

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSIGHT IN A COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

By **Carl R. Rogers, PH.D.**

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

From the JOURNAL OF CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGY, 1944, Vol. VIII, No. 6, (Nov.-Dec.): 331-341. Copyright by the JOURNAL OF CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGY.

Paper given at the National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, May 24, 1944, at the program planned by the American Association for Applied Psychology.

IN DEALING with adolescent and adult clients, one question which faces the worker—whether psychologist, case worker, psychiatrist, or educational counselor—is, “How may this individual come to an effective understanding of himself?” It is recognized that once the individual genuinely understands his behavior, and accepts that understanding, he is able to adopt a more realistic and satisfactory control of his actions, is less likely to hurt others to gain satisfactions, and in general can become more mature. But how to reach this goal?

This understanding of self we customarily call insight. We find rather general agreement that the achievement of insight is the keystone of the process of therapy. Whether we are dealing with a student who is maladjusted, or a marriage which is skidding toward failure, or a war neurosis, the essentials of a therapeutic experience seem to be the same. First comes the experience of release—the pouring out of feelings, the loosening of repressions, the unburdening of guilt, the lessening of tension. There follows, if progress is to be made, the understanding of self, the acceptance of one's impulses, the perception of relationships, which we classify under the term insight. Then, out of this more accurate view of the inner life, out of this new understanding of the web of personal adjustments, come new plans, new choices, new and more satisfying ways of meeting the realities with which the individual is faced. While each of these three steps is essential, and no one can take place without the other, the middle step, the achievement of insight, is a crucial one and deserves much more attention than it has had in the past.

In the counseling and the research on counseling which is being carried forward at Ohio State, we are gradually accumulating more information about this important aspect of psychotherapy. We are finding that in counseling relationships governed by a non-directive viewpoint, highly significant insights develop with a spontaneity and vigor which is astonishing [3]. We are also becoming more and more convinced, though as yet research evidence is meager, that such spontaneous insight is not characteristic of other counseling approaches. We find that the directive procedures which are characteristic of so much educational guidance do not produce insight of this sort. Our evidence would also point to the conclusion that spontaneous insight is a rare occurrence in the more interpretative approaches such as psychoanalysis. Consequently, it appears to be worth while to present both examples and research evidence regarding the achievement of self-understanding as we are seeing it.

Insight, as it is coming to be defined through our practical experience and research findings, involves such elements as (1) an acceptance of one's impulses and attitudes, good or bad, including attitudes previously repressed; (2) an understanding of the patterning of one's behavior, the perception of new relationships; (3) a fresh perception of reality made possible by this acceptance and understanding of the self; (4) the planning of new and more satisfying ways in which the self

can adjust to reality. Since this definition grows out of examination of the data, not from armchair speculation, an attempt will be made to let the data speak for themselves. Where problems are not too deep-seated, simple and partial insights may come very quickly. A father, concerned about his ten-year-old daughter, is encouraged to talk out his attitudes, and arrives at these insightful reactions in a single interview [4].

Father. She's awful pokey—awful pokey. You just can't get her going. Of course, maybe it's been our fault. It's been easier to do things for her than to teach her to do them. She hasn't enough to do. She ought to have more responsibility.

Counselor. That's a splendid idea...You feel you haven't given her a chance to learn?

Father: Yes. She gets an allowance, but the trouble is she spends it. And then it comes time to go to the show and she hasn't any. And I haven't the heart—I give it to her. (Pause) Of course when I was a boy I didn't have any money at all—I had to earn everything.

Counselor. You think it would have been better if someone had given it to you?

Father. Well, it wouldn't have hurt my parents could have... (Pause) I know I give in to her and she knows it, see?

This may seem like a minimum degree of insight, it could be briefly stated in these terms "She should have more responsibility, but I don't give it to her because I feel sorry for myself as a boy." It is a simple insight, yet it is effective. Before the father leaves he says, in a hesitating manner, "I kinda think tomorrow morning when she wakes up she's going to find she has some things to do!" One year later the school principal, talking to the psychologist about this child, knowing nothing of the above, says, "Well, she seems better...And the attitude of the parents seems different. They seem to be giving her more responsibility in various ways." This illustrates one of the points which I would like to make—that partial insights, spontaneously arrived at, are surprisingly effective in bringing about alteration of behavior.

