and creative and involve all kinds of curves in motion, not logic. But the logic has to enter into it too. Yeah, that was a good expression. And some of them that I developed were really elaborate. I made one for a couple up in Menlo Park which has since gone to pieces because I used nylon thread. They were quite lightweight; my best ones were, because they could move very easily. It must have had thirty or forty pieces all moving in concert, and it looked quite different depending on where it was at any particular moment.

Family Life in California

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

Our children were grown up during this time. ...My relationship with both of them—Helen's and my relationship during that period with both of them—was very good. We came to realize them as friends and resources, and also came to realize some of the mistakes we'd made in bringing them up. But I don't think I've ever lost any sleep over that.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

It's been unfortunate that I've had as little contact as I have with my grandchildren. That I really do regret. I see them, I've had more impact on them than I realize; I get evidence of that sometimes. But the actual contact with them has always been infrequent and I never had too much opportunity to get more than intermittently close to my grandchildren. That has happened. And, more recently, the great grandchildren.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

During the years after we moved to California, Helen had increasing illnesses.... She'd always been anemic but more and more she had difficulty with illness, so that she was not as well as she had been during most of her life. She did have good friends here and was happy in that respect, but our relationship was not as good as it had been before.

She was not at all enthusiastic about my being involved in groups, and I think the primary reason was that she recognized that deep attachments were formed and was scared to death that I might form an attachment and leave her or something.She did not have a good experience with groups herself and that solidified her feeling that I shouldn't be having anything to do with them. Then, toward the end of that time, there were several occasions when both Natalie and I thought that probably we would be called back from workshops we were doing because she seemed to be dying. But then she would recover again. It was a difficult period in our marriage—difficult for her and difficult for me. We had good times together; we had good mutual friends and did a lot of exciting things together but it was not as good as it had been before.

The Group Process

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

I was realizing...as I was looking back over some of the things I've done that I have been very bold, adventuresome, quite a maverick, and definitely a pioneer. It seems to tie in with my reading of books about pioneers as a boy. It's strange—the particular activity at the time never seemed so unusual. It just seemed like the sensible thing to do. It's only looking back on it that I realize, Hey, I don't think anybody ever did that before.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

There was always a lot of excitement in regard to the human potential movement, workshops, encounter groups, sensitivity training, NTL labs, and so on, but the possibility of harm was very much in people's minds. Couldn't people be damaged by this? I don't doubt that people were damaged, but damn it all, not in my groups. I think that a group that is connected in a facilitative fashion may leave a person somewhat upset for a while because they've come to realize new things in themselves, but it does not do permanent harm. I really don't know of anyone in the groups I've worked with who was permanently harmed. I think of one man who came there psychotic and went away psychotic, but he was not harmed.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

It's strange that people get concerned about permanent harm with regard to groups. I feel much more concerned about what happens to people in individual therapy. I hear all kinds of horror stories of what happens to people who go to therapists—and therapists for the most part are licensed people. It's true that, for group leaders, there's no framework for licensing, but I hear of more serious damage being done by ignorant, unethical, licensed therapists than I do about damage done in groups. And I still retain the conviction I had at that time: the intensive group experience, the encounter group—whatever you wish to call it—is, when well-managed, well-facilitated, I think, one

of the most significant social inventions of this century. I think it has had—and continues to have—a tremendous impact. The floss and the trivia tend to die out. I haven't heard about nude encounter groups for quite a while, and people tried different gimmicks at different times and they worked for a while, but a well-facilitated encounter group which relies on the potential that resides in the group is, and continues to be, a very powerful experience for personality change, for behavior change, for laying the basis for solution of social problems.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

What facilitators do: they're attentive, they're listening, they're empathic, they're caring. They try to be real in the situation. Their primary task is to create a psychological climate which is releasing, safe, growth-promoting, and so on. ...some of the things they do *not* do: they don't talk a lot; they don't persuade; they don't interpret what's going on; they don't have goals for the group. They have goals for themselves of setting a climate, but they don't have goals for the group. They don't try to persuade. They don't try to exhort. They don't try to coerce. They really don't try to instruct. Most of the things that we think of people as doing with a group, they do not do, and perhaps that helps to indicate that theirs is a rather special function. They become catalysts, facilitators.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

Once a situation has been dealt with, no matter how painful it is, it's in the past and I don't dwell on it.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

My work there is something that hasn't been too well covered in anything that I've written or that has been written about me. I looked it up this morning and was astonished to find that I gave a talk there in November 1964, so I must have started that consultation almost immediately upon coming out to California.

