

## 2. Background

- Ranks with **humanistic phenomenological school of thought**.
- Theory based on 3 central assumptions:
  - Individual has *constructive potential*
  - Nature of individual is basically *goal-directed*
  - Individual is *capable of changing*
- Emphasis on importance of people's subjective experience of themselves (self concepts) and its influence on personality.
- Individual is central figure in actualisation of their potential, environment only plays facilitating or inhibiting role.
  - Facilitating – promoting self-actualisation
  - Inhibiting – preventing self actualisation
- Potential is actualised in atmosphere in which individual is unconditionally accepted and feels free to develop without external restrictions.
- **The influence of Roger's life on his theory:**
- **Theory originated** mainly from experience with people in clinical therapeutic situations.
- **Thinking was influenced** by personal life experiences – especially childhood.
- Exposed to scientific thinking at early age
  - Father (engineer) used scientific principles on their farm.
    - Applied control groups & hypothesis tests to feeding patterns of cows.
- Farm life influenced divergent interests
  - **1. In Roger's vision of fully-functioning individual, he places emphasis on openness to experience and the ability to derive pleasure from small things.**
    - Influenced by:
      - Intensive study of night-flying moth at age 12 in which he became regarded as a specialist.
- Came from narrow-minded, conservative family
  - Family had little social contact with others.
  - Were forbidden contact with 'sinful' things.
    - (card games, films, smoking, alcohol)
      - ∴ Roger's immersed himself in books which:
        - (+) Widened intellectual horizons and enriched knowledge.
        - (-) Plunged him into isolation, hampering development of human relationships.
  - **2. Theory argues for 'wholeness' and development of all potential.**
    - Influenced by:
      - Narrow-minded, conservative home.
      - Roger's isolation & lack of development of human relationships.
- Roger's later concentrated on developing human relationships and focused on area where he had experienced emptiness in himself.
  - **3. Rebellious resistance Roger's displayed towards any enforced prescriptions on individual from the outside world. (i.e. Roger's believed that individuals were responsible for their own self-actualisation and the environment only played a facilitating or inhibiting role – it *did not control* individual development)**
    - Influenced by:
      - Rogers tertiary studies in the following universities:
        - (1924) Union Theological Seminary, New York.
          - Individual thinking was encouraged to such a degree that he found it impossible to stick to specific doctrines.
        - Teacher's College at University of Columbia
          - Roger's found that his freedom of thought would not be limited or forced in a particular direction in the area of psychology.
        - (1927-1928) Internship at Institute of child guidance.

- (1931) Received PhD in Clinical Psychology.
    - Accepted post as psychologist at Child study Department of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Rochester, New York) as he felt it was an opportunity to do something that interested him.
    - Closely associated with establishment of new Guidance Centre in Rochester and appointed director.
- Roger's was often the centre of controversy as he propagated the humanist approach – dramatically differed from psychoanalytical and behaviourist approaches.
- **Roger's policy** was consistently to walk gently through life & make as little noise as possible until reaching his goal, when it was too late to stop him.
- After 1940 – Roger's was associated with Ohio State, Chicago and Wisconsin Universities.
- 1964 – Left academia & joined Western Behavioural Sciences Institute (La Jolla, California)
- 1968 – moved to Centre for Studies of the Person (La Jolla)
- Last 15 years became involved in international conflict situations as a 'sociotherapist' and attempted to build a broad, productive experiential base in international arena.
- Received dozens of awards in his professional capacity.
- Enjoyed 55 years of happy marriage to Helen and was able to refer to his children as his best friends.
- Saw himself as 'older & growing' rather than 'growing older'.
- Died 1987
- Visited S.A. in 1982 & conducted workshops in JHB and CT.
- Invited to return in 1986 to facilitate black/white groups and use his person-centred orientation to investigate issues causing tensions among different population groups.
- Carl Rogers programme has been offered at Wits Centre for Continuing Education since '86.