Another illustration of such simple and partial insight might be given. A young bride has been troubled by guilt feelings about an experience previous to her marriage in which she had been intensely in love with a young man who regarded her as "just a passing fancy." She is troubled about keeping this experience from her husband. She talks out her attitudes in one contact, getting considerable release. In a second brief contact she shows how much insight she has gained.

"I guess I needed to talk to someone about it. I think I can see where I stand now. If I were to tell Nick it would merely mean that I was selfish. I would be telling him to help myself, not because of anything I feel I owe to him. It would be 'passing the buck' to him. I see now that it was merely an experience that hurt me—hurt my ego. It's only natural that I should feel queer about it. But that feeling queer is my own burden. Certainly it's unfair to pass it on to Nick. It would certainly be foolish of me to endanger our relationship, too. Time will cure my 'conditioning' to this very small unpleasant segment of my life—and my marital happiness will hasten this time. I already feel my perspective changing—the present looms larger and larger and the rest dwindles."

Here we find that the insight achieved involves a better acceptance of attitudes previously denied—the hurt to her ego—a clearer perception of the patterning and significance of her own desire to tell her husband, and finally a choice of a new method of handling the problem.

As might be expected, a working insight is not always so easily achieved. Much depends on the complexity of the problem, and the extent to which attitudes are repressed. In the case of an aviation cadet who was failing in his solo flights, counseling brought to light an intense and hitherto denied hatred for his unreasonably strict father. The gradual perception of a relationship between his attitude toward his father and his reactions during his flights covers several interviews. Brief excerpts from the fifth, sixth, and tenth interviews will illustrate the development of this insight.

From fifth interview:

S. You know after the last interview I wondered what made me tell you the things that I did. Could it be possible that the instructor is a symbol of my father? Is that hatred coming back to blot my memory? Could that possibly be significant?

C. You wonder if perhaps the instructor might be a symbol of your father.

S. Yes, he was telling me what to do just like Dad always did. I fully intended to carry out the instructor's directions; I couldn't not want to do them. Maybe I forgot because I thought of Dad and wanted to forget.

From the sixth interview:

S. On the basis of what we've done thus far the instructor may have been considered in the role of my father and as he was telling me what to do I probably didn't want to because I thought of him as my father—but I don't know—I'm not sure.

C. You're not absolutely sure that that's the answer to your problem.

S. I'm not positive but that's what it seems to be at the present time. If you said it was I would know it. Then recognizing that fact, I wouldn't be bothered in the plane any more.

C. If I should say that was the solution to your problem and you didn't thoroughly believe it yourself, that wouldn't do much good, would it? Or if I told you that wasn't the solution to your problem, and you thought that perhaps it was, then my telling you wouldn't do a bit of good either.

S. (Smiling) I see your point. I guess you're right.

From the tenth interview:

The cadet tells of a recent failure to do well. The counselor recognizes his feeling.

C. You didn't follow his instructions up in the air even when he was telling you.

S. It seems that way. If you could apply that to other maneuvers it might be. I really want to fly though. Maybe that's why I haven't done so well—a dislike to follow directions. Gee, that's pretty well tangled up. Let me try and draw a parallel there. My instructor is to my father as my instructor's directions are to my father's directions. Even though I thought I wanted to, I really didn't want to.

C. You feel there's a parallel to your father's and instructor's directions.

S. I wanted to fly badly. That may be the block. That's probably the answer to the question. I guess I didn't have it formulated before I came here today, but I sure do now.

C. You feel that may be at the center of your problem.

S. That's right. Flying is grand. By George, why did I have to get an instructor that reminded me of father? If I got an easy instructor all the way through would it have been easier? There's a good possibility I would have been the best in the group.

In this material the insight which is gained is primarily a new perception of relationships between past repressed attitudes and present experiences. It should be pointed out that neither in this case, nor in any of the cases cited in this paper, has the counselor ever suggested these insights in any way. The counseling has been non-directive, with the counselor reflecting, in an understanding fashion, the attitudes and feelings expressed. The understanding of self springs from the client, not from the counselor.

In other instances the insight consists largely of an acceptance of the denied portions of the self. Illustrations of this type of insight may be taken from the case of Mrs. S., a young, highly educated mother, who comes for assistance because she is having trouble with her child and is losing the affection of her husband. Some of the points at which she comes face to face with her own feelings may be given. First she faces her basic rejection of her child.