I was completely mystified as to why they would hire me as a consultant on their educational and student problems. ...After visiting there a time or two, I was aware that working with students on a once-a-month basis would not be very productive. It seemed wiser to work with faculty and therefore influence the environment of the students. ...It was an education for me. To be involved with really top-notch physical scientists gave me a new concept of what science was about. I think one of the biggest things I learned was that these people played with ideas. They had a good time playing with them. It was fun.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

When we got through with the very first meeting, I remember people saying, "Well, it was a good meeting, but we didn't do anything but talk." I realized that just talking didn't seem like anything to them when actually there had been a lot of progress in that meeting, from very formal to more informal. So I began then to write up a memorandum after each meeting and get it to the group members before the next meeting. ...My memo idea proved to be quite an inspiration. ...And it did make them realize, "Oh, yes, things are going on."

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

It had one amusing sidelight. I, being me, called people by their first names: Bob, Dick, Murray, and Leita. At the next meeting of the Honker Group, Dick Fineman was outraged. He said, "I don't know who these people are you talk about in your memo. I've known these people for twenty years but don't know their first names."

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

I was interested in the philosophy of science because I felt that the logical, positivist approach was killing psychology; it was not suitable to the field we wanted to study. I didn't know what would be, but I was sure it was not that. So partly at Bill Coulson's instigation we held a conference which came out as a book, finally: *Man and the*

Science of Man. I think that was the title of the conference, too... It's an important thread but not a major thread in my career—this interest in the philosophy of science. It's something I've had for a long time but it never has been a major interest—something I get into and then drop out for a time. But again, I suppose it indicates that I had a lot of nerve to get into that field when I didn't have major training for it.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

Recently I responded to the question, "What would most advance a person-centered approach?" I said, "Some solid research..." What we need are more studies of process. Process is always a little difficult to study, but we need to study the relationship and the qualities of it, and also we need to study a question which is often raised: Is this therapy more suitable for one type of person than another? It doesn't really seem to me that it is, but that's a good question to investigate by research.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

We had a very good dialogue but really differed on one point. I said that I thought that the best of the therapeutic relationship was very much an I-Thou relationship of the sort that he'd described. Well, he didn't think so—that couldn't be, because [Buber thought] the therapist was the expert, the upper level. And finally, to clinch it, he said, "Well, that's certainly not in dealing with a schizophrenic—that wouldn't be an I-Thou relationship." I said, "I just had such an interview with a schizophrenic before leaving." He didn't understand that at all.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

As I began to extend my thinking into the field of education, I thought, You could make a change in the educational system, but you'd have to really start at the top and look through the whole system. You can't just do it piecemeal. Teachers can teach in a fresh fashion, but it doesn't work upwards at all. So I wrote a paper called "The Plan for Self-Directed Change in an Educational System," and I wound it up with the phrase, "Are

there any takers?".... Some sisters from Immaculate Heart College and High School in Los Angeles came to see me and.... the [Center for Studies of the Person] started a great big project at Immaculate Heart which really did change a lot of things. ...I learned that to try and change a system is a very polarizing thing because a lot of people were turned on by it, they were enthusiastic about it, they learned a lot from it, and they did a lot of new things. But the more new things that were done, the more it solidified those who felt, Damn it, we don't want to change. This is good as it is. Quit bothering us; we don't want these personal things in education. It really polarized the group very heavily.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 8:

I had been asked by Scott Forsman to write an introductory text in psychology and I thought that it was a noble idea to have a humanistically-oriented introductory text instead of the dry stuff that was available...I started writing it. And then I found that, when I got to the areas that I thought should be covered but where I had not had personal experience, my writing was dull; I didn't like it; it was a chore to do it. I finally just bogged down. ...There were a few things I had written that I thought were good and I just made use of them. Anyway, one of them was a good chapter on marriage in which I'd interviewed some people, so I interviewed some more people and made a book out of it. That's an understatement; I really worked hard on creating the book, but the origin of it came from the chapter for the textbook that was never written. Anyway, that was another pioneering area. I really did have a lot of nerve—I recognize that.

