

Rogers C R. The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *J. Consult. Clin. Psychol.* 21:95-103, 1957.

What conditions make possible constructive change in personality and behavior? Operational definitions are given of such conditions. These are: that the troubled client is in relationship with a therapist who is genuine, real; is experiencing an unconditional caring for, and a sensitive empathy for the client. When these conditions are experienced by the client, constructive change occurs. [The *Science Citation Index*® (SCI®) and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*™ (SSCI™) indicate that **this paper was cited a total of 218 times in the period 1961-1977.**]

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"I remember very well the comfortable new auditorium at the University of Michigan where I first presented this paper.

"I have a clear memory of the audience—academic psychologists, clinicians (both psychologists and psychiatrists), all psychoanalytically oriented. They were expectant and critical. I was at that time a controversial figure.

"I certainly remember my apprehensive feelings. I had been working for two years on a very concise and rigorous statement of client-centered theory.¹ This formulation was not an arm-chair theory. It was based on more than twenty-five years of experience and observation—my own and that of my students and colleagues. My aim had been to make every statement in that theory testable by research means. I had distributed this longer statement to the staff of the Counseling Center of the

University of Chicago, and had profited from their perceptive criticisms and suggestions.

"Now, for the first time I was about to present a small but very important segment of that theory to an audience of critical peers. I included explanations and illustrations of each rigorous point, hoping to make them clear.

"The presentation aroused much open discussion. I believe I was regarded as presumptuous for having set forth what I regarded as *sufficient* conditions to account for effective psychotherapy. I know that I shocked many by stating that 'special intellectual professional knowledge' is not essential in psychotherapy. Another controversial statement was that a psychological diagnosis is only helpful in making the therapist feel secure. The major audience reaction was that traditional views had been sharply challenged, and that time was needed to assess the significance of my talk. It has been gratifying to see that the paper has gained increasing acceptance over the years.

"This article has sparked more research investigations than any other I have written. This is because every condition hypothesized as necessary for effective therapy is operationally defined, and therefore testable. I also made suggestions as to methodology by which each could be validated or invalidated. Consequently research workers have found here a basis for all kinds of research in psychotherapy, education, and personality development. These have taken place in this country and in many foreign countries. The most recent example is a summary by Prof. Reinhard Tausch of seventeen studies completed at the University of Hamburg, West Germany, during the 1970s.²

"All in all, I suspect this is the most significant paper I have ever written, and the most far-reaching in its effects."

1. **Rogers C R.** A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships, as developed in the client-centered framework. *Psychology: A Study of a Science, Vol. 3.* (Koch S, ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959. p. 184-256.
2. **Tausch R T.** Facilitative dimensions in interpersonal relations: verifying the theoretical assumptions of Carl Rogers in school, family education, client-centered therapy, and encounter groups. *College Student Journal* 12(1), Spring 1978 (in press).