

Tony Merry on Non-directivity

Tony Merry, in an e-mail communication on non-directivity, dated 2/19/98, said the following:

"It is something of a red herring to say that this means therapists can't offer advice, or make suggestions, etc. because the context of that advice giving or suggestion making needs to be specified--in other words advice giving and suggestion making can, in effect, be expressions of the therapist's empathic understanding, authenticity and unconditional positive regard. Provided these actions are intended, by the therapist, as expressions of respect for the independence and self-direction of the client, they do not necessarily contradict the principle of non-directivity because they will have arisen from the encounter between therapist and client in which the intention is to explore and understand the client's subjective frame of reference. If the intention of the therapist, however, is to explore the client's world in order to be able to give advice, make suggestions, offer interpretations, etc. this would contradict the principle of non-directivity and demonstrate a palpable lack of trust in the client's self-determining characteristics."

It seems like discussion of this very important topic never ends. IHE