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Towards a more humanistic approach to family therapy.

Abraham Avesar

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TOWARDS A MORE HUMANISTIC APPROACH
TO FAMILY THERAPY

A Dissertation Presented

by

Abraham Avesar

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

June, 1973

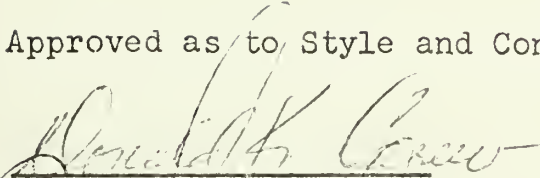
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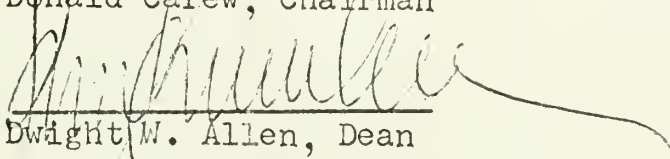
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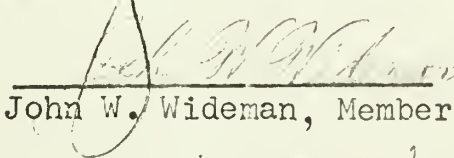
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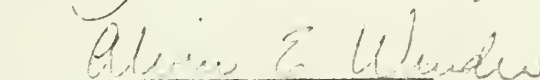
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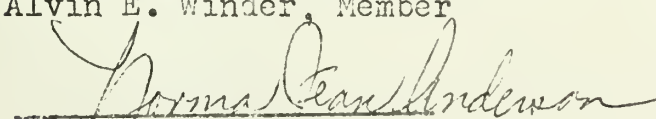
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my
father, Shalem, and to my mother,
Simha, for allowing me to be me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Don Carew and Al Winder for reading the draft of this dissertation and making many constructive and helpful comments.

I want to especially thank Jack Wideman for encouraging me to write what I think.

I want to thank Naomi for being patient, and Avner, my son, for teaching me how to be a father.

I am also grateful to Mary whose expert editing turned rough language into finished products.

Most of all I want to thank my family and all the individuals and families I work with. I am grateful for their allowing me to visit their inner space and to learn so much. This study would not have been possible without them.

If we only have love
To embrace without fears,
We will kiss with our eyes
We will sleep without tears.

If we only have love
With our arms open wide,
Then the young and the old
Will stand by our side.

If we only have love
We can reach those in pain,
We can heal all our wounds
We can use our own names.

If we only have love
Then Jerusalem stands,
and then death has no shadow
There are no foreign lands.

Then with nothing at all
But the little we are,
We'll have conquered all time,
All space, the sun and the stars.

Jacques Brel

ABSTRACT

Towards a More Humanistic Approach to
Family Therapy (June 1973)

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This study develops the Family Growth Theory--a subjective, flexible, humanistic, and open-ended approach to understanding and working with families. This theory stresses "health" rather than "sickness." It focuses on working with the whole person rather than fragments of personality. It views the growth process as a cooperative effort between therapist and family. The theory seeks to develop ways for the family to live together and enjoy each other after the initial problem and pain have been alleviated.

The study is organized around five principal themes: the growth of the self, objective and subjective reality, anxiety, the relationship of the self to others, and the importance of bringing feelings into awareness. The limitations of the study precluded any detailed analysis of the important influence society has on shaping the family and fostering or inhibiting growth.

The study is divided into two parts. The first reviews the theories, ideas, concepts, and techniques found in family therapy, existentialism, phenomenology, and humanistic

psychology. The second develops the Family Growth Theory and discusses techniques for translating theory into practice. Although the Family Growth Theory incorporates many of the ideas found in various schools of thought, these philosophical and psychological foundations for the theory are assimilated and integrated to reflect the author's own personal and professional experiences.

In part one the theory and practice of family therapy as generally practiced today discusses the work of Ackerman and Satir, among others. An overview of existentialism and phenomenology was organized around the work of Laing, May, Sartre, Buber, and others. The contributions of humanistic psychology to the Family Growth Theory were presented through the work of Maslow, Rogers, and Perls.

Existentialism, phenomenology, and humanistic psychology's main contribution to the Family Growth Theory is their focus on viewing the individual as unique, and helping him to become the best possible version of himself, defined by his own values, aspirations, needs, and limitations. The Family Growth Theory shares with these different perspectives of man an emphasis on increasing individuality and authenticity through self-actualization. One important goal of Family Growth is to help each family member achieve his potential and to help the family achieve family-actualization.

In part two the presentation of the Family Growth Theory includes a discussion of: the individual, the family, growth, and the relationship between "I" and "We" growth. The theory

further discusses the characteristics of an open, as opposed to a closed, family system and lists some attributes of an actualizing family. Certain themes common in working with families are introduced: "hypothetical living"--the if-only-things-were-different approach to life that may prevent a family or individual from enjoying the here and now; family rules--their function, influence on family life, and the importance of their re-examination and up-dating to suit the present; communication patterns--the difficulties many individuals and families have in expressing their feelings; "I" time and "We" time.

Part two also discusses the techniques employed by the Family Growth to elicit the theory. They are designed to help families develop ways of appreciating each other, learn to develop open and honest methods of communication, examine their rules and change them where necessary, and to begin to enter the process of self-actualization.

One important concept behind the technique of Family Growth is that the therapist's unique self are among the most valuable tools for effecting change. The open sharing of the therapist's self, experience, and values is viewed as a constructive way to promote human growth.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study presents an open-ended theory of family therapy. It attempts to integrate current thinking about family therapy theory and techniques with philosophical and psychological ideas and knowledge from existentialism, phenomenology and humanistic psychology. The resulting theoretical synthesis will be broadly based on humanistic psychology and will be called the "Family Growth Theory."

Statement of the Problem

Many professionals trained in family therapy have found themselves increasingly uncomfortable with many underlying assumptions of family therapy. Current theory generally assumes that the members of treated families are emotionally disturbed, or that the whole family is "sick." These perspectives are valuable but have some definite limitations.

One problem is that when a therapist labels individuals or families emotionally sick, the relationship which develops between therapist and patient may inhibit emotional growth. Sometimes, too, the family's status quo remains intact, or the situation worsens for some members. Laing (1971) and Szasz (1961) discuss this problem and emphasize the destructive element that is created for the individual and his family.

As Szasz put it: "Who are the people who are persecuted and victimized in the name of 'health' and 'happiness'? There are many. In the front ranks are the mentally ill and especially those who are so defined by others rather than by themselves," (1961, p. 9).

Another problem is that most methods of treatment in the mental health field are based on the medical model which is, in essence, highly authoritarian. The therapist, socially sanctioned and professionally trained, is seen as behaving "objectively." The patient, disturbed or disturbing, is observed, diagnosed, and treated for signs and symptoms that only the therapist supposedly understands. Many therapists have questioned this methodology but, until recently, their protests and arguments have often been ignored or silenced. In fact, members of their own profession have labeled many of them "sick."

