

# **COMPARISON OF ROGERS, ELLIS AND PERLS THERAPIES**

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# **COMPARISON OF ROGERS, ELLIS AND PERLS THERAPIES**

**Dr. Carl Rogers: Client-Centered Therapy**

**Dr. Albert Ellis: Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy**

**Dr. Frederick Perls: Gestalt Therapy**

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**Comparison of Rogers, Ellis and Perls therapies**

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**Publisher**

The present article has benefited from the ideas of Carl Rogers in Client-Centered Therapy, Albert Ellis in Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and Frederick Perls in Gestalt Therapy.

**Mohsen Makhmalbaf**

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## Introduction

Since Freud, three theories have been proposed in psychology. It is natural that the value of all of them has not been the same, either theoretically or therapeutically. Famous psychologists such as Freud, Jung, Pavlov, Watson, Skinner have contributed ideas, concepts and experiments to help us understand the human mind. Some others such as Adler, Karen Horne, Victor Frankl, William Glasser, Aaron Beck and others have become famous for their successful treatment of people with psychological problems.

This book compares three completely effective but at the same time entirely different therapies with reference to their psychological approaches. They are the works of eminent psychologists Albert Ellis, who used the method of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Carl Rogers, with the method of Client-Centered Therapy, and Frederick Perls, who introduced the method of Gestalt Therapy. It is hoped that the comparison of these three methods will shed light on a better understanding of the modern treatment methods used in psychology treatment today.

● **CHAPTER ONE:**  
**CLIENT-CENTERED THERAPY**  
Dr. Carl Rogers



American psychologist Carl Rogers (1902-1987) is one of the theorists of humanistic psychology. His client-centered approach to psychological counseling is of paramount importance. Rogers's tool for Client-Centered Therapy is motivational dialogue. Below we first get acquainted with Rogers' motivational interview method.

## Motivational interview

The motivational interview of Carl Rogers's model of dialogue with his clients is based on client-centered therapy, so that they can hear the forgotten voice within themselves and find the motivation for change within themselves. This model of conversation has its do's and don'ts, which we will get acquainted with below.

This method is based on the premise that the client understands his pain and treatment better than anyone else, even better than the psychotherapist, but the client, because of the confusion in his mind, does not find the solution that already exists within him. Motivational questions asked by a psychotherapist help clients to find the solutions within themselves.

### Twenty “Do not’s” in Motivational interviews

In Rogers' model of therapy, the therapist should consider the following when assisting clients, otherwise the client will find the solution again from the outside instead of finding the solution from within.

1. Do not give solution. (Don't tell me if I were you, the best solution would be to...)
2. Do not advise.
3. Do not threaten. (Do not say that if you do this, you will have a disaster.)
4. Don't make it moral.
5. Do not agree or opposition with the client.
6. Do not shame him.
7. Do not console.
8. Do not argue.
9. Do not formulate.



10. Do not stray from the subject.
11. Do not joke.
12. Do not rush to correct.
13. Do not change position: If you change position, the client will take guard position.
14. If the client is 100% insistent, do not motivate the interview, the interview will not change him.
15. Don't kill lovely one. For example, do not take the family side of the clients. Because the client will take a worse position.
16. Do not ask marginal questions and answers.
17. Do not look like a specialist. (The clients know their problem better than anyone. And they will find a solution.)
18. Do not label personality disorder. (It does not help.)
19. Do not conclude that what the client's problem. Maybe it is a sign of another problem.
20. Do not look for the culprit.

### **Principles of Motivational Interviewing**

1. Empathy (Understanding the client as he understands himself.)
2. Bringing the contradictions of the clients to the surface (Clients bring out their contradictions when they speak, and the therapist can clarify his or her doubts and contradictions by summarizing the client's contradictions.)
3. Undermining resistance to change. (Client: On the one hand, when I smoke, I'm more relaxed. But on the other hand, my mother has asthma. Her cough gets worse. I'm in doubt in this case what to do.) (Therapist: On the one hand, you think that smoking makes you addicted. On the other hand, you are worried about your mother, that your cigarette will make her health worse.) The therapist actually tries to quietly undermine the client's resistance by exacer-

bating the client's concerns about the mother.

4. Strengthen the sense of self-efficacy.

### **Introduction to treatment**

- Question about the benefits of the current situation:

(What is benefit for you to be a smoker?)

- Question about the disadvantages of the current situation:

(What harm does being a smoker do to you?)

- Question about the disadvantages of change:

(What harm do you face if you do not smoke?)

- Question about the benefits of change:

(If you do not smoke, how will it benefit you?)

► Why does the therapist first question the benefits of the status quo, then the disadvantages of the status quo, then the disadvantages of change, and then the benefits of change? Because this kind of direction is in favor of the benefits of change just by asking, without the therapist giving advice.

This model of question helps to pay attention to the benefits and disadvantages, which is a wise calculation, as opposed to the habit and addiction that caused the problem.

This is similar to asking a young child who has just started to speak: Do you love your mother more, or your father?

**Child:** My father.

**Question:** Do you love your father more, or your mother?

**Child:** My mother.

In fact, the child repeats the last word. The adults also have this subconscious focus on the question and frame their answer to the question asked which helps

them to deal with it in the end. In the motivational interview method, the therapist focusses on the benefits of change.

### Techniques:

#### 1- Open-ended question:

- What happened to you that brought you here?
- What are your main problems in life?
- What is the problem between you and your spouse?
- What are the main problems that bother you?
- Explain your inner feelings.

Open-ended question help the clients to examine themselves and their thoughts and circumstances and articulate what they discover about themselves. Because the clients have come to solve a problem, it is better for the first question to bring to the surface the problem. In the West, doctors or psychologists start with this question 'How can I help you'?

#### 2- Approval of clients' intentions:

You did well to come.

This point helps a lot.

This is a sign of your honesty (The therapist confirms the aspects of the client's words that indicate a need for change.)

Deleting the word «I». (If the therapist says, 'I like what you said', it is wrong. But if he says, 'What you said is very good', it is correct).

Showing approval of clients' intentions boosts their confidence to speak honestly.

#### 3- Listening reflectively:

Reflective listening helps the client hear his or her own voice, which he or she has never heard before, or only from the inside, this time from the outside.

**Example:**

**Client:** I got tired of smoking myself, but I don't know what to do?

**Therapist:** So, you are tired of smoking, and you are looking for a solution.

**4- To summarize:**

Summarizing helps to remind the client of the key points which he may otherwise not remember while he is dealing with a multitude of thoughts in his confused mind. Summarizing helps to simplify and clarify the messages which the client needs to work with.

Reflection is the half of the therapist's speech:

The therapist and the client face each other like two mirrors. Two people who make each other's words clearer. (So, you mean ... or what do you mean by that?)

1. Sometimes reflection helps to express unspoken feelings (I think that you want to say something else but it is stuck in your throat and you are not expressing it).
2. Sometimes reflection helps to understand oneself (arranging the confused thoughts).
3. Sometimes reflection helps to get closer to what the patient is saying and what the therapist is perceiving (My words make you see and express your mind more clearly. The more I understand, the more I help you express yourself better and understand).

**Types of reflective listening****● Simple form:**

Repetition of all or part of the words of the client in the same way as expressed by the client

**Client:** I'm tired of my mother nagging.

**Therapist:** You are tired of your mother nagging.

**● Form of retelling with similar words:**

**Client:** I'm tired of my mother nagging.

**Therapist:** You are tired of your mother's complaints.

- **Form of interpretive repetition:**

Guessing. Complete the words of the client. Complete his sentences. Tell the rest of the story in his own words.

**Therapist:** Is that what you mean? (Move ahead of him.)

**Client:** I'm tired of my mother nodding.

**Therapist:** You have reached a point where it is difficult for you to bear being at home. (Do not ask a question. Tell a news.)

**Therapist:** Your mother's nagging has created a situation that has led you to the conclusion that you want to make a change.

- **Intensified reflection pattern:**

The statements of the client are said in an exaggerated form with other sentences:

**Client:** I'm tired of my mother nagging.

**Therapist:** You are extremely tired of your mother's complaints.

Sometimes the client retreats and the therapist uses it to take advantage of the change in the client.

**Client:** No, I was not so tired that that I was ready to die

- **Emotional Reflex Forms:**

Emphasis on the emotional aspect of the client.

**Client:** I'm tired of my mother nagging.

**Therapist:** You have a bad feeling about what your mother is doing. You are depressed. You are very upset and you cannot do anything.

- **Two-way reflection form:**

**Client:** I'm tired of my mother nagging

**Therapist:** On the one hand you love your mother and on the other hand you are tired of her. Either you have to make your mother stop nagging, or you have to

make a change yourself.

- **Summarizing:**

Summarize what the client has said from time to time. Do not summarize the words of the client more than 3 times in 3 minutes.

The summary can be a summary of a few minutes ago, a summary of the whole session, or a summary of a few sessions ago.

- **At the end of the summary, ask:**

**Therapist:** Did you think that was right?

**Therapist:** Did you think it was accurate or do you think we should add something else?

The motivational interview system is a participatory guidance system that helps the client to bring about change within himself, rather than engaging with the client to impose change. The therapist brings the contradiction to the surface. When traps are avoided and the right techniques are used, the possibility of doing the following increases:

- Being empathetic
- Slipping on the resistance (instead of getting angry and inciting the client to resist.)
- Raising the contradictions.
- Never saying 'we want to change you' but 'saying 'we want to help you decide for yourself'.
- Client gradually changes the terminology with these techniques. He himself subconsciously sits in wait for the language to change, and when that language is changed, he clings to it.

In the documentary film, in a conversation with one of his clients, Gloria, Dr Carl Rogers, the leading Client-Centered Therapy psychologist, illustrates his treatment well. He does not give any advice to the client. He only helps Gloria to hear her inner voice by talking loudly to her during her therapy session. He helps Gloria find the contradictions within herself and deal with them as reality and to

find her way of life through her own choice.

Rogers's method is to listen to the words of the client and retell them to her so that the client can clarify the muddled thoughts in her mind by hearing the summary of her own words.

### **Where is the problem in humanism? What is an unhealthy person?**

**Rogers:** The last human need is self-actualization. On the other hand, as much as I grow, I need self-respect. How is this need met? By others. Whenever I agree with others, they say: Well done. They pay attention to me, but their attention is conditional. I am a good son of Mom and Dad. When I listen to them and follow their rules. (Conditional Attention) I am slowly learning to forget the inherent need that flourished. Example: I like to sing now. If I sing, they either do not pay attention to me or they pay negative attention to me. So I ignore some of my needs. For example, part of me is aggression. But society does not like aggression. So I deny some of my own experiences. I may lie to myself and my mental trauma may begin.

What is the treatment? One must behave unconditionally. We must create an environment in which there is no judgment. As a result, one can talk about oneself and aspects that one has never talked about before. So that one can perceive and express oneself as one is.

Even someone who is your friend is your friend to the extent that you follow his values and everyone has done the same with you. As a result, you are hurt.

In the treatment session, because there is no judgment, you present yourself and slowly your self-fulfillment begins.

«The more non-judgmental environments there are, the more self-actualization there is,» says Rogers. (If the therapist acts non-judgmentally, it does not mean confirmation of the client's behavior.)

Humans can flourish on their own, but they experience lying for the approval of others. Lie to yourself, lie to nature, lie to others. (We do not declare the needs we have to ourselves.)

Therapists act in different ways. In the view of humanism, it is the therapist who empathizes. (Unlike psychotherapy, where the therapist seems indifferent.) Therapist Rogers does not talk much. But in a non-judgmental and safe environment, it reflects on the patients:

Therapist asks open ended questions to the client.

The therapist listens to the client.

The therapist summarizes and reflects on the therapy session to the clients.

Rogers' therapists look at the client and say go ahead.

The therapist does not leave the chair to erroneously give the client the feeling that it does not matter to the therapist.

If the therapist misses something in the summary, his message to the client is that I did not pay attention to you.

The answer to the closed question is yes or no. The open question is an explanatory answer.

**Classic Rogers:** He returns everything that the client says, to the client.

**New Rogers:** Bringing back a recollection of important words used by the clients to the notice of the client. Sometimes what the client had downplayed as unimportant, the therapist will show it like is important. (For example: So, you could stand it for an hour.)

**Values technique:**

You ask the person: Can you tell me about your values? Value is something we pay for and are satisfied with.

If I'm not mistaken, these things were valuable to you ... They seem to have an overlap between your behavior and your values. How can your values be preserved without any problems?

