

Dear Pat

Many thanks for your attachment on the nature of theory. One point which particularly stood out for me was your statement in it regarding existing theories of psychotherapy--about which, as your theories' book demonstrates, you know as much about as anybody else. 'Existing theories [of psychotherapy]', you state, 'are at a primitive stage'. It reminded me of Rogers' (1959: 190) declaration in his theory statement: 'I believe that there is only one statement which can accurately apply to all theories...and that is that at the time of its formulation every theory contains an unknown (and perhaps at that point unknowable) amount of error and mistaken inference'.

Your discussion on the nature of theory highlights for me a particular strength in your writings, the ability to identify the essential issue and present it in a clear and easily understandable fashion.

In this regard, too, and vis-à-vis recent discussion on this network, I consider your short chapter 'On Being Non-directive' (in the collection of your papers entitled 'Understanding Psychotherapy', PCCS Books) a particularly important piece. There are one or two points I would argue about, but, as far as I am concerned, you hit the nail on the head in terms of so-called 'nondirectivity/nondirectiveness' (with or without the hyphen).

As you say there:

'Therapy is an influencing process. The intent of the therapist is to influence the client. If this were not so, the therapist would not be practicing. The issue is not directiveness-nondirectiveness. Rogers recognized the irrelevance of this as an issue when, as Cain (1989) notes, he abandoned consideration of the issue. The relevant issue is the nature and extent of this influence that is consistent with the philosophy and assumptions of client-centered therapy (2000: 182).

I am sorry you are neither in the best of health nor best of spirits these days, but I wish you well and say 'Thank You' again for all I learned from you.

Take care,

Ivan

PS. Another key theoretical point you made in your theories book which has stayed with me with respect to enhancing client-centered theory is the point that the phenomenological perspective is deterministic. In other words, if you know another's inner world, you know how they will behave. One thing I wonder about is how one squares this notion with personal autonomy/free will, a notion that also plays such an important part in client-centered theory.