

# The Core Conditions in Emotions-Focused Therapy

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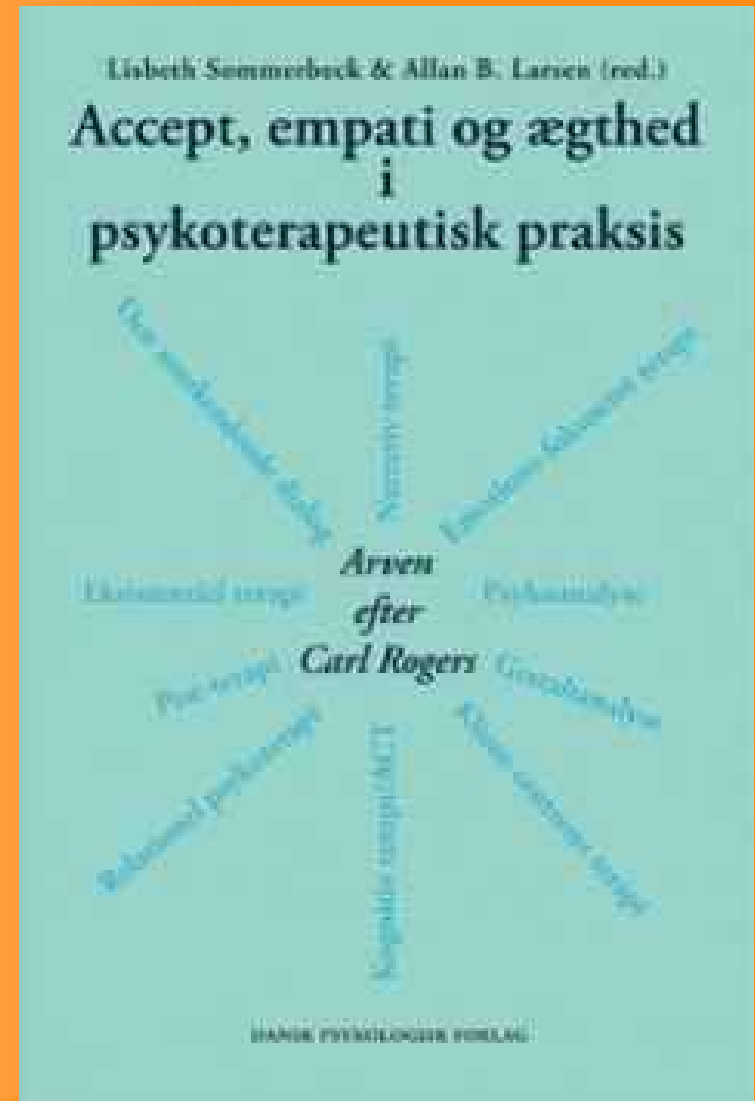
# NIELS BAGGE

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- ⌘ Co-founder of Danish Carl Rogers Forum with Lisbeth Sommerbeck
- ⌘ EFT therapist and supervisor trained by Leslie Greenberg
- ⌘ Private practice & IPCOPT



# Accept, empathy and congruence in psychotherapeutic practice

- Investigating the legacy of Carl Rogers
- Research has repeatedly shown the effect of relationship factors
- 9 schools of therapy describe their use of the empathy, accept and congruence
- EFT and core conditions



# The necessary and sufficient conditions of constructive personality change

1. Two persons are in psychological contact.
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavours to communicate this experience to the client.
6. The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.

(Rogers, 1957)

# Emotion Focused Therapy

- Neo-humanistic perspective
- 35 years research program
- Emotion theory
- Person-Centered and experiential emotional process-guiding relational stance
- Marker-guided task strategy

Elliott, Watson, Goldman & Greenberg (2004)

# Basic Principles of Emotion-Focused Therapy

## A. Relationship Principles: Facilitate safe, productive relationship:

1. *Empathic Attunement*: Enter, track clients' immediate and evolving experiencing
2. *Therapeutic Bond*: Actively offer accepting, congruent, empathic presence to clients
3. *Task Collaboration*: Facilitate mutual involvement in goals and tasks of therapy

## B. Task Principles: Facilitate work on specific therapeutic tasks:

4. *Process Differentiation*: Offer clients opportunities to work in different ways at different times, according to the current task they are engaged in
5. *Task Completion/Emotional Change*: Help clients resolve key therapeutic tasks in order to facilitate reorganisation of core maladaptive (no longer useful) emotion schemes
6. *Self-development*: Help clients differentiate and access new experiencing, inner strength or resources, agency or self-empowerment

Elliott, Watson,  
Goldman &  
Greenberg (2004)



Same root  
(Rogers)  
diverse  
branches  
(EFT)