Sometimes we put the two sentences he said at a distance together to see his



contradictions.

In the year 1965, a documentary was made about the differences between the three methods of treatment in psychology:

- 1- Client-Centered Therapy by Carl Rogers.
- 2- Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy by Albert Ellis.
- 3- Gestalt Therapy by Frederick Perls

The text of the conversations of these three prominent psychologists with a common client named Gloria is presented in this book along with explanations to make the three theories understandable.

#### **Introduction of the documentary film:**

Psychotherapy is such a personal and private process that it is a mystery to most people who have never gone through it. The documentary series made in 1965 was a unique effort that allows the viewers to sit in on what is ordinarily a very private therapeutic experience. An actual patient Gloria was courageous enough and considerate enough to allow herself to be filmed while actually engaged in therapy with the three different therapists. Thus, the viewer is allowed the privilege of seeing and feeling what really transpires in the three therapy sessions.

A film series like this in which three therapists distinguished by their different orientations share their therapeutic endeavors was never been made before. We therefore owe our gratitude to Gloria the patient and to her three therapists for having allowed the viewers to share in their therapeutic adventure.

This documentary series was divided into three separate films. The first film shows **Dr. Carl Rogers, founder of Client-Centered Therapy** interviewing Gloria. In film number two, **Dr. Albert Ellis founder of Rational Emotive Therapy** is working with her. And in film number three, **Dr. Frederick Perls founder of Gestalt Therapy** is the therapist. In each film, the therapist first describes his system of therapy briefly. He then demonstrates his work with Gloria and finally, he comments briefly on his work.

## Client-centered therapy session with Gloria by Carl Rogers

### Preliminary Description by Dr. Rogers

From my own years of therapeutic experience, I have come to feel that if I can create the proper climate to a proper relationship and proper conditions, a process of therapeutic movement will almost inevitably occur in my client.

You may ask, what is this climate, what are these conditions? Will they exist in my interview with the woman I have never seen before? Let me try to describe very briefly what these conditions are as I see them.

1- Can I be real in the relationship?

This is a very important point that I have reached over the years. I feel that genuineness is another way of describing the quality I would like to have. I like the term congruence by which I mean that what I'm experiencing inside is present in my awareness and comes out through my communication. There's another word that describes it for me; I feel it in the relationship I would like to have a transparency I would be quite willing for my client to see all the way through me that there will be nothing hidden. And when I'm real in this session that I'm trying to describe them, I know that my own feelings well will often bubble up into awareness and be expressed in ways that won't impose themselves on my client.

2- Will I find myself praising this person? caring for this person?

I certainly don't want to pretend a caring that I don't feel in fact if I dislike my client persistently, I feel it's better then that I should express it. But I know that the process of therapy is much more likely to occur and constructive change is much more likely, if I feel a real spontaneous praising of this individual with whom I'm working. Praising of this person as a separate individual. You can call that quality acceptance. You can call it caring. You can call it a non-possessive love if you wish. I think any of those terms describe it. I know that the relationship will prove more constructive if it is present.

3- Will I be able to understand the inner world of this individual from the inside?

Will I be able to see it through her eyes? Will I be able to be sufficiently sensitive to move around inside the world of her feelings so that I know what it feels like to be her, so that I can sense not only the surface meanings, but some of the meanings that lie somewhat underneath the surface. I know that if I can let myself sensitively and accurately enter into her world of experience then change and therapeutic movement are much more likely. Well, suppose I am fortunate and that I do experience some of these attitudes in the relationship. What then? From my own set of therapeutic experiences and research, I have come to the conclusion that if the features I have described are present, the following results are possible:

- The client may explore some of her feelings and attitudes more deeply.
- The client is likely to discover some hidden aspects of herself that she wasn't aware of previously.
- Feeling herself praised by me, it is quite possible she will come to praise herself more.
- Feeling that some of her meanings are understood by me then she can more readily perhaps listen to herself, listen to what's going within her own experience, listen to some of the meanings she hasn't been able to catch before.
- Perhaps if she senses a realness in me, she'll be able to be a little more real within herself. I suspect there will be a change in the manner of her expression; at least this has been my experience in other instances.
- From being rather remote from her experiencing, remote from what's going on within her, it's possible that she'll move toward more immediacy of experiencing, that she will be able to sense and express what's going on in her in the immediate moment.
- From being disapproving of herself, it's quite possible she will move toward a greater degree of acceptance of herself.
- From somewhat a fear of relating, she may move toward being able to relate more directly and to encounter me more directly.

- From construing life in somewhat rigid black and white patterns she may move toward more tentative ways of construing her experience and of seeing the meanings in it.
- From a locus of evaluation which is outside of herself it's quite possible she will move toward recognizing a greater capacity within herself for making judgements and drawing conclusions.

These are changes that, if I have any success in creating the kind of conditions that I described initially, then we may be able to see some of these changes in this client even though I know in advance that our contact is going to be very brief.

## Transcript of Gloria – Rogers Consultation session

**Carl Rogers:** Good morning, you must be Gloria?

**Gloria:** Good morning.

**Carl Rogers:** We have half an hour together and I really don't know what they will be able to make of it but yeah, I hope we can make something of it. I will be glad to know whatever concerns you.

**Gloria:** Well, I'm... right now I'm nervous but I feel more comfortable the way you're talking in the low voice. I don't feel like you'll be so harsh on me. But I...

**Carl Rogers:** I hear the tremor in your voice too.

**Gloria:** The main thing I want to talk to you about is, I'm just newly divorced and I had gone in therapy before, and I felt comfortable when I left, and all of a sudden now, the biggest change is adjusting to my single life... and one of the things that bothers me the most is especially men... having men come to the house, and how it affects the children. The biggest thing I want... the thing that keeps coming to my mind I want to tell you about is... I have a daughter 9 who at one time I felt I had a lot of emotional problems.

I wish I could stop shaking.

I'm really conscious of things affecting her... I don't want her to get upset. I don't want to shock her. I want so bad to for her to accept me and be really open with each other, especially about sex. The other day she saw a girl who was single who was pregnant and she asked me if teen girls can get pregnant when they're single and the conversation was fine until she asked me if I ever made love to a man since I left her daddy, and I lied to her. And ever since that it keeps coming up to my mind coz I feel so guilty lying to her, for I never lie, and I want her to trust me, and I want an answer from you... I want you to tell me if it will affect her if I told her the truth.

**Carl Rogers:** And this concern about her and the fact that you really aren't that kind of .... that this open relationship that exists between you and .... Now you feel it is kind of...

**Gloria:** Yes, I feel like I have to be on guard about that because, when I was a little girl, when I first found out my mother and father made love... it was dirty and terrible and I didn't like her anymore, for a while, and I don't want to lie to Pammy either and I don't know...

**Carl Rogers:** Sure wish I could give you the answer as to whether you should tell her.

**Gloria:** I knew you were going to say that

**Carl Rogers:** Because what you really want isn't an answer

**Gloria:** I want to especially know if it would affect her if I was completely honest and open with her, or, if it would affect her because I lied. I feel like it's bound to make a strain because I lied to her.

**Carl Rogers:** She'll suspect that or she will know something's not quite right.

**Gloria:** She'll distrust me yeah and also, I thought would she... what about when she gets a little older and she finds herself in such a situation she probably wouldn't want admit it to me coz she thinks I'm so good and so sweet and yet I'm afraid she could think I'm really, a devil, and I want so bad for her to accept me and I don't know how much a nine year old really can take.

**Carl Rogers:** And really both alternatives concern you, that she might think you're too good or better than you really are

**Gloria:** Yes.

**Carl Rogers:** or she may think that you're worse than you are.

**Gloria:** Not worse than I am. I don't know if she can accept me the way I am... I think I paint a picture that I'm all sweet and motherly, and I'm a little ashamed of my shady side too.

**Carl Rogers:** I see. It really cuts a little deeper. If she really knew you, would she, could she, accept you?

**Gloria:** Yeah, I don't want her to turn away from me. I don't even know how I feel about it because there are times when I feel so guilty like when I have my lover over, I even tried to make a special setup so that if I were ever alone with him the child would never catch me and that sort of thing because I'm real worried about it and yet I also know I have these desires.

**Carl Rogers:** Okay it is not only her problem or the relationship with her, it is in you as well.

**Gloria:** I guess so

**Carl Rogers:** What can I accept myself as doing

**Gloria:** Yeah

**Carl Rogers:** And you realize that you set up subterfuges, ways to make sure that that you're not caught or something; you realize that you are acting from guilt, isn't it?

**Gloria:** Yeah, I don't like the way..... I would like to feel comfortable with whatever I do .... if I choose not to tell Pammy the truth, to feel comfortable with that. I want to be honest and yet I feel there are some areas that I don't even accept myself.

**Carl Rogers:** If you can't accept them in yourself how could you possibly be comfortable in telling Pam.

**Gloria:** Right

**Carl Rogers:** And yet did you say you do have these desires and you do have your feelings but you don't feel good about it.

**Gloria:** Right.... and I thought you're just gonna sit there and let me experiment (laughs). I want more; I want you to help me get rid of my guilt feeling; if I can get rid of my guilt feeling about lying or going to bed with a man, any of that, just so I can feel more comfortable.

**Carl Rogers:** I feel that this is the kind of very private thing that I couldn't possibly answer for you, but I sure, as anything will try to help you work toward your own answer. I don't know if that makes any sense to you but I mean it.

**Gloria:** Well, I appreciate you saying that; you sound like you mean it but I don't know where to go; I don't begin to know where to go I thought that I'd pretty well worked over most of my guilt and now that this is coming up I'm disappointed in myself; I really am... I want ...I like it when I feel that no matter what I do even if it's against my own morals or my upbringing but I can still feel good about me and now I don't. There's a girl at work who sort of mothers me and she just - she I think - she thinks I'm all sweet and I sure don't want to show my more ordinary devilish side to her, I want to be sweet and it's so hard for me to do something like this again – it is so disappointing.

**Carl Rogers:** Yeah, I get the disappointment that here a lot of you thinks you thought you'd worked through and now the guilt and a feeling that only a part of you is acceptable to anybody else.

**Gloria:** Yeah

**Carl Rogers:** That keeps coming out. (silence) I guess I did catch the real - the puzzlement that you feel is – great - what the hell shall I do?

**Gloria:** And you know what I can find Doctor is that - everything I start to do that is on impulse - it seems natural to tell Pierre or to go out on a date or something – I am comfortable until I think how I was affected as a child and the minute that comes up and I'm all haywire like I want to be a good mother so bad and I feel like I am a good mother but then there's those little exceptions like my guilt with working. I want to work and it's so fun having extra money... I like to work... the minute I think I'm not being real good to the children or giving them enough time, then I start feeling guilty again, then, that's when, I guess - what do they call it? a double vine? That's just what it feels like... I want to do this and it feels right, but after all I'm not being a good mother and I want to be both. I'm becoming more and more aware of what a perfectionist I am - that's what it feels like, I want to be so perfect - you know I want to become perfect in my standards or not have that need anymore.



**Carl Rogers:** or I guess I hear it a little differently that what you want is to seem perfect but it means - a great matter of great importance to you is to be a good mother and you want to be seen to be a good mother even if some of your actual feelings differ from that - is it?

**Gloria:** I don't feel like I'm saying that... no... that isn't what I feel really. I want to approve of me always but my actual won't let me. I want to approve of me.

**Carl Rogers:** I realize - let me - I'd like to understand that... it's kind of like your actions are kind of outside of you. You want to approve of you... but what you do somehow won't let you approve of yourself.

**Gloria:** Right - Like I feel, I could approve of myself regarding for example my sex life... that's the big thing - if I really fell in love the man and I respected him and I adored him, I don't think I feel so guilty going to bed with him, and I don't think I'd have to make up any excuses to the children because they could see my natural caring for them, but when I have the physical desire and I'll stay over, why not and I want to anyway, then I felt guilty afterwards, I hate it for the kids... I don't like looking at myself... but I really enjoy it and this is what I mean. If the circumstances would be different, I don't think I'll feel so guilty because I feel right about it.

**Carl Rogers:** Yeah, I guess I hear you think... if what I was doing when I went to bed with a man was really genuine and full of love and respect and so on, I wouldn't feel guilty in relation to Pam... I wouldn't... I really would be comfortable about this.

**Gloria:** Yes, that's how I feel, and I know that sounds like I want a perfect situation, but that is how I feel, and, in the meantime, I can't stop these desires. I've tried that also. I've tried saying okay I don't like myself when I do that so I wouldn't do it anymore. But then I resent the children... I think why should they stop me from doing what I want and it's really not that bad.