Mrs. S. I'm afraid I'd have to say this of myself, I really didn't want Buddy. We were married two years, and I had a job. My husband didn't want me to work. We thought children would be the best solution. We felt social pressure too. With the birth rate up in the lower groups, college graduates should have children. In a limited way we were emotionally interested in him, but not deeply. And I've never adjusted to having him! It's terrible to say this!

Later she sees the relationship of this rejection, and of her difficulty with her husband, to Buddy's behavior.

Mrs. S. He senses the tension in us, lacks security. That probably explains it all. I used to put myself into working for social causes. Now I've given myself all to my husband, none to Buddy. I pat him and tell him I love him, but I wonder if he doesn't know.

C. You feel perhaps he realizes you don't love him much.

Mrs. S. Say not 'til now. But with the situation as it is—how will it come?

C. You want to love him.

Mrs. S. Yes, very much. I'm not just cold-blooded.

At another point she begins to accept the role of being a woman, rather than merely an intellectual. Talking about her husband, she says:

Mrs. S. I spend my time worrying about him, discussing with him his feelings and emotions. Instead I should take an interest in myself, my clothes, my hair. I've never been that sort of person—I hate

to fuss with my hair. I shouldn't say that—after I'm through, and look in the mirror, I like myself better. That's the first time I've thought of it that way.

C. Instead of being tense about him, you feel you should take an interest in yourself, and you find that doing that, like fussing with your hair, is not as foreign to your nature as you thought.

Mrs. S. Yes. I have more hope now than I have felt to this moment.

In regard to her relationship to her husband, this woman also gains much insight in which she sees the problem in a new frame of reference, and also decides what she can do about it.

Mrs. S. I'm more firmly convinced than ever that what I have to look at is myself, rather than Bill, do something about my own faults and shortcomings. I thought a lot about it last night; I realized a person can only be responsible for oneself, not for the other person's feelings and emotions. I wasn't treating him as an individual—my emotional involvement makes that hard. I tried to think and feel for him, take over his problem and work it through for him.

C. Now you feel you can be responsible for yourself, and can let him be responsible for himself.

Mrs. S. Yes. Things may break down, but we can build them up again.

C. While things may not go smoothly, you feel more basic security.

Mrs. S. Yes. I've got to look to myself, to see how I'm dressing and behaving with him.

C. You feel those are your responsibility.

Mrs. S. Yes. And the children—I'm not excusing myself about them. I thought it was impossible for anyone to take care of house, and herself, and find time to play with the children, but I think now I can. I'd assumed some things were impossible, but they were not.

In these excerpts, being able to accept as a part of herself her rejecting attitudes, and her desire to be a woman, enables her to achieve a more detached and realistic attitude toward the reality of her husband and his behavior. It also frees her to choose new patterns of reaction. In the instances which have been given the insights which were achieved were relatively simple, though definitely significant. In some cases insights are much more involved, and the achievement of them is a more gradual process. A series of excerpts from the case of Alfred will indicate something of the richness which this insight process may have. Alfred was a very withdrawn student, the exclusive sort who was living largely in fantasy when he first came in. The possibility of a schizophrenic break seemed very real. There were twenty interviews, and during that period he altered in a most striking fashion in his behavior and attitudes. He became independent and socially adjusted, indeed something of a social leader. His adjustment has been further tested by two years in the army, to which he has reacted very well. There are in his case many threads of insight which would be intriguing to follow. One which has been selected is his gradual achievement of understanding of his daydreaming. His gropings toward this insight are a fascinating process to watch. It is unfortunate that only brief excerpts can be given from the phonographic recordings of the contacts.

In the seventh interview Alfred first shows a real understanding of the fact that his daydreaming was compensatory.

Alfred. I always had the idea that I would make up for a lot of the things I didn't do— like being an Edison or a Lincoln some day. Yet I never did enjoy the real happiness that kids were having at the present time. I always kidded myself along by thinking that 'I'm going to be a great man some day'. And when you get to college, and really find out how many brilliant people there are you realize you've been kidding yourself. You certainly never could become important if you were to go on in the past, instead of concentrating and studying and everything. I think maybe if I could be as happy as this I could amount to something—probably not an Edison or Lincoln, but I could hold a position. It would certainly be through an entirely different set of plans than I planned on the other way of doing it.