### 3. The view of the person underlying the theory

- Fundamental view of person – **humanistic-phenomenological**.
- **Humanistic approach:**
  - Emphasis on study of individual as a whole (holistic).
  - Each person plays an active role in actualising their own inherent potential.
  - Individuals:
    - Are active role players in their own functioning.
    - Can be trusted to follow a positive course in order to realise their potential and be the best they can be.
    - Possess basically constructive attributes but destructive tendencies (aggression) also exist.
      - Healthy people are aware of positive & negative attributes, but the constructive triumph over the destructive.
- Places a high premium on *freedom and constructiveness of human nature*.
  - Emphasises person's role in determining their own lives.
  - Theory is **NOT deterministic**
    - Behaviour is determined by the choices of the individual, not by factors beyond their control.
    - Environment only facilitates or inhibits role in realisation of individual's potential.
      - Closer look at social environment shows signs of determinism in his theory.
- **Phenomenological approach:**
  - Emphasis on part played by people's *subjective experience* of their world.
    - Particularly the impact of subjective experience on behaviour of individual's *self concepts* (people's view of themselves).
  - **Ideal environment** is one created by circumstances allowing individuals to see themselves exactly as they are & in which full potential can be realised.

- Environment lays down certain conditions for accepting the individual which influences their self concepts.
  - Individuals act in accordance with conditions set by significant others – not in accordance with their potential.
- Rogers presents ideal that appears to endow individual with freedom BUT in practice, most people are actually influenced by external factors.
  - However, emphasis is placed on the individual's freedom to change which introduces the possibility that those who function in terms of other's conditions can become free and realise their potential.
    - Prerequisite is that they must experience *unconditional acceptance*
      - In therapeutic situation.
      - In every-day life.
- **Basic theoretical assumptions underlying Roger's theory:**
  - Roger's personality theory was derived from experience in the field of psychotherapy.
  - 19 propositions of his theory are the assumptions which are fundamental to his approach.
  - The first 5 are relevant with regards to the structure of the personality. \*
    - 1. All individuals exist in a continually changing world of experience of which they are the centre.
    - 2. Organisms react to the field as experienced and perceived.
      - Perceptual field is 'reality' for the individual.
    - 3. Organism reacts as an organised whole to this phenomenal field.
    - 4. A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.
    - 5. The result of interaction with the environment (particularly evaluational interaction with others) is that the structure of self is formed – an organised, fluid, but consistent pattern of perceptions of characteristics & relationships of the "I" or "me", together with the values attached to these concepts.
- *The person occupies central position, which is why the individual (organism) is the central structural element. Salient issue is the organism which interacts with its 'total experiential world'/phenomenal field. Part of the phenomenal field that is bound up with the experience of the self is the self concept, which forms an important part of the structure of the personality.*

The terms 'self', 'self concept' and 'self structure' all refer to individuals' perception of themselves.

#### **4. The structure of the personality**

- 3 Structural elements:
  - The organism
  - The phenomenal field
  - The self concept

##### **4.1. The organism**

- The total individual with all physical and psychological functions.
- Is central figure that constantly interacts with dynamically changing world in which they live.
- Organism's behaviour is determined by subjective perception of their world and the meanings they attach to it.

##### **4.2. The phenomenal field**

- The totality of a person's perceptions & experiences, including:
  - Perceptions of *objects or events outside the person* and the meaning they attach to them.
  - *Inner experiences* and meanings that relate to the individuals themselves.

\* It is not necessary to learn the propositions word for word, but you need to know how to apply them in situations.

### 4.3. The self concept

- Differentiated part of phenomenal field which concerns the individual is known as self concept.