The idea of working with the family as a unit, rather than "blaming" the individual for most of his problems was a threatening one to other therapists. Ackerman replied to the criticism his work provoked as follows:

Turning specifically to family therapy, one encounters some curious attitudes. Among those who indict this method as guilty of the crime of superficiality are some who have neither tried it nor even observed it. One wonders inevitably about the motives of such criticism. Is it vested professional interest, status, and prestige, a secret fear perhaps that they cannot do family therapy? The traditional mode of training for an exclusive, private, one-to-one therapeutic relationship does not easily fit a person for the challenging role of family therapist. Personal discomfort with the prospect of involvement in this role should be openly and honestly conceded, not rationalized, (1969, p. 13).

The importance of the family in contributing to human

problems has long been stressed. However, family therapy has only recently emerged as a significant and specific form of psychological treatment. Pioneers, like Nathan Ackerman, developed new treatment techniques which are gaining increased acceptance and use. Such contributions have been valuable. However, as this study attempts to suggest, our current understanding of the family is still limited. Many of the developments in the field have still been derived and extrapolated from the psychology of mental illness.

There is today, however, a movement toward a more humanistic approach to working with people that stresses the "healthy" rather than the "sick" aspects of the individual. Maslow, Rogers, May, Perls, and many others have been leaders in this growing movement. As Maslow stated:

Not only do I feel dissatisfied with the helpless labeling of neurosis, but also I and many other psychologists feel excited and hopeful because there is now emerging over the horizon a new conception of human sickness and of human health, a psychology that I find so thrilling and so full of wonderful possibilities that I yield to the temptation to present it publicly even before it is checked and confirmed, and before it can be called reliable scientific knowledge. Call it an expert guess, if you like, or a set of theories, but remember, I speak for only one school of psychologists and not for all, (1969, p. 4).

This study is undertaken in the spirit of Maslow's words.

The Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to integrate knowledge and ideas from different schools of thought into family therapy. It emphasizes understanding the process of family therapy from a humanistic perspective. The resultant model will be called

"Family Growth Theory." The medical model, based on an authoritarian, problem-solving approach, is of little concern to this study. Instead, a family-centered model, where the therapist and family are co-equal in their interaction, will be used to develop this theory.

Humanistic philosophy and concepts will be introduced and integrated into the "Family Growth Theory." The emphasis will be on a psychology of "mental health." The capacity of a family member to accommodate new experiences, to learn, change, and grow will be stressed.

Method of Study

These steps will be followed in order to develop an open-ended theory:

1. Nathan Ackerman's work and others in family therapy will be presented. His extensive writings provide a central focus for examining the basis of current family therapy. Innovation in the field must follow an understanding and appreciation of what has already been developed in family therapy.
2. Selected representatives of the "third force" in psychology whose different perspectives have contributed so much to the theory of mental health, and to an understanding and appreciation for people will be discussed. Proponents of existentialism and phenomenology will be introduced.
3. Humanistic psychology will be examined through the work of Maslow, Rogers and Perls. As clinicians, many of their observations and techniques will be assimilated into the

"Family Growth Theory."

Limitations of the Study

It would be impossible within the scope of this study to discuss all the concepts, constructions, and philosophical ideas found in the fields of family therapy, existentialism, phenomenology, and humanistic psychology. Instead, an overview will be presented based on the work of some of the leaders in these fields who have inspired and generated further thought and knowledge.

Ackerman's Treating the Troubled Family, and Satir's Conjoint Family Therapy are the principal sources for contemporary family therapy theory; May's Existence will be the cornerstone for existentialism; Laing's The Politics of the Family and The Divided Self will be used for phenomenology; Maslow's Toward a Psychology of Being, Perls' Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, and Rogers' Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human will be used for humanistic psychology.

In addition to limiting the writers and theories used, this study will focus on the psychosocial growth of the family in five principal areas. Almost everyone in the field (including this author) recognizes the great importance of societal influences upon the family. This study, however, will not examine how the individual and the family interact with and are influenced and shaped by the larger milieu of society and its institutions. The principal areas of concern for this study are:

1. Growth of Self. Most theory that deals with the

development of self defines the process of growth in relation to important people in the person's life, i.e. parents. Growth of self will be viewed in this study as a separate entity that is not entirely dependent on other people's approval or disapproval. This includes the "discovery of the inner self," (Maslow, 1967).

2. Objective and Subjective Reality. Most therapists in the mental health profession believe that there is a reality (usually the therapist's reality). One of the goals of traditional therapies is to help an individual to accept this reality and change his perception accordingly. In this study, however, emphasis will be put on the complexity of realities that exist in any given family. One person's experience in his family may create a reality that differs from that perceived by other members, (Laing, 1969).
3. Anxiety. This concept will be looked at from two perspectives: not only as emotional energy to be controlled, but as feelings to be experienced and used for development of the inner self.
4. Relationship of Self to Others. This area focuses on the interaction of family members. It examines the following questions: Can the interaction enrich the relationship? Can communication be clear and not destructive or double-binding? How does a family enter the self-actualizing process? How can the family help each member maintain his authenticity?
5. Awareness. Awareness is one of the most important factors

in emotional growth. This area will examine awareness of self, one's feelings, one's body, as well as awareness of others and the environment. Awareness in the "here and now," awareness of things and people as they are, and not as one might wish them to be. Awareness of one's feeling is critical if change and growth is to be facilitated.

These areas were carefully selected to elucidate the two processes of individual growth and family growth. The interaction and interplay between these two is one of the major issues that determines how one sees the family and oneself. It is the central theme of this study. The way a therapist organizes and understands the processes taking place in the family matrix will determine how he is going to work and interact with the family.

Following the presentation of current thinking about family therapy, and a discussion of psychological and philosophical foundations, an attempt will be made to organize and integrate the contributions of humanistic psychology into a more comprehensive Family Growth Theory. This theory will synthesize the material in such a way that both the autonomy, as well as the interaction between individual growth and development and family growth can be seen. It will answer such questions as: How do members of the family complement each other's development without getting into a power struggle where one person's growth is seen as jeopardizing another's? Can family members flourish on differences and enjoy one another, rather than view differences as "dangers" to be guarded against and overcome in relationships? Instead of the therapist focusing

on "problems to be solved," can he and the family members learn how to work and be together in an experience of growth for all?

In summary, a theory of family growth will be developed that will be open and flexible enough to allow other theorists to integrate their ideas into it, and to make it more congruent with everyday practice--not as an intellectual exercise but as a theory to be understood and used.

Chapter Synopses

Chapter I outlines the rationale, objectives, methodology and limitations of the study.

Chapter II will present a review of the literature of current family therapy and practices. These theories will then be critically examined.

Chapter III will present existentialism and phenomenology.

The knowledge and ideas from these two schools of thought will provide the philosophical and psychological foundations for Chapters IV and V.

Chapter IV will present humanistic psychology through the works of Maslow, Rogers, and Perls. Their psychological contributions and techniques will be examined in detail.