**Carl Rogers:** But I guess I heard you saying too - that isn't only the children - you don't like it as well - it really isn't....

**Gloria:** I'm sure that I know that's it probably even more so than I am aware of but I only notice it so much when I pick it up in the children - then I can also notice it myself.

**Carl Rogers:** Somehow... sometimes you kind of... you like blaming them for the feelings you have and why should they cut you off from a normal sex life.

**Gloria:** Well, a sex life I could say - not because there is something about me that says that... not that I just go into sex because I feel physically attracted or something or a physical need... something about it tells me that's not quite right anyway.

**Carl Rogers:** Does it feel - really - that there are times you are acting in ways that are not in accord with your own inner standards.

**Gloria:** Right

**Carl Rogers:** But then we're also saying a minute ago that you feel you can't help that

**Gloria:** I wish I could - that's it and I can't now... I feel like I can't control myself as well as I could have before - for a specific reason now... I can't... I just let go and I have... there's too many things I do wrong that I have to feel guilty for and I sure don't like that.

I want you very much to give me a direct answer and I'm going to ask you, but then I don't expect a direct answer, but I want to know... do you feel that to me the most important thing is to be open and honest and if I can be open and honest with my joy, do you feel that it could have an effect... for example, I could say to Pammy, I was... I felt bad lying to you Pammy and I want to tell you the truth now... and if I tell her the truth and she is shocked at me and she's upset, but that could bother her more. I mean I want to get rid of my guilt so that'll help me but I don't want to put them on her.

**Carl Rogers:** That's right

**Gloria:** Do you feel that could hurt her?

**Carl Rogers:** I guess I'm sure this will sound evasive to you but it seems to me that perhaps the person you're not being fully honest with, is you... because I was very much struck by the fact that you were saying... if I feel all right about what I have done whether it is going to bed with a man or what... if I really feel all

right about it, then I don't have any concern about what I would tell Pam or about my relationship with her.

**Gloria:** Right. All right. Now I hear what you're saying. (long pause and sigh) And all right then I want to work on I want to work on accepting me then. I want to work on feeling all right about it. That makes sense. But that'll come naturally and then I will not have to worry about Pammy. But when things don't seem so wrong for me and I have an impulse to do them, how can I accept that?

**Carl Rogers:** What you'd like to do is to feel more accepting toward yourself when you do things that you feel are wrong?

**Gloria:** Right, like, I feel like you're going to say no why do you think they're wrong and I have mixed feelings there too. I'll say, no look, I know this is natural... women feel that... sure we don't talk about it a lot socially .. that all women feel it... it's very natural I've had sex for the last 11 years... I'm of course, going to want it... but I still think it's wrong unless you're really truly in love with a man and my body doesn't seem to agree. So, I don't know how to accept it.

**Carl Rogers:** Sounds like a triangle to me doesn't it... you feel that I or therapists in general or other people say it's all right... it's all right... it's natural... huh... go ahead... and I guess... you feel your body ... so it lines up on that side of the picture ... but something in you says ... but I don't like it that way ... not much ... it's really not right.

**Gloria:** Right... (long pause; sigh) Well, I have a hopeful sign those are all things I sort of fill myself with and I feel though ... okay now what?

**Carl Rogers:** This is the conflict and it's just not being solvable and therefore, it's hopeless, and here you look to me, and I don't seem to give you any help than what

**Gloria:** I am ... I really can't answer for me I have to figure it out myself, but I want you to guide me or show me where to start or, I am hopeless, I know I can't keep living with this conflict, and I know eventually things would work out, but I like feeling more comfortable with the way I live.

**Carl Rogers:** What is it you wish I would say to you?

**Gloria:** I wish you would say to me to be honest and take the risk that Pam is going to accept me, and I also have a feeling, if I could really risk it with Pammy of all people, that I'd be able to see... here's this little kid that can accept me and I really know that that is she really knows what a demon I am and still loves me and accepts me it seems like it would help me to accept me more like it's really not that bad ... I want you to say to go there ... go be honest ... but I don't want the next moment to go ... that it would upset her ... that's right.

**Carl Rogers:** Oh yeah you know very well what you'd like to do in a relationship... you would like to be yourself and you'd like to have her know that you're not perfect and do things that maybe even she wouldn't approve it... that you disapproved to some degree yourself but somehow, she would love you and accept you as an imperfect person?

**Gloria:** Like I wonder if my mother had been more open with Lou, maybe I wouldn't have had such a narrow attitude about sex ... if I would have thought that she could be ... you know ... pretty sexy, and corny, and devilish too ... but I would look at it as being such a sweet mother... that she could also be the other side but she didn't talk about that ... well maybe that's where I got my picture ... I don't know ... but I want Pammy to see me as a full woman but also accept me.

**Carl Rogers:** You don't sound so uncertain

**Gloria:** I don't? what do you mean?

**Carl Rogers:** What I mean is you've been sitting there telling me just what you would like to do in that relationship with Pammy.

**Gloria:** I would ... but I don't want to quite take it, doing it ... unless some authority tells me that....

**Carl Rogers:** Yes, I guess one thing that I feel very keenly is it's an awfully risky thing to live...maybe taking a chance on your relationship with her; taking a chance on letting her know... who you are really.

**Gloria:** If I don't take a chance if I shall never be accepted by her, I'm never gonna be accepted by her anyway.

**Carl Rogers:** If your love and acceptance of you is based on a false picture, what the hell is the benefit of that?

**Gloria:** But I also feel a lot of responsibility with being a mother ... I don't wanna feel like I've caused any big traumas in the children ... I don't like all that responsibility bit but I don't like it feeling it could be my fault

**Carl Rogers:** Okay that's what I meant when I said life is risky to... take the responsibility for being a person you would like to be with her – it's a helluva responsibility

**Gloria:** It is

**Carl Rogers:** Very frightening

**Gloria:** The only way I look at it ... two ways I like to see myself as being so honest with the kids and really being proud of myself though that no matter what, I told them ... no matter how they may think I was ... I was honest and down deep it's going to be a much more honest relationship and yet you know I get jealous like when they're with their daddy, I feel he's more flip, he's not quite as real, he's not quite as honest, but nevertheless, they see a sweet picture of their dad ... you know his openness right and I'm envious of that too. I want to be seen just as sweet as they see him and yet no he's not quite as real with them... so it seems like I've got to swap the one for the other... and I know this is really what I want the most, but I miss some of that glory.

**Carl Rogers:** Hmm you said ... I feel I want them to have just as nice a picture of me as they had of their dad and he's a little phony; then mine will have to be too... I think that's putting it a little too strong

**Gloria:** That's close – I know she can't have that sweet picture of me if I were honest ... the fact that I do more things than their dad is more likely to do ... more things that they disapprove of.

**Carl Rogers:** Oh, somehow I really find it quite hard to believe that they wouldn't

really love you if they knew you.

**Gloria:** That's right you know that's exactly... before therapy, I would have definitely chosen the other area, I'm going to get respect no matter what, even if I have to lie. I see all right now I know that's not true and I'm not positive they'll truly accept me. Something tells me they will... I know you will, but I am not really sure, but I'm not positive, but I keep wanting this

**Carl Rogers:** We're in kind of a no-man's land... probably shifting from one point of view toward them to another... boy I'd sure like somebody to say that's right you go ahead and do it

**Gloria:** Yeah, that's why I get encouraged when I read in a book from somebody I respect and admire, this is the right thing. No matter what, honesty will win out. Well, then, that keeps giving me confidence... by gosh, I'm right

**Carl Rogers:** It's damn hard to really choose something on your own, isn't it

**Gloria:** Which makes me feel very immature. I don't like this... I mean, I wish I were grown up enough or mature enough to make my decisions and stick by them... but I need somebody to help me out,... somebody to push me

**Carl Rogers:** So, you can't reproach yourself for that I guess, and deal with why if I was anybody, if I was grown up, I would be mature enough to decide things like this by myself

**Gloria:** Right... and take more risk. I wish that I could take more risk. I wish that I could just go ahead and be this and say, when the children grow up, I've done with this, I didn't have to constantly have this conflict... and like later, no matter what you ask me kids, at least I told you the truth... you may not have liked it, but it's been true... that somehow I can admire. I just don't respect people that lie; I hate it, so, I hate myself if I'm bad but I also hate myself if I lie. So, it's accepting, I want to become more accepting.

**Carl Rogers:** I guess judging from your tone of voice you sound as though you hate yourself more when you lie than in terms of things you do in terms of disappearing...

**Gloria:** I do, because this was what really bothered me. This happened apparently

about a month ago and it keeps coming back to me I don't know whether to go back and talk to her about it. Or, wait, she may have even forgotten what happened

**Carl Rogers:** It is you who haven't forgotten

**Gloria:** I have .. no ... I haven't... I like to at least be able to tell myself I remember why and I'm sorry I lied and it's been driving me bugs because I did. I don't know I feel like now that it is solved and I didn't even solve the things but I feel relieved. (pause) I do feel like you've been saying to me you're not giving me advice but I feel like you're saying you really want to know what pattern you want to follow Gloria and go ahead and follow it. That's what I feel like backing up from you.

**Carl Rogers:** I guess the way I sense it is... you think telling me that you know what you want to do... and yes, I do believe in backing up people and what they want to do. Just a little different slant on the way it seems to you.

**Gloria:** Are you telling me....?

**Carl Rogers:** One thing that concerns me... it's no damn good you're doing something that you haven't really chosen to do... that's why I'm trying to help you... find out what's your own inner choices are

**Gloria:** And there's also a conflict there because I'm not really positive what I want to do... the lying part, yes, but I'm not positive what I want to do when I go against myself, like when I bring a man into the house... I'm not sure I want to do that if I feel guilty afterwards...

**Carl Rogers:** Good to say that you don't want it you don't like yourself or you love it when you do something against yourself

**Gloria:** You know this is so different now, this kind of thing that we're talking about now, it isn't just knowing whether you want to do something or not, if I want to go to work in the morning or I don't want to, look that's easy, but when I find myself doing something I don't feel comfortable with, I automatically say if you're not comfortable Gloria it's not right, something's wrong. All right now what I want to ask you is how can I know which is the strongest because I do it does that mean that the strongest

and yet if I disapprove that's just part of the thing that's got to go on with it? See it sounds like you, I'm picking up a contradiction I'm literally falling?

**Carl Rogers:** Sounds like you're feeling a contradiction in yourself too. Oh, what I heard you saying in part is... the way you like it, is when you feel really comfortable about what you're doing

**Gloria:** Yes, and I have at times, when I've made a decision... now that seems right, that feels perfectly right, but then there are times I do things that I feel uncomfortable with, so that there is a conflict, then it's not the same at all. What I'm saying is, how do I know when I'm failing that your feelings are playing conflicts afterwards or guilt afterwards

**Carl Rogers:** I see because in the moment that may seem like your true feelings ...

**Gloria:** Yes, like if I'm steady to do it, okay

**Carl Rogers:** So that really is tough... and if you feel comfortable in a moment about it, but then after it you don't feel at all comfortable, which course of action was really the one you should have followed?

**Gloria:** What I am saying is how do I know if you're following me when I say about this conflict, but one thing I know is... for example I had been wanting to leave my husband for quite a few years. I never did it, I kept thinking how nice it would be or how scary it would be, but I never did it. And all of a sudden when I did it, it felt right, I didn't feel mean toward him I just knew this is what I had to do. That's when I knew I'm following myself, I'm following my feelings completely. I had no conflict there. Some of the happy things came from it, but I still had no conflict. That to me is real, in following my feelings and in everyday life, the small little decisions, the small little things to do don't come out that clear at all, so many conflicts coming in, is it natural?

**Carl Rogers:** Although you're saying that you expect it is, but you're saying too that you know perfectly well with feeling within yourself that occurs... when you're really doing something that's right for you



**Gloria:** I do...I do and I miss that feeling other times

**Carl Rogers:** You can really listen to yourself sometimes, realize... no this isn't the vague feeling but this isn't... this isn't the way I would feel if I was doing what I wanted to do

**Gloria:** But yet many times I'll go on and do it anyway, and say, oh well I'm in the situation now, I'll just remember next time. I mentioned this word a lot in therapy and most therapists granted me or giggled or something when I say utopia but whether I do follow feeling and I feel this good feeling inside me... that sort of utopia... that's what I mean... that's the way I like to feel whether it's a bad thing or a good thing, but I feel right about me

**Carl Rogers:** In utopian moments you really feel kind of whole you feel all in one piece

**Gloria:** Yeah...yeah it gives me a choked up feeling when you say that, because I don't get that as often as I'd like

Carl Rogers: Mm...hmm

**Gloria:** I like that whole feeling that's real precious to me

**Carl Rogers:** none of us get it as often as we like but I really do understand. (pause). It really does touch one...

**Gloria:** Yeah you know what else I was just thinking I thought don't say it... all of a sudden it isn't news, but tonight I can talk to you and I want you to approve of me, and I respect you... I meant that my father can't talk to me like you are. I'd like to say to you I'd like you for my father... I only know one that came to me

**Carl Rogers:** He looked to me like a pretty nice guy...but you really do miss the fact that you couldn't be open with your own father...