#### DEFINITION:

*...organised consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the 'self' and the perceptions of the relationships of the 'self' to others & various aspects of life, and the values attached to these perceptions. It is a gestalt which is available to awareness, though not necessarily in awareness. It is a fluid & changing gestalt, a process, but a specific entity.*

- **Self concept** is view that individuals have of themselves & the value they attach to themselves.
  - Represents the person's conscious experience of themselves.
  - Only conscious experiences & experiences allowed into consciousness are included in the self concept.
- Consists of a relatively stable pattern of integrated perceptions but is flexible & changeable.
  - Due to self-perceptions being organised into an integrated whole, change in part of the self concept influences the whole of the self image.
- **Ideal self** – self concept that individual would most like to have.
  - **Psychologically healthy person:**
    - Ideal self is realistic, attainable and in harmony with the self concept.
    - Ideal self provides valuable guidelines for growth & development as it reveals characteristics & ideals which individual strives towards.
  - **Psychologically unhealthy person:**
    - Ideal self and self concept does not correspond.
    - Ideal self represents extreme forms of the ideals set by others for the individual and is not in tune with the real potential of the individual.
    - Successful therapy will allow for self concept & self ideal to draw closer to each other.

### 5. The dynamics of the personality

- Propositions 6 – 13 concern the dynamics of the personality \*
  1. **6.** The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualise, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism.
  2. **7.** The best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual.
  3. **8.** Behaviour is the basically goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.
  4. **9.** Emotion accompanies and facilitates goal-directed behaviour, the kind of emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behaviour for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.
  5. **10.** Values attached to the experiences and values that are part of the self concept are directly experienced by the organism, and in some instances are values interjected or taken over from others, but perceived in a distorted fashion – as if they have been experienced directly.
  6. **11.** As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either: symbolised, perceived and organised into some relationship to the self, ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self concept, denied symbolisation or given distorted symbolisation because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.
  7. **12.** Most of the ways which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self.
  8. **13.** In some instances, behaviour may be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not yet been symbolised. Such behaviour may be inconsistent with the structure of the self, but in such instances the behaviour is not 'owned' by the individual.

- Basic *motive* underlying all behaviour – **the actualising tendency**.
- 2 other basic *needs* underlying & directing behaviour:
  - **Need for positive regard**
  - **Need for positive self regard**
- **Congruent functioning** = Individual's self concept corresponds with their potential
- **Incongruent functioning** = Individual's self concept does not correspond with their potential.
- **Self concept** – plays a specific role in perception and experience and how it affects behaviour.

### 5.1. The actualising tendency

- The purpose of all life is to become 'the self which on truly is'.
- All organisms have a natural tendency to strive for the utmost potential regardless of any setbacks.
- **Actualising tendency:**
  - The inherent tendency of organisms to maintain themselves and to expand/ grow in order to become what they want to be. (despite setbacks that may occur)
  - Therapists rely on the actualising tendency in order to lead their clients to discovering their own potential and in helping them to develop their potential as fully as possible.
- Roger's uses actualising tendency when referring to the general, basic motive of behaviour.
  1. When using the term 'self-actualising', he refers specifically to the actualisation of the self concept.
  2. The self actualising tendency is a subsidiary part of the actualising tendency.
- **Psychologically healthy/congruent person:**
  1. Person whose self concept and actual potential correspond.
  2. Actualisation of the self-concept and actualisation of the whole organism is in harmony.
- **Psychologically unhealthy/incongruent person:**
  1. Self concept does not correspond with actual potential.
  2. Self actualisation (maintaining the self concept) is pursued at expense of organism's actualisation.

### 5.2. The need for positive regard

- **Need for positive regard from others:**
  - Concerns individual's basic need for approval, appreciation, love, admiration & respect.
  - In order to fulfil this need, an individual sometimes adopts the wishes and values of another as their own and behaves in a particular way to earn esteem.
- **Need for positive self regard:**
  - Associated with the need for positive regard from others as people require esteem from others in order to esteem and feel positive about themselves.
- Need for positive regard seems to be acquired NOT innate.
- The need for positive regard plays an important role in determining behaviour.