# Aspects of EFT in relation to CC

1. Therapist internal processes
2. Therapist experiential response modes
3. Client processes
4. Empathy tasks



# Therapist

1

Therapist  
internal  
processes

Empathy  
process

2

Therapist experiential  
response mode

4

Empathy tasks

3

Experience of events

Client micro process

# Client

Immediate &  
evolving  
Experience

Deconstruction  
Reconstruction

Affect regulation

Interpersonal  
process

# 1. Therapist internal processes

- Presence and genuineness
- Empathic attunement
- Accepting, prizing and trust
- Collaboration
- Procedural knowledge of the model
- Process awareness and guiding stance

# Presence and genuineness

- **Presence**
- **Genuineness**
  - **Wholeness** - not divided, contact with self
  - **Authenticity** - being who you are, real
  - **Transparent** - showing who you are

# Acceptance, praising, trust

## ⌘ **Accepting**

- ⌘ Letting go of values, standards preferences
- ⌘ Not approval or endorsement
- ⌘ Validation of experience as actual (vs. illusory), interesting, unique, meaningful, understandable, tolerable, valid

## ⌘ **Praising**

- ⌘ Active sense of caring, valuing
- ⌘ Varm, emotionally touched

## ⌘ **Trust**

- ⌘ "unconditional confidence"

(Elliot, Watson.  
Goldman &  
Greenberg, 2004)

# Empathic Attunement

- **Present maintained understanding of clients internal experience as it evolves moment to moment**
- **Follow client on several tracks**
  - What client is talking about, immediate experience, emerging experiences and what it is like to be the client
- **Imaginative, bodily experience**
  - not conceptual
  - T Feeling same or complementary feeling
  - T Grasp C experience in lively, poignant and emotionally near way, then the way of communicating is less critical
- **Subprocesses of empathy**
  - Entering, letting go, ...

The client is expert on his or her  
own experience



# Empathy – sub process

- ⌘ Letting go
- ⌘ Entering
- ⌘ Resonating
- ⌘ Searching and selecting
- ⌘ Grasping and expressing

(Elliot, Watson. Goldman & Greenberg, 2004)

# Empathy tracks

| Client                                 | Empathy track |
|--|---------------|
| The main thing the client is saying    | Content       |
| The cl's feelings, poignancy           | Emotion       |
| What is at the edge of awareness       | Emerging      |
| What it is like to be the cl generally | Person        |
| The process or way cl communicate      | Process       |
| What is implicit or between the lines  | Implicit      |
| What the cl is avoiding or minimizing  | Avoiding      |

## 2. Therapist Experiential Response Modes

|   |   |
|---|---|
| A. Simple Empathy                         | Responses intended primarily to communicate understanding of immediate client experiencing. |
| B. Empathic Exploration                   | Responses intended to encourage client exploration while maintaining empathic attunement.   |
| C. Process Guiding Responses              | Responses intended to directly facilitate useful client experiencing.                       |
| D. Experiential Presence                  | Responses intended to reveal therapist's emotional presence to client.                      |
| E. Content Directives (“nonexperiential”) | Responses intended to provide expert external perspectives on the client's problems.        |

# Therapist Experiential Response Modes

## A. Simple Empathy

Empathic Reflection

Empathic Following

Empathic Affirmation

## B. Empathic Exploration

Exploratory Reflection

Evocative Reflection

Exploratory Question

Fit Question

Process Observation

Empathic Conjecture

Empathic Refocusing

## C. Process Guiding

## D. Experiential Presence

General

Process Disclosure

Personal Disclosure

## E. Content Directives

# Rogers therapy responses

- ⌘ Informs about the therapy
- ⌘ Confirms attention (Hm, hm)
- ⌘ Checks understanding
- ⌘ Reflects empathically
- ⌘ Validates clients unspoken emotions
- ⌘ Reassures, answers
- ⌘ Interpretations
- ⌘ Confrontations
- ⌘ Direct questions
- Turns questions back to client
- ⌘ Keeps or breaks silence
- ⌘ Self disclosure
- ⌘ Accepts corrections from client

Brink & Faber, 1996

# Main expression of core conditions in therapist experiential response modes

## 1. Empathy

- Reflection, affirmation, following, exploratory reflection, evocative reflection, exploratory question, fit question, process-observation, empathic conjecture, empathic refocusing

## 2. Accept

- Empathic affirmation, nonverbal and extra verbal behaviour

## 3. Genuineness

- nonverbal and extra verbal behaviour, process disclosure, personal disclosure



# Empathy tracks - tp response mode

| <b>Client</b>                          | <b>Track</b> | <b>Therapist response mode</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------------------------|
| The main thing the client is saying    | Content      | Empathic understanding         |
| The cl's feelings, poignancy           | Emotion      | Evocative reflection           |
| What is at the edge of awareness       | Emerging     | Empatic exploration            |
| What it is like to be the cl generally | Person       | Experiential formulation       |
| The process or way cl communicate      | Process      | Process observation            |
| What is implicit or between the lines  | Implicit     | Empathic conjecture            |
| What the cl is avoiding or minimizing  | Avoiding     | Empathic refocusing            |

(Elliot, Watson. Goldman & Greenberg, 2004)