Chapter V will integrate and assimilate pertinent components of Chapters II, III, and IV into a more comprehensive theory of family therapy: The Family Growth Theory.

Chapter VI will present a discussion, further suggestions for study, and raise some questions. It will also offer a brief summary of the study.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF FAMILY THERAPY THEORY

Introduction

Despite some minor departures by family therapists from psychoanalytic theory and technique, family therapy studies, practices, and writings in the past 20 years have predominantly reflected the psychoanalytic viewpoint. For the most part, writers like Ackerman (1966), Bell (1961), Bowen (1961), Jackson and Weakland (1961), Whitaker, Felder, and Warkentin (1965), Boszormenyi-Nagy (1965), and Framo (1965) have essentially adhered to the view that therapists must formulate and communicate insights, and work through unconscious resistances and defenses in patients in order to promote beneficial change. Even such departures from psychoanalytic technique as those described by Satir (1967) and Minuchin (1965) seem to be fundamentally insight-centered.

This chapter examines the basic foundation of family therapy and deals with the following issues: (1) What is family therapy? (2) What are its goals? (3) How does it view individual growth? (4) What is the interaction between individual and family growth? (5) What is the process of family therapy and the role of the therapist? (6) Special problems in family therapy.

The final section of this chapter will critically

analyze family therapy theory.

The works of many acknowledged authorities in the field of family therapy will be evaluated. Nathan Ackerman, in particular, will be quoted and referred to more extensively. Ackerman's formulation of theory and techniques in family therapy are widely accepted and extensively used all over the country.

What is Family Therapy?

Ackerman defines family psychotherapy as ". . . a method of therapeutic intervention on the emotional processes of a natural living unit, the family entity, viewed as an integrated behavior system," (1966, p. 4).

He emphasizes that the therapeutic intervention should involve, by nature, all those persons who share the identity of the family, and whose behavior is influenced by the emotional interchanges occurring within that unit. Family therapists seek to define the characteristics of the conflict in the family, the coping resources of family members, and the mechanisms for restoring balance after upset. As such, the process involves three main variables: family organization, family role adaptation, and individual personality.

Ackerman (1966), Bowen (1965), and Framo (1965) point out that psychotherapy with the whole family focuses on the disturbance aspects of the interpersonal conflict. They see the family in therapy as an organismic unit, or as a system which generates its own particular growth disorders within the

family. Their theory of family therapy distinguishes malignant aspects in family life and reveals those phenomena akin to "fixation" and "regression" which cause deviant development and disorganization of the unit.

What are the Goals of Family Therapy?

Ackerman states that: "The goals of family therapy are to alleviate emotional distress and disablement and promote the level of health, both in the family group and in its individual members, by resolving or reducing pathogenic conflict and anxiety within the matrix of interpersonal relationships," (1966, p. 5).

According to Ackerman (1966) therapy achieves these goals by:

1. The establishment of a needed quality of rapport, empathy, and communication in the family therapy situation.
2. The clarification of the real content of conflict by dissolving barriers, defensive disguises, confusions, and misunderstandings.
3. The catalytic release of the main trends of conflict and coping, by counteracting inappropriate denials, displacements, and rationalizations.
4. The transformation of dormant, concealed, interpersonal conflict into open interaction and expression.
5. Lifting hidden intrapersonal conflict to the level of interpersonal and open interaction.
6. The neutralization of patterns of prejudicial scapegoating

that fortify one part of the family while victimizing another part through the imposition of an excessive load of conflict, guilt, and fear.

7. Maximization of the dormant healing potentials of the family group, epitomized in the role of a family therapist as family healer.
8. The penetration and undermining of resistances which relies largely on a device called "tickling the defenses," (Ackerman, 1966).
9. The therapist's intervention as a source of support and satisfaction which is used to help control interpersonal dangers and the emotional elements the family needs but lacks.
10. The facilitation of the efforts of the family to balance and allow sameness and differences as well as cooperation and individuation. This mobilizes respect for individual differences while affirming the foundations for sharing and identification in family relationships.
11. The introduction and use of the device of reality testing.
12. The education and personification of the range of models of family health are presented and examined by family members and adopted according to their needs.

How does Family Therapy View Individual Growth?

Family therapists like Ackerman (1966), Framo (1965), Bowen (1961), and Boszormenyi-Nagy (1965) see a close connection between the process of individual growth and development

and the family's growth.

Ackerman states:

It should be apparent from what has already been said that the child cannot be considered apart from the family. Each stage of his growth is related to the family environment; from the very first, his adaptation to it must be viewed as a biosocial process, (1966, p. 163).

Ackerman (1966) and other major family therapists reveal their psychoanalytic training by basing their view of the unfolding of personality on Freud's theory of psychosexual development. Freud's theory, as interpreted by Ackerman, has four phases: (1) the magical symbiotic union of infant and mother; (2) interdependence and intimacy with progressive differentiation of the child's individuality; (3) the achievement of autonomy, self-sufficiency, mastering of the environment, and personal initiative; (4) the creative fulfillment of the self in the wider society.

Ackerman (1966) divides individual growth into six stages. The first stage, immediately following birth, basically reflects a vegetative adaptation. The individual organism feeds, sleeps, and cries when hungry. The neurological integration is still incomplete; perceptual responses are crude and relatively unorganized.

The second stage, that of symbiotic union or "primary symbiosis with the mother," as Ackerman calls it, takes place while the infant is totally dependent for survival. He requires nourishment, warmth, bodily touch, verbal and non-verbal contact, stimulation, and protection from danger. In the symbiotic union, the child commands--the mother obeys, and/or the

mother commands--the child obeys. . The child is not yet able to distinguish the mother's self from his own. At this stage, the child's behavior alternates between utter helplessness and defenselessness and a striving for omnipotent control.

The mother functions not only as the child's source of love and security, but also as his perceptive and executive agent. Through her behavior she communicates her own effective interpretation of prevailing realities, as well as her devices for dealing with them. In this stage, the child is capable of a tender, warm response to the mother and, according to Ackerman, any "premature, excessive, shocking, or sudden withdrawal of the mother induces in the child feelings of panic, helplessness, and fears of loss of life and may produce outbreaks of aggression," (1966, p. 164).

The third stage of individual growth is one of a gradual separation of the infant from his mother. As the child matures, there is progressively less panic and less aggression at separation. The child begins to assert his separate self; he develops the power of speech and a greater mastery over his environment. Gradually, the need for the symbiotic union lessens. It is also in this third stage that the child comes to terms with his parents and family. The mother's care and control of the child are influenced by the quality of her relations with the father and the rest of the family. The child depends on the parent as an external source of control, but gradually incorporates these standards into his own personality.

The fourth stage reflects the child's differentiation of his parents' sexual identity. What emerges here is the child's own sexual identity, his ability to distinguish between the male and the female parent, and the redirection of his love needs in accordance with his parents' own sexual identity and the relationship between them.