### 5.3. Congruence and incongruence

- The need for positive regard can hinder the actualisation process when the desire for appreciation by others is in conflict with the actualisation of organisms' potential.
- Actualising tendency is directed towards realisation of all actual potential.
  - Individuals have capacity to be aware of all experiences which impinge on them & all psychic and physical attributes they possess at any time.
    1. Giving them the ability to know and actualise themselves completely.
- **Congruence** – in the ideal situation there is no difference between people's experiential world and their view of themselves.
  - The ideal in which individuals are open & conscious to all of their experiences & can incorporate them into the self concept.

- Congruent people:
  1. See themselves as they really are
  2. Have a self concept that corresponds with their actual potential.
    - ∴ Behaving in a way which maintains & enhances the self concept, it is in harmony with their striving towards the actualisation of organismic potential.
- Self concept is based on:
  - True individual organismic experiences.
  - Individual efforts to win approval from others by incorporating their values into their own self concept.
    1. Condition of worth:
      - ∴ Due to trying to gain approval from others, an individual may incorporate other's values of a particular thing into their self concept, even though they may personally believe otherwise.
      - ∴ A condition of acceptance is created by others which the individual includes in their own self concept in order to retain their acceptance and simultaneously fulfil the need for positive regard. However, the individual will still desire what they originally valued.
- When an individual has an experience which is at odds with the self concept, they cannot incorporate the experience into the self concept.
- Total experiential world includes both admissible and inadmissible experiences:
  1. Experiences allowed into consciousness ∴ incorporated into self concept.
  2. Experiences not permitted into consciousness.
- **Incongruence:**
  - Experiences contrary to the self concept form part of the phenomenal field.
  - Individuals can exclude incongruent experiences from their consciousness by:
    1. Denying them.
    2. Distorting experiences to make them fit the self concept.

#### 5.4. The role of the self concept in experience

- 3 ways in which people deal with experiences:
  - Ignore experiences or symbolise them
    1. Allowing them into consciousness
  - Refuse to symbolise experiences
    1. Preventing them from reaching consciousness
- The individual's **specific needs and self concept** determine which of the 3 is most appropriate.
  - 1. Some experiences are *ignored* because they are irrelevant to the person's needs at a given moment, but at another time the same experiences may be *allowed into consciousness*.
  - 2. Experiences may be *symbolised* when they correspond with individual's needs.
  - 3. Experiences are *allowed into consciousness* when corresponding with an individual's self concept.
  - 4. Experiences which are *denied & distorted* are *denied access to consciousness* as they are contrary to the individual's self concept.
    1. Denial & distortion take place on an unconscious level when organism has a need or experience which cannot be symbolised because it is completely incongruent with the self concept.
      - ∴ Self concept is threatened & must be protected.
        - **Subception** – a form of perception on the unconscious level which an individual uses to determine whether an experience is a threat.
          - Experience not keeping with the self concept is selected at the unconscious level & defended against.
          - Treating an experience as a threat may be accompanied by anxiety.

### 5.5. The role of the self concept in determining behaviour

- Most of what a person does corresponds with the self concept.
  - Self concept plays an important role in determining behaviour and problems can arise if individual's needs don't accord with the self concept.
  - If needs don't correspond with self concept, in order to comply with self concept:
    1. Individuals vent their irritation in a distorted way about their inability to fulfil these needs.
    2. Individuals distort their perception of other's and their own behaviour.
  - Denied needs become so strong that they evoke behaviour in which they are satisfied directly (not through channels corresponding with self concept).
    1. When this occurs, individual is not prepared to 'own' their behaviour and will blame it on external factors.
  - Individuals function ideally when their self concepts are congruent with their needs and feelings ∴ their behaviour reveals & corresponds to self concept & reflects their needs and feelings.
  - In congruent functioning, individuals would have less need to deny or distort experiences and behaviour & would be more directed towards the actualisation of their full potential.