I look back on some of these things and I think, "I'll be damned—did I do that?" I guess I did.

The Peace Project

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

Growing out of almost three decades of interest in resolving tensions between groups, my [peace activities] work has become quite multifaceted at the present time and I'm very involved in several things which bear on reconciliation of antagonistic groups and reduction of tensions in several hot spots of the world today. I think they all have a bearing on peace, although not all of them are directly concerned with the possibility of war. They all have a bearing on reduction of tensions.

There's a part of the project that has been dealing with Central American tensions and difficulties and antagonisms, and that resulted in a conference in November of 1986 in Rust, Austria, which seemed successful. And there are a variety of invitations and possibilities which have grown out of that workshop which now constitute a heavy responsibility of the project for which we are trying to find funds. There are various directions we can take providing we can fund them.

Then there's the cross-cultural workshop in Szeged, Hungary, which was held in July of 1986. I just returned from that, and there was a previous one—a similar one—there in 1984. That's one of a long series of cross-cultural conferences. I think there have been something like sixteen or eighteen of those over the years, and they involve representatives from many, many nations. I'm interested in that—in the continuation of that—because it has served very useful purposes.

A third facet has to do with the work we've done in South Africa, which is probably the most dramatic of all because the situation is so full of tension and is so critical. That has involved a number of groups—training them as facilitators and then putting them to work at actual facilitating tasks. We will be returning there in early 1987, so that's a very active part of our work.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

I might mention that the original Peace Project was the culmination of a very broad dream where we anticipated bringing together world leaders from many nations to see if they couldn't meet on a person-to-person basis. That, I realize, was totally unrealistic. The idea was good, but it was not realistic and it eventually became narrowed down to a Central American focus due to a variety of circumstances. But I did want to mention that it started out as an attempt to see if it would be possible to bring together on a very personal basis, without agenda, in a residential retreat setting, leaders from various nations to discuss the issues of world peace and to meet together as persons. I still think that's a valuable idea but I'm not sure who in the world could pull it off.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

I realize I've taken a great many risks in my life, and usually at the time I'm taking them they don't seem like risks—they seem like sensible, ordinary things to do. Occasionally that's not true. ...But I guess there's no doubt: I like risks. That's what makes life exciting. I was thinking the other day, I realize I am a pioneer. ...The pioneering aspect—the gamble as to whether you could do that—I realize that's what attracted me.

I'm somewhat astonished at the terrible record we've had in approaching foundations and people for funding. "We must be doing something wrong," as one of our staff said. I guess that's true, but I don't quite know what it is. We've probably been turned down by fifteen or twenty foundations. We're negotiating now with one that looks somewhat hopeful in the long run, but how long it will be...well, we're torn between the fact that the Peace Project office will have to come to an end in a few months unless we can get some money, and yet the foundation is saying, "We like to get well-acquainted with our clients before we give them any funding." If they are talking about months and months then we might as well not get acquainted. It seems as though my personal record of achievement and the staff record of achievement are sufficient to justify generous funding, but we certainly have not had that and I don't quite know why. We've had good proposals written. We've sent them to good foundations.

Part of it is me. I think I am paying the price for not being a part of the establishment. Someone who is as well-known as I am through my writings should also be in personal contact with a lot of people of influence—that I would know somebody in government and literature and politics and finance and so on. I don't. I don't know social leaders. I have never been involved in high society. And I feel that money is granted on the basis of somebody knowing somebody.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

The other factor that may be involved in the difficulty in getting funds is that the whole viewpoint I represent is deeply, deeply subversive of almost all of our institutions. It is democratic to the very limit—to a degree that people find themselves not believing it. It does believe in empowering the individual, in trusting the group, in feeling that there is a wisdom in the individual and a wisdom in the group that can be trusted; that it doesn't need to be guided, directed, controlled, and so forth; that it needs to be released.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

I continue to look forward to the future and to doing more of this work. I feel satisfied in myself that it is constructive, promising, and helpful. And to what extent other people will come to believe that, I don't know, but my conviction runs very deep.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 9:

I do like challenges. I do like to put things to the test—myself to the test, too, I guess. It's partly my scientific interest that if the ideas I have are any good...then they ought to be helpful even in extreme situations. Extreme high status people—it ought to operate there. Extreme degrees of explosive tension, like in South Africa—it ought to operate there. And it has been effective in both kinds of situations, but I've made mistakes and I've learned. I realize that I like to put my ideas to the test, and if that involves risk, okay—so it involves risk.