In the tenth interview he brings out more forcibly how much the fantasy meant to him, and how difficult has been the process of bringing it into the full light of consciousness.

Alfred. So anyway I do believe coming over here is helping me, because these things don't bother me as much as they used to. And I used to carry them around with me. For Instance, that daydreaming. Boy, it just about killed me the first time I tried to tell that to anybody but I suppose that if I tell it about twenty-five times I'll really begin to laugh at it.

In the eleventh interview he expands the insight gained. He is able to face the fact that the satisfactions of fantasy existed not only in the past but during the initial stages of counseling. He also faces frankly the fact that his fantasy goals are impossible.

Alfred. I just used to comfort myself at school by telling myself that I would be a very famous person some day, and I didn't just say that as a sort of compromise, I actually believed that that was right, and even when I was coming here I still did think that. I remember one time I said to myself, 'If I were happy I would be another Abe Lincoln', but if your mind is really normal and out in the world, you realize how really big, the world is and you realize that...maybe you aren't going to accomplish as much as you want.

In the fourteenth interview Alfred makes the final link in this chain of insight when he becomes genuinely willing to face and accept the prospect of being only an average person in the real world, rather than a great person in a fantasy world of his own making.

Alfred. I might desire to be an awfully great person, but really just to be average and to be normal is something to be very appreciative of, because I was thinking it could very easily be that I could grow up to be a bum. I was watching some of the newsies, men about 35 or 40, selling their papers, and I thought, 'Gee, just to be average really isn't such a little thing.' For a man to have a respected position, he really doesn't need to be known even in his own community as a great figure, but to be average is really a very high position compared with how low a person could fall in the opposite direction where he would be a bum.

In these excerpts we see Alfred openly accepting his fantasies, and able to bring them fully into consciousness, recognizing that they are compensatory, recognizing that he has used them as a means of satisfaction right up to the present, perceiving the difference between fantasy satisfactions and the less glamorous but more substantial satisfactions of real goals, and finally accepting a realistic goal as his own. This is a rich, deep, and thoroughly effective instance of spontaneous insight.

In this same case there is still another thread of insight which is worthy of our attention. He was, as has been mentioned, a very withdrawn young man, with no satisfying contacts of a social nature, standing on the brink of creating his own private world in the form of a psychosis. A few of his statements, as he comes to see himself more clearly in this respect, will both illustrate the achievement of insight, and reveal the way the world looks to a highly seclusive individual. During the seventh interview he indicates something of his isolation, and the dawning realization that he might be able to deal with it.

Alfred. It's like a curtain in a theatre, something that shuts me off from the players in the rest of the play. Just completely isolates me. Until I pull that curtain away and look at myself as being one of the players the same as anyone else, I won't be able to get very far. At times when I really get to looking at these things the way I should, I wonder why I don't jump in and get in the stream of life.

In the eleventh interview he begins to see this isolation as being partially in the past, giving a vivid picture of the way he felt. He also recognizes that he is changing, living more in a world of social reality.

Alfred. I just withdrew a little more each year until things had gotten to a point that around Christmas time I started to wonder for fear I was the only person that was alive. I must have gotten away from the present world that much, that everything just kind of disappeared, kinda, and I felt as if I were standing on a hill all alone or something, and everything was gone, and here I was all alone. But the more I start going back in the group, why—I know the other day I was thinking about something, I don't know, I had my mind on something else, and I suddenly got the idea, 'Well, how in the world could I have gotten the idea that I was the only person existing. Here this person is every bit the same as I am.'

As might be supposed, it is not an easy matter to face all these deep problems within the self, and reorient to new goals, yet growth was steadily made during the interviews. In the sixteenth interview Alfred gives a picture of the two opposing forces within himself, the desire for growth and the desire to withdraw from life. His description of the constructive turmoil into which his life has been thrown has the genuine literary quality which only accompanies a struggle to say deeply significant things.

Alfred. I certainly think in a way the problem is a lot clearer than a while ago, yet— maybe - - It's like the ice breaking up on a pond in the spring, it's—while things are a lot nearer to—While the pond is a lot nearer to being nothing but clear water, yet things are much more unstable now, possibly, than when the pond was covered over with ice. What I'm trying to bring out is that I seem to be so much in a terrible fog all of the time lately, but I do feel a lot better off than I was before, because then I didn't even realize what was the matter. But maybe all this fog and so-called trouble is due to the fact of two opposing forces in me now. You know it's not really a case of just letting one be superior, but it's kinda breaking up and reorganizing that's going on now that makes things seem so doubly bad. So maybe I'm better off than I think.