# 3. Client processes

## 1. Experience of events (content)

## 2. Micro-processes (ways of processing experience)

- Micromarkers
  - Verbal, non-verbal, level of arousal and experience
- Markers of characteristic style How clients treat them self and others
- Mode of engagement markers
  - Non-experiential, experiential
- Task markers
- Treatment foci indicators

(Elliott, Watson.  
Goldman &  
Greenberg, 2004)

# Following and leading

# Empathy - Active process of change

## ⌘ Interpersonal function - therapeutic relationship

- ⌘ Safe, understood, supported
- ⌘ Build alliance and prevent alliance rupture
- ⌘ Part of negotiation of goals

## ⌘ Explorative and deconstructive function

- ⌘ Hermeneutic process (interpretation of text)
- ⌘ Deconstruction → reconstruction of understanding

## ⌘ Affect regulation

- ⌘ Relief and satisfaction in being understood
- ⌘ Containing emotions
- ⌘ Greater self-soothing and self worth

(Elliot, Watson.  
Goldman &  
Greenberg, 2004;  
Watson, 2001)

# EFT Tasks

## TASK RESOLUTION

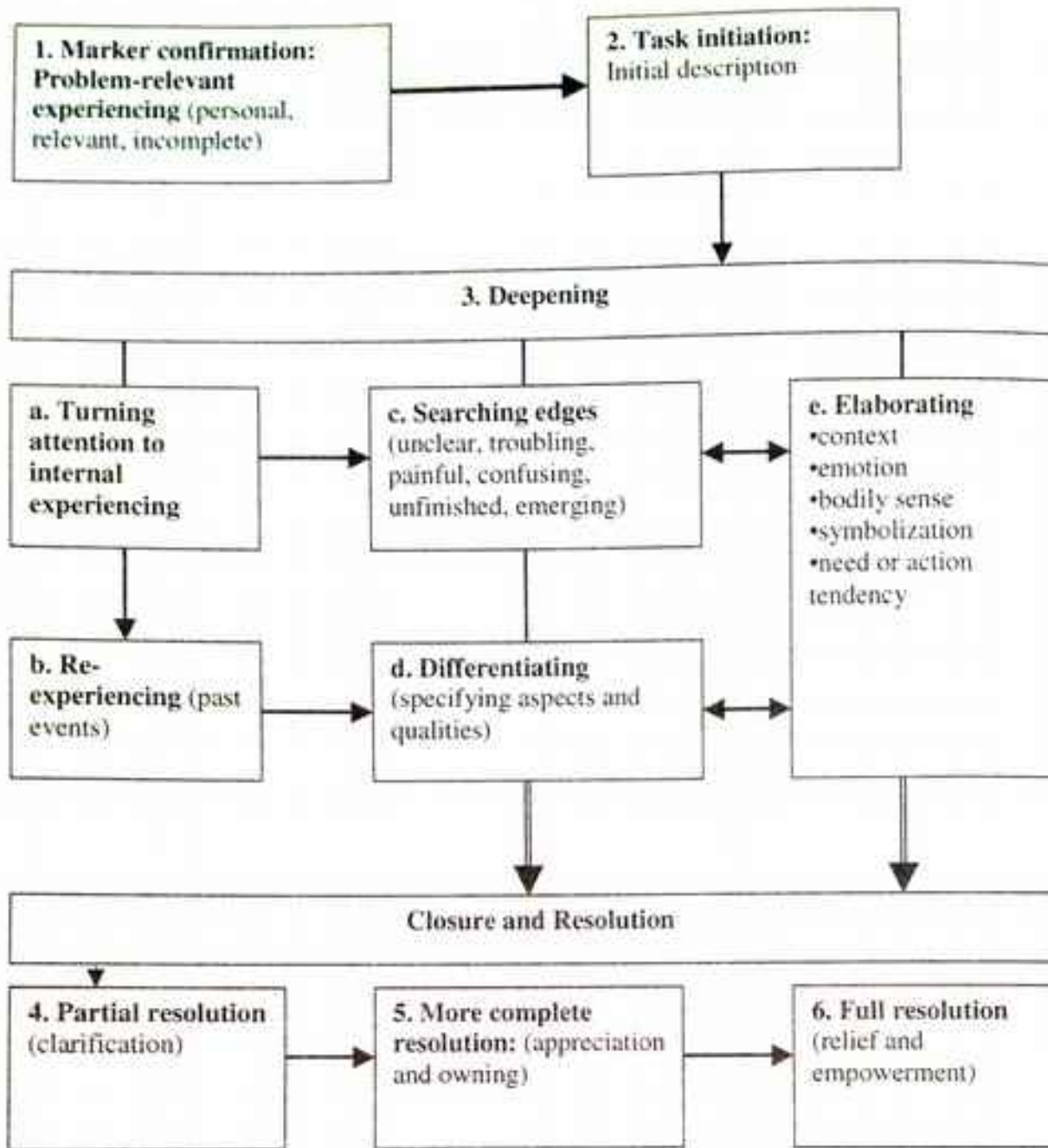
1. Marker and initiation
2. Evoking and entering
3. Deepening
4. Partial resolution
5. Restructuring
6. Carrying forward