I would rather deal with ordinary citizens or with young people who are still looking for a channel they can follow. ...I'm much more interested in changing attitudes of people in different cultures towards one another than I am in changing attitudes of established therapists.

The Question of Originality

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

I never had any specific training as a psychotherapist; never had any training as a group leader or group therapist or facilitator; never had any training as an encounter group leader; never had any training in the philosophy of science; *certainly* never had any training in intercultural, interracial, or international tensions...I suppose that's one of the things that has made me bold.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

I had never been satisfied with the term patient. ...A client is self-responsible, going to someone else for help but still containing the locus of evaluation within himself, the locus of decision. And he's not putting himself in the hands of someone else. He still retains his judgment.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

Psychological adjustment—a fully functioning person, a well-adjusted individual, an optimally functioning person—would be one who is open to all the experiences that are going on within the organism and is able to assimilate those into the concept of self. If I feel hatred, I can assimilate the fact that I'm a hating person; I hate this individual. If I feel love, I'm able to recognize that that's what I'm feeling. If I'm frightened, the same, so that when one is really open to all of the experiences going on in the organism, one is a fully functional person.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

The fully-functioning person is open to his or her experience—is able to accept the self as is, with failings and positive and negative feelings as well as positive qualities; is able to cope with life; is able to love, able to receive love.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

In this technological age, an approach that simply lives a philosophy and puts its trust in the capacities of the client seems lacking in glamour, compared to things that try all sorts of tricks and techniques, and do different things and try different procedures. It interests me that people who use that sort of an approach often burn out because they just come to the end of their rope, whereas when you get nourishment from the client by seeing the client grow, that's very rewarding.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

Personally, I like much better the approach of an agriculturist or a farmer or a gardener: I can't make corn grow, but I can provide the right soil and plant it in the right area and see that it gets enough water; I can nurture it so that exciting things happen. I think that's the nature of therapy. It's so unfortunate that we've so long followed a medical model and not a growth model. A growth model is much more appropriate to most people, to most situations.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 10:

People have felt—I think correctly—that I'm not a terribly original thinker. But I guess my feeling is, I doubt if anyone is, really.

If I were to summarize what is original about my work, I think it would be that I added clarity to ideas that came from all kinds of sources; I fitted the pieces together in a way that had never been done before; I was willing to carry an idea to its logical conclusion.

To whatever degree that I'm scholarly, I think I tend to attribute that to my historical training—in which you really look up the sources, and you try to track down the references and do things thoroughly.

I know I greatly enjoyed writing—I remember in some of our earliest research studies I wrote a nonobjective introduction in which I made it very clear that, though the findings were stated in formal terms, the research was a very human venture.

The Therapeutic Process

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 13:

I was trying to think about myself as a therapist in the therapeutic hour—as I seem to myself, and as I seem to be seen by others. I think one of the outstanding things is that I'm very much present to the client. I'm not sure entirely what I mean by that, but the main thing that's going on in me is my concern with, and attention to, and listening to, the client. I'm very much present; nothing else matters much. That's why I can do a demonstration interview—it doesn't matter how many other people are around; for me there's just this one person that exists. What develops is a feeling of connectedness, and this is often very strongly felt by the client as well as by me, as though there is some kind of a real bond between us. That grows out of the fact that I do enter so fully into the client's personal world.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 13:

I conducted demonstration interviews. Both of them were quite outstanding and quite, quite different, and made me realize I am a very good therapist—that's really what I'm best at.

[I realize that] I don't have to know all about it. I'm just going to be a companion with her so that she can experience it fully without having to think about it herself—so that she can just let herself go in the experience.