The person who is skilled in therapy will realize that this is a deep and genuine insight, and will not be surprised that in the next interview Alfred made a definite decision to obtain a job as junior counselor in a summer camp, a step he had contemplated before, but about which he had been unable to come to a clear decision.

In this second train of insightful thinking, which could be illustrated with many other examples from the recordings, Alfred sees clearly his icebound, frozen, isolated personality, and comes to see

also the attractiveness of life in a social, real, world. Though he also perceives the pain and difficulty of such a radical reorganization of life, he is able to face this and to take steps in the direction of social life and social responsibility.

As may have been noted, these spontaneous insights, wrought out of the individual's struggle to see himself more clearly, have a depth and a sincerity and an individual quality which are quite lacking in attempts on the part of the counselor to "give" the client insight. This is the person seen from within, rather than without, and the difference is very striking. As an illustration of the attempt to give insight, a portion may be taken from an electrically recorded psychoanalysis, conducted by a reputable psychoanalyst. This example could be duplicated hundreds of times in the course of the 424 interviews of the analysis.

The patient, a schizophrenic young man, has been telling, in the fourth interview, about vaguely guilty feelings which he had while in the cafeteria, and the thought that if he did not eat much for lunch, he could later go to the candy counter, but then remarks that these ideas are foolish. The interview continues:

Analyst. What does eating candy make you think of?

Patient. Home, right away now. That's what it means.

Analyst. And what does home make you think of?

Patient. My mother.

Analyst. And what does your mother make you think of?

Patient. Oh, children, babies. Those ideas are put in my head. I don't know. I've got those thoughts again in my head.

Analyst. Yes. And as you think of babies, what comes into your mind.

Patient. Girls, I guess. Barbara Boyce.

Analyst. Barbara Royce?

Patient. Yes. (very long pause).

Analyst. You see, you have guilt about Barbara Royce. You undoubtedly have sex feelings about her and something within yourself has been trying to convince you that this is wrong. That same part of your personality is making you feel guilty about eating, about going down to the cafeteria, about asking for a second course, about eating candy. You see, it connects right up with the thoughts that come, that somehow you—one part of you is trying to make you believe that all of that is wrong. Well, we know it isn't. (Pause) Why shouldn't you feel that way toward girls?

Patient. Well, I don't see any reason why I shouldn't. That's just a - - Well, it's all right. (Long pause.)

[From an analysis recorded under the auspices of the Yale Institute for Human Relations.]

Here it seems all too clear that any seeing of relationships, any perception of pattern, is in the mind of the analyst, not in the mind of the patient. The nearest he comes to accepting his own feelings is a passive acceptance of the analyst's attitude, by saying, "Well, it's all right." This is pale indeed alongside of the spontaneous insights which we have been examining. It lacks any of the internal conviction which they carry. It shows how weak are attempts to give insight, when compared with the client's achievement of insight.

Our knowledge regarding insight comes not only from such examples as have been given, but from research studies which have been made. Three of these investigations have findings pertinent to the topic of insight. Snyder has made an objective study of the characteristics of non-directive counseling in six complete counseling cases. He devised an objective list of 38 carefully defined categories and classified each of the nearly 10,000 client and counselor responses into one of these categories, thus making possible a statistical study of the counseling process. Raimy has studied the changing concepts of the self which the individual exhibits in counseling. His study is based on 14 recorded cases. Curran has made an exhaustive analysis of the case of Alfred, with particular reference to the problem of insight. From these three studies certain findings in regard to self - understanding in non - directive counseling may be briefly stated, with the source in parenthesis.

