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Abstract	Mindfulness is a complex, multifaceted quality (feeling, attitude, posture). It integrates many different aspects of human feelings and viewpoints. All together they comprise what we call mindfulness: presence, respect, welcoming what comes, being in the here and now, noticing what is just there, acceptance, loving care (for oneself and others), empathy, and congruence (being what I am). In this chapter, I will show that all these aspects of mindfulness are inherent and constituting values of the person-centered approach. Citing some Asian colleagues who also practice Buddhist meditation, I conclude that Eastern philosophy and Rogers' therapy approach have central aspects in common.
Keywords (separated by '-')	Person-centered approach - Mindfulness - Acceptance - Core conditions - Presence - Third wave of behavior therapy - Meditation - Buddhism - Taoism - Wu Wei

The Awakened Heart: Mindfulness as a Bridge Between the Person-Centered Approach and Eastern Philosophies

Karin Bundschuh-Müller

1 Introduction

Carl Rogers (1902–1987) initiated person-centered psychotherapy in the 1940s. Many therapists and counselors worldwide consider this approach one of the most important representatives of humanistic psychotherapies. In 1982 and again in 2009, Rogers was rated the most influential psychotherapist (Cook et al. 2009). The basis of the person-centered approach (PCA) is a view of human beings, which emphasizes the capacity for self-development as well as the freedom of decision and self-responsibility, and it puts the relationship between the therapist and the client at the center. It considers certain fundamental attitudes and ways of behaving with which the therapist meets, or rather encounters, the client, to be a healing force, which generates change.

In this chapter, I aim to trace the footprints of Carl Rogers under a perspective of mindfulness in order to find out what the PCA has to offer to the new stream in psychotherapy, counseling and everyday life which evolved from “the great mindfulness debate,” especially held in the field of the behavior therapists. This stream, which is known as “third wave of behavior therapy,” emphasizes Buddhist and Zen meditation practice, acceptance, and mindfulness. Examples of therapeutic approaches from this direction are acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) (Hayes and Smith 2005), mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn 2005), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993), and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) (Segal et al. 2002). Some relationships of the PCA with this “third wave” will be addressed later in this chapter.

Various authors (Kuno 2001; Moore 2001, 2003; Schillings 2004) think that Carl Rogers’ theory builds a bridge between the Eastern and the Western world. This position is shared from the perspective of Buddhist psychotherapy which

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acknowledges that the PCA offers “some clear ground for fruitful interaction between Buddhist and Western psychological approaches to mind” [Padma (2011) Internet source without page information]. The aim of my chapter is to elucidate some of these bridges.

2 What Does Mindfulness Mean?

It is undisputed that in the Western linguistic, therapeutic, and philosophical sphere the term “mindfulness”—meaning taking care, being careful, paying close attention, being alert—has an important function as well as its own value and tradition. It holds the meaning of awareness, attentiveness, consciousness, regardfulness, sensibility, thoughtfulness, cautiousness, and “watchfulness.” It also implies the connotation of accepting what is, just in the here and now. It is obvious that “mindfulness” and “acceptance” in person-centered psychotherapy are of crucial importance. We can even consider them as fundamental.

In a workshop, I asked the participants: “When do you think you are mindful?” One of them answered: “When I am carrying something very precious and fragile, then I am mindful.” And this—to me—is really the core of mindfulness in the PCA: encountering somebody very precious and fragile—the client sitting in front of me. In the PCA, the basic principles, which are unconditional positive regard, acceptance, respectful non-judgmental listening, gentle care and non-intrusiveness, form the basis for constructive change. Person-centered encounter always takes place “in the situation,” in the “here and now.”

Similar descriptions come from Kabat-Zinn (2003), a microbiologist specialized in integrating the concept of mindfulness in a modern form of stress-coping therapy. He writes that “mindfulness” is connected with special features like mindfulness and consciousness, which can be cultivated and developed by means of meditation. According to him, “mindfulness” means that consciousness is focused on the evolution of experiencing on a moment-to-moment basis. The basis for this is the fact that attention is paid intentionally and without judgment to present moment experiences.

Being mindful reminds us of the inherent actualizing tendency of a person: Mindfulness in its most general sense is about waking up, becoming alert, and being sensitive to our everyday experiences and the direction of personal growth.