|                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>EMPATHY-BASED TASKS</b> | Empatic exploration             |
|                            | Empatic affirmation             |
| <b>RELATIONAL TASKS</b>    | Therapeutic alliance formation  |
|                            | Alliance dialogue               |
| <b>EXPERIENCING TASKS</b>  | Clearing a space                |
|                            | Experiential focusing           |
|                            | Allowing and expressing emotion |
| <b>REPROCESSING TASKS</b>  | Trauma retelling                |
|                            | Meaning protest                 |
|                            | Systematic Evocative Unfolding  |
| <b>ENACTMENT TASKS</b>     | Two-chair dialogue              |
|                            | Two-chair work                  |
|                            | Empty-chair work                |

# 4. Empathy Tasks

| <b>Task Marker</b>   | <b>Intervention</b>         | <b>End State</b>                                       |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Problem-Relevant Experience</b> (e.g., interesting, troubling, intense, puzzling) | <b>Empatic Exploration</b>  | Clear marker, or new meaning explicated                |
| <b>Vulnerability</b> (Painful emotion related to self)                               | <b>Empathic Affirmation</b> | Self-affirmation (feels understood, hopeful, stronger) |





relation has primacy  
over process

# Therapist

1

Therapist internal processes

Empathy process

2

Therapist experiential response mode

4

Empathy tasks

3

Experience of events

Client micro process

# Client

Immediate & evolving Experience

Deconstruction  
Reconstruction

Affect regulation

Interpersonal process

# Diversity

- ⌘ Same root (Rogers), diverse branches (EFT)
- ⌘ Following and leading (relation and process)
- ⌘ Necessary and sufficient conditions
- ⌘ Research (outcome)

# Core conditions in relation to EFT

Case formulation

Emotional assessment (primary, secondary ..)