1. Insight primarily follows outpourings of material with a negative emotional content, colored by such attitudes as hostility, self criticism, and hopelessness. (Curran, 1.)
2. Insightful responses are most likely to follow immediately upon counselor responses of simple acceptance. They tend not to follow interpretation, persuasion, or other directive counselor responses. (Snyder, 5.)
3. An important aspect of insight is the seeing of relationships between issues heretofore regarded as unrelated. (Curran, 1.)
4. Another important aspect of insight is the alteration of concepts of the self. Individuals who come for counseling tend to see themselves in a strongly negative light as worthless, bad, inferior, etc. As insight is gained and the self is accepted, the self-concept is reorganized and a strong positive valuation is placed on it. The individual sees himself in much more positive terms. (Raimy, 2.)
5. As insight is gained into given problems or issues, those problems tend to drop out of the client's conversation. (Curran, 1.)
6. Insight and the making of independent plans and decisions both constitute a very small fraction of the client's conversation at the outset of counseling, but rise to become a significant part of the concluding interviews. These two categories taken together constitute 12.5 per cent of the client responses in initial interviews, 30.5 per cent of the middle interviews, and 42.5 per cent of the final counseling interviews. (Snyder, 5.)

With the evidence thus far given, indicating that spontaneous insights do occur in non-directive counseling, that they exhibit themselves in a variety of ways, and that they are significant in altering the client's concept of himself and his way of behaving, it becomes important to ask ourselves, Under what conditions is this spontaneous insight most likely to be achieved?

A careful examination of a growing body of data brings one to the conclusion that there is one primary principle operative. When the client is freed from all need of being in any way defensive,

spontaneous insight comes bubbling through into consciousness. When the client is talking through his problems in an atmosphere in which all his attitudes are genuinely understood and accepted, and in which there is nothing to arouse his desire to protect himself, insight develops.

Some workers will feel disappointed in the simplicity of this conclusion. They will feel that they have always dealt with clients in an accepting fashion. The fact is however that most of the procedures actually used in counseling contacts are such as to make clients defensive. This is clearly shown by our study of recorded interviews. It is not enough for the worker to have an accepting attitude, though this is important. The techniques used must also be such that defensiveness will not be aroused. Let us look at some of the methods actually employed by most workers.

Questions, for example, constitute one of the methods most frequently used in counseling. They may be simple questions such as, "When was that?" "Did he like it?" Or they may constitute an attempt to get deeper into attitudes expressed by asking, "Why did you feel that way about it?" "Why did you think that was bad?" "Why do you think these things happen?" Or questions may be of a highly probing nature, "What did you think about your mother?" "Will you behave next time the way you did this time?" In varying degrees all these questions arouse the psychological defenses of the client. There is always the fear that the questions may go too far, may uncover the attitudes which the client is afraid to reveal even to himself. Snyder's study showed that counselor questions tend to be followed frequently by rejection of the question by the client.

Evaluative responses are another familiar aspect of counseling. We have learned long ago that negative evaluations—comments which imply criticism, which question motives, which pass judgment on the client—tend to freeze the situation, and to make spontaneous expression difficult. We have not sufficiently learned that reassurance, agreement, and commendation have the same effect to a lesser degree. "I agree with you," "You're certainly right," "You've done very well," "You don't need to feel guilty about that," are the sort of well-intentioned comments which actually make it more difficult for the client to bring contradictory attitudes into the relationship. They show that the counselor is passing judgment on the client. These particular attitudes are judged favorably, but the client fears that there may be attitudes which will be judged unfavorably, and hence is unable to bring his thinking fully into the interview.

Advice and suggestions are, we know, freely given even by those who protest strongly that they do not wish to guide the client's life. "Of course you will want to make your own decision, but I think you might try..." is one of the many subtle ways by which we introduce our own solutions to the client's problems. Such procedures cut off free expression. In two ways they make the client defensive. If he brings out deeper attitudes it would seem to imply that the counselor had not solved the problem. It would also bring the possibility that the counselor would try to solve these deeper problems in ways which the client did not want.

Interpretation of the client to himself is a technique used somewhat by psychologists and social workers, and very heavily by psychiatrists and analysts. The more shrewd the interpretation, the more it hits the mark, the greater the defensiveness it arouses, unless the client has already reached that point of insight himself. Snyder found that interpretation, even when made by skilled counselors, is most likely to be followed by client responses which deny the interpretation. The client is thrown on the defensive.

To sum it up, most of the procedures which we customarily use in counseling tend to put the client subtly on his guard. As we analyze our psychotherapeutic contacts there are only two

techniques which are actually in accord with the accepting viewpoint which most workers profess. These are simple acceptance—"Yes," "M-hm," "I understand"—and recognition and clarification of feeling. The first needs no explanation, but there is no doubt that it serves an important part in developing a permissive atmosphere where the client can discover insight.