3 Carl Rogers: A Mindful Man

People are just as wonderful as sunsets if I can let them be... When I look at a sunset, I don't find myself saying: Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner... I don't try to control a sunset, I watch with awe as it unfolds... Carl Rogers.



68 Carl Rogers was known as an attentive, friendly, unassuming, moderate, and
69 humble man, very authentic, yet radical in his thinking. The way he saw himself
70 was as “walking softly” through life, like Native Americans often “walked softly”
71 through the forest; nobody knew of their whereabouts until they had reached their
72 destination. Carl Rogers, “the quiet revolutionary” (Rogers and Russell 2002)
73 lived in a similar way. Perhaps, it is due to these qualities that he was able to
74 develop a psychotherapy and counseling approach accepted worldwide, describing
75 the fundamental basis of therapeutic change.

76 Rogers was an example of his own vision of lifelong learning, changing, and
77 growing. When he died the influence of his theory and therapy was widespread and
78 profound. But he worried about the legacy of his theory. He did not want his theory
79 becoming a dogma of truth, but a stimulus for further creative thinking. This
80 was—in his mind—the real goal of a theory. And he did not want to imprison
81 others with his thinking (Demorest 2005). In his view, people should always be
82 open to their own experience and trust in them.

83 Eastern thinkers “walk softly” as well. They also caused something like a
84 “quiet revolution.” They are “warriors” in a special sense. The key to this kind of
85 “warrior ship” is not being afraid of who you are and not being afraid of yourself.
86 We can be heroic and kind at the same time. The essence of being a warrior, or the
87 essence of human bravery, is refusing to give up on anyone or anything. Trungpa
88 (1984) states: “Real fearlessness is the product of tenderness” (p. 47). I believe
89 Rogers embodied this attitude very well.

90 **4 The Core Conditions Under an Eastern Perspective**

91 I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your
92 greatest treasures. Lao Tzu.
93
94

95 ***4.1 Offering Mindful Relationships: Being Genuinely There*** 96 ***with an Open Heart***

97 In a lecture, delivered in 1954 on the Nellie Heldt Lecture Fund about “Some
98 Hypotheses Regarding the Facilitation of Personal Growth” Carl Rogers said:

99 In my early professional years, I was asking the question: How can I treat, or cure, or
100 change this person? Now I would phrase the question this way: How can I provide a
101 relationship which this person may use for his own personal growth? I recognize that
102 change appears to come about through experience in a relationship. I can state the over-all
103 hypothesis in one sentence: If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person
104 will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth, and change
105 and personal development will occur (p. 1).

106 We learned that there is a very special way of listening to a person, which
107 fosters personality growth and change. This way of listening has to meet three
108 crucial attitudes, which we call the core conditions: empathy, unconditional
109 positive regard, and genuineness also known as congruence. And even more: They
110 build—if they happen to come into the presence of the living moment of the
111 relationship in the here and now—a special “sacred space” in which healing and
112 growing can take place.

113 In Rogers’ opinion, the most important attitude is “congruence” because
114 without this quality the other two conditions are not trustworthy and reliable: “I
115 have found that the more I can be genuine in the relationship, the more helpful it
116 will be. It is only in this way that the relationship can have reality and reality
117 seems deeply important as a first condition. It is only by providing the genuine
118 reality which is in me, that the other person can seek for the reality which is in
119 him” (Rogers 1954, p. 2).

120 Congruence means to open to one’s experiences: “If a person could be fully
121 open to experience, however, every stimulus,—whether originating within the
122 organism or in the environment,—would be freely relayed through the nervous
123 system without being distorted by any defensive mechanism” (Rogers 1961/1995,
124 p. 188). Hendricks-Gendlin (2003) suggests the expression “pausing” in order to
125 sense and listen to what is felt right now as a mean of authenticity and self-
126 exploration. To pause an ongoing situation, to become aware of one’s immediate
127 inner felt sensing creates a space for new possibilities to unfold.

128 Genuineness and exact sensing what is felt in the present moment meet
129 mindfulness at this point: Solè-Leris (cited by Rose and Wallach 2009, p. 28)
130 defines mindfulness this way: “Mindfulness is the attentive, unbiased looking at all
131 phenomenon, in order to perceive and experience them as they really are, without
132 deforming them emotionally or intellectually” (translated by KBM).