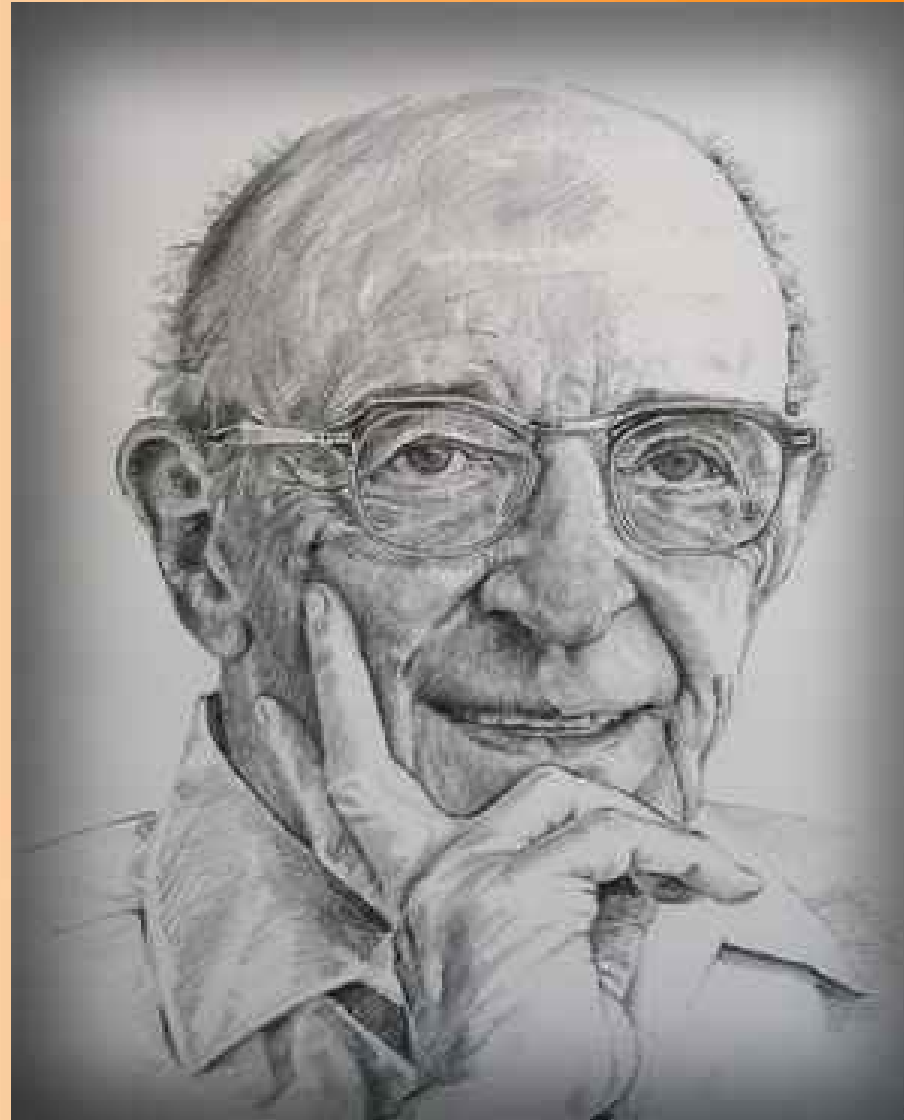
Therapeutic changes processes

Phases of therapy: Arriving and leaving

Neuroscience

Research

Client's experience of empathy



IPCOPT

Institut for Personcentreret og Oplevelsesorienteret Psykoterapi



# IPCOPT

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# A. Simple empathy

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Empathic Reflection  | Accurately represent most central, poignant or strongly-felt aspect of client's message.                                    |
| Empathic Following   | Brief responses which indicate that therapist understands what client is saying (acknowledgments and empathic repetitions). |
| Empathic Affirmation | Offer validation, support, or sympathy when client is in emotional distress or pain.  |

# B. Empathic Exploration

## Exploratory Reflection

Simultaneously communicate empathy and stimulate client self-exploration of explicit and implicit experience, through open-edge or growth-oriented responses.

## Evocative Reflection

Communicate empathy while helping client to heighten or access experience, through vivid imagery, powerful language or dramatic manner.

## Exploratory Question

Stimulate client open-ended self-exploration.

## Fit Question

Encourage client to check representation of experience with actual experience.

# B. Empathic Exploration

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Process Observation | Nonconfrontationally describe client in-session verbal or nonverbal behavior (usually with Exploratory Question). |
| Empathic Conjecture | Tentative guess at immediate, implicit client experience (usually with Fit Question).                             |
| Empathic Refocusing | Offer empathy to what the client is having difficulty facing, in order to invite continued exploration            |

# D. Experiential Presence

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| General             | Generally communicated via speech, paralinguistic, nonverbal manner (e.g., warm/gentle vocal quality, responsive facial expression, self-deprecatory humor, exploratory manner, respectful silence). |
| Process Disclosure  | Share own here-and-now reactions, intentions or limitations.   |
| Personal Disclosure | Share relevant information about self.   |

# Empathy and case formulation

## Emotions

Primary, Secondary, Instrumental, Adaptive or maladaptive

## Emotion schemes

Intensity, experiential depth,

Differentiation, narration

Affect regulation

# Core conditions facilitative attitude

1. Safety
2. Ideal working space
3. Therapeutic Bond
4. Promote autonomy
5. Affect regulation

(Watson, 2007)

# Affect regulation - CC

1. Awareness of affective reaction
2. Label and symbolise inner experience
3. Affective reaction are modulated
  - Represent in words
  - Internalization of therapist soothing, nurturing and accepting stance of therapist
4. Cultivate clients reflective capacity on them self (Watson, 2007)



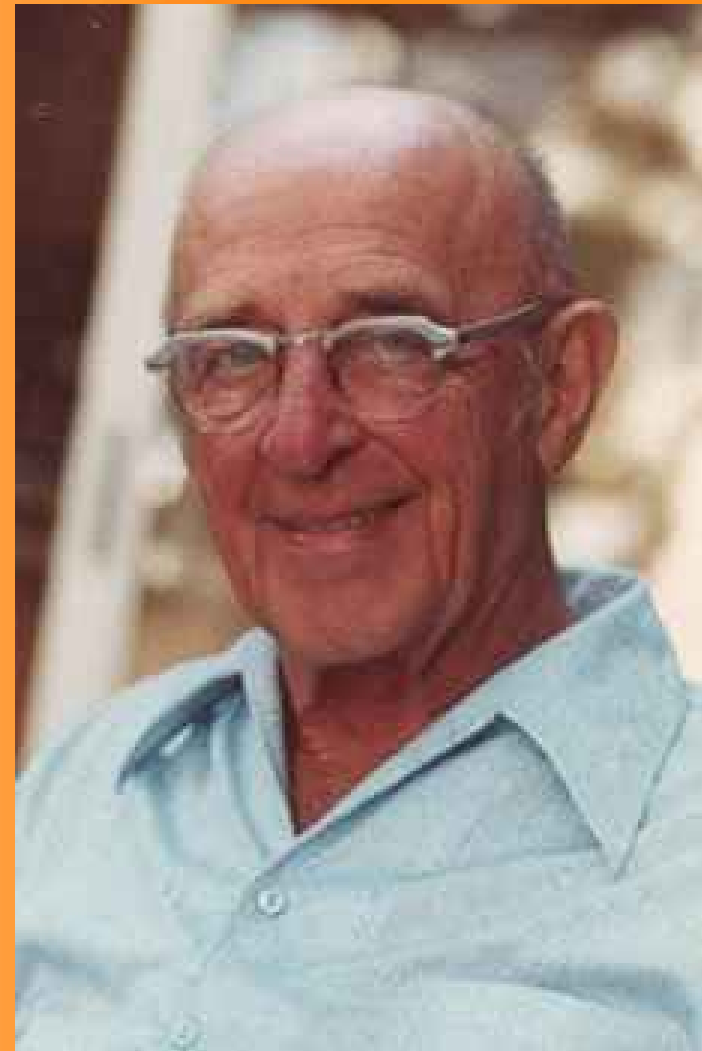
# Process-out

In a safe relationship,  
with reflection and attuned  
to the client

- ⌘ Access emotion in therapy
- ⌘ Experiential depth
- ⌘ High emotional intensity
- ⌘ Expression of high emotional intensity  
(Not too much and not too often)
- ⌘ Processing of emotions (symbolising, congruence, accept, ownership, regulating and differentiating)
- ⌘ Transformation of emotional schemes