In the fifth stage the emotional and social spheres of the child's interaction are expanded beyond the confines of his immediate family. He now begins to test social reality and to learn from wider contact with peers and parent substitutes. Ackerman points out that, "This is a period of broadened social growth, education, and preparation for adolescence," (1966, p. 165).

The sixth stage, adolescence, is characterized by the struggle for ego-identity; lines of identification are re-organized and group allegiances and roles are realigned in anticipation of and preparation for the tasks of adult life.

Ackerman defines the term "growth" as those vital forces in the personality which facilitate the maturing process. He conceptualizes the growth of personality as a progressive movement through the finite stages of development and fulfillment, each of which signified a new integration of the forces of personality, interpersonal relationships, and social achievements. Movement from one stage to another implies a successful resolution of the conflicts and adaptation problems of the previous stage.

Every stage of self-development creates its own anxiety

and conflict whose resolution may either be healthy or pathological. When healthy resolution fails, deviant patterns in the child start to emerge, possibly bringing about the following reactions:

1. The child may attack his family and attempt to coerce gratification of his needs. Ackerman (1966) categorizes this behavior as aggressive conduct disorders or sociopathic forms of behavior disorders.
2. He can react by withdrawal from contact with his family and develop personality changes such as a preoccupation with self and body.

Two important behavior components that the individual needs to learn to master and use effectively are reality testing and anxiety.

Reality Testing. Reality is considered to be the process of thinking and seeking to regulate behavior in terms of the future welfare of the individual. The term "reality testing" means the slow sorting out of experiences and the learning of what works and what does not, all of which starts during infancy. The individual's testing depends upon the consistency and reliability of the behavior of his family unit.

Ackerman (1966), Framo (1965), and Bowen (1965) observe that families seeking help have usually created distorted images of what reality is. At the onset of therapy, every member of the family starts out by expressing his distorted images of himself and the other members' roles and functions.

Ackerman (1966) sees the function of the family therapist

as helping members to determine what reality is. He says a crucial function is the family therapist's use of self as an instrument of reality testing. Ackerman states:

By testing against the therapist's more objective perceptions, each family member has the opportunity to experience every other member without the felt dangers of their disorder imagery. Each member takes a second look at every other member and at the therapist and readapts toward more realistic images of self and other members of the group, (1966, p. 99).

The Function of Anxiety in Individual Growth. Ackerman (1966), Bowen (1965), Framo (1965), and Whitaker (1965) see anxiety as one of the basic emotional energies involved in the process of individual growth and stage-by-stage movement through psychosexual development. Appropriate amounts of anxiety are needed in order to move smoothly from one stage to another. When the psychosexual stages of development go smoothly, the individual learns how to cope with anxiety and becomes aware of how much he can master. Part of growth also involves developing mechanisms of defense against anxiety. For Ackerman, "The concept of defense refers to a psychic means of control of endogenous sources of anxiety," (1966, p. 88).

Ackerman (1966), Framo (1965), and Bowen (1965) also deal with the issue of what happens when excessive amounts of anxiety and fear accompany stages of development. As has been noted earlier, Ackerman (1966) believes that the healing of conflict and anxiety may be either healthy or pathological at any stage of child development, and that when healthy healing fails, anxiety overwhelms the child and makes way for deviant behavior patterns to develop.

As a child moves to the next stage, new deviations may be superimposed, and thus multiple types of pathogenic responses and symptoms may surface. Ackerman lists ways in which the child may react to threats in the family environment:

The child may react with excessive anxiety, internalization of conflict, and the production of one or another structured form of psychopathology:

- (a) Excessive anxiety with internalization and encapsulation of specific conflicts, as in the production of psychoneurotic reactions;
- (b) Excessive anxiety, defective emotional control, decompensation of defenses, or paralysis or disorganization of adaptive functions that may induce sociopathic or psychosomatic tendencies;
- (c) Excessive anxiety, disorganization of adaptive behavior, arrest of development, or regression and reintegration at a primitive psychic level, as in psychotic forms of reaction, (1966, p. 167).

In short, anxiety is considered a psychic energy controlled by the development of defense mechanisms which serve as a protective wall to prevent the ongoing process of individual growth from being overrun or disorganized by excess.

What is the Interaction between Individual and Family Growth?

The family has a natural life history of its own; it is born, grows, and develops. Each stage of growth is capable of adapting to new experiences and change. The family is structured one way during the child-rearing period and another when the children enter puberty, and the parents move into their prime. Its structure changes yet again when the children mature and leave home to create their own families. As a family moves from one stage to another, new and appropriate

balances must be found between the individual and the family in order to sustain essential relationships among its members.

Boszormenyi-Nagy (1965), and Framo (1965) view the family as a social support group which answers two basic needs. First, it assures the survival of its members by protecting their biological integrity. Second, the family's major responsibility is to socialize its members. Ackerman has stated that: "Where socialization fails, the human quality of the members also fails, as is dramatically exemplified in those families where the failure of the socializing function results in children who behave like animals, who are brutalized, who turn criminal or pervert, or who become victims of mental illness," (1966, p. 59).

According to some theories of family therapy, (Jackson (1961), Haley (1972), and Ackerman (1966)), family members are seen as being extraordinarily sensitive to each other's needs. Loyalty and love are the products of this sensitivity. The family develops the kinds of persons it needs to carry out its function. While satisfying individual personal strivings, each member, in turn, influences the family.

The emotional give and take of family relationships is the crucial center of forces that sustains or damages mental health. Family stability hinges on complicated and sensitive patterns of emotional balance and interchange. As described by Ackerman (1966), the relationship of the individual to the family is a delicate interplay of the parallel processes of emotional joining and separation. The psychological identity

of the marital and parental pair shapes the child to his identity; the child in turn shapes the parental pair to his needs. Each member's behavior is affected by every other member's behavior. A shift in the emotional interaction of one dyad alters the interactional processes of other family pairs.

Each family member brings to the total family configuration a unique balance of tendencies to conform or to rebel and to submit to or actively alter the family's role expectations. The total family molds the roles required of husband, wife, father, mother, parent, child, and child-sibling. The family's capacity for growth depends upon whatever resources for coping it has developed. There are ever-changing problems and conflicts that influence the relative balance between the tendency to cling to the old, and the familiar, and the ability to assimilate and adapt to new experiences.

If one family member is in conflict within himself, this conflict exercises a profound influence on the growth and development of the family and its individuals. Conflict may center around differences, values, expectations or competition. The outcome of the conflict may result in a further integration of the individual's and the family's human experience or serve to disintegrate that experience.

In general, family therapy theory views intra-family conflict as the main reference point for understanding adaptation. Conflict and competition between members of a family can have healthy or pathogenic effects. It can either intensify

a move towards emotional alienation and fragmentation of relationships, or it can promote growth and interdependence. The resolution of conflict depends on the dynamic context of a particular set of conflicts within the larger framework of the family's total evolution.