## 6. The development of the personality

- Rogers proposed general principles of development rather than specific stages.
- Main issue in personality development – formation of the self concept.
  - New-born infants have a phenomenal field that is undifferentiated.
  - Gradually differences occur between organisms and their worlds and the baby will begin to experience themselves as a separate entity.
  - Functioning of organisms at this early stage is in accordance with the *organismic evaluation process*:
    1. Organisms' functioning is directed towards fulfilling its own needs.
    2. Organism judges that which is advantageous as positive and that which is disadvantageous as negative.
    3. Evaluation process deals only with satisfying individual's needs.
  - Self concept gradually develops as a result of individual's actions with social environment and as a consequence of the evaluation of others. Only then does it begin to influence functioning.

### 6.1 The development of the self concept

- Self concept as a structural element:
  - Individuals attach specific meanings to experiences which involve them, & these are incorporated into the self concept.
  - Meanings and values which are not based on people's own experiences are also incorporated into the self concept.
- The need for positive regard & the actualising tendency are fundamental to functioning of all organisms.
  - All people that are closely connected to the individual (significant others) and help satisfy their need for positive regard play an important role in the development of that individual's self concept.
  - There are 2 key factors in the development of the self concept, namely:
    1. Unconditional positive regard
    2. Conditional positive regard

#### 6.1.1. Unconditional positive regard

- Unconditional positive regard is acceptance by significant others of individuals for what they are, just as they are.
  - Should be accepted as people with specific needs peculiar to them and not against needs of others; nor are other's needs forced on them.

- They do not need to fulfil requirements to gain esteem of significant others & are able to express their feelings and acknowledge their needs.
- Individual's self concepts are free to include all experiences and their self concepts are congruent with their potential
- No limitations are imposed on these individuals
  - ∴ Self concepts are congruent with organismic potential.
- Unconditional acceptance leads to complete actualisation of potential & allows individuals to realise innate abilities.
- However, a distinction needs to be made between *acceptance of the person* and *acceptance of the behaviour* when a particular behaviour in a situation is not satisfactory.
  - When a person behaves in an unsatisfactory manner, the person can still be unconditionally accepted but their behaviour may be disapproved of.
  - Phenomenological approach:
    - The subjective experience is the individual's own reality so it is not the specific behaviour of the significant other that is important, but the individual's perception of it.
- People are basically good – congruent people choose behaviour that is consistent with their organismic evaluation process and will assist the maintenance & enhancement of the organism; and **will not** choose behaviour that is to their detriment.
- Uncertainty of freedom of expression of behaviour.
  - Individuals should be free to give symbolic expression to their inner needs but some behaviour should be limited by societal norms as the expression of some emotions may lead to feelings of guilt rather than freedom.
  - It is presumed that individuals will exercise their freedom responsibly & choose constructive behaviour.

### 6.1.2. Conditional positive regard

- Every person sometimes experiences non-acceptance by significant others & will feel worthy only once they have fulfilled certain conditions laid down by others.
- **Conditions of worth:**
  - People experience conditional positive regard when they feel accepted by significant others on the basis that the individual has fulfilled specific conditions set by others.
  - These individuals formulate other's conditions for themselves & then distort them and make them their own by incorporating them into their self concepts.
  - If conditions set by others are not met, individuals will distort/deny their behaviour and will not accept responsibility for what they have done.
- Approval/disapproval can be conveyed verbally, by body language & through the unstated.
- The more conditional positive regard received from significant others, the more an individual includes these conditions in their own self concept
  - This leads to them becoming more incongruent.
    - Lack of congruence between self concept and organismic potential.
    - These individuals are only conscious of part of their experiences which reduces their ability to actualise their potentials and impairs their development towards fully functioning individuals.

## 7. Optimal development

- Proposition 14 – psychological adjustment occurs when the self concept is such that all of the individual's experiences are assimilated at a symbolic level in relation to the self concept.
  - ∴ Psychologically adjustable individual is capable of allowing all experiences into the self concept.
- The wider the spectrum of experience available to people and the more integrated these experiences are in the self concept, the better people will know themselves & be able to use their abilities and talents, choose constructive action and realise their potential fully.
  - ↳ **Fully functioning people.**
    - The 'good life' is not a static nirvana in which the person experiences:



- Satisfaction
- Happiness
- Fulfilment
- Tension reduction
- Drive reduction
- Homeostasis
- The good life is a process, not static state, in which organisms continuously strive to fulfil their potential (a direction not a destination).
- A fully functioning person displays characteristics which do not function independently of one another, namely:

### 7.1. A growing openness to experience

- Fully functioning person moves away from defensiveness & is **increasingly open to experience** – which they experience as a part of themselves and their world.
  - People who are completely open to experience (internal/external) have no need of subception or defence.

