

## *Abstract.*

The ideas represented in this dissertation-case study evolved during the two-year period-spent working alongside the selected client. Throughout this time, I worked to articulate my perspective of this particular therapeutic relationship and I notice my views have not developed or grown in isolation. Instead I, and subsequently the client and relationship, have been nourished by the process of exploration and exchange, which emerged within a variety of contexts; including experiences in my personal therapy, supervision and training, together with my engagement with various literary works. It is my intention that this piece of work reflect a flavour of these rich and diverse factors and to draw attention not only to the now commonly held view that constructive therapeutic change is facilitated within a growth promoting climate (Rogers, 1951; Erskine, Moursund & Troutmann, 1999) but also that no relationship exists in isolation. In my view, each is influenced by its wider contextual environment, which in this instance includes the 'fields' of both client and therapist (Yontef, 1993; Barrett-Lennard, 2002).

I begin with a description of my professional identity (as currently constructed), with reference to both motivations and influences affecting my practice. I have incorporated an overview of the context in which I undertake my work with reference to the importance of supervision (both internal and external). Following this, I have provided an in-depth analysis of an area, which has been of particular interest and relevance to the development of my clinical practice; namely, consideration of the

development of an 'inner critic' from a person-centred perspective. The case exploration itself includes an introduction to the selected client, together with detailed reflections on the therapeutic relationship and process. I have highlighted and critically assessed key aspects including the correlation between early sessions and the on-going therapeutic process, the impact of the client's self-criticism and the importance of *trust* within the humanistic/person-centred working alliance. The main emphasis of these reflections is in relation to my use of supervision and my integration of practice and theory<sup>1</sup>.

The focus of this study is on what *I* experienced and how *I* perceived this experience; I think this is particularly important in view of my approach as it keeps the boundary between the client and my 'self' clear and lessens the risk of generating distance in the relationship, for instance, by objectifying the client through the process of reflection and writing; which I see as a potential pitfall. In addition, one of the distinguishing features of humanistic/person-centred approaches is the emphasis placed on the therapists therapeutic use of *self*, thus I believe it is vital my case exploration reflect this as opposed to extensive biographical material (etc.) about the client. Finally, I have used the terms counselling, psychotherapy and therapy interchangeably, making no distinction between the activities.

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<sup>1</sup> I have provided a glossary of terms (pp. iii-vii).