I'll put it in personal terms: I know that I have some knowledge of who I am, so I can let myself go into the world of this other person—even though it's a frightening, crazy, bizarre world—because I know I can come back to my world and be myself.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 13:

Another thing about me as a therapist is that I'm very willing to follow the client's lead. My responses are always full of questions: "Is this the way it is in you?" and so forth. And if the

client says no, that's all right. I'll drop that then because I don't want to be clever. I want to be with the client.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 13:

I'm quite a disciplined person myself, and it comes natural to me to think that everyone else is, too, but that's not so. ...there's a discipline involved in being deeply empathic. It means you really do shut things out and you are focused.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 13:

I don't really understand the workings of intuition. Do I simply pick up nonverbal cues? I don't think that's sufficient to explain it. Somehow, there is a way in which the inner core of me relates to the inner core of the other person, and I understand better than my mind understands, better than my brain understands—I'll put it that way. Mind is greater than brain and, somehow, my nonconscious mind understands more than my conscious mind understands, so I'm able to respond to something in this other person that I didn't know I was responding to.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 13:

Working with groups has been a very strong growing experience for me. I'm sure it has helped to loosen me up and has made me more free in expressing my feelings. I had gotten to the point of being willing to express my feelings in individual therapy, though I feel quite cautious there because there's a lot at stake in the welfare of the other person. In a group, I've learned that I don't need to feel that cautious, because if I do something that is hurtful to another person, the other members of the group will get after me and support the person who's been unfairly attacked or confronted. And also, I've realized, I suppose, that it helps to get a group underway if I can be personal right from the start. It helps. My experience as a facilitator in group therapy has meant a lot to me.

Looking to the Future

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 14:

I think that in our increasingly technological society, the values that are represented by humanistic psychology are profoundly important. I believe that in our technological society we are really doomed to destruction if we do not introduce more of the values that are part of humanistic psychology. We grow increasingly concerned with the technological aspects and we forget that there are human individuals involved. And the stress in humanistic psychology of the worth, dignity, and the uniqueness for the potential of creativity that exists in each individual is terribly important. I feel that, as I say, we are heading for destruction unless we incorporate more of those human values in our society.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 14:

If humanistic psychology is to have a larger future it will in some way have to penetrate the universities more deeply. It will have to find ways of carrying on research.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 14:

One of the things that amazes me is that a point of view that started from individual therapy is now becoming significant in international and interracial situations.

Oral History Excerpt, Chapter 14:

I don't for a moment think that we have done things that will have worldwide impact. What we have done is to show on sort of a smaller test-tube basis that change is possible, reconciliation is possible, reduction of tension is possible if a person-centered, facilitative climate is present. And that means a great deal to me. What we have worked on is more basic than the solution of problems; we have worked on helping people understand one another, communicate with one another, and that, I feel, represents a much more realistic basis for the solution of the specific issues.

Carl at 84

Oral History Excerpt, pp. iv-v:

I'm dictating this in June 1986, [at 84 years old] and here are some of the things I'm involved in: I'm involved in negotiations with South Africa because they want us to come back there for the third time—a very exciting prospect. It involves a lot of planning. I have been trying to find time to write up the experience we had in South Africa in the early months of 1986—the most moving experience—where our workshops were composed of equal numbers of blacks and whites; I felt some of the most profound and strongest feelings of bitterness and rage and fear and, finally, love and closeness that I ever experienced. I'm involved in negotiations about a trip to the Soviet Union in October of this year—trying to assemble materials, trying to decide what we will be doing. They want us to conduct at least two workshops, perhaps more—particularly on a person-centered approach to education.

I'm involved in a peace project which conducted an international conference on Central America last fall; the question is, What do we do next? How can we get funds for it? I've been working all day on trying to draft a document that I hope will bring in some funds for a continuation of the peace project. I'm involved in immediate planning for Hungary. A month from now, I'll be involved in a big cross-cultural workshop in Hungary, which will include people from the eastern bloc nations as well as the Western bloc and the United States.

Then, right at the present moment, my income is shrinking. Royalties aren't as large as they used to be. I've got to figure out how to get enough money to live satisfactorily and to support the secretarial help I need. Then each week I'm trying to do this oral history, which is another very important project in my life.