

## **A Tentative Statement of a General Law**

Taking all of the above into account, it seems possible to state it for more parsimoniously as a generalized principle. Here is such an attempt (Rogers, 1961, 344-345).

Assuming (a) a minimal willingness on the part of two people to be in contact; (b) an ability and minimal willingness on the part of each to receive communication from the other; and (c) assuming the contact to continue over a period of time; then the following relationship is hypothesized to hold true:

The greater the congruence of experience, awareness and communication on the part of one individual, the more the ensuing relationship will involve a tendency toward reciprocal communication with a quality of increasing congruence; a tendency toward more mutually accurate understanding of the communications; improved psychological adjustment and functioning in both parties; mutual satisfaction in the relationship.

Conversely the greater the communicated incongruence of experience and awareness, the more the ensuing relationship will involve: further communication with the same quality; disintegration of accurate understanding, less adequate psychological adjustment and functioning in both parties; and mutual dissatisfaction in the relationship.

“Now, acceptantly to be what I am, in this sense, and to permit this to show through to the other person, is the most difficult task I know and one I never fully achieve. But to realize that this is my task has been most rewarding because it has helped me to find what has gone wrong with interpersonal relationships which have become snarled and to put them on a constructive track again. It has meant that if I am to facilitate the personal growth of others in relation to me, then I must grow, and while this is often painful it is also enriching.” (Rogers, 1961, S. 51)

„Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.” (Rogers, 1983, S. 115).

„There are three conditions that must be present in order for a climate to be growth-promoting. These conditions apply whether we are speaking of the relationship between therapist and client, parent and child, leader and group, teacher and student, administrator and staff. The conditions apply in fact in any situation in which the development of the person is the goal.” (Rogers, 1980, S. 115)

Rogers, 1980: A way of being:

p. 15: “I have learned, however, that realness or genuineness, or congruence-whatever term you wish to give it- is a fundamental basis for the best of communication.”

p. 64: “Still peering back - though my neck is getting stiff from that posture - I can see what is perhaps one overriding theme in my professional life. It is my caring about communication. From my very earliest years it has, for some reason, been a passionate concern of mine. ... I have wanted to understand, as profoundly as possible, the communication of the other, be he a client or friend or family member. I have wanted to *be* understood. I have tried to facilitate clarity of communication between individuals of the most diverse points of view.

p. 66: “I discern more sharply the concern of my life as having been built around the desire of clarity of communication, with all its ramifying results.”

Irvin D. Yalom in his introduction to *A Way of Being*:

“A Way of Being begins with Rogers’s view on communication. Few things mattered more to him than the accurate and honest communication of his feelings and thoughts. He eschewed any impulses to awe, persuade, or to manipulate.”

p. 332? “Finally, there is agreement that one of the most essential elements for survival is the development of a greater sense of cooperation, of community, of ability to work together for the common good, not simply for personal aggrandizement.”

”When the facilitator is a real person, ... the feelings the facilitator is experiencing are available to his or her awareness, ... he or she is able to live these feelings, to be them, and able to communicate them if appropriate.” Rogers (1980, S. 271)

„As for the therapist, what he or she is experiencing is available to awareness, can be lived in the relationship, and can be communicated, *if appropriate*.” (Rogers, 1980, S. 115)

Trust in the human being:

„It will be evident that another implication of the view I have been presenting is that the basic nature of the human being, when functioning freely, is constructive and trustworthy. For me this is an inescapable conclusion from a quarter-century of experience in psychotherapy. When we are able to free the individual from defensiveness, so that he is open to the wide range of his own needs, as well as the wide range of environmental and social demands, his reactions may be trusted to be positive, forward-moving, constructive. We do not need to ask who will socialize him, for one of his own deepest needs is for affiliation and communication with others. As he becomes more fully himself, he will become more realistically socialized. We do not need to ask who will control his aggressive impulses; for as he becomes more open to all his impulses, his need to be liked by others and his tendency to give affection will be as strong as his impulses to strike out or to seize for himself. He will be aggressive in situations in which aggression is realistically appropriate, but there will be no runaway need for aggression. His total behaviour, in these and other areas, as he moves toward

being open to all his experience, will be more balanced and realistic, behaviour which is appropriate to the survival and enhancement of a highly social animal.”