**Gloria:** I couldn't be open... today I wanna blame it on him... I think I'm more open than him. He never listened to me talk like you are and not disapprove, I thought about it just the other day... why do I always have to be so perfect? I don't know why he always wanted me to be perfect... I always had to be better ...

**Carl Rogers:** It must have been trying like hell to be a girl he wants you to be

**Gloria:** Yeah, I almost caught myself writing a letter the other day and telling him I'm a waitress which I expected to disapprove of like its wild at nights and almost screwed it hitting it back, like now, oh how do you like me

Carl Rogers: Mm...hm

**Gloria:** And yet I really want acceptance and love from him I mean I really love him

**Carl Rogers:** Snap at him and say this is what I am now, see?

**Gloria:** Yeah, you raised me... how do you like it but you know what I think? I want him to say I knew this was you all along to me and I really love you

**Carl Rogers:** really feel badly that you think there's very little chance he'll say that

**Gloria:** No he won't... he doesn't care ..I went back home in about two years ago really willing to let him know I love them although I've been afraid of him, he doesn't hear me... he just keeps saying things like honey you know I love you. You know I've always loved you... he doesn't hear!

**Carl Rogers:** Never really known you and loved you and this somehow is what brings the tears inside

**Gloria:** I don't know what it is. You don't want to talk about it... if I just sit still me it feels like a great big hurt down there

**Carl Rogers:** much easier to be a little flip because then you don't feel that big lump inside.

**Gloria:** And again, that's all of a situation. I tried working on it and I feel totally... you have to accept my father just isn't the type of man I really like. I'd like somebody more understanding and caring... he cares but not really enough to cooperate and communicate

**Carl Rogers:** Nope, that's permanently cheated

**Gloria:** hmm that's why I like substitutes like .. I like talking to you, men that I

respect and doctors I keep sort of pretending underneath feeling like we're real close you know and it is sort of like a substitute father

**Carl Rogers:** I don't feel it is pretending

**Gloria:** Well, you're not really my father

**Carl Rogers:** No, I meant about the real close business

**Gloria:** Well you see I think about pretending is because I can't expect you to feel very close to me you don't know me that well

**Carl Rogers:** All I can do is tell you what I am feeling and that is I feel close to you in this moment.

## Conclusion by Carl Rogers

In spite of feeling initially the artificiality of the situation particularly the hot lights, I very quickly became oblivious to the outside situation. And I think the Gloria did too.

In many ways I'm glad that she kept pushing me for an answer to her very personal questions about her sex life and her relationship to her daughter. I'm glad of this because as the relationship developed. It became completely clear to Gloria as well as to me that she was seeking something a good deal deeper than.

I'd like to pay my tribute to her deep honesty and being willing to talk about herself so freely. Although every individual is entirely unique. And in this respect that was definitely unprepared for and sometimes surprised by the material she brought up.

Although this was very typical in my psychotherapy experiences. When I'm able really to let myself and her into a relationship. And I feel that this was true in this instance. Then I find myself not only being increasingly moved by being in touch with the inner world of my client, but I find myself bringing out of my own inner experience statements.

I felt there were one or two incidents of this kind in this brief interview. I was genuinely moved. I probably showed it by the fact that she told me near the end of the contact that she saw me as the father she would like to have. My reply was also a thoroughly spontaneous one that she seemed to me like a pretty nice daughter.

I guess, I feel that we were only playing with the real world of relationships when I talk about such an experience in terms of transference and countertransference. I feel quite deeply about that I want to say: Yes, we can put this experience and do some such highly intellectualized framework that when we do that it completely misses the point of the very immediate eval quality of the relationship, at such moments. I felt that Gloria and I really encountered each other and that in some small but I believe lasting, way we were each of us enriched by the experience.

I'm saying these things almost immediately after the conclusion of the interview

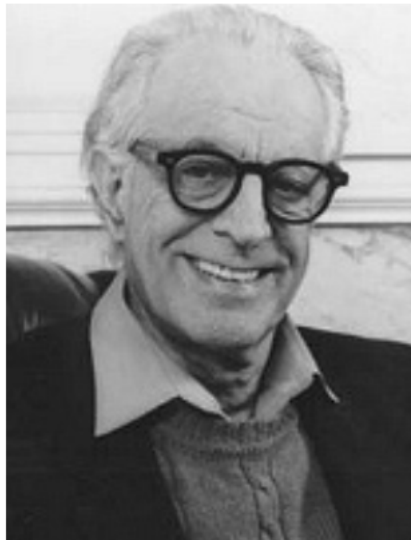
and as is characteristic of me there are not more than one or two statements or incidents which I recall from the interview. I simply know that I was very much present in the relationship that I lived it in the moment of its occurrence. And I realized that after a time I may begin to remember it too. But at the present time I really have a very nonspecific memory of the whole interview. I'll try to look at it though, a little bit more from an intellectual rather than a strictly feeling point of view.

Gloria showed that I have come to feel are characteristic elements of therapeutic movement. In the first part of the interview, she was talking about her feelings and they were past feelings. She was talking about aspects of her behavior and of herself as if she didn't quite own them. She was looking outside herself for a center or locus of evaluation some source of authority. She saw some of the things she was talking about in fairly black-and-white fashion. By the end of the interview, she was experiencing her feelings in the immediate moment not only as evidenced by her tears, but by her ability to express very directly and with immediacy her feelings toward me.

She was also much more aware of her ability to make her own judgments and choices. I guess put in terms that have become somewhat commonplace you could say that she moved from the there and then of her life to the here and now of elements that she was discovering in herself and feelings that she was experiencing in the moment in her relationship with me.

All in all, I feel good about the interview. I guess I feel good about myself in the interview. And like Gloria, I feel very real regret that the relationship cannot continue.

● **CHAPTER TWO:**  
**RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY**  
**Dr. Albert Ellis**



Albert Ellis (1913-2007) American psychologist is the founder of Rational- Emotional Therapy. If Carl Rogers was silent in the treatment room, and what he was saying was more a summary of what his own clients had said about him, then Albert Ellis was a talker, and his treatment was educational. Ellis tried to change the interpretations and beliefs of the clients that caused the resentment. Influenced by the Greek philosopher Epictetus, he introduced the following theory into psychology. A theory that, despite its simplicity, made revolution in psychology.

**Before Ellis, two approaches had been proposed in psychology:**

**The first approach is related to Freud's psychotherapy.** Freud's theory said that the child is born as a part of nature with two instincts of pleasure and violence. If this child lived in the forest like an animal, these two instincts were the driving force behind his behavior. But man does not live in the forest now. Urbanization and civilization impose laws on man. These rules are put on the child's instincts by parents and educators. If a child succumbs to the pressures of civilization, and suppresses the instincts of pleasure and violence, he or she will develop psychological complications. And if he disregards the laws of civilization for satisfying his instincts of pleasure and violence, he will be punished by society. In any case, the root of our mental illness lies in how we suppress instincts or over-satisfy them by ignoring the laws of civilization.

**The second approach was behavioral therapy.** Watson, Skinner, and Pavlov, in their experiments on animals and their extension to man, concluded that human behavior is not due to the instincts of pleasure and violence, as Freud puts it, but to human conditions to the environment. In fact, human behavior is due to his circumstances.

Ellis, who still belonged to the second approach to psychology, behavior therapy, himself started the second wave in behavior therapy. As you can see in the present chapter, Ellis proposed a new theory that says that human behavior is not the result of the instincts of pleasure and violence as Freud says, nor the effect of circumstances, as the first wave of therapeutic behavior says, human behavior is the result of his interpretation of events and beliefs. Therefore, if a person changes his interpretation of the events around him, or changes his beliefs, his behavior as well as the causes of his sufferings will change.

Consider the following theories:

**ONE:**

A-) An incident that happens. (A child urinates in the street. While you cross the street, you see this.)

B) Your interpretation of the incident A. (Your mind interprets this incident as follows: What an ill-mannered child.)

C) The emotional consequence or your reaction in the face of A. (Feeling of anger)

An alternate response experienced by a person who interprets the incident as 'Poor child, he must have been in a hurry' could result in a feeling of pity or compassion.

Ellis believes that other theorists have turned their attention to either A or C, blaming A for C ignoring the importance of B.

Consider, for example, the event of rejection by a friend (A). Some respond to the event with depression (C) and some with new friends (C).

It is not the event here that caused the different responses of individuals, but the interpretation that these two individuals had of rejection (B), which led to their different responses (C).

In Ellis's treatment, teaching the above theory is part of the treatment.

### **TWO:**

According to Ellis, a person's beliefs are the main determinant of his emotions and behaviors. The most common irrational beliefs that lead to negative emotions and dysfunctional behaviors are:

1. Belief that basic human desires, such as sexual desire, are needed; Because we need them (while they are just our preferences).
2. We cannot tolerate certain events, whether we have to wait in line, or face criticism or rejection, (while we can tolerate such events no matter how unpleasant they are).
3. Our value as human beings is determined by our successes and failures or our specific traits, such as income (while human value cannot be assessed as functional traits).
4. We have to get the approval of our parents or those in power (while our existence does not depend on them).



5. The world should treat us fairly (as if the world can follow our desires).
6. Some people are mean or evil and should be punished for their evil, (while we cannot assess the worthlessness of human beings.)
7. It is really horrible when things don't go the way we want them to, (while the concept of "horrible" cannot be defined by empirical references).
8. If we were not angry or anxious, we could not act, (while we must not be emotionally disturbed to do the logical actions that make the world a happier place.)
9. Harmful things like cigarettes or drugs can increase the happiness in life and are necessary for me (while I have this thought simply because living without them may be unpleasant for a moment).
10. External factors make people happy and people cannot control their emotions much (while external factors have no meaning without our specific interpretation).
11. A person's past history is the only determinant of current behavior (while something that once had a profound effect on a person's life cannot affect him or her forever).
12. Beliefs that were learned as children, whether religious, moral, or political, can be good guidelines for adulthood (while these beliefs may be mere prejudices or myths).

### **THREE:**

Fear is a preventative measure for Ellis and includes the knowledge that:

1. There is something dangerous or personal.
2. It is better to protect myself against that dangerous thing. Fear works and enables a person to deal with a really dangerous situation. Anxiety is completely different from fear and includes a third belief.
3. I feel inadequate and I cannot satisfactorily face the dangers

that threaten me and eventually do something to save myself. In a state of anxiety, the person makes pessimistic assessments about himself and loses the ability to deal with the problem and resolve it.

**FOUR:**

1. Ellis never spends much time looking at a person's previous life.
2. Ellis is not interested in hearing the emotions associated with the problem.
3. Ellis convinces the authorities that he is not a victim and is responsible for solving his problem through: (not generalizing the problem), (changing his interpretation of the incident) (changing problematic beliefs).

## **Rational-Emotive Therapy session with Gloria by Albert Ellis**

### **Preliminary Description by Dr. Ellis**

Rational Therapy, or Rational-Emotive Therapy is based on several fundamental hypotheses.

The first of these is that the past is not crucial in a person's life. The past affects a person a good deal, but he effects himself much more than the past affects him.

Because no matter what a person has learned during the historical development, the only reason why these things that have happened to him or her and have been told to him or her, affect him or her today is because he or she is still re-indoctrinating himself or herself with the same philosophies of life, the same values that he or she usually imbibed and taught himself or herself to early in his or her childhood.

Therefore, in Rational-Emotive Psychotherapy, we focus mostly on the present rather than in the past. And we believe that today the individual experiences negative emotions and self-defeating behavior doomed for failure and inefficiencies. Because he is now redefining himself through simple self-explanatory sentences that contain his beliefs.

Humans can express their ideas in all kinds of languages, in pictures, in sign language and using non-verbal expressions. But they normally speak to themselves in their native tongue.

When they talk to themselves in an irrational or an illogical way then they create, they literally create their negative feelings or emotions and the behavior that follows their loud voice.