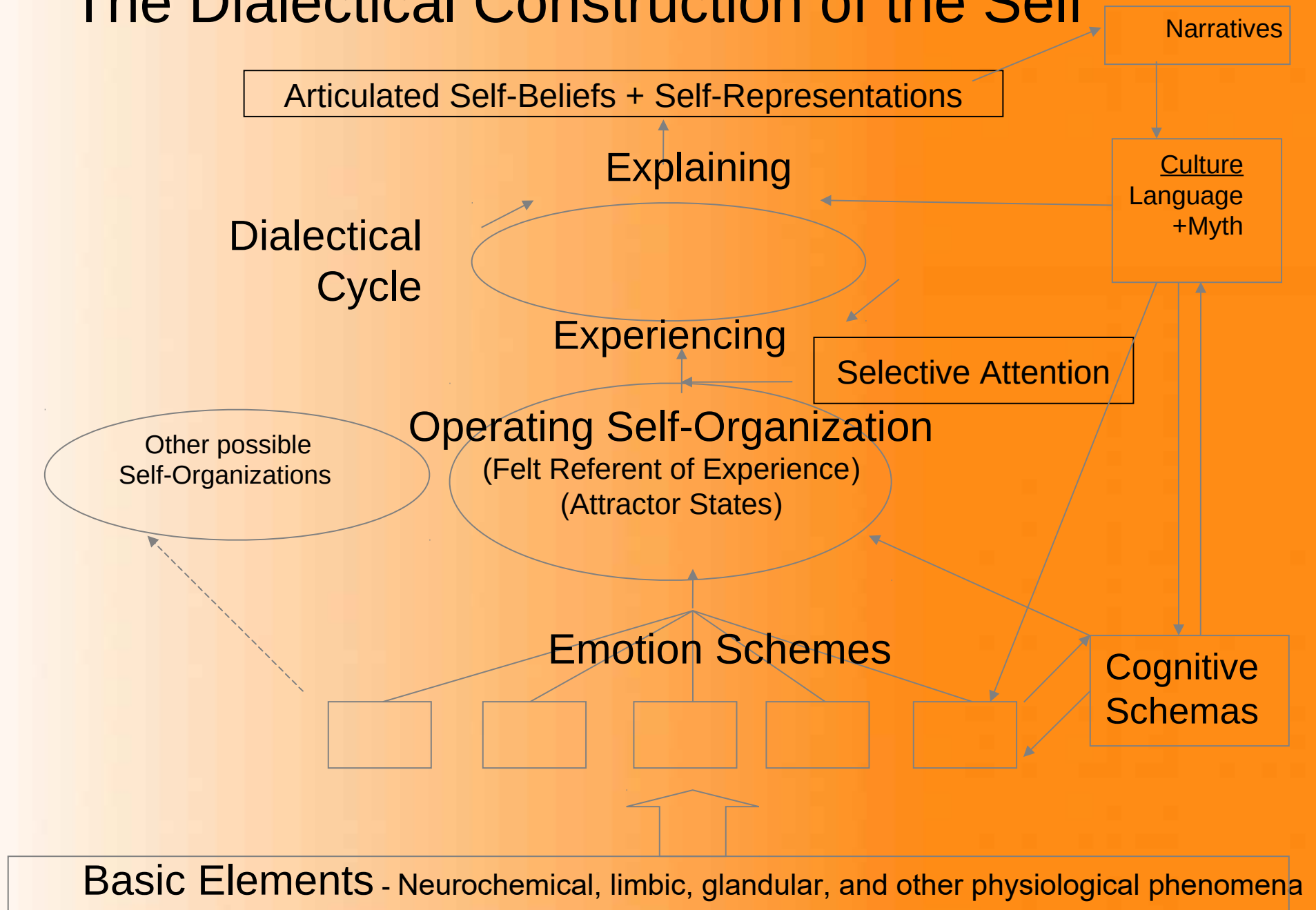
# Carl Rogers

- ⌘ 1902 – 1987
- ⌘ Amerikansk psykolog
- ⌘ Humanistisk psykologi
- ⌘ Psykoterapiforskning
- ⌘ Klientcentreret Terapi  
Personcentreret Tilgang
- ⌘ Bøger, artikler, film ect
- ⌘ President APA, priser