133 If we follow the perception of Manu Bazzanu, who is an ordained Taoist monk
134 and person-centered counselor, genuineness and congruence find an equivalent in
135 Buddhist terms like “being there with an open heart” or “being there like a host.”
136 At the PCE Conference 2008 in Norwich in a workshop, he compared Eastern
137 philosophy and Rogerian theory. In Taoist tradition, a wise individual is called a
138 “true person,” a person of integrity, dignity, a person who is whole. If a true
139 person opens up to another person in an encounter, he or she becomes open and
140 vulnerable and he or she has to be aware about the risk of meeting another person
141 on an existential level. Bazzanu also cited Levinas: “We are a host of the other.”
142 This hospitality is crucial for the PCA (see chapter by Schmid in this book) as well
143 as for Buddhism. It is due to the awareness: I am a guest in my own dwelling, in
144 the world. I am passing through. And thus I am guest and host at the same time.

145 On this basis—genuineness, deep openness of the heart and my own vulnera-
146 bility—contact, real encounter is possible. When I am meeting the other person
147 with an attitude of not knowing, with openness, wonderment, and curiosity
148 (Buddhists call this attitude a “beginner’s mind”), then I am ready to really listen
149 to another person.

150 Rogers puts this into these words: “I risk myself... I let myself go into the
151 immediacy of the relationship... in these moments there is a timeless living in the
152 experience which is between the client and me. It is at the opposite pole from
153 seeing the client, or myself, as an object” (Rogers 1955, p. 268f). Rogers
154 emphasizes that in these moments helping is mostly a by-product; according to
155 him, what is the most important is that “I want to understand you. What person are
156 you... behind all these masks that you are wearing in real life? Who are you? In
157 this there is the ‘desire to meet as a person’, not the wish to help” (Rogers and
158 Buber 1994, p. 30). Genuineness and openness causes openness in the other per-
159 son. Encounter is touching and being touched. This position we share with Bud-
160 dhist thinking.

161 ***4.2 Unconditional Positive Regard: Accepting What Is***

163

164

What you know is not as important as how you are as a person Carl Rogers.

165 Rogers characterizes the importance of unconditional positive regard as fol-
166 lows: “I find that the more acceptance and liking I feel toward this individual, the
167 more I will be creating a relationship which he can use. By acceptance I mean a
168 warm regard of him as a person of unconditional self-worth—of value no matter
169 what his condition, his behavior, or his feelings are” (Rogers 1954, p. 3). The
170 concept of unconditional positive regard can also be found in Eastern schools of
171 thought. Shared terms like loving kindness, compassion, tenderness, respect, joy,
172 beauty, patience, gratitude, gracefulness, or unconditional love characterize the
173 bridge between PCA and Eastern thinking.

174 The fact that the attitude of unconditional positive regard is close to and related
175 to the attitude of mindfulness which Eastern tradition displays is underlined by the
176 estimation of Japanese person-centered psychotherapists of Buddhist orientation.
177 In the Japanese school of person-centered psychotherapy, a special focus is put on
178 the quality of unconditional positive regard. Kuno (2001) recognizes in this quality
179 the core of Buddhism. For him, “unconditional” means that a person is accepted
180 exactly the way he or she is, independent from whether he or she expresses “bad,”
181 painful, anxious or abnormal feelings or a “good,” positive, adult and trusting way
182 of experiencing. To approach another person in an unconditional way of being also
183 means that the therapist him- or herself must learn to accept his or her own
184 negative feelings in the same way as he or she accepts his or her positive feelings.