### 7.2. An increasingly existential lifestyle

- An increasing **tendency to live each moment fully**.
  - Person approaches existence without a pre-conceived structure, permitting the experience to form and reform the structure from moment to moment.
  - Self concept and personality emanate from experience, not distortion of experience to fit self concept.

### 7.3. Increasing organismic trust

- Individuals **trust themselves increasingly** when choosing appropriate behaviour or a situation.
  - Don't depend on existing codes, social norms or judgement of others.
  - Individuals find that if they are open to experiences, their sense of what is right is a reliable guide to satisfactory behaviour.

### 7.4. Freedom of choice

- Individuals can make whatever **choices** they like in terms of total experiential fields to which they become increasingly open.
  - They can do so as they feel responsible for their choices & play a role in determining their own behaviour.

### 7.5. Creativity

- Individuals are able to **be and live creatively**.
  - Person will adapt constructively to society without being a conformist and will be able to adjust to changing environments in an easy and creative way.

### 7.6. Basic reliability and constructiveness

- Individual who is good and open to a wide variety of their own needs and to the demands of the environment and society can be **trusted to act positively and constructively**.
  - Person is able to admit and accept all their needs and is able to maintain a realistic balance between them.
  - Fully functioning individual is able to exert the control that is necessary to maintain a balance among different needs and to work out the most constructive way for people to live in harmony with themselves & others.

### 7.7. A rich, full life

- Lives of the fully functioning are rich, full and exciting.
  - Individuals experience joy, pain, love, heartbreak, fear and courage intensely.

- Process of the 'good life' involves the stretching and growing of becoming more of one's potentialities and involves courage.

## 8. Views on psychopathology

- An incongruent person who is always on the defensive & can't be open to all experiences can never function ideally and may even malfunction.
  - **Incongruence** results when a large part of the symbolised version of the organism's experiential field is denied
  - When an incongruent experience on the unconscious level is experienced by subception, it threatens the self concept and is accompanied by anxiety.
    - **Anxiety:** the emotional response when the self concept is threatened which is a trigger for defensive behaviour.

### 8.1. Defence mechanisms

- Defence mechanisms are used to protect the self concept.
  - Ideal = individual is aware of all organismic experiences and assimilates them into their self concept so that defence mechanisms become unnecessary.
- Defence mechanisms are used to preserve the self concept & protect it against incongruent experiences.
- There are 2 defence mechanisms, namely:
  - **Distortion:**
    - Incongruent experiences are distorted to fit the self concept so that it remains intact and is not disorganised.
    - This preserves the integrity of the self concept.
  - **Denial:**
    - Process whereby experiences that are not congruent with the self concept are simply ignored & excluded from consciousness.
    - When deep-seated needs are denied, there are serious consequences for the functioning of the individual.

### 8.2. Malfunctioning

- Hogan says that defensive behaviour reduces the person's consciousness of the threat, but not the threat itself.
  - Growing system of misconceptions increases the possibility of threatening experiences as the false structure becomes bigger and must be maintained.
- Rogers does not believe in attaching labels such as neurotic or psychotic to people, but people can be arranged on a hypothetical continuum according to the amount of defensive behaviour they display
  - The more incongruent the person, the more threatened they are by experiences, the more defensive they are and the more rigid the organisation of their self concept.
  - Certain degrees of malfunctioning can be distinguished:
    - **Neurotic behaviour:**
      - If the degree of incongruence becomes overwhelming, the individual's behaviour is restricted and discomforting.
      - Although the self concept can be maintained through neurotic behaviour, the person's functioning is precarious or they are psychologically vulnerable.
    - **Psychotic behaviour:**
      - Incongruence takes on such dimensions that the person's defence mechanisms no longer function effectively.
      - A 'defenceless' situation develops where incongruities become conscious, causing the incorporation of contradictory experiences into the self concept.
      - Psychotic behaviour is characterised by bizarre, irrational behaviour linked to earlier denied parts of the self which erupt uncontrollably.