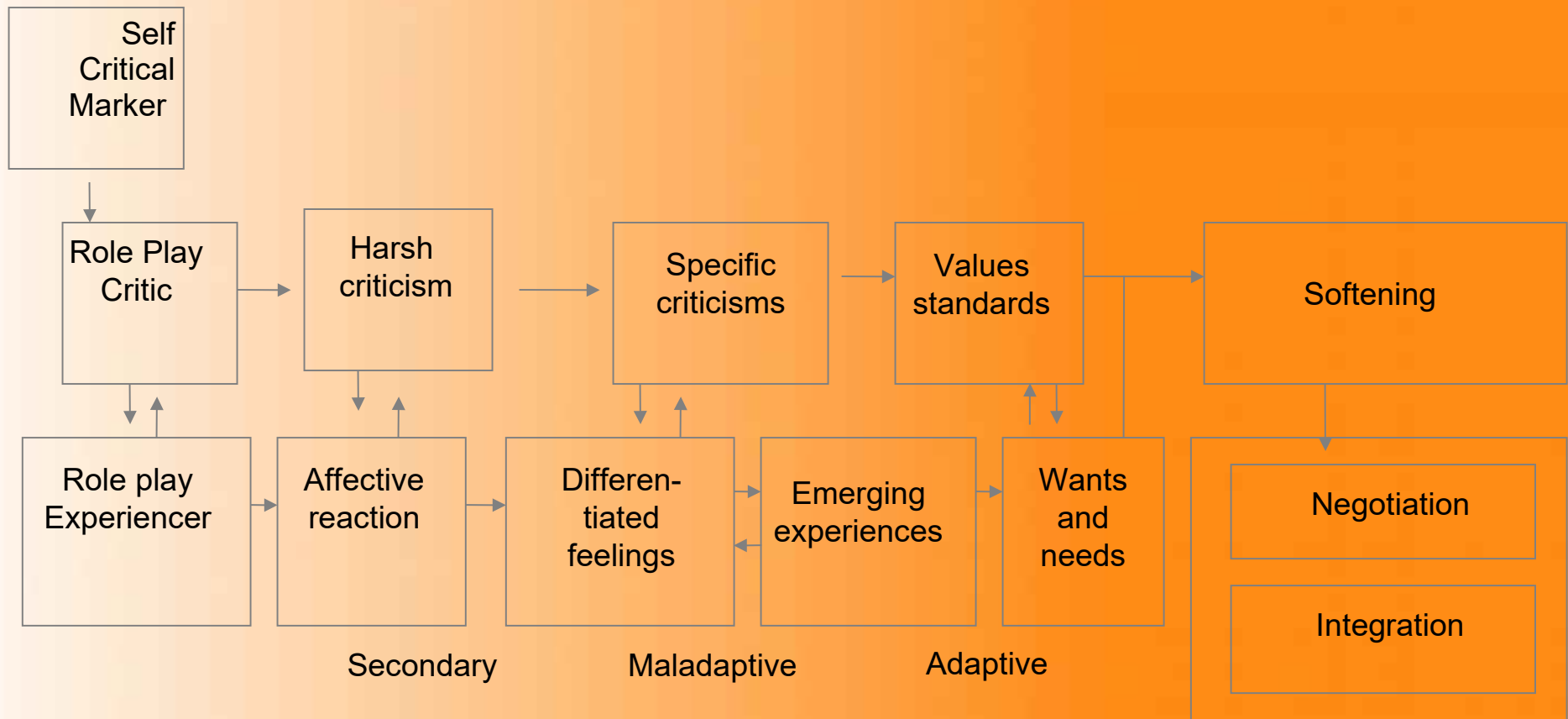


| Task Resolution Stage                  | Client Process   | Therapist Responses   |
|--|--|---|
| 0. Premarker                           | Marker is not clearly present, but may be implicit in client's experiencing.   | •Listen for, reflect toward possible task markers.  |
| 1. Marker/ Task Initiation             | Client presents indication that he/she is currently experiencing a particular kind of processing difficulty and is agreeable to work on it with therapist.   | •Reflect, confirm client marker.<br>•Elicit client collaboration for task.  |
| 2. Evocation                           | Client begins to explore and express difficulty, so that it starts to come alive.  | •Offer special procedures to address particular task, as appropriate.<br>•Help client explore difficulty<br>•Evoke, intensify client's arousal.                                 |
| 3. Exploration/ Deepening              | Client explores difficulty via a dialectical process, either with therapist or between different aspects of self. (Exploration process may be lengthy.) Eventually, primary underlying feelings begin to emerge, along with underlying emotion schemes and related needs and values. | •Help client access and differentiate primary and secondary feelings, emotion schemes, needs, values.<br>•Help client stay involved with task and in contact with experiencing. |
| 4. Partial Resolution (Emerging Shift) | Client accesses new aspects of experiencing, including previously overlooked aspects of emotion schemes; as a result, begins to feel at least a small shift in experiencing.   | •Listen for, reflect emergence of new experiencing.   |
| 5. Restructuring/ Scheme Change        | Client experiences a clear shift in how he/she seeing self or others, such as owning/accepting previously ignored aspects of self, coming to understand something about self or others better, or coming to see self or others in a more positive light or self as more powerful.    | •Help client solidify emerging shift by exploring, appreciating, or symbolizing it.   |
| 6 Carrying Forward (Full Resolution)   | Client pursues further implications of shift, including negotiation among competing needs/values, and commitments to pursue action consistent with new experiencing. Experiences greater contact with experiencing, clear symptomatic/ bodily relief                                 | •Facilitate exploration of implications, including negotiation and appreciation of emerging experiencing.   |