185 Buddha’s teachings show that everyone can reach this state of mind, if he or she
186 can fully understand the “Four Noble Truths,” which are The Truth that there is
187 sadness and distress, the Truth that there is a reason for sadness and distress, the
188 Truth that there is an end to suffering, the Truth that there is a way to end suffering.
189 In order to obtain a better understanding of the third truth, Kuno quotes Brazier’s
190 (1995) interpretation of the second Truth which is based on the following logic: If
191 one does not suppress or unnecessarily enhance the emotions which come with

192 suffering, these emotions will gradually disappear without leaving a trace. How-
193 ever, normally we endeavor to escape our suffering, the final result of which is that
194 we aggravate it. Rogers came to realize the same insight which is expressed in the
195 paradox of change: "...the curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I
196 am, then I change. I believe that I have learned this from my clients as well as
197 within my own experience—that we cannot change, we cannot move away from
198 what we are, until we thoroughly *accept* what we are. Then change seems to come
199 about almost unnoticed" (Rogers 1961/1955, p. 17).

200 Apart from "unconditionality," Kuno also describes, as a second element, the
201 core variable of "positive regard" from a Buddhist perspective: According to
202 Kuno, Rogers' notion of positive regard corresponds with the teachings of
203 Mahayana Buddhism in that sense that priority should be given to saving others
204 before saving one's own soul. In person-centered therapy, the feelings and the
205 experiencing of the client have priority over the feelings and experiences of the
206 therapist. From Buddhist perspective, the therapist encounters the client with a
207 behavior that corresponds with the "Four Means of Embracement," which are "to
208 give," "mild words," "philanthropic deeds," and "connection with others" (Kuno
209 2001).

210 Also in the Western sphere, some authors point at the parallels between the
211 variable "unconditional positive regard" and Buddhist practice. For example,
212 Moore (2001) emphasizes the deep need for acceptance of the truth and truth-
213 fulness of inner experiencing. According to her, this is of existential significance
214 for human growth. Moore describes this attitude of unconditional positive regard
215 as an exceptional letting go, an inner melting, a way of forgetting or losing the
216 self—the aim of Buddhist practice.

217 Furthermore, unconditional positive regard can be seen as a joy about the
218 truthfulness of the other person. The joy of experiencing beauty only implies
219 seeing the object—a kind of joy which is not possessive or controlling. Joy about
220 beauty is without an agenda. It does not want to possess, to own, to consume, or to
221 control. We are happy observing the object, looking at it. This attitude resonates in
222 Carl Rogers' work and in the work of many others, when they describe the attitude
223 of a person who offers unconditional positive regard to another person. Santorelli
224 (1999, quoted by Iberg 2001, p. 124) adds another specific aspect: "When we stay
225 closely and non-judgmentally with someone exploring pain, we find beauty in the
226 midst of the 'ruins'." It is touching to be present, when a person confronts him or
227 herself with their problems in a truthful and genuine way. It is truthfulness which
228 "opens the heart" and which evokes feelings of appreciation and respect.

229 **4.3 Empathy: Mindful Listening**

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232

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It is as though he listened and such listening as his enfolds us in silence, in which at last we
begin to hear what we are meant to be. Lao Tzu.

234 “It is only as I understand the feelings and thoughts which seem so horrible to
235 you, or so weak, or so sentimental, or so bizarre—it is only as I see them as you see
236 them, and accept them and you, that you can feel really free to explore all the
237 hidden nooks and frightening crannies of your inner and often buried experience.
238 This freedom is an important condition of the relationship” (Rogers 1954, p. 2).

239 Empathy implies mindfulness, care, and acceptance. In order to be able to enter
240 the world of another person in a healing way, the therapist needs to adopt an
241 attitude of friendly, appreciative, and respectful mindfulness, of “being with” the
242 client: “It means temporarily living in the other’s life, moving about in it delic-
243 ately without making judgments; it means sensing meanings of which he or she is
244 scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover totally unconscious feelings of which the
245 person is totally unaware, since this would be too threatening. It includes com-
246 municating your sensing of the person’s world as you look with fresh and unf-
247 rightened eyes at elements of which he or she is fearful” (Rogers 1980b, p. 142).