Conflict occurs at many levels: between the nuclear family unit and representatives of the extended family; between one segment of the nuclear family and another; and, more importantly, there may be an internal conflict within the mind of an individual member. This latter conflict comprises a potent and contagious force; it invades and pervades every aspect of family life. However, conflict at any one level influences conflict at every other level. Ackerman stated: "The organization of the family resources for the control of conflict, both conscious and unconscious, expresses an unceasing struggle to enhance complementarity of family roles," (1966, p. 74).

The struggle involves the interplay between self-image and family-image. Individual needs and group needs must be accommodated. Each individual develops his own defenses against anxiety, and the group as a whole also develops defenses. Conflict is a threat to the continuity, stability, and growth of the family. An honest and appropriate perception of conflict is a function of family interaction and consensus. No individual member can gain accurate perceptions by himself. Moreover, he is powerless alone to satisfactorily resolve conflict.

The patterns which individuals and family units develop

to cope with conflict may be appropriate or inappropriate. Conflict may hold an important or a peripheral significance in the family's inner life. Frequently, one conflict is substituted for another, or the pathogenic focus of conflict will be displaced from one part of the family to another.

The method an individual family member develops to deal with conflict may be through over-reliance on defenses: denial, projection, displacement, or withdrawal. The family itself, as a whole, may develop defenses such as an increased rigidity in role patterns or a routinization of family relationships. This may further lead to an increase in emotional distance, distortion, or faulty communication. All, or several members, of the family may participate in acting-out or "scapegoating." Interpersonal conflict affects intrapsychic conflict; the reverse is also true.

Family therapy theory has developed concepts and constructs to deal with the relationship between the individual and the family, and then uses these to examine how this relationship, as a unique interaction, can lead to distorted and disturbed ways of relating. Four of these constructs are discussed below:

Double-bind theory has become classical in the literature on schizophrenia. Bateson (1956), Jackson (1956), Haley (1971), and Satir (1967) all devote energy to an analysis of this phenomenon. This theory has been researched by a number of people, including Sojit (1971), Blakel and Mehrabian (1969), Olson (1972), and Ringuette and Kennedy (1966).

Essentially, the theory postulates that the schizophrenic is caught in a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" dilemma and for the person caught in the double-bind, the conflict is irresolvable and unescapable. The double-bind occurs when the individual is involved in an intense relationship which he feels is vitally important to him and he tries to understand what sort of messages are being transmitted so that he can respond appropriately; and when the individual finds himself in the predicament where the other person in the relationship is communicating two conflicting sets of messages. As a result, the individual is unable to respond to the messages at all. No matter what answer he attempts, he is wrong.

The Scapegoat construct states that in the family-versus-individual relationship, the family, as a whole, seeks to rid itself of the conflict and tension which is inflicting emotional damage. To do this, the family often chooses a single member as a scapegoat. Franklin (1965), Whitaker (1961), Framo (1965), Boszormenyi-Nagy (1965), and Haley (1972) all discuss this phenomenon. The scapegoat gets blamed, punished, and singled out emotionally by the others. In turn, the scapegoat defends himself through retaliation against the others. This damages the family relationship. The persecutor, or persecutors, use a special prejudice as the vehicle for attack. Another member of the family becomes the object of this attack. The scapegoat may either be selectively rewarded for adapting to this role, or he may sustain an emotional injury that renders him susceptible to mental breakdown.

The scapegoat effect is not necessarily bad. Sometimes it involves idealizing one member of the family. Often the assignment of the role is unconscious. Boszormenyi-Nagy stated: "Scapegoating is an age-old practice, designed for the magical riddance of evil," (1965, p. 70).

For Bowen (1965) scapegoating is a deep emotional problem in the family. It results from profound disorganization and rift in family relationships and alignments. It can paralyze the family in emotional terms through guilt and anxiety. In order for the family to survive, the scapegoat may be seen by them as a monster.

The Family Rules construct, as described by both Satir (1967) and Jackson (1965) theorizes that the family is governed by rules and regulations. The family has its rules, and each individual has his own rules. Most importantly, however, sometimes the individual is ignorant or unaware of his own rules, and often of those of the family. For Jackson (1965), the family system is rule-governed. The members act among themselves in an organized, repetitive way. These behavior patterns are the ruling principle in family life. (His theory takes its theoretical basis from the communication theory and sociological theory of norms and values as described by Lennard and Bernstein.)

In the Family Homeostasis construct, according to Ackerman (1966), Jackson (1961), Haley (1971), and Satir (1967) the family acts to achieve a balance in relationships which is maintained overtly and covertly. The family's repetitious,

circular, and predictable communication patterns reveal this balance. When the family homeostasis is precarious, family members exert a great deal of effort to maintain it, (Satir, 1967).

The maintenance of this self-regulating psychological process is critical to the family. Everyone in the family has a stake in maintaining the delicate relationship existing between family members. Homeostasis is essential for comfort and survival. Any change in one family member affects change in the others.

Haley summarizes this concept well:

When one begins to conceptualize the family as a group of people who respond to change in each other in an error-activated way, it becomes possible to view the family as a homeostatic system. Such a system contains, within itself, self-corrective processes which permit it to continue to function in habitual ways. It is these points of self-correction which must be changed if a change in the family system is to occur, (1971, p. 133).

What is the Process of Family Therapy and the Role of the Therapist?

In reviewing family therapy treatment methods, several convergent themes and goals will be analyzed:

1. Re-education of the family through guidance.
2. Re-organization of the family through a change in its communication patterns.
3. Resolution of pathogenic conflict.
4. Induction of change and growth through a dynamic approach to current family life.

The three principal stages of family treatment, as

outlined by Framo (1965), will be discussed. It is important to realize, however, that at present few families reach the final stage as theoretically defined.

Beginning Phase of Family Therapy. For Framo (1965), diagnosis and treatment are inter-related processes. At the start of therapy, the entire family is asked to come in to talk about how each member of the family sees the "problem." Reaching a definition of the "problem" and labeling the "sick" family member is not important or helpful. The therapist's role at this stage is to elicit the process of each family member describing himself and his experience of the conflict the family is undergoing.

After this initial discussion, the number of people involved in any given session may vary. At some times the therapist may work with the extended family. In fact, there is a growing tendency among family therapists to accept the "three generation theory." This theory postulates that, in breaking the cycle of pathology, intervention must occur three generations back to correctly assess the psychopathological components. At other times, therapy can concentrate on the parent-child interaction, or focus solely on the husband-wife relationship.

The initial phase begins with the first face-to-face contacts. The therapist makes instantaneous observations of the family's personalities, their ways of interacting, and their adaption to family roles. He is sensitive to how members enter the room, who sits next to whom, who speaks, who listens, who

smiles, and who frowns. He notices the existing confusion, distrust, and hostile fragmentation of family relationships.

At a typical early session, the family arrives in a state of pent-up anger, pain, fright, and bewilderment. The therapist observes the quality of appeal each member projects towards other members. Who wants what from whom? Are members' needs denied, glossed over, or expressed in urgent, frantic, coercive ways? Have they given up and, with resigned apathy, ceased to ask or expect anything?