When a person is upset, he usually says to himself first a wise sentence, and then an insane sentence. A wise sentence is something like:

'I don't like the thing that I've done'.

'I dislike my own behavior'.

And that would be fine but unfortunately, he follows it with an insane sentence which says to himself:

'Because I don't like my behavior, I am a louse, I am worthless, I am a not good person'.

It creates other forms of self-talk and self-destruction through anxiety, depression, and feelings of guilt.

When someone has treated you badly, instead of saying, «Even though I do not like your behavior, I can still tolerate it and try to force you to change your behavior,» you say, «I cannot tolerate your behavior» or “you say that because of your self-importance, and I think I do not like you as you are now.»

The second 'must' sentences which upset the individual. Or another way of putting it as Epictetus a Roman philosopher said many years ago, it is not what happens to us at point A that upsets us; it is B, our view of what happens to us that upsets us.

In Rational-Emotive Psychotherapy we show that whatever a person thinks upsets him or her not an external occurrence or behavior of another person. That is, what he says to himself about this event. Although he may never be able to do anything about the external event that upset him at point A, he can change his internal interpretation of that event. That is, to change how he projects the event to himself and his related beliefs in point B.

In Rational-Emotive Psychotherapy we try to teach the patient three types of insights that are distinctive to some other psychotherapies, emphasizing the most common.

The first type of insight teaches the patient that all his behaviors especially his negative self-defeating behavior which we are interested in and which is upsetting him, has clear-cut ideological antecedents. Otherwise, he would not have adopted the current negative behavior.

Insight number two which is most important but which is unfortunately neglected in many other psychotherapies is that a person is continually associating himself with these ideas that he had before. And that is the issue and that is why he is

now disturbed.

Insight number three is that even when he sees clearly what he is telling himself is nonsense, only by work and practice and by continually reassessing and revaluing his own philosophical assumptions, will he ever get better. Now we also stress the fact that action is necessary to change an individual. Just talking about things and thinking about things is nice but not necessary. I should say it is not a necessary condition for psychotherapeutic change. What the individual has to do in addition usually is act. And we therefore give him concrete homework assignments and get him to act these out and checkup and follow to see whether he does these homework assignments.

Our final goal is to get the individual to learn and learn for the rest of his life to challenge and question his own basic value system, his own thinking, so that he really thinks for himself. He must do this particularly when he feels miserable, or when he is experiencing anxiety or depression or guilt or too much frustration or anything else that is negative or when he loses his efficiency. And finally, he is able through this kind of new thinking, rethinking his own assumptions, to apply what we call the scientific method and thereby to minimize, though never able to entirely eliminate the terrible anxiety.

## Transcript of Gloria – Ellis Consultation session

**Albert Ellis:** Hello, Gloria, I'm Dr. Ellis.

**Gloria:** Hello, how do you do, Dr. Ellis.

**Albert Ellis:** Do you want to be seated, please? Well, would you like to tell me what bothering you most?

**Gloria:** Hmm, yeah. I think the things that I'd like to talk to you the most about are adjusting to my single life, mostly men, I guess... As a matter of fact, I don't know if I'm doing the wrong thing but I'm going to refer to your book anyway because this is what I'm impressed with, the book about The Intelligent Women's Guide to Man-Hunting.

Albert Ellis: Yeah.

**Gloria:** I tried to follow it and I believe in it. This is why it's so fun reading your book because I'm not much of a reader but I sort of believe the same way you do. But then I've got a problem in this area. The men I'm attracted to or the type of man I'd like to become closely involved with. I can't seem to meet or I get too shy with or something but it just doesn't click. The men I seem to be dating nowadays are the ones that I don't respect much, the ones I don't enjoy much, that seem flip and uninteresting. And I don't know if it's something about me or what because I really do want to meet his kind of man.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, let's talk a little about your shyness. Let's suppose you meet somebody who you consider eligible, that you might like. Now let's see if we can get at the source of your shyness, just what you're telling yourself to create this. You meet this man and you feel shy, embarrassed.

**Gloria:** Yes, but I don't usually show that. I usually act flip right back.

Albert Ellis: Yeah

**Gloria:** I act like the other men act to me, as a matter of fact. I act flip. I don't

seem near as intelligent. I act like a typical dumb blonde... I'm just not myself with them. I'm more un-at-ease.

**Albert Ellis:** Yes, well, as you probably know from Guide to Man-Hunting, I believe that people only get emotions such as negative emotions of shyness, embarrassment, shame because they tell themselves something in simple exclamatory sentences. Now let's try to find out what you're telling yourself. You're meeting this individual. Now what do you think you are saying to yourself before you get flip?

**Gloria:** I know what it is, that I'm not, I don't stand up to his expectations. I'm not quite enough for him. He's superior to me. Although I want this type of man, I'm afraid I won't have enough to attract him.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, that's the first part of the sentence and that might be a true one because maybe he could be superior to you in some ways. Maybe he wouldn't be attracted to you. But that would never upset you if you were only saying that I think he may be superior to me. Now you're adding a second sentence to that which is if this is so... that... would be... awful.

**Gloria:** Well, I'm not quite so extreme as that cause I've thought about that too. It's usually I've missed my chance again because if I want to show the very best of myself, because I think I have self-confidence, and I have enough to offer.

**Albert Ellis:** Yeah.

**Gloria:** But when I get afraid like that then I show all the bad qualities. I'm flip... Then I'm so much on the defensive that I can't show my good qualities and it's like I missed my change again. There was a good opportunity to be close to this man and I loused it up again.

**Albert Ellis:** All right, but even let's suppose you're saying that, and I think you really are, but you must be saying something else too. Because if you were just saying, hell, I missed my chance again you'd say, all right, next time I'll take advantage of what I learned this time and do it a little better. Now you still must be saying if you feel shame, embarrassment, shyness that there's something pretty bad about your error in missing your chance again.

**Gloria:** I don't know if this follows in contact to what you're saying, but the thing I do feel is that I get suspicious then, am I the type of woman that will only appeal to the ones that are not my type of guy anyway?

**Albert Ellis:** Yeah.

**Gloria:** Is there something wrong with me? Am I never going to find the kind of man I enjoy? I always seem to get the other ones.

**Albert Ellis:** All right, now you're getting closer to what I'm talking about cause you're really saying if I am this type of woman that none of these good, eligible men that I could appeal to then that would be awful. I'd never get what I want and that would really be something frightful.

**Gloria:** Plus, I don't like thinking of myself that way. I want to put myself on a higher standard. I don't like to think that I'm maybe just an average Jane Doe.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, let's just suppose for the sake of argument at the moment that that were so.

**Gloria:** All right.

**Albert Ellis:** That you were an average Jane Doe. Now would that be so terrible? It would be inconvenient. It would be unpleasant. You wouldn't want it. But would you get an emotion like shyness, embarrassment, shame out of just believing that maybe I'm going end up like Jane Doe?

**Gloria:** I don't know.

**Albert Ellis:** I don't think you could because you still would have to be saying on some level as I think you just said and it would be very bad, it would be terrible. I would be a no-goodnik if I were just Jane Doe.

**Gloria:** Well, plus I'd never get what I want. If I were just a Jane Doe and if I would have to accept that I'd never get what I want and I don't want to live the rest of my life with just icky men.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, it's not necessarily so that you'd never. You really mean your



chances would be reduced because we know some icky girls who get some splendid men, don't we?

**Gloria:** Yes.

**Albert Ellis:** You see, so you're generalizing there. You're saying it probably would be that I'd have a more difficult time but then you're jumping to therefore I'd never get at all.

**Gloria:** Well...

**Albert Ellis:** You see the catastrophizing there that you jumped to.

**Gloria:** Yes, but it feels that way to me at the time. It seems like forever.

**Albert Ellis:** That's right. But isn't that a vote of non-confidence in you? An essential vote of non-confidence?

**Gloria:** Yes.

**Albert Ellis:** And the non-confidence is because you're saying, one, I don't want to miss out on things. I would like to get the kind of a man I want and be a, in your words, superior kind of girl who gets a superior kind of man.

**Gloria:** Yes.

**Albert Ellis:** But if I don't then I'm practically on the other side of the chain completely, a no-goodnik, somebody who will never get anything that I want, which is quite an extreme away, isn't it?

**Gloria:** ...Yes.

**Albert Ellis:** And that's what I call catastrophizing. Taking a true statement, and there is a good deal of truth in what you're saying, if you didn't get the kind of a man you wanted that it would be inconvenient, annoying, frustrating, which it really would be and then saying I'd never possibly get what I want. And even beyond that you're really saying and then I couldn't be a happy human being. Aren't you really saying that on some level?

**Gloria:** Yes.

**Albert Ellis:** But let's just look at that. Let's just assume the worst, as Bertrand Russell once said years ago. Assume that worst, that you never got at all, for whatever the reasons may be, the kind of a man you want. Look at all the other things you could do in life to be happy.

**Gloria:** Well, I don't like the whole process. I don't even like it as I'm going through it... All right, even if it wasn't a catastrophe.

Albert Ellis: Yeah.

**Gloria:** Even if I didn't look at it as a catastrophe, I don't like the way I'm living right now. For example, when I meet somebody that I'm interested in that could have some potential, right away I find I'm not near as relaxed with him. I worry more should I be friendly, should I kiss him good night, should I do this? If it's just a Joe Doe and I don't give a darn I can be anything I want to be. I turn out to be more of a person when I'm not as concerned. I don't like the way I'm...

**Albert Ellis:** But you're not really concerned, you're over-concerned, you're anxious. Because if you were just concerned, you'd do your best and you'd be saying to yourself. If I succeed, great, if I don't succeed, tough, right now I won't get what I want. But you're over-concerned or anxious. You're really saying, again, just what we said a moment ago, if I don't get what I want right now I'll never get it and that would be so awful that I've got to get it right now. That causes the anxiety, doesn't it?

**Gloria:** Yes, or else work toward it.

**Albert Ellis:** Yes, but if you...

**Gloria:** If I don't get it right now that's all right but I want to feel like I'm working toward it.

**Albert Ellis:** Yes, but you want a guarantee I hear. My trained ears hear you saying I would like a guarantee of working towards it and there are no certainties and guarantees.

**Gloria:** Well, no, Dr. Ellis, I don't know why I'm coming out that way. What I really mean is I want a step toward working toward it.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, what's stopping you?

**Gloria:** I don't know. I thought, well, what I was hoping is whatever this is in me why I don't seem to be attracting these kinds of men. Why I seem more on the defensive? Why I seem more afraid?... You could help me what it is I'm afraid of so I won't do it so much.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, my hypothesis is so far that what you're afraid of is not just failing with this individual man, which is really the only thing at issue when you got out with a new, and we're talking about eligible males now, we'll rule out the ineligible ones. You're not just afraid that you'll miss this one, you're afraid that you'll miss this one and therefore you'll miss every other and therefore you've proved that you are really not up to getting what you want and wouldn't that be awful. You're bringing in these catastrophes.

**Gloria:** Well, you sound more strong at it but that's similar. I feel like this is silly if I keep this up. There's something I'm doing. There's something I'm doing not to be as real a person with these men that I'm interested in.

**Albert Ellis:** That's right, you're defeating your own ends.

**Gloria:** I've done it again. If I weren't so doggone anxious about trying to hook this guy, I could be more real. He's going to enjoy me more if I'm real anyway. So, I'm only giving him the stinky part of me.

Albert Ellis: Right.

**Gloria:** How can anybody I respect, respect a church and that's what I am when I don't really come through.

**Albert Ellis:** But look how you just devalued yourself. Let's just suppose for the sake of argument you kept giving the stinky part of you.

**Gloria:** All right.

**Albert Ellis:** A human being, another person who is trying to get interested in you might not like these attributes, these characteristics of you but I don't think he's going to despise you as a person, which you are really doing.

**Gloria:** I am harder on myself than I think he is. ...

**Albert Ellis:** That's exactly the point.

**Gloria:** But he just doesn't like me, there's not enough to me.

**Albert Ellis:** Right, and as I said before, if people just didn't like you and you went through enough of them, and it would be hard to go through enough but it would be possible, you'd eventually find one who did like you and whom you liked. But as long as you devalue yourself personally in your own eyes, you complicate the problem enormously and you're not focusing on how can I be myself. Change the traits. If you, for example, had a, let us just say, a mangled arm and you wouldn't accept your whole person, your being because of this mangled arm then you would focus so much on that mangled arm that you wouldn't be able to do things that you would otherwise be able to do.