248 Such mindful listening can have a healing power which is very well exemplified
249 by a quote of Hanh (1998): “If the power of mindfulness and of empathic listening
250 is in you, your presence can have a healing and calming effect on other people.
251 You only have to sit there and to listen to the person who trusts you...” (p. 64,
252 translation by Elisabeth Zinschitz). Rud (2003) calls this capacity of empathic
253 listening a contemplative state which leads to transformation. Another important
254 and complimentary aspect of transformation is what happens inside the client.
255 Eugene Gendlin [who was a student and colleague of Carl Rogers at the University
256 of Chicago and influenced him a lot, especially his *concept of experiencing* (1962)
257 and *the way of being with the client* (1970, 1984)] explored the question what
258 clients have to do to improve their own therapy outcome (Klein et al. 1969). He
259 found out that it is crucial to develop an attitude of mindful attention toward
260 oneself. When I am able to listen precisely and from moment to moment to myself
261 in a gentle, friendly and curious, nonjudgmental manner, especially to what is
262 bodily felt, change will occur, naturally. As this chapter deals mainly with the
263 impact of Carl Rogers, I will mention the work of Eugene Gendlin only briefly
264 (More about relationships between Gendlin, Focusing and mindfulness can be
265 found in Bundschuh-Müller 2004, 2006, 2007).

266 4.4 Presence: Wu Wei—A Way of Being With

267
268
269 When nothing is done, nothing is left undone—The way to do is to be—By letting go it all
270 gets done Lao Tzu.

271 When he was already at the end of his life, Rogers proposed a hypothesis about
272 a further significant variable which he called “presence.” This additional feature is
273 one that exists in the area of mysticism and spirituality (Rogers 1979, 1980b,
274 1986). He describes in “A Way of Being” (1980b) what happens in a helping
275 relationship, when he is very close to his “inner intuitive self”:

276 ... When I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me, when I am perhaps in a slightly
277 altered state of consciousness, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. Then, simply
278 my *presence* is releasing and helpful to the other. There is nothing I can do to force this
279 experience, but when I can relax and be close to the transcendental core of me, ... it seems
280 that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our rela-
281 tionship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger. Profound growth and
282 healing and energy are present (Rogers 1980b, p. 129).

283 Rogers did not elaborate on an understanding of presence. But today there are
284 several authors who have reflected about this topic. Schmid (2003) assumes that
285 Rogers' "presence" is the existential foundation of the basic attitudes. It com-
286 prehensively describes them in an existential way and on a deeper, dialogical-
287 personal level. Thorne (1985), independently, uses the word "tenderness" in this
288 context. Thorne's experience is that tenderness emerges when a relationship is
289 characterized by acceptance, empathy and congruence and a deep trust in the
290 client's ability to move forward. Thorne describes this as being caught up in a
291 stream of love. Effortless understanding, profound growth, energy and healing
292 accompany this. This quality can only arise in a climate of faith and a transcending
293 of fear. O'Hara (2000) calls presence "moments of eternity," which for her is a
294 synonym for unconditional love.

295 Gendlin described this special attitude of "being with" like this: "If there is
296 something bad, sick, or unsound, let it inwardly be and breathe. That is the only
297 way it can evolve and change into the form it needs" (Gendlin 1986, p. 178).

298 This attitude meets perfectly the principle of Wu Wei which originates from
299 Taoism. Wu Wei means "non-doing" or more precisely not to act against the Tao
300 or the "flow of the universe": "Taoism states that all life forces tend to move
301 toward harmony and balance because it is in their nature to do so. From the Taoist
302 viewpoint, we, as humans, have the choice of consciously aligning ourselves with
303 the way, or remaining in ignorance and resisting the natural order of the Tao. To
304 choose the latter means to remain disconnected from our own personal processes,
305 our own Tao, as well as life's grand flow. Taoist teachings are intended to be
306 utilized as a guide to daily living. Their greatest value lies in their ability to direct
307 us toward our own process of self-exploration, growth, and transformation which
308 connects us deeply to ourselves and to the world around us" (Kardash nd, p. 2).
309 The "going with the flow" of the Wu Wei principle, the "non-doing" can be seen
310 as being/staying with what is just there in the present moment.

311 Presence is the authentic attitude to be, to fully live in the presence: uncondi-
312 tionally accepting the other, empathically becoming involved in his or her pres-
313 ence, without any prior intention that is with openness and a wonder toward
314 experience and thus meeting the quality of Wu Wei.

315 To sum up, it seems to me that the core conditions put into practice meditative
316 attitudes (see also the chapter by Flender). In Buddhist terms, these are the
317 qualities of being there with an open heart (genuineness), loving kindness
318 (unconditional positive regard), mindful listening (empathy), and the principle of
319 Wu Wei (which meets the quality of presence).