How long a family remains at the first stage will vary enormously because of the wide differences within families and the way their problems are approached or presented. However, among the typical characteristics of this stage is the accommodation and adjustments made by the family to the therapist. There is a jockeying for position, not only among the family members, but with the therapist. The family's fear of disclosing secrets in the more public forum of family therapy must be assuaged. The therapist is attempting to learn about the family, and frequently the family is seeking to block or prevent this process. It is only when the therapist gains their trust and, in a sense, becomes a member of the family, that the middle stage, the core of family therapy, can be reached.

Framo stated:

It is difficult to generalize about the early phases of family therapy because of the wide differences among families, differences in the way problems are approached or presented, and variability in the styles of the therapists. But the preliminary stages of family therapy are largely characterized by the accommodations and adjustments which must be made between the family and the therapists, the harmonization of the co-therapy team,

the jockeying for position as well as at least partial apprehension of the interlocking quality of the family pathology. There are many paths to these goals, and some families remain in these early phases for a long time without ever advancing into the real core of family therapy. Most succinctly, in the early phases the therapists are trying to break into the family system and the family is trying to keep them out. If the middle phases are reached, the therapists are in the family, (1965, p. 166).

Middle Phase of Family Therapy. A principal characteristic of this stage is the therapist's discovery of the family's idiosyncratic language. How does the family talk? What do they choose to talk about? What do they avoid talking about? These are questions the therapist must ask himself. More importantly, however, he must observe not only verbal expressions or attitudes, but non-verbal communications as well. Body language (facial expressions, gestures, posturing and vocal inflection) often provides more pertinent information about inner feelings than the spoken word.

The emotional currents that frighten and inhibit family members must be analyzed. Mistrust, despair, bitterness, and vindictiveness are identified so that the forces of conflict and anxiety can be recognized. Until this is done, family members will be unable to reach out and ask for, or give, intimacy and understanding to each other.

The therapist must define the level of struggle that is peculiar to each particular family. He has to evaluate the interplay between the family's defenses as a group and each individual's defenses against anxiety. A series of clinical hunches must be tested. As this testing progresses, the therapist

builds a diagnostic image of the group. This image encompasses the family's patterns of functioning, cooperation, conflict, and coping.

Whitaker (1965) observed that once this diagnostic image is developed and the idiosyncratic language learned, the therapist can move to the treatment process.

As surface defenses, such as denial, displacement, and rationalization, are recognized and stripped away, essential conflicts between and within family members are revealed. Acting as a catalyst, the therapist can elicit increasingly candid disclosures of underlying, and often never previously expressed or recognized, currents of interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict is elevated to the level of interpersonal process, (Ackerman, 1966).

Using the existing conflict as a therapeutic tool, Ackerman stated: "Significant connections can be traced between the family's disorder and the intrapsychic anxieties and disablements of its individual members," (1966, pp. 96-97).

At this stage, the therapist has to neutralize the assault on the scapegoat. By doing this, he removes the excuse for family dysfunction. The underlying conflicts can then be transferred to its origin in the family group. In this phase, too, the family roles of persecutor, victim, rescuer, or family healer frequently come to light. Often the therapist will join hands with the family healer.

Haley (1971) stresses that it is important to recognize that throughout this stage it is vital that the therapist

influences and controls what happens in therapy. If he is to induce change in the family system, he must not let them gain control of what happens. If they do, they will perpetuate their system and their distress.

Once the family and the therapist have defined together the main themes of conflict and defense, the therapist makes use of the device of confrontation. He penetrates and undermines the pathogenic patterns of defense mechanisms. By calling attention to the inefficiency, inappropriateness, and harmfulness of certain sickness-inducing mechanisms, he fosters the evolution of healthier ones. "Tickling the defenses," according to Ackerman (1966), pierces the pathogenic shield by catching the family off-guard. This procedure exposes dramatic discrepancies between verbal, self-justifying rationalizations and non-verbal attitudes. Empty cliches and pat formulae are challenged. Sterile bickering over trivia and routine is stopped. Sensitive to cues and subtleties, the therapist helps develop more honest and constructive kinds of communication. Unless this is done, the family will continue to substitute empty words for genuine emotional interchange. Often, members are unaware of the disparity between what they say and how they say it, or how their posture, gestures, and facial expressions contradict the verbal content of their conversation.

During the middle phase of treatment, the therapist must play many roles. He offers security through emotional support, acceptance, and understanding; he reaffirms individual and family worth; he is a catalyst provoking interchange among

family members; he is the promotor of a search for conflict resolution and the discovery of more workable compromises.

The therapist must be a tightrope walker offering emotional support on a selective basis. A weaker member of the family will be supported against attack. The family healer may become a "co-therapist" at times. In the long run, the therapist's concern, fairness, and method of shifting support from one member of the family to another will determine whether destructive rivalry is diminished or enhanced.

The therapist must use himself as an instrument of reality testing. For Ackerman (1966) this is critical. The family interview, the face-to-face interaction, the increasing depth and honesty of the quality of the interchange, is a fertile ground for reality testing. One member will expose what another one is hiding. Prejudiced expressions will be counter-balanced by honesty; each has the opportunity to offer a reality check for the other members.

The family therapist serves as an educator in the problems of family living. He represents in himself a range of models of family health. As the family members work through their feelings, thoughts and actions, the therapist elicits expanded awareness of alternative patterns of family relationships. He shakes up pre-existing alignments and splits; he opens the way to new designs in family living that offer more mutual satisfaction and a greater potential for growth for the family as a whole. New levels of intimacy, sharing, and identification are discovered; constructive, rather than destructive, solutions

and compromises are created.

By raising respect for individual differences, the therapist affirms bases for sharing and identification. He facilitates the group effort to balance sameness and differentness, cooperation and individualization. In addition, the therapist activates and enriches the reassessment of family identities, goals, and values, especially those which are pertinent to fundamental family functions: husband-wife, father-mother, parent-child.

Framo states:

As the families begin to consider the idea that they can change their feelings about each other they will become more unguarded, and their behavior in the treatment setting will more closely approximate that which may occur at the dinner table when, for example, they have an argument. In fact, some families will unwittingly exaggerate their feelings in order to provoke more interest from the therapists. It must be remembered, though, that the motivation for change in most families is dissociated. At the deepest level they continue to attend sessions in order to get the therapists assistance in restoring things back to how they used to be. During the course of the therapy they become more dependent on and involved with the therapists, and when positive change takes place it occurs almost despite themselves, (1965, p. 176).

The consensus of theorists in family therapy, Ackerman (1966), Bowen (1965), Jackson (1961), Satir (1967), Framo (1965), and Haley (1971), is that the crucial step in the entire process is the breaking down of taboos against the discussion and sharing of family problems and conflicts. Such restrictions must be eliminated before the family members are able to find newer and better ways to interact with one another.