**Congruence.** ”Perhaps the most basic of these essential attitudes is realness, or genuineness. When the facilitator is a real person, being what he or she is, entering into relationships with the learners without presenting a front or a facade, the facilitator is much more likely to be effective. This means, that the feelings the facilitator is experiencing are available to his or her awareness, that he or she is able to live these feelings, to be them, and able to communicate them if appropriate.” (Rogers, 1983, p. 121)

**Realness, transparency.** "I have found that the more that I can be genuine in the relationship, the more helpful it will be. [...] Being genuine also involves the willingness to be and to express, in my words and my behavior, the various feelings and attitudes, which exist in me. [...] It is only by providing the genuine reality which is in me, that the other person can successfully seek for the reality in him." (Rogers, 1961, p.33)

“As for the therapist, what he or she is experiencing is available to awareness, can be lived in the relationship, and can be communicated, if appropriate.“ (Rogers, 1983, S. 15)

**Acceptance, positive regard.** "I find that the more acceptance and liking I feel toward this individual, the more I will be creating a relationship which he can use. By acceptance I mean a warm regard for him as a person of unconditional self-worth, of value no matter what his condition, his behavior, his feelings. It means a respect and liking for him as a separate person, a willingness for him to possess his own feelings in his own way." (Rogers, 1961, p. 34)

**Prizing, acceptance, trust.** “I think of it as prizing the learner, prizing her feelings, her opinions, her person. It is a caring for the learner, but a nonpossessive caring. It is an acceptance of this other individual as a separate person, having worth in her own right. It is a basic trust – a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy. [...] The facilitator’s prizing or acceptance of the learner is an operational expression of her essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism.” [Rogers, 1983, p. 124]

**Understanding, empathy.** "[...] I feel a continuing desire to understand - a sensitive empathy which each of the client's feelings and communications as they seem to him at that moment. Acceptance does not mean much until it involves understanding. It is only that I understand the feelings and thoughts which seem so horrible to you, or so weak [...] - it is only as I see them as you see them and accept them and you, that you feel really free to explore [...] your inner and often buried experience. [...] There is implied

here a freedom to explore oneself at both conscious and unconscious levels." (Rogers, 1961, p. 35)

„To understand another person’s thoughts and feelings thoroughly, with the meanings they have for him, and to be thoroughly understood by this person in return—this is one of the most rewarding of human experiences, and all too rare.“ (Rogers, 1961, S. 323)

**Empathic understanding.** “A further element that establishes a climate for self-initiated, experiential learning is empathic understanding. When the teacher has the ability to understand the student’s reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student, then again the likelihood of significant learning is increased. [...] This attitude of standing in the other’s shoes, of viewing the world through the student’s eyes, is almost unheard of in the classroom. [...] But it has a tremendously releasing effect when it occurs.”[Rogers, 1961, 125]

„... it should be pointed out that to cease evaluating another is not to cease having reactions. It may, as a matter of fact, free one to react. “I don’t like your idea” ... is not an evaluation, but a reaction. It is subtly but sharply different from a judgment which says, “What you are doing is bad (or good), and this quality is assigned to you from some external source.” The first statement permits the individual to maintain his own locus of evaluation. It holds the possibility that I am unable to appreciate something which is actually very good. The second statement, whether it praises or condemns, tends to put the person at the mercy of outside forces. He is being told that he cannot simply ask himself whether this product is a valid expression of himself; he must be concerned with what others think.” (Rogers, 1961, S. 358)

„In these moments there is, to borrow Buber’s phrase, a real “I-Thou“ relationship, a timeless living in the experience which is between the client and me.” (Rogers, 1961, p. 202)

(Rogers, 1961; Persons or Science?, pp. 201-202): „I launch myself into the relationship having a hypothesis, or a faith, that my liking, my confidence, and my understanding of the other person’s inner world will lead to a significant process of becoming. I enter the relationship not as a scientist, not as a physician who can accurately diagnose and cure, but as a person, entering into a personal relationship. ... I let myself go into the immediacy of the relationship where it is my total organism which takes over and is sensitive to the relationship, not simply my consciousness. I am not consciously responding in a planful or analytic way, but simply react in an unreflective way to the other individual, my reaction being based, (but not consciously) on my total organismic sensitivity to this other person. I live the relationship on this basis.“

"Science has its inception in a participating person who is pursuing aims, values, purposes which have personal and subjective meaning for him. ... he immerses himself in the relevant experience... He senses the field in which he is interested, he lives it. Out of this complete subjective immersion comes a creative forming, a

sense of direction, a vague formulation of relationships hitherto unrecognized. ... It is indeed the matrix of immediate personal, subjective experience that all science, and each individual scientific research has its origin." C. Rogers (1961, S. 217)

Rogers (1961, S. 202-203):

“I am often aware of the fact that I do not know, cognitively, where this immediate relationship is leading. It is as though both I and the client, often fearfully, let ourselves slip into the stream of becoming, a stream or process which carries us along. It is the fact that the therapist has let himself float in this stream of experience of life previously, and found it rewarding that makes him each time less fearful of taking the plunge. It is my confidence that makes it easier for the client to embark also, a little bit at a time. It often seems as though this stream of experiencing leads to some goal. Probably the truer statement, however, is that its rewarding character lies within the process itself, and that its major reward is that it enables both the client and me, later, independently, to let ourselves go in the process of becoming.” (Rogers, 1961, S. 202-203).