320 **5 Selected Concepts of the PCA: Reflected by Eastern** 321 **Wisdom**

322 ***5.1 Actualizing Tendency***

323 From the viewpoint of the PCA in each person, there is the deep need and desire of
324 “becoming oneself,” a longing to become whole, a craving for further develop-
325 ment in a direction of growing and becoming what one is meant to be. “It seems to
326 me that at bottom each person is asking, who am I really? How can I get in touch
327 with this real self, underlying all my surface behavior? How can I become
328 myself?” (Rogers 1980a, p. 357) and the reply could be: “At the center of your
329 being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want”
330 (Lao Tzu, internet source). Rogers names this inner quest the “actualization ten-
331 dency.” I dare to assume that the “Tao” is of similar quality: the inner spirit which
332 flows through us, a life force that goes for inner development in a direction of
333 living in harmony, genuineness, and balance. Chuang Tzu refers to this type of
334 being in the world as flowing, or more poetically (and provocatively), as “pur-
335 poseless wandering.” By allowing the Tao to work through us, we render our
336 actions truly spontaneous, natural, and effortless. We thus flow with all experi-
337 ences and feelings as they come and go (Kardash 1998, 2012 Internet source
338 without page information).

339 ***5.2 Openness to Experience***

340 One main basic assumption of PCA is that of the fully functioning person. This
341 (ideal) person is totally free of defense, it is not identified with a special view of
342 itself and flexible to adapt in any situation. “The self and the personality emerge
343 from experience, rather than experience being translated or twisted to fit a pre-
344 conceived self-structure. It means that one becomes a participant in and an
345 observer of the ongoing process of organismic experience, rather than being in
346 control of it” (Rogers 1961/1995, p. 189). Or, “The good life is a process, not a
347 state of being, it is a direction, not a destination” (Rogers 1961/1995, p. 186). We
348 can understand the attitude of the fully functioning person as mindfulness toward
349 one’s own ongoing experiencing in the sense of an attitude of attentive and
350 accepting being with what is going on inside right now without presumption and
351 prejudice. One can also name this “openness to experience”: “In general then, it
352 appears to be true that when a client is open to his experience, he comes to find his
353 organism more trustworthy. He feels less fear of the emotional reactions he has.
354 There is a gradual growth of trust, and even affection for the complex, rich, varied
355 assortment of feelings and tendencies, which exist in him at the organismic level.
356 Consciousness, instead of being the watchman over a dangerous and unpredictable
357 lot of impulses, of which few can be permitted to see the light of day, becomes the

358 comfortable inhabitant of a society of impulses and feelings and thoughts, which
359 are discovered to be very satisfactory self-governing when not fully guarded”
360 (Rogers 1961/1995, p. 119).

361 Gendlin (1962) emphasizes the attitude as one of unconditional positive regard,
362 mindful attention, and curiosity toward oneself and toward what is bodily felt in
363 the present moment. It is a focusing on one’s own inner sensing. It carries in it the
364 mood of “beginner’s mind” or the position of witness. One uses the core condi-
365 tions to establish a helpful and friendly relationship toward oneself in order to
366 further personal development.

367 Quite similarly, Lao Tzu writes that we must be quiet and watchful, learning to
368 listen to both our own inner voices and the voices of our environment in a non-
369 interfering, receptive manner. In this way, we also learn to rely on more than just
370 our intellect and logical mind to gather and assess information. We develop and
371 trust our intuition as our direct connection to the Tao. We heed the intelligence of
372 our whole body, not only our brain. And we learn through our own experience.
373 This means trusting our own bodies, our thoughts and emotions (Kardash 1998,
374 Internet source without page information).

375 *5.3 The Positive View of Human Nature*

376 Within the PCA, a positive view of human nature is held: “One of the most
377 revolutionary concepts to grow out of our clinical experience is the growing
378 recognition that the innermost core of a man’s nature, the deepest layers of his
379 personality, the base of his ‘animal nature’ is positive in nature—is basically
380 socialized, forward-moving, rational and realistic” (Rogers 1961/1995, p. 91).