**Gloria:** That's almost what I do, yes.

**Albert Ellis:** Yes, you see, that's exactly. So, you're taking a part of you, an arm, and focusing almost completely on that. And just to bring it down to our own conversation, you're taking a part of you, your shyness, your not being yourself with males and focusing so much on that part that you're almost making it the whole of you and you get an awful picture of your total self because of this defective part. And we're assuming, you and I, that it is defective. We're not glossing over and saying, oh, you're doing all right. You're not doing that well.

**Gloria:** Right.

**Albert Ellis:** Now if you could accept yourself for the time being with this defective part, with these attributes and not beat yourself over the head, as I feel you definitely are doing, then it becomes a relatively simple problem to work and practice, to work and practice against this negative attribute. In other words, let's

get back to that now, how to be yourself. Let's just suppose for the moment that you really were fully accepting yourself with your failings.

**Gloria:** All right.

**Albert Ellis:** You know you're going to go out and you know you're going to screw up with the next man and the man after that in all probability but you're saying, all right, I have to go through a learning process, that's too bad. I won't be very good during this while but I'll do it just as I would as ice skating where I'd have to fall on my neck for a few times before I learn to ice skate. OK, now let's suppose that. Then if that were so, if you were really accepting you, you'd go out, take the risks of being you, because after all if you do win one of these men, you have to be yourself. You're not winning them for a day. You're not winning them for an affair. I assume you want to marry one of these individuals eventually and be with them a long time.

**Gloria:** But mostly a long relationship. I don't think so much as marriage as a long relationship.

**Albert Ellis:** All right, a long relationship, in the course of which you couldn't act. So, we don't want to give you some technique of acting well that he will later find out was a role-playing sort of thing.

**Gloria:** Right.

**Albert Ellis:** So, you have to eventually be yourself. Now if you really weren't so disturbed about these present, current failings of yours you could go out and be this self of yours, ask yourself what do I really want to do with this man to help enjoy him and have him help enjoy me? Because that's the basic function of life, enjoyment, which we tend to lose. And you force yourself to take the risk of being that because if you succeeded, great, if you failed, too bad. Either you are not for him or he may even not be for you. Because don't forget, you said before when these men reject you, you assume right away it must be my doing and my fault. You know they may not be your cup of tea and you may not be their cup of tea and it's nobody fault. It's just true incompatibility.

**Gloria:** I know it could be, yes.

**Albert Ellis:** You see.

**Gloria:** Yeah.

**Albert Ellis:** So, if you would really accept yourself as you are and then force yourself, and if you were one of my regular patients I would give you this homework assignment and then check up on you to see whether you could force yourself to open your big mouth and be you for a while. Even though it hurt with these males, you would find that, A, you would start being yourself and gradually lopping off these inefficiencies, which incidentally are the result of not being you but watching yourself from the outside while you're trying to be you, which is almost impossible. Because you can't spy on yourself and still be yourself very well at the same time.

**Gloria:** No, but it would become like a habit.

**Albert Ellis:** After a while if you took the risks and forced yourself to, as I said, open your big mouth and even though you thought maybe it will come out badly, maybe he won't like me, maybe I'll lose him completely, and so on and so forth, then you'd start swinging in the groove and being what you want to be. And I would almost guarantee that you'd become more practiced and less inefficient, especially in terms of the shyness, because you wouldn't be focusing on, oh my God, isn't this awful how bad I am. You would be focusing on what a nice individual this is and how can I enjoy him, which is the focus, the purpose of the relationship.

**Gloria:** Well, you say my focus is the opposite way.

Albert Ellis: Right.

**Gloria:** How can I be more attractive to him and how can he be pleased by me?

**Albert Ellis:** Because underneath if I am not then I cannot enjoy myself. I refuse to accept myself unless I attract and win this good individual. Isn't that what you're basically saying?

**Gloria:** Yes, I even go further, Dr. Ellis. When there is one of these men I come in contact with and I find that I want to cultivate more of a relationship. Well, if he accepts me and we're going along pretty great, I find myself constantly on the defensive. Constantly watching the way, I sit, not drinking too much, the whole time instead of just relaxing and saying he'll either like me or he doesn't.

**Albert Ellis:** An emotion in psychotherapy. You're giving a very good illustration of why other-directedness doesn't pay. Because if you really are defining yourself in terms of others' estimation of you then even when you're ahead of the game and you're winning them you have to be saying to yourself will I win them today, will I win them tomorrow, will I keep winning them? And you're always focused on am I doing the things to please him and you never are yourself, you never have a self. While if you're saying what do I want to do in life, there must be some human beings who would like me the way I am, let's see if this is one of those human beings then that's the only way is that you can be. You see?

**Gloria:** Yeah.

**Albert Ellis:** Now we haven't got too much time now so let's try to get it off on a constructive note of more concretely what you can do. You asked before where you can go, how you can meet new people. I'd say that, I don't know this particular area but it's almost anyplace, if you could do what we are talking about, really take risks and focus on what you want out of life, and on the fact that it's going to take time, which unfortunately it does, and it is not awful and you are not awful while it's taking that time, then you can leave yourself open unshyly to all kinds of new encounters. And these encounters can take place on busses, while waiting for a streetcar, if they have street cars in this area, at cocktail parties, anywhere. You can talk to people who look eligible, you can ask your friends to get you eligible males, and so on. But the main thing is that you have to, A, like yourself while you're not doing badly and, B, not be intolerant against conditions which are bad. And I'm agreeing with you that they are. Now as I said, I would give you if you were a patient of mine the homework assignment of deliberately, very deliberately going out and getting yourself into trouble. In other words, taking the most eligible males you can find at the moment and forcing yourself, risking yourself to be you.

**Gloria:** Are you saying even if it were like if I went into a doctor's office to start a conversation with him because he was attractive to me or he appealed to me?

**Albert Ellis:** Right

**Gloria:** Even go so far as to starting out a conversation with him, a personal one?

**Albert Ellis:** Why not? If he's an eligible individual, any kind of an eligible individual.

**Gloria:** Well, I know you accept that but that seems awfully brazen or something.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, let's suppose it is brazen. What have you got to lose? The worst he can do is reject you. And you don't have to reject you if you were thinking along the lines that we've been talking five minutes or so.

**Gloria:** Oh, Yeah.

**Albert Ellis:** Now can you try to do that?

**Gloria:** I think, I think so. It sort of gives me a spurt to go out and see. You're right, that's all I can do is be rejected.

**Albert Ellis:** Right, and that leaves you intact. It just leaves you, unfortunately, not for the moment getting what you want. So, you try. The one you've already read and I'll be very interested in finding out what happens.

**Gloria:** Oh, I'm excited about it.

**Albert Ellis:** Well, it was certainly very nice meeting you, Gloria.

**Gloria:** Thank you, Doctor.



## Conclusion by Albert Ellis

I enjoyed talking with this interesting and, I think, highly courageous patient. And thought that this session gave a pretty good illustration of a fairly typical session of Rational-Emotive Psychotherapy.

First, I was able rather rapidly and quickly to get to some of what I think are the philosophic cores of the patient's disturbances, to show her that the reason she is feeling shy and ashamed and afraid in this instance is because, even though partially unwittingly, she is defining herself in a very negative way or devaluing herself by blaming herself too much for imperfect behavior.

Because perfectionism is the root of most human evils and she was showing some fairly typical perfectionistic notions. So very quickly as is usually done in rational-emotive psychotherapy, we skip some of the asides, we skip going back into the history as some of the psychoanalysts do and we skip some of the transference relation between us and the patient and we skip some of the nonverbal expression, not that we think these things are quite unimportant; rather, I think they have relatively little to do with the patient's disturbance, which is her philosophy of life.

And typically, again this patient showed both anxiety and low frustration tolerance which most patients showed, and these were intertwined, and again very usually she was then beating herself over the head, blaming herself, condemning herself for feeling these kinds of feelings. Now she did not see very clearly, at least I thought so, at the beginning of the session; with descriptive sentences and exclamatory sounds she was telling herself to create these feelings and I endeavored to show her some of these sentences and what could be done about it.

And among other things I also, though briefly, because this is just one brief session, tried to give her a homework assignment that she could go and get her teeth into and actively try to promote herself by going out and taking risks which normally up to now she hasn't been taking that much of. It's interesting to note that again quite typically, in this session although I was attacking fairly vigorously the

patient's attitudes and philosophies, she did not feel an attack on her; she felt that I was supporting her if anything and she ended up, I thought rather optimistically, feeling that I had given her several ideas on what she could do in the future.

Again, rather typically in this session I kept persuading the patient and attacking her ideas and showing her that her philosophy of life not only was such and such, but that if she stuck to this kind of philosophy, she had to get negative and self-defeating results from it. And then I kept persistently going on even though at one time, she became defensive and wasn't quite accepting by any means what I was saying. I didn't let this bother me but kept going on against her basic core system, her value system, because this is again what bothers patients that they give up very easily on attacking their own negative evaluations of themselves and therefore, they persist for ever.

There were limitations of course, especially in terms of time, to the session and these limitations did have some effect for example it was not enough time for repetition. In several sessions, I would have gone over much of the same material until I was sure that it had sunk in; then I would have had time to get feedback from the patient to see whether she really understood in action, in particular what I was talking about and whether she was following it up or leading herself up some other diverting pathway, which people can do. There was no time to emphasize that she would have to continually reassess her evaluations of herself and her general philosophies and do rethinking for the rest of her life. There was no time to show the patient very much that even during this session in relation to me and what she was saying about herself, that she was displaying her bad attitudes toward herself. And finally, there was no occasion to continue the process as this was an individual session to see how she related specifically to other non-therapists, as she would in group therapy, and in the midst of this group situation, to show her exactly what was going on and what she could do about it.

But I feel hopeful about the session and think that perhaps I was able at least to give the patient a few ideas which she could then go out and work on, on her own because unless patients do work themselves with the material that we therapists give them, in psychotherapy nothing eventually happens. It isn't any magic that we have for them but we can give them certain catalytic ideas and influences. If they work on them and practice them later, they will have a good result for the rest of their lives.

● **CHAPTER THREE:  
GESTALT THERAPY**  
Dr. Frederick Perls



Frederick Perls (1893-1970) The German psychiatrist and psychologist developed Gestalt<sup>1</sup> Therapy with his wife Laura Perls in the 40th and 50th decades. This method is based on awareness of emotions and behavior, especially the body.

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1. An organised whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts

Rogers was silent in the treatment room, helping the client to make the final decision to get out of the crises of his life, just by summarizing the words of the patient and returning them to the patient.

Ellis in his treatment room discredited his patient's interpretations and beliefs and tried to replace negative interpretations and irrational beliefs with more positive interpretations and more rational beliefs, in order to help the patient make the world and herself and her relationships real and seem more and more logical to be treated.

Perls attacks the patient with a mask on his face, preventing her from lying and deceiving herself, so that he can begin his treatment honestly. Perls describes the barriers to a healthy personality as follows:

**Obstacles to creating a healthy personality:**

1- A safe environment and parental support lead the child to self-reliance, the lack of which causes the child to not rely on his own support and to experience a dead end; Because he is disappointed with both himself and his parents.

2- Excessive parental involvement and self-disclosure also limit children and prevent them from developing a healthy personality. Children will be afraid of their parents' anger, and children will become obedient and dependent, for whom the slightest disobedience to parental orders will result in deprivation and punishment. The child says: If I accept the risk of my actions, I will no longer be dear to my parents and they will not approve of me.

3- Some parents look to the past and experience every failure in life and want to make up for what they did not have in the lives of their children. As a result, lazy children are delivered to the community, and lazy children prefer to stay nurtured and achieve whatever they want with parental support. Such an environment brings little failure. While it is only with failure that we can stand on our own two feet and taste independence.

4- The patient is playing a role and does not show the reality of his existence. Based on a fantasy, he tries to escape from his real self. Following this layer, he cultivates his fake personality; Because it only shows half of what it is. In this way, he is confronted with opposite poles.

5- Two opposing poles: The dominant pole acts in the form of conscience and commands and forbids, and by commanding and blaming, it wants to drive the nail of its dominance. The dominant part of the character is the slave-like part, which seems to follow the expected demands of the dominant pole; But in reality, with passive aggression, he tries to take control of the dominant sector. As long as people do not accept these contradictory poles in their being and constantly try to eliminate one in favor of the other, the fake character will continue to survive.

6- In order for a person to be completely cheerful and fresh, he must explode in anger, sadness, joy and orgasm. With these explosions, one goes a long way in the path of growth. Explosions only occur when a person stops playing the role of a fake layer and ignores their own components.