In a person who is open to experience, each stimulus is freely relayed through the nervous system, without being distorted by any process of defensiveness. Whether the stimulus originates in the environment, in the impact of forms, color, or sound on the sensory nerves, or whether it originates in the viscera, or as a memory trace in the central nervous system, it is available to awareness. ... It means lack of rigidity and permeability of boundaries in concepts, beliefs, perceptions, and hypotheses. It means a tolerance of ambiguity where ambiguity exists. It means the ability to receive much conflicting information without forcing closure upon the situation. (1961, S. 353)

A condition of worth arises when the positive regard of a significant other is conditional, when the individual feels that in some respects he is prized and in others not. Gradually this same attitude is assimilated into his own self-regard complex, and he values an experience positively or negatively solely because of these conditions of worth which he has taken over from others, not because the experience enhances or fails to enhance his organism. It is this last phrase which deserves special note. When the individual has experienced unconditional positive regard, then a new experience is valued or not, depending on its effectiveness in maintaining or enhancing the organism. But if a value is “introjected” from a significant other, then this condition of worth is applied to an experience quite without reference to the extent to which it maintains or enhances the organism. It is an important specific instance of inaccurate symbolization, the individual valuing an experience positively or negatively, as if in relation to the criterion of the actualizing tendency, but not actually in relation to it. An experience may be perceived as organismically satisfying, when in fact this is not true. Thus a condition of worth, because it disturbs the valuing process, prevents the individual from functioning freely and with maximum effectiveness.

(Rogers, 1961, S. 154)

The client ... values exactness in differentiation of his feelings and of the personal meanings of his experience. His internal communication between various aspects of himself is free and unblocked. He communicates with himself freely in relationships with others, and these relationships are not stereotyped, but person to person. He is aware of himself, but not as an object. Rather it is a reflexive awareness, a subjective living in himself in motion. He perceives himself as responsibly related to his problems. Indeed, he feels a fully responsible relationship to his life in all its fluid aspects. He lives fully in himself as a constantly changing flow of process.” (Rogers, 1961, S. 154)

In the ordinary interactions of life – between marital and sex partners, between teacher and student, between employer and employee, or between colleagues or friends – congruence is probably the most important element. Congruence, or genuineness involves letting the other person know “where you are” emotionally. It may involve confrontation and the straightforward expression of personally owned feelings – both negative and positive. Thus, congruence is a basis for living together in a climate of realness.” (Rogers, 1980, S. 160)]

„We are, in my view, faced with an entirely new situation in education where the goal of education [...] is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn [...] how to adapt and change [...]. Changingness, a reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world.” (Rogers, 1983, S. 120)

"Significant learning combines the logical and the intuitive, the intellect and the feelings, the concept and the experience, the idea and the meaning. When we learn in that way, we are whole." (Rogers, 1983, S. 20).

"We know ... that the initiation of such learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon scholarly knowledge of the field, not upon curricular planning, not upon use of audiovisual aids, not upon the programmed learning used, not upon lectures and presentations, not upon an abundance of books, though each of these might at one time or another be utilized as an important resource. No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner." (Rogers, 1983, S. 121)

“.. 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.”  
(Rogers and Russell, 2002, p. 194)

„... a well-facilitated encounter group [...] is, and continues to be, a very powerful experience for personal change, for behavioral change, for laying the basis for the solution of social problems.” (Rogers and Russell, 2002, p. 194-195)

(Rogers, 1961, p. 330):

“The task of psychotherapy is to help the person achieve, through the special relationship with the therapist, good communication within himself. Once this is achieved he can communicate more freely and more effectively with others. We may say then that psychotherapy is good communication, within and between men. We may also turn this statement around and it will still be true. Good communication is always therapeutic.”

Way of Being: p. 332 (on ciclo-effects)

Finally, there is agreement that one of the most essential elements for survival is the development of a greater sense of cooperation, of community, of ability to work together for the common good, not simply for personal aggrandizement.

Way of Being: p. 335 (on ciclo-effects)

They could develop a participatory mode of decision-making that is adaptable to almost any situation and contains its own self-correcting gyroscopic mechanism, as error-free as any decision-making process known.

They could develop a sense of community in which respect for others, and cooperation rather than competition, were keynotes.