Concluding Phase of Family Therapy. As therapy proceeds

to its final stage, a sense of danger and tension often arises. The family can feel an increasing threat of loss of control which can lead to panic and disorganization. The therapist's calm, firm presence is needed to provide assurance against catastrophe. In his role as a "true parent figure" (Ackerman, 1966) the family therapist must function as the controller of interpersonal and familial danger.

Many of the dynamics of the final stage of treatment and its termination remain unexplained. There is little information in this area because there are so few places in the country where long-term therapy is done. Also, few families reach a phase of natural termination; as Framo points out: "A termination mutually agreed upon by the therapists and the family with the unanimous conviction that growth has taken place," (1965, p. 201). Family therapy has not been operating long enough, with adequate research and evaluative components, to see enough families reaching a final phase. The termination of therapy is based on the awareness by the family that therapy is going to end. At this point, a struggle between the therapist and the family takes place. The family feels rejected by the therapist and may well prematurely terminate therapy. When the family, or some family member, senses that it is going to be abandoned, it wants to quit, and sends the message: "We'll reject you before you have a chance to reject us." At this point, the therapist must work through "separation anxiety" to help the family see themselves as healthy functioning individuals who are independent of the therapist.

Special Problems in Family Therapy

In order to conclude the presentation of the process of family therapy, certain problems which arise during therapy need clarification.

Haley (1971), Jackson (1961), and Whitaker (1965) talk about problems common to their clinical work. When the identified patient gets better, the rest of the family often gets worse. Any change in one member sets off a chain-reaction of change, usually worse, in other members which upsets the equilibrium of the family. Unless the patient is seen as a dynamic, emotional force, interacting with other family members, and unless the symptoms of the individual are viewed from the broad perspective of the entire family, a change in one person only will upset the delicate balance of the family. To avoid dealing with this change, the family will find new ways to achieve pathological interaction.

The double-bind communication has been described by Jackson (1959), Haley (1971) and Satir (1967). Two or more people are involved, in which one is the victim and the other is the persecutor. The double-bind is a recurring theme in the experience of the victim. It is a negative frame of interaction expressed in two forms: (1) "Do not do that or you'll get punished"; and (2) "If you don't do that, you'll get punished." The result is that the person placed in the double-bind is no longer aware of what people are trying to communicate to him--nor is he aware of what his reactions to these communications are. In order to deal with the double-bind, the

therapist must interpret it in two ways. First, he tries to comprehend its specific aspects to determine what the speaker is really trying to say. To do this, he relies heavily on non-verbal meanings, especially body language and tone of voice. To determine the reality of the situation, he must be aware of what kind of messages are going back and forth. Second, he must neutralize the double-bind messages by taking an active role in helping family members stop this kind of communication. He must help the person sending the double-bind messages to become aware of how destructive these messages are to the scape-goat.

If the family member is unable to stop transmitting double-bind messages, there is a good chance that the therapist, himself, will be caught in the double-bind. The major difference between the therapeutic double-bind and the family double-bind is that the therapist, himself, is not involved in a "life and death struggle." He is, therefore, free to establish alliances with certain members of the family and gradually help them to abandon this destructive way of interacting.

Resistance can occur at any stage in the therapy in somewhat different forms. The most massive resistance phase usually occurs when the immediate presenting crisis is past and the family is not hurting too much. Framo notes that a "don't rock the boat" attitude appears, (1965, p. 179). For Framo (1965), Whitaker (1965), as well as Ackerman (1966), resistance arises when the family consciously and unconsciously sees change in terms of deprivation rather than enhancement. They are

afraid that change in the family system will result in the loss of some vitally needed form of relationship, even if that relationship is a hurting one. Framo (1965) views resistance as the function of an intricate interplay between variables in the family and variables in the therapist. He quotes Whitaker as asking, "Is there really resistance, or is there something in the therapist which prevents exploration?" (1965, p. 182). In order to help the family deal with resistances, the therapist must be aware of his own resistances to intervening and helping in the family work. Working through resistance is a long and tedious process. When the therapist gains, or reaffirms, the family's trust, only then will they slowly begin to relinquish their resistances.

Critical Evaluation of Prevailing Family Therapy Theory

The majority of the leaders in the family therapy field are medical doctors (Ackerman, Bowen, Whitaker, Jackson and Boszormenyi-Nagy); furthermore, most family therapy centers are run by psychiatrists. Most of the theory, therefore, rests on the psychoanalytic model which was developed and expanded during the time when the intact, extended family was more the norm.

One way that any field can grow and meet new demands and challenges is to incorporate knowledge and ideas from related fields. In fact, cross-pollination of effort is probably needed in order to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing family wherein traditional values and structures are under

increasing attack.

Most methods of family treatment stress the abnormal rather than the normal. Using the medical model, psychiatrists are sanctioned by society to define what is "normal" and "abnormal" for other people. Society has further empowered this sanction by giving them the authority to hospitalize and administer drugs. Should this group of "elite" continue to hold this power in an age so much more questioning of authority, so much more aware of mental health and human rights? Many psychiatrists themselves, like Laing and Szasz, are seriously challenging the status quo.

Family therapy, in general, insists that the mental health of the family unit as a whole is more important than the mental health of its individual members. On the contrary, one of the main functions of the family is to help the individual grow and develop and realize his potentiality. In turn, the individual's growth promotes and strengthens the family's growth. If family growth is emphasized over individual growth, too frequently the individual's needs are subsumed into the larger entity which tends to sustain the very problems that needed help in the first place.

Family therapy currently deals mainly with pathological symptoms, conflicts, and conscious and unconscious resistance. The theory of treatment is that as soon as conflicts, guilt, and excess anxiety are removed, the family member will then be in a position to create and sustain healthier relationships, not only within the family, but also outside. Once a problem

is solved, goes the theory, emotional health inevitably follows. This is not an accurate assumption.

Family members need to work just as hard on finding more satisfying ways to be with each other as they work on understanding and resolving their own conflicts. They need to learn how to enjoy, love, and appreciate each other as individuals, as well as enjoy, love, and appreciate each other. This task takes learning, patience, and skill on the part of each member of the family. Too often family therapy ends as soon as conflicts are resolved, and before any mutual respect or appreciation has grown among the members.

Many theorists who have influenced the field of family therapy see individuals as moving through psychosexual stages of development, (Freud, Ackerman, Erikson). They believe that the conflicts and anxieties of each separate stage must be resolved before the individual can progress to a subsequent stage. For them, anxiety and conflict are essential for growth. However, every stage does not necessarily have to be filled with conflict and anxiety; some stages can be, and often are, peaceful and the progression harmonious. Moreover, an individual often can still grow and develop his potential, even if his early experiences were painful or traumatic.