- Person-centred therapy seeks to bring about greater harmony between the self concept and the total organismic field of experience.

## 9. Implications and applications

### 9.1. Psychotherapy

- Propositions 17 and 18:
  - **17.** Under certain conditions involving primarily complete absence of any threat to the self concept, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived and examined and the structure of self revised to assimilate & include these experiences.
  - **18.** when the individual perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system, all their sensory and visceral experiences, they are necessarily more understanding of others and are more accepting of others as separate individuals.
- Initially Roger's theory focused on a therapist who listened with unstinting attention and made few contributions to conversation.
  - This was when the *reflection of feelings* came into the spotlight & Rogers began to refer to his therapy as client-centred therapy.
- Person-centred theory:
  - Not only applicable in therapeutic context but in every-day context as well.
  - Purpose of psychotherapy is to provide clients with the opportunity to come to know themselves fully and to reveal their potential.
    - Takes place in a therapeutic climate in which therapist accepts client unconditionally.
  - Emphasis:
    - Quality of relationship between people in the therapeutic context.

### 9.2. The therapeutic process

- In therapeutic process, client is central & must take responsibility for their own change.
  - Therapist acts as facilitator who creates a climate of unconditional positive regard, warmth & empathy
    - ↳ Client feels free and safe to allow change & strive towards congruence & the actualisation of their potential.
- What is most important is not the power that the therapist has with the client, but the *transfer or power* (empowerment) to the individual.
  - Individual is given the freedom to exercise autonomous choices & act creatively, productively, constructively and responsibly.
- The role of the therapist is the 'facilitator of growth' and therapist must therefore create a growth facilitating climate.
  - Therapeutic climate must include the following in order to foster growth:
    - Therapist must be **sincere and congruent**.
      - Clients are most likely to grow if therapist is able to be themselves in the relationship & does not hold up a façade.
      - Must be congruence between what therapist is experiencing internally, what is in their consciousness and what they actually say to the client.
    - Therapist must have an **attitude of unconditional acceptance**
      - Therapist must be able to care in a non-possessive way so client feels accepted.
      - Therapist must treat client with respect without laying down conditions.
    - Therapist should **understand with empathy**.
      - The therapist must be so attuned to the client's world that they can clarify the meaning of client's experiences and the client's experiences that lie just below consciousness.
    - **Spiritual dimension**
      - Therapist should be closer to their inner intuitive self so that their inner spirit can reach out and touch the inner spirit of the client.
- Things the therapist should **NOT** do:

- Be passive as this makes the client feel rejected.
- Clarify the client's feelings in a cold, clinical, omniscient way
  - Should rather enquire with empathy & subtlety.
- Function of therapist is to observe from the **client's frame of reference**:
  - Observe the world as the client sees it
  - See the client as they see themselves
  - Put aside external observations
  - Communicate empathetic understanding with the client.
- Principles of person-centred therapy can also be applied to any interpersonal relationship.

### 9.5. The interpretation and handling of aggression

- Rogers is fully aware of high incidence of destructive, cruel behaviour but does not believe that this evil is inherent in human nature.
  - In a nurturing, growth-promoting climate, individuals can be trusted to make constructive choices that will lead to improved socialisation & better interpersonal relationships.
- People sometimes choose to harm themselves or others, but **cultural influences are responsible for destructive behaviour**.
- When individuals follow a destructive course, fault must be looked for in the environment and healing must take place in an understanding & accepting atmosphere.