381 Eastern philosophies also assume a basic goodness of human nature. Chögyam
382 Trungpa (1998) writes:

383 If we are willing to take an unbiased look, we will find out that, in spite of all our problems
384 and confusion, all our emotional and psychological ups and downs, there is something
385 basically good about our existence as human beings. Unless we can discover that ground
386 of goodness in our own lives, we cannot hope to improve the lives of others. Every human
387 being has a basic nature of goodness, which is undiluted and unconfused. That goodness
388 contains tremendous gentleness and appreciation. If they have never developed sympathy
389 or gentleness toward themselves, people cannot experience harmony or peace within
390 themselves, and therefore, what they project to others is also inharmonious and confused.
391 Developing tenderness toward yourself allows you to see both your problems and your
392 potential accurately. That kind of gentleness toward yourself is very necessary. It provides
393 the ground for helping yourself and others. Basic goodness is very closely connected to the
394 idea of bodhicitta in the Buddhist tradition. Bodhi means “awake” or “wakeful” and citta
395 means “heart”, so bodhicitta is “awakened heart”. Such awakened heart comes from
396 being willing to face your state of mind. That may seem like a great demand, but it is
397 necessary (p. 11).

398 Both Eastern Philosophies and the PCA refer to humans as part of a social
399 system, as having a social responsibility, meant to be part of a relationship from
400 the very beginning. Social responsibility, “social self,” being part of something
401 bigger, being a relational person is central for both:

402 By listening carefully within, as well as to our surroundings, by remembering that we are
403 part of an interconnected whole, by remaining still until action is called forth, we can
404 perform valuable, necessary, and long-lasting service in the world while cultivating our
405 ability to be at one with the Tao. Such is the power of wu-wei, allowing ourselves to be
406 guided by the Tao (Kardash 1998, para. 11).

407 One can say the background parallels between the PCA and Eastern approaches
408 involve similar aims, recognition of the essential trustworthiness of human nature,
409 the importance of an internal locus of evaluation, the “process” view of the self,
410 and the therapeutic process which involves a reduction in “incongruence” or
411 “delusion” (Purton 1996).

412 **6 Shambhala: Different Routes—One Destination**

413 In Tibet, there are stories about a legendary kingdom. According to the legends,
414 this was a place of peace and prosperity, governed by wise and compassionate
415 rulers. The citizens were equally kind and learned, so that in general, the kingdom
416 was a model society. This place was called Shambhala. Their people follow the
417 Buddhist path of *loving kindness and concern for all beings*. Among the Tibetan
418 people, there is a popular belief that the kingdom of Shambhala can still be found,
419 hidden in a remote valley somewhere in the Himalayas. Many scholars, however,
420 believe that the stories of Shambhala are pure fiction; it is also possible to see in
421 these legends the expression of deeply rooted and very real human desire for a
422 good and fulfilling life. Shambhala can be regarded as the ground or root of
423 awakening and sanity that exists as a potential within every human being.
424 Shambhala teachings are found on the premise that there is basic human wisdom
425 that can help to solve the world’s problems. This wisdom does not belong to any
426 one culture or religion. Nor does it come either from the East or from the West.
427 Rather it is a tradition of humanistic warrior ship that has existed in many cultures
428 and many times throughout history (Trungpa 1984).

429 Like the hidden land of Shambhala, the PCA and its findings and richness
430 nowadays have moved into the background for many modern psychotherapies. As
431 mentioned before, today many therapists prefer Eastern concepts and techniques
432 and integrate them into their work rather than use “old-fashioned” therapies and
433 concepts of Carl Rogers, Gene Gendlin, and other representatives of the human-
434 istic therapies. If I compare these different streams carefully, I don’t understand
435 this effort, because there are a lot of similarities between them.

436 Take, for example, Marsha Linehan, the founder of the DBT, who originally
437 learned a lot from Carl Rogers during her university time. When I attended a

438 retreat with her and Benedictine monk and Zen Master Willigis Jäger about
439 mindfulness and DBT in 2006, she was asked about this noticeable influence of
440 Rogers, and at this retreat she confirmed Rogers' influence on her. One of the
441 participants a behavior therapist asked her about how real change is to come about.
442 He asked: "How can I change, when I accept what is?" Linehan looked at him
443 irritated for a moment, then she smiled and replied: "But acceptance *is* change!"—
444 In other words, she offered to the whole auditorium the Rogerian paradox of
445 change without mentioning him, and perhaps without even realizing it.