7- The client's job is to stay here and now. In one of the Gestalt therapy techniques, the client sits on a chair to expose the fake layer. Play various roles such as helpless, stupid or patient, and then the patient is asked to participate in therapeutic exercises and be aware of the roles he plays and the fake faces he chooses for himself. For example, in domineering-submissive practice, the therapist sits in a chair once in a domineering role and then in a submissive role.

8- Part of the therapist's responsibility is to stay in the here and now and keep the client in the present. For example, if the therapist complains to the client and the reason for his problems is known to the client, the 'empty chair' technique can be performed. And the client is asked to visualize at this moment that his parents are sitting on a chair and he is telling his unspoken words to them.

9- Unlike Rogers' therapy, the therapist does not reflect the clients' words. Rather, they give feedback and information to the client on what they see and hear, and especially on what constitutes physical barriers to treatment.

## **Gestalt Therapy session with Gloria by Frederick Perls**

Psychotherapy is sometimes defined as: The process of helping a person is learn how to help themselves.

### **Explanation by Dr. Frederick Perls**

I want to show you a simple outline of what Gestalt treatment is all about. The Gestalt therapist works on these equation points:

- Awareness.
- Present time.
- Reality.

In contrast to indepth psychology, in the Gestalt treatment we try to understand the apparent issues and the level of problems, to understand the situation in which we are engaged in shaping Gestalt, totally based on you and me, and here and now.

In Gestalt, escape to the future or the past is considered as a possible resistance to the present. The affected person has given up much of his or her potential. He must regain his lost ability. He must integrate the opposite poles within himself. He must recognize the difference between role-playing and real self-reliance behaviors.

The war between internal contradictions undermines the patient's efficiency and calmness. But every bit of integration makes him strong and calm again. In the extraordinary and safe state of the therapeutic situation, the patient begins to leave the influence of the environment, and to begin to rely on his personal strength. This process is called maturation.

Once the patient has learned to step on his own feet emotionally, intellectually, economically, his need for therapy will collapse. He will wake up from the nightmare of his current existence.

'The basic technique of Gestalt is: not to explain things to the patient, but to provide

the patient opportunities to understand and to discover himself. For this purpose, I manipulate and confront the patient in such a way that he's confronting himself. In this process he identifies with his lost potential for instance through assimilating his projections by acting out. By acting out the alien part of himself instantly.

I consider any interpretation to be a therapeutic mistake as this one implies that the therapist understands the patient better than the patient himself. Interpretation takes away from the patient the chains of self-discovery and prevents him from finding out his own values and style. On the other hand, I disregard most of the content of what the patient says and concentrate most on the nonverbal level as this is the only one which is less subject to self-deception. In his verbal pseudo self-expression on the nonverbal level, the relevant Gestalt will always emerge and can be dealt with in the here-and-now'.

## Transcript of Gloria – Perls Consultation session

**Frederick Perls:** We are going to interview for half an hour.

**Gloria:** Right away I'm scared

**Frederick Perls:** you say you're scared but you're smiling. I don't understand how one can be scared and smiling at the same time?

**Gloria:** and I'm also suspicious of you, I think you understand very well. I think you know that... when I get scared, I laugh or I tend to cover up

**Frederick Perls:** Do you have stage fright.

**Gloria:** I don't know, I'm totally aware of you... I'm afraid that... I'm afraid you're going to have such a direct attack that you're going to get me in the corner and I'm afraid of it... I want you to be more on my side

**Frederick Perls:** You said I get you in your corner, you put your head on your chest, what is it you want?

**Gloria:** well it's like ...yeah... it's like I'm afraid... you know?

**Frederick Perls:** Where would you like to go? .... Can you describe the corner you would like to go to?

**Gloria:** yeah it's back in corner where I'm completely protected

**Frederick Perls:** where you would be safe from me?

**Gloria:** well, I know I wouldn't really... well

**Frederick Perls:** imagine you are in this corner, you're perfectly safe now. What are you doing little girl?

**Gloria:** but I just said...



**Frederick Perls:** Yes, you just said... how long would you sit?

**Gloria:** I don't know, but this is so funny... as you're saying this... this reminds me of when I was a little girl. Every time I was afraid, I felt better sitting in the corner

**Frederick Perls:** okay, are you a little girl?

**Gloria:** No, but it's the same feeling

**Frederick Perls:** are you a good little girl?

**Gloria:** this feeling reminds me of it

**Frederick Perls: (louder)** Are you a little girl?

**Gloria:** No

**Frederick Perls:** So how old are you?

**Gloria:** 30 year

**Frederick Perls:** And you are not a little girl?

**Gloria:** No.

**Frederick Perls:** Okay..... so you are a 30 years old girl who's afraid of me, her therapist

**Gloria:** I don't even know if I... yeah, I do know I'll be afraid of you... I get real defensive with you

**Frederick Perls:** Now, what can I do to you?

**Gloria:** you can't do anything but I can sure feel down and I can feel stupid for not having the right answers

**Frederick Perls:** now what would it do to you to feel dumb and stupid

**Gloria:** I hate it when I'm stupid

**Frederick Perls:** what would it do for you to be dumb and stupid? put it like

this.... what would you do to **me**... if you would play dumb and stupid

**Gloria:** makes you all the more smarter and all the higher above me then I really have to look up to you because you're so smart yeah

**Frederick Perls:** yeah but tell me how practical I am

**Gloria:** no I think you can do that all by yourself

**Frederick Perls:** I think the other way around... if you play dumb and stupid you force me to be more explicit

**Gloria:** That's been said to me before, but I don't .... but I don't know

**Frederick Perls:** what are you doing with your feet now?

**Gloria:** wiggling (laughs)

**Frederick Perls:** What's funny now?

**Gloria:** (smiling) I am afraid to do everything I do, gee..... yeah I want you to help me become more relaxed, yes, I don't want to be so defensive with you, I don't like to feel so defensive...

You're acting like... you're treating me as if I'm stronger than I am and I want you to protect me more and be nicer to me

**Frederick Perls:** Are you aware of your smile? You don't believe a word of it ....

**Gloria:** I do.... You don't think I am being serious...

**Frederick Perls:** Sure, you are bluffing.... You are being phony...

**Gloria:** do you mean it seriously

**Frederick Perls:** yeah you can see you are not faded, you are laughing, you are giggling, you squirm, u it's phony; you are putting on a performance for me

**Gloria:** oh I I resent that very much

**Frederick Perls:** Can you express it?

**Gloria:** Yes sir. I most certainly I'm not being phony. I... I will admit this. It's hard for me to show my embarrassment and I hate to be embarrassed, but boy, I resent you calling me a phony just because I smile when I'm embarrassed or I'm put in the corner doesn't mean I'm being a phony

**Frederick Perls:** wonderful, thank you. I didn't expect it but for the last minute

**Gloria:** well I am mad at you

**Frederick Perls:** yeah that's right it didn't have to cover up your anger with your smile. Now in that moment, in that minute you had no control

**Gloria:** well at that minute I was mad though I wasn't embarrassed

**Frederick Perls:** when you mentioned that you are not phony?

**Gloria:** I still resent that... I'm not phony when I am nervous

**Frederick Perls:** Again

**Gloria:** (Raising your voice) I want to get mad at you .... I you know what I want you on my level so I can pick on you just as much as you're picking on me

**Frederick Perls:** okay pick on me

**Gloria:** I have to wait till you say something that I can pick on (shaking and rotating hands)

**Frederick Perls:** what does this mean (imitating hand movement) can you develop this movement

**Gloria:** I can't find words... I want to ..

**Frederick Perls:** develop this (hand movement)

Gloria: I want to....(hand movement)

Frederick Perls:... I think you were dancing

**Gloria:** I want to start all over again with you

**Frederick Perls:** okay that's sounds like fun

**Gloria:** I know a corner I'd like to put you on... I'd like to ask you a question and... because I have a feeling you don't like me right off the bat and I want to know if you do

**Frederick Perls:** If you were your best friend what would you say about Gloria?

**Gloria:** I'd say that she's a phony for one

**Frederick Perls:** say you are a phony?

**Gloria:** I would tell Gloria you're a phony and you're a flip little girl and you're a show-off

**Frederick Perls:** what's Gloria answer to that?

**Gloria:** I know what I'd answer I'd say I think you are too

**Frederick Perls: (laugh)** well tell this to me... tell me what a phony I am....

**Gloria:** phony is not quite the right word but it's more like a a show-off issue like ....

Frederick Perls: show-off?

Gloria: I can know all the answers

**Frederick Perls:** yeah

**Gloria:** and I want you to be more human and that doesn't seem very human to me

**Frederick Perls:** To know all the answers is not human? What's to be more human?

**Gloria:** You are right away trying to find out how I'm kicking my feet and why am I doing like this (moving her hands) and why are you doing like that

**Frederick Perls:** oh dear, I've got eyes, I can see you're kicking your feet... I don't need a scientific computer to see that you're kicking your feet... let's think about that. I don't need to be wise to see that you are kicking your feet

**Gloria:** I know but it seems like you're trying to find some reason for it

**Frederick Perls:** I don't. It is your imagination.

**Gloria:** okay I know what I'd like from you... can I tell you what I'd like from you?

**Frederick Perls:** yeah

**Gloria:** I'd like you to be aware that I'm kicking my feet and to be aware that I'm giggling when I'm really nervous and accept it instead of putting me on the defensive having to explain it I don't want to have to explain why I'm doing these things..

**Frederick Perls:** Did I ask you to explain

**Gloria:** you said why am I or what am I doing well .. what am I doing you said

**Frederick Perls:** That's right... kicking the feet... I didn't ask you to explain it? It is your imagination. It's not me, for it is the effect of your imagination... big difference...

**Gloria:** (Big sigh)

**Frederick Perls:** Now do this again

**Gloria:** Do you mean this? (big sigh)

Frederick Perls:... how do you feel now

**Gloria:** I don't know.

**Frederick Perls:** Playing stupid?

**Gloria:** I'm NOT playing stupid. I don't know the correct answers

**Frederick Perls:** this is plain stupid...

You did something that to your hair there. By any chance is there something in my hair that you object to?

**Gloria:** No

**Frederick Perls:** Okey.

**Gloria:** no, but your hair and your features go with the feeling I had about you earlier... I... I had a feeling I could be afraid of you and you're the type of person that seems like you demand so much respect

**Frederick Perls:** Please be free. I demand so much respect okay that's what you just saw

**Gloria:** well, 'You know how smart I am, I know more about psychology than you do Gloria, so anything I say of course is right'.

**Frederick Perls:** can you say the same as Gloria... something similar as Gloria... but the same act as Gloria. I demand respect because...

**Gloria:** I don't know

**Frederick Perls:** you do know

**Gloria:** I don't identify it... with my father but not me... I don't feel like I demand respect

**Frederick Perls:** You don't demand respect:

**Gloria:** No

**Frederick Perls:** yeah sure

**Gloria:** I'd like more... I'd like you to respect me more

**Frederick Perls:** well you see, so you demand respect?

**Gloria:** all right yeah, yeah, I don't mind if I could demand respect from you, I would

**Frederick Perls:** DO IT! who's preventing you except yourself?

**Gloria:** because I feel if I get myself out on the corner, you're gonna let me just drown, you're not going to help me one bit and I know that I can't quite come up to standards with you

**Frederick Perls:** what should I do when you're in the corner?

**Gloria:** encourage me to come out

**Frederick Perls:** Aaaaah! You don't have enough courage to come out by yourself. You need some people to pull the little maid in distress out of that corner.

**Gloria:** Yeah

**Frederick Perls:** so anytime you want somebody to pay attention to you, you put yourself into a corner and wait till your rescuer comes

**Gloria:** Yes that's exactly what I like

**Frederick Perls:** and this is what I call phony

**Gloria:** Pardon me.

**Frederick Perls:** this is what I call phony

**Gloria:** why is it phony? I'm admitting to you what I am... how is that a phony?

**Frederick Perls:** it is a phony for me because it's a trick, it's a gimmick. You put yourself into a corner and wait until somebody comes to rescue you

**Gloria:** I'm admitting it, I know what I'm doing. I'm not being phony, I'm not pretending I'm so brave. I resent that I feel like you're saying unless I come out openly and stand on my own I'm not a phony. BALONEY! I'm just just as real sitting in that corner as I am out here all by myself.