# The Dialectical Construction of the Self

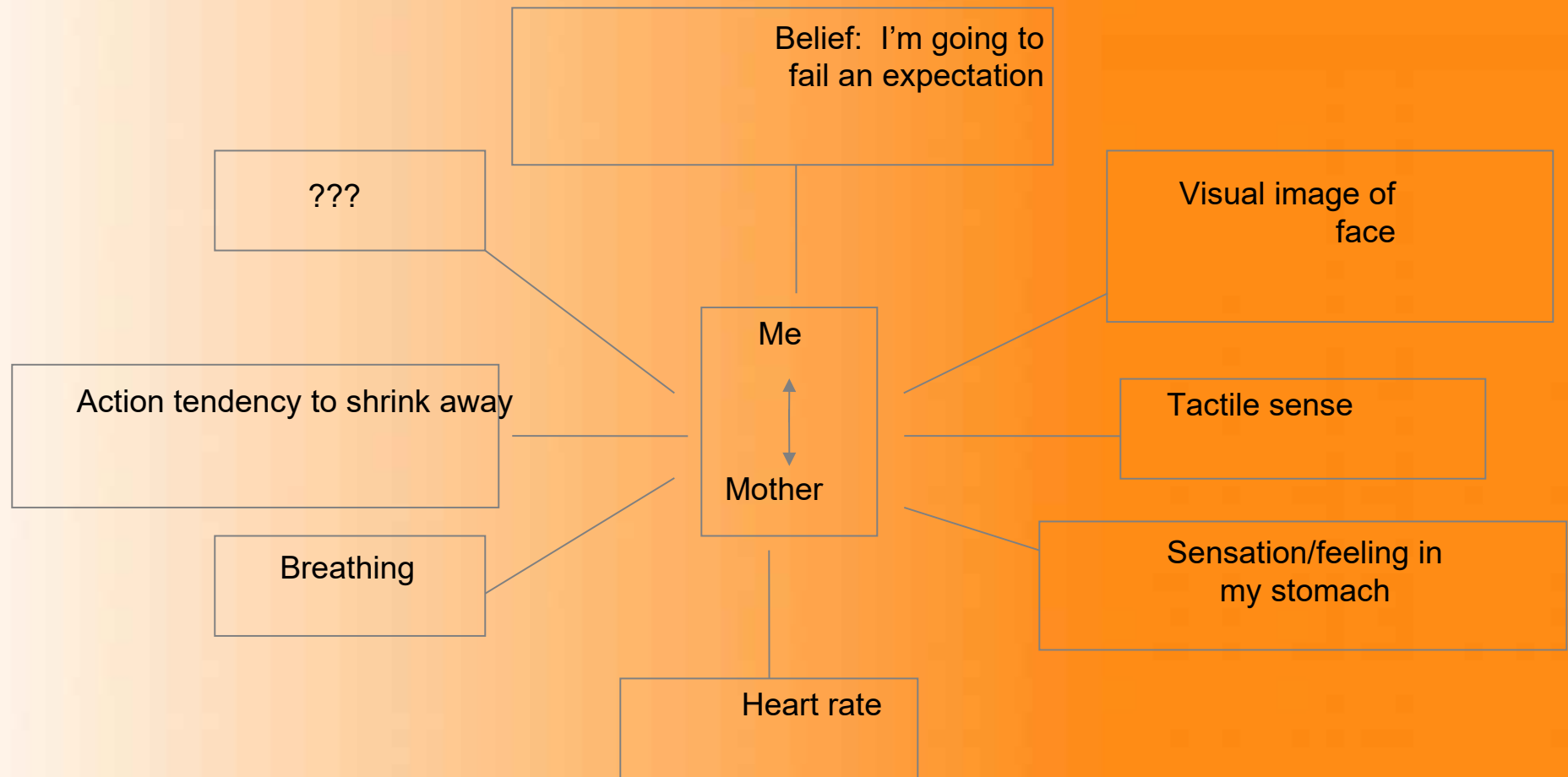


# Model of Resolution of Self Criticism



Greenberg, 2002

# Emotional Scheme



# More conditions and relationship factors

- Rogers
  - Contact
  - Presences
- Other
  - Alliance

# Working Alliance and Empathy

- The Working Alliance correlates .35 with outcome accounting for about 12% of the outcome variance (Weeresequera, Linder, Greenberg & Watson 1998 *Psychotherapy Research*, 8, 5)
- The Relationship conditions( E, P.R & C) predicted about 10% of outcome variance (Watson J & Geller, S. 2005 *Psychotherapy Research*, 15, 1-8)