The procedure of recognizing and clarifying attitudes is one which also has a deceptive simplicity. It consists in mirroring, reflecting for the client the feelings he has been expressing, often more clearly than he has been able to do for himself. Two examples might be given. The first one is a very simple reflection of a straightforward attitude, taken from the case of the aviation cadet mentioned earlier.

Cadet. I should have soloed long ago. And here is something. Before I joined the Navy I was an overhead electrical crane operator, and that takes depth perception, coordination, and alertness; and I'm positive that I can apply that to my flying.

Counselor. You feel that your training as a crane operator should help you in your flying.

Cadet. That's right And here's something else

This simple recognition of feeling serves the purpose of making expression of attitude easy, and of interposing nothing which will make the client in any way defensive. It makes him feel that he is understood, and enables him to go on to another area of emotionalized attitude, until gradually he has worked into the deeper and really significant realms.

Responses which might be termed clarification serve a further purpose of assisting the client to understand himself, but without any trace of an approach which would arouse defensiveness. A brief example from a case in which the man was disturbed over his tendency to gamble excessively will illustrate this point.

Mr. R. One thing I have thought of vaguely, that might be the cause of everything; I have had the props knocked out from under me so many times since I went into business. After I got out of the University I went into business in L - - , and had a good practice there, but my family didn't want me to stay there. They kept after me until I gave it up and came home. I worked for my father then, and had just gotten up to a decent job when I was let out for no particular reason. Next time I set up a lease that was profitable, and just at the time when I was about ready to profit from it, they cancelled the lease.

Counselor. You feel that the breaks have been against you.

Here the counselor's response puts briefly, and in clearer form, the underlying attitude which the client has been expressing. It is as such recognition and clarification of feeling frees the client from all need for defense, since it never in any way attacks the ego, that expression becomes freer, deeper attitudes are brought forth, and insights are developed. The justification for the development of these non-directive attitudes, and the skills which implement them, lie in the results which they bring.

This material has certain clear implications for the worker who deals with maladjusted clients in need of help. If deeper degrees of insight are deemed desirable, if it is important that the client reorganize his concept of himself, if he needs to find fresh and more satisfying ways of dealing with his problem, then the worker will increase the likelihood of this by adopting certain viewpoints and procedures. The worker will need to cultivate a tolerant, accepting attitude which quite genuinely

accepts the individual as he is. Furthermore the worker will need to utilize in the counseling situation only those techniques, which prevent defensiveness from arising.

Aside from simple acceptance, the major technique is that of mirroring for the client the emotionalized attitude which he is expressing. Snyder found that these two types of responses constituted nearly 75 per cent of the counselor's statements in non-directive counseling. Their use and the counselor's accepting attitude are undoubtedly the primary reason for the development of the spontaneous insights which have been discussed, insights which deeply alter the client's way of living.

SUMMARY

1. It has been found that in counseling situations of a non-directive character, new perceptions and understandings of self develop in spontaneous fashion.
2. These insights are of various types, some relatively simple, some highly complex and going to the root of the behavior patterns of the individual.
3. Research shows that these insights develop gradually in a non-directive counseling situation and mount to a peak toward the conclusion of the counseling experience. They follow free expression of negative emotion. They are closely connected with a positive change in the self concept. They are accompanied or followed by plans and decisions which involve the alteration of behavior.
4. Insights are not likely to follow counselor procedures which evaluate, question, probe, advise, or interpret. They are likely to develop if the counselor uses responses which are accepting and clarifying. Procedures which make defensiveness on the part of the client completely unnecessary, but which make the client feel that he is deeply understood, are most successful.

REFERENCES

1. Curran, Chas. A. An Analysis of a Process of Therapy Through Counseling and its Implications for a Philosophy of Personality. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1944.
2. Raimy, Victor C. The Self-Concept as a Factor in Counseling and Personality Organization. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1942.
3. Rogers, Carl R. Counseling and Psychotherapy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942.
4. Sargent, Helen. "Non-directive Counseling Applied to a Single Interview," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 1943, 7: 186.
5. Snyder, Wm. U. An Investigation of the Nature of Non-Directive Psychotherapy. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1943. A condensation of this thesis is shortly to be published in the *Journal of General Psychology*.