**Frederick Perls:** But you are not sitting in that corner.

**Gloria:** well not now... and besides that it's like passing judgment when you call me phony, I just hate that anyway

**Frederick Perls:** Now we are getting somewhere. I call anybody phony who puts on an act. If you like somebody and if you want to meet this person, to go to this person tell them I would like to meet you, I would call not phony, but if you consciously go into the corner and wait to be rescued this I call phony

**Gloria:** and I still think you're judgmental. you know what I have... a feeling you've never felt this way in your life... you feel so secure that you don't have to feel like anybody that does something like this... you're going to pass judgment on their being a phony. Well, I resent it.

**Frederick Perls:** Good, now it's passing judgment...

**Gloria:** YOU ARE! you're sitting up there in your big old chair

**Frederick Perls:** I'm the judge, I pass judgment... you pass judgment on me now

**Gloria:** I don't feel close to you at all Dr. Perls I feel bad for me, I feel like you're playing one big game

**Frederick Perls:** what? we're not playing games but in spite of the games I think I touched you did I not

**Gloria:** of course you did

**Frederick Perls:** and I think I hit the bull's eye, do you feel that?

**Gloria:** I don't know, all I know is when somebody, when I feel the way I feel with you right now. It's like you don't have feelings

**Frederick Perls:** Now, exaggerate it. You just talk to me

**Gloria:** I can't ...I can't ...I want to laugh... I want to ...I want you to be younger than me so I could really scold you

**Frederick Perls:** How old must I be?

**Gloria:** be at my age.. 30.

**Frederick Perls:** Good I'm 30 now. Imagine I'm 30 now...

**Gloria:** okay... don't be so cocksure yourself, don't think you're so doggone smart, don't act so proud because you've never been in the corner. I think you can be just as big a phony parading around like you're so damn smart, you know all the answers as much as me sitting in my corner, oh, and I like the feeling of



you being younger I'd like to... really I'd like to embarrass you

**Frederick Perls:** yeah..embarass me...

**Gloria:** you wouldn't get embarrassed, you won't even be affected

**Frederick Perls:** Tell me, embarrass me, tell me how ugly I am

**Gloria:** you don't look ugly... you are distinguished... that gives you... that's all the more on your side if you look so distinguished... then see it's more on your side too

**Frederick Perls:** Right Gloria. oh yeah can you see one thing, we had quite a good fight

**Gloria:** No, I don't think you're fighting with me

**Frederick Perls:** but I thought you came out quite a bit

**Gloria:** No, I am mad at you

**Frederick Perls:** wonderful

**Gloria:** but you seem so detached, you don't even seem to care that I'm mad at you, you're not recognizing me at all Doctor Perl's, not a bit

**Frederick Perls:** this is .. correct me.. our contact is much too superficial to be involved in caring... I care for you as far as... let's see... you are right now my client .. I care for you as far as I'd like to like an artist... to bring something out which is hidden in you ..this is far as I care

**Gloria:** well I'd like you to... I'd like to feel that there's some... frustrating... if I were to leave you right now and not see you again, it would frustrate me to feel like there hasn't been more contact. I feel completely out of contact with you, like I'm talking to the baby that doesn't understand me or something like that. I don't feel like we're a bit in contact and that frustrates me. That bothers me more than being angry with you... I'd rather we were angry and fought than to have no contact... yeah... this reminds me of when my husband and I used to fight... he sits

there and he listens to me but he's not even aware of how much I hate him and how mad I am at him I'd rather yeah, I'd rather it affect you. You didn't really hate me or something... and I feel like you're purposely staying out of contact with me

**Frederick Perls:** how should I be? give me your fantasy how could I share my concerns with you?

**Gloria:** I can't say in words, I know the feeling I'd say on you, but I can't say, it's just a feeling, like I don't know, it's like I want you to respect me more as a human being, that I've got feelings

**Frederick Perls:** now we come back to the beginning... so you want respect?

**Gloria:** Yes I do. This is a different kind of respect than what I meant the first time

**Frederick Perls:** but you want to .. you need respect?

**Gloria:** yes

**Frederick Perls:** I respect you so much as you think .. that you refused to accept the phony part of yourself and that brought us to the genuine part right now the last few minutes, you were wonderfully genuine. You were not playing anymore I could see you were erupting

**Gloria:** well I don't feel I've got it right when I don't like somebody or I disagree with what somebody's doing. If I should respect them, if they're above me, they're superior to me, I don't feel I've got a right to really, really tell you how mad I am ....

**Frederick Perls:** That's rubbish. You are taking yourself back into your safe corner.

**Gloria:** that's the way it feels. that's what the safe corner feels like to me

**Frederick Perls:** now go back to your safe corner because you were in your safe corner, you came out for a moment, you nearly met me, you nearly got a little bit angry with me. Now go back to your safe corner.

**Gloria:** I feel like you're telling me the only way you respect me as a human being is if I'm aggressive and forceful and strong, yeah, I thought you couldn't even

accept my.... I'd be scared to death to cry in front of you. I feel like you'd laugh at me and call me a phony. I feel like you don't accept my weak side... only when I'm yelling back at you, hollering at you

**Frederick Perls:** you must be tired of my presence

**Gloria:** well I wouldn't even give you a satisfaction

**Frederick Perls:** say this again

**Gloria:** no

**Frederick Perls:** say this again

**Gloria:** I try not to, I try not to cry in front of you or show my weak spot for fear you may jump on me again

**Frederick Perls:** are you aware that your eyes are moist?

**Gloria:** I'm aware that I feel more choky, yes, I feel it

**Frederick Perls:** could you choke me?

**Gloria:** Pretend, but not for real

**Frederick Perls:** Why not for real?

**Gloria:** Well because I don't hate you that much

**Frederick Perls:** Would you like to choke me?

**Gloria:** I'd like to, I'd like to choke you. It would be to make you cry. I'd like to see you weak. I'd like to see you hurt and vulnerable

**Frederick Perls:** what will this do for you?

**Gloria:** make me feel like I'm... I have more of a right to be heard... you won't jump on me so quick

**Frederick Perls:** would you jump on me if I would cry

**Gloria:** No.

**Frederick Perls:** But I would jump on you if you would cry?

**Gloria:** no I'm not sure but

**Frederick Perls:** what would you like me to do if you were to cry

**Gloria:** I..(smiling)

**Frederick Perls:** you are smiling... you are smiling of something...

**Gloria:** well because I got two feelings I was gonna say I want you to I want you to lke me and give me a hug and be my friend but then I thought no I don't want to

**Frederick Perls:** what's your fear?

**Gloria:** I'd be scared to be too close to you

**Frederick Perls:** now we're getting somewhere. First you want to be close to me, now you're afraid to be too close to me. Do you notice this contradiction?

**Gloria:** That's what I am saying

**Frederick Perls:** now we've got the two ports of existence

**Gloria:** but they're two different feelings of course I mean emotionally but not physically

**Frederick Perls:** two ports of existence. now either far away in a corner or be so close that you can learn to run with other person... the perennial travel between the two extremes

**Gloria:** I do. You know what, I'm thinking when I am really hurt and really upset about something and I want someone to love me, like my girlfriend will do it a lot, and she'll come up to hug me. I don't... I don't want it

**Frederick Perls:** Exactly. This is what I'm talking about you cannot sustain contact okay.. what will happen if you become too close to your girlfriend and if you let her hug you

**Gloria:** the only thing I'm aware of is like when I perspire it embarrasses me that should feel how wet I am and she would hold my body up close and I don't know...

**Frederick Perls:** Are you finished with closeness, a kind of disgust ...

**Gloria:** yeah yes I am (she shows a disgusted face and makes a disgusted sound)

**Frederick Perls:** do this more

**Gloria:** it's just icky (repeats disgusted expression and sound)

**Frederick Perls:** Again

**Gloria:** I can just feel what it is... I don't like it

**Frederick Perls:** Can you say this to me .... Dr. Frederick Perls, you are icky?

**Gloria:** No.

**Frederick Perls:** No. What's your difficulty

**Gloria:** because I feel like if you really believe me, that one will hurt your feelings

**Frederick Perls:** oh you must love my feelings

**Gloria:** well

**Frederick Perls:** I thought that I was so indifferent see before that nothing could touch me. Now you suddenly discovered a way to touch me, isn't it?

**Gloria:** well you know what I believe? I believe you're the type of person sort of like me... you act like it wouldn't hurt your feelings but it really would. Relaxed, strong, but you you're soft and vulnerable inside there too - I think your feelings could be hurt sure, but I don't think you'd show it very easy

**Frederick Perls:** look what do I do? How could I see my feelings

**Gloria:** by turning it back on me. By saying, now, what did you get from that Gloria, you turn the whole thing back on me instead of showing what you are

**Frederick Perls:** now can you say this - what did you get out of this Perls ...say this to me

**Gloria:** get out of what?

**Frederick Perls:** what you just see... just this sickness

**Gloria:** sure I know what you'd get out of it... if I said what did you get out of this Perls, you will say nothing, it didn't bother me, it was you that did it, you still wouldn't let me know you were hurt, but I know what it would be if you told your true feelings, that you didn't want to show your hurt, so you covered it up same way with me in the corner

**Frederick Perls:** not if I... if I would cry what would you do with me

**Gloria:** you would be... you wouldn't be so superior to me, you'd be more vulnerable and I could pacify you and make you feel better

**Frederick Perls:** you could pacify me

**Gloria:** yes

**Frederick Perls:** and I could be the baby

**Gloria:** yes I'd like that... you'd feel more on my level... I wouldn't have to feel so down with you

**Frederick Perls:** So the other way around, you would have to be my baby. She would cry, would like to play the baby and be comforted and hugged and .... the poor thing...

**Gloria:** Well, I like it too.

**Frederick Perls:** I tell you something. I think we came to a nice closure. We came to a little bit of understanding. I think we will finish the situation. Well?

**Gloria:** Alright. Thanks.

### Conclusion by Frederick Perls

The demonstration was in my opinion quite successful in consistence with my theoretical outlook. Gloria's avoidance of the genuine encounter manifested itself in three ways:

The patient was first taking control by putting on a smiling sophisticated phony mask, oscillating between a pretense of being frightened and yet at the same time having me figured out, thus believing to be fully in control of the situation.

Secondly, she was withdrawing by fantasizing about hiding in a corner.

Third, she was blocking the real encounter of melting through crying which then would have been the real emotional meaning of this meeting.

The patient was capable of identifying with several fantasies she had projected unto me. This was especially evident with regard to her initial denial for a need to be respected. The need for environmental support started to come out besides the need to get respect.

I broke off the session as the first tears began to appear. She began to play the role of a lonely child and apparently wanted to be hugged and comforted. Adherence to the assimilation of her projection began to work and she began to experience holding me like a baby.

In some projections the main therapeutic factor was to show the inconsistency of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors, for instance, saying that she was frightened and smiling at the same time. A frightened person does not smile. I feel it was in the direction of an embarrassment. This embarrassment was protected by the brazenness and anger. To get to her existential embarrassment we would have to work through and eliminate the phoniness; that is the ease with which we can superficially assume any role that is required for a specific situation. This pseudo-adaptation is her way of coping with life. This is about what I got out of this conversation.

## Summary

As you read in the previous three chapters, each of these three prominent psychologists have assumptions about human mental illness and apply techniques according to those assumptions.

Carl Rogers' general premise is that man knows his own pain and healing, but outside voices, the voices of others, prevent him from hearing the inner voice. Therefore, according to Rogers, the best technique is for the psychologist to listen to his patient's words, and to summarize it, to present what he has heard to the patient, to give the patient an opportunity to listen to his inner voice to solve his problem. It is important for Rogers to speak to the client and listening actively is the therapist's most important job.

Albert Ellis' general assumption is that the patient's irrational interpretations and beliefs are the cause of his suffering. As a result, the patient should be helped to change his or her irrational interpretations and beliefs through education. Changing a patient's beliefs through education is the most important part of Ellis's Rational-Emotive Therapy.

The general premise of Frederick Perls is that the cause of mental illness is the mask that the patient wears on his face to be favored by society and others, and therefore with this mask he was not being self-realistic. Therefore, by attacking this fake mask and removing it, the therapist will confront the patient with his true self. To use Perls' Gestalt therapy, emotions and reactions are more important than what the patient says.

In today's therapies, each of these approaches is used together as appropriate treatment tools. And despite their differences, therapists do not see them in opposition. In some treatments, they first begin to diagnose the Rogers method. And after identifying the misconceptions, they turn to Ellis's techniques and complete the rest with Perls' method.

**Mohsen Makhmalbaf**  
London  
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