446 Many therapists, especially from the behavioral therapy direction, are just
447 exploring the—for them—radically new findings of the impact of mindfulness and
448 acceptance, without realizing that there is a lot to learn from proven body of
449 experience of the PCA.

450 Mindfulness meditation is a central element of the "third wave" of behavior
451 therapy (see above). While in these therapies training of mindfulness is generally
452 offered as a pure exercise, in PCA mindfulness is offered in a relationship. In
453 person-centered and experiential therapy we (usually) don't sit on a cushion or
454 bench, we carry mindfulness in the real relationship of the present moment, or in
455 the real relationship with oneself. Here, the dialog is affected and colored by
456 mindfulness; there is a flowing of mindfulness between the two people. In this
457 way, the client is able to learn to be mindful with him- or herself.

458 But undoubtedly meditation practice is extremely useful (and also Western
459 contemplation practice, see the chapter by Flender in this book). There are an
460 increasing number of person-centered counselors and psychotherapists who
461 practice Buddhist or Zen Meditation. Geller (2003) explains the meaning of
462 mindfulness and meditation:

463 Simply being with internal states and accepting what is there—thus enabling the client to
464 be with and accept what is there—is what lies at the heart of working with the core
465 conditions. There is something important in all of this about *being with* in a deeper, more
466 fully "mindful" way that might require a different, perhaps a more precise quality of
467 attention to what is going on- in both self and client- at the level of thoughts, feelings,
468 body language and the felt sense (Cited by Moore 2002). She and her colleague Greenberg
469 (2002) also offer a very profound and comprehensive research study about the impact of
470 mindfulness practice on person centered and experiential psychotherapists. Additionally,
471 Bazzanu's (Bazzanu 2009) result of a small research project was that "the regular practice
472 of meditation would assist a process of focusing and centering that can make a therapist a
473 better instrument, more finely tune to empathic awareness and congruence, on that can
474 better assist a person in distress, or a person exploring issues in his or her life" (p. 11).

AQ2

475 The PCA goes far beyond mindfulness trainings. It aims deeper than pure
476 mindfulness practice. Sometimes very special moments of deep connectedness,
477 like "sacred spaces," arise in the relationship. This is when the quality of presence
478 unfolds. In presence, there is a qualitative jump, which in contrast to meditation
479 practice we cannot make, cannot control with our will. We can direct mindfulness
480 to something, yet presence simply is; it is effortless (yet needs a lot of concentra-
481 tion). It can come when bodily sensation, feeling, and mental activity, such as
482 thinking, are synchronized to a great extent. Rogers (1980b) described an opening

483 in the direction of presence in the sense of this spontaneous state of effortless
484 clarity, precision, lightness and earthed expansion of perception or consciousness.
485 And so, we are entitled to say: The PCA offers much more than a mere technique!

486 7 Conclusion

487 Coming to a conclusion, the quality of being “mindful,” being fully and accurately
488 aware of what is going on, both in self and in self-in-relation-to-other is of high
489 value in different schools of thought. Person-centered therapists have known about
490 this for a long time (see “[The Essence of the Person-Centered Approach](#)”). I want
491 to state that the PCA is the first and oldest mindfulness-based therapeutic approach
492 of the western hemisphere carrying old and everlasting wisdom from Eastern and
493 Western traditions. Realizing this we are entitled to say: Mindfulness, peaceful-
494 ness, and “a listening mind” are the crucial characteristics of the PCA. They
495 constitute the spirit of the PCA. They are “the mood” of it.

496 And I want to bring to mind again the quality of humanistic warrior ship.
497 Members of the person-centered community are the keepers of a deep wisdom and
498 competence, which is inherent in the PCA. In the spirit of a warrior, who never
499 gives up, with the sense of bravery and trust, we will wait for a change of the
500 zeitgeist. In the spirit of Lao Tzu, we can say: “I see my path, but I don’t know
501 where it leads. Not knowing where I’m going is what inspires me to travel it.” And
502 so: We will walk softly and: The path unfolds while walking....

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