

Abstract

During my development and clinical practice I have strived to understand how the Humanistic Person Centred approach supports movement towards growth and healthy functioning within the field of eating disorders, specifically Bulimia. This journey of discovery led me to a deeper exploration of the theoretical concepts and how they align to my own personal philosophy on human growth and development. I have deconstructed and reconstructed my own values and beliefs to ensure I was fully integrating and assimilating an approach to therapy that was a way of being, rather than a toolkit.

Emerging from this process is a hypothesis that the long term changes in health, functioning and behaviour of clients suffering from a bulimic process, requires a shift away from the treatment of bulimia as a disorder towards the healing and reparation of the rupture in the self-concept and self- experience. In essence, growth is through the appreciation of the self lost under the bulimic façade.¹

I have provided the grounding theoretical focus for this hypothesis and a portrayal of my own attempts to congruently apply this in my practice using a clinical case study. I believe there is a significant amount of potential for research into this field, currently scantily addressed within the field of person centred research.

¹ Interestingly, more psychoanalytical perspectives are arriving at the same conclusion, Barth (1988) advocates: "the therapist's role is not so much to "change" the bulimic person, but to accept and understand who the person is and how he or she came to be that way. Change often follows such understanding". (Barth, 1988:1)