Family therapy theory implies that in order for the individual to mature, previous behavior patterns learned at lower stages of development must be abandoned. The stage theory postulates finiteness and distinction for each stage. However, growth can also be seen as a continuous and unending

process. Instead of being abandoned, earlier behaviors can be transformed and integrated with the total developing individual. "So was it when my life began / So is it now I am a man / So be it when I shall grow old . . . The child is father of the man." (Wordsworth, "My Heart Leaps up")

Ackerman and others not only view conflict as an essential part of growth, but they also view it as innately combative and competitive. Conflict, as seen by the writer, however, is the natural result of existential differences between individuals. Conflict is seen not as the threat of losing or winning a power struggle, but rather as any set of circumstances which prevents or prohibits the individual from developing his own authenticity and potentiality. Family therapy must promote mutual respect for, and understanding of, these inevitable differences.

Current family theory suggests that the family is naturally very sensitive to its members' emotional needs. The family situation, however, is in perpetual flux. Needs are extremely complex and diversified and, most importantly, change with circumstances and with the continuous realignment of forces present in the family. Each member of the family can satisfy certain needs of his own and of others some of the time and under some circumstances. His ability to do so is dependent upon and relative to where other family members are within themselves at any given point of time, but he can never satisfy all of his own needs and all of those of his family strictly within the family--he must often go outside the family structure to

find satisfaction for some of his needs.

One of the major goals in family therapy is for the therapist to help the family with reality testing. The therapist uses himself and his "subjective reality" as a mirror for the family. There is danger inherent in this device. Any family experiencing pain and conflict will, in seeking help, tend to go along with any reality that anyone will provide for them. This is especially true when the provider is seen as an authority figure. By agreeing too readily, and accepting too eagerly the reality as interpreted by the therapist, the family and the therapist may overlook or ignore certain critical factors. The family, no less than the therapist, has the right to choose their own definition of reality, and does not have to reflect the therapist's vision of normality. The reality for a family in pain is that it is in pain. Therapy should accept that fact initially and then work towards another, hopefully, more beneficial reality.

The burden borne by the therapist in his traditional role is so heavy that it may interfere with his successful functioning. He is seen as a "superman," with a thespian's ability to change roles according to the family's therapeutic needs. If a therapist emulates Ackerman, he is to be an activator, a challenger, supporter, comforter, interpreter, and reintegrator. Too often this repertoire means that the therapist loses his own identity which is his most valuable therapeutic tool.

Summary

This chapter presented a critical survey of the theory .

and techniques in family therapy which were developed during the last decade when family therapy began to achieve a respectable standing among other forms of psychotherapy. In order to provide a framework for understanding the psychological and theoretical assumptions on which family therapy is presently based, the following components of family therapy theory were examined:

1. A definition of what constitutes family therapy was presented, based largely on the views of Ackerman, Bowen, and Framo.
2. Twelve goals of family therapy were listed.
3. How family therapy views individual growth was described. Principally, this consisted of an analysis of the various "stages" an individual goes through. This section also included two additional concepts relevant to family therapy--reality testing, and the function of anxiety in individual growth.
4. The question of the interaction between individual growth and family growth was posed. Four of the constructs family therapy has developed to deal with this question were analyzed. These were: double-bind theory, the scapegoat, family rules, and family homeostasis.
5. The process of family therapy and the role of the therapist was delineated. The three phases of family therapy--beginning, middle, and concluding--were also discussed.
6. Some special problems in family therapy--patient identity, double-bind communications, and resistance--were presented.

7. A brief critical evaluation of current theories and practice in family therapy concluded this chapter.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will review the theories and philosophical constructs of Existentialism and Phenomenology. It will focus on the unique view of man presented by these two schools of thought, providing an over-view of their theories rather than concentrating upon techniques of how to be an existentialist or phenomenologist. This chapter, then, lays the philosophical and psychological foundations for what follows.

Many of the ideas and concepts from the existential and phenomenological view of man, his existence, and his relationship to the world around him have been incorporated into humanistic psychology (Chapter IV of this study). These ideas are further adapted and assimilated into the Family Growth Theory outlined in Chapter V of this study.

Many people have contributed to both schools of thought, and it would be impossible to analyze in depth all the exponents of each. The men chosen to present the two points of view were selected because they have had a significant influence not only in the development of theory, but have also generated methods and techniques employed in therapy. Their works provide a valuable opportunity to examine the philosophical bases for therapeutic processes.

Existentialism and Phenomenology are interdependent and interwoven--each perspective borrows and lends concepts to each other. For the purposes of clarity, however, they will be treated separately in this chapter. Moreover, rather than attempting to re-evaluate or redefine their concepts and terminology, their thoughts whenever possible, will be expressed in their own words.

Existentialism

Existentialism, as it has evolved over the past fifty years, contains many ideas that are relevant to the understanding of man and his existence. It focuses on the relationship between the self and the body, on the realm of emotions as the expression of self in encounters with others, and on language as the expression of experience.

Existentialism is a way of understanding human existence. It represents a set of beliefs which suggest that the best way to understand people is through understanding their unique existence in the world. In Western Culture there is an over-emphasis on technique which accompanies a tendency to see human beings as objects to be calculated, analyzed and controlled. The Western World tends to think that understanding follows technique--the right technique can fathom man. The existential approach holds the exact opposite: technique follows understanding and without understanding, technique is, at best, irrelevant. In fact, many existentialists like Sartre and Camus are not concerned with technical matters and make no

apologies for this fact.

To talk about or try to explain existentialism is difficult, since most existentialists believe that once existential thinking is systematized it is no longer existential. Wild (1966) and Kaufman (1957) were dissatisfied with what they considered to be the superficial and remote traditions of science and philosophy; therefore, many existentialists refuse to belong to any school of thought or to any organized and systematized body of knowledge.

Difficult as it is, therefore, to discuss existentialism, it should be noted that the existential experience is one that every sensitive therapist meets many times a day. It is the experience of one person's unique encounter with another. The other can come alive in a very different way from before. "Unique encounter" refers not to the actual time involved, but to the quality of the experience. The therapist may "know" a great deal about the person; however, when the person himself appears, the therapist may have a sudden powerful experience which often carries with it an exhilarating element of surprise. What was known before about the person may have been worth knowing, but the "here and now" experience of that person is more valuable because of the uniqueness of the encounter and the people involved.

Just as each experience and each individual is unique, there is no one school of existentialism or one single judge who can decide what is and what is not existential. Given these drawbacks to a systematized explication of existentialism, the following

pages will attempt to examine the following existential themes:

- (1) Man Being and Becoming; (2) Anxiety Function in Man;
- (3) Man Being in the World and his Relationship to Others.

Man Being and Becoming

Kierkegaard (1957), Sartre (1956), Heidegger (1969), Kaplan (1961), Buber (1965) and others have concerned themselves with various aspects of "being." They have struggled with the question of how man can achieve authenticity and actualize his potentialities. For them, man is not like any other being because he can choose how he acts. His being is not predetermined; rather, it is something that he himself can create. He can also choose to complete this task or leave it undone. Man's life can be lived routinely like an animal that is born, exists, and dies; or man can achieve his own meaning of life, an authentic life where individual potential is realized. May summarizes this position well when he writes: "Man is the being who can be conscious of and, therefore, responsible for his existence. It is this capacity to become aware of his own being which distinguishes the human beings from other beings," (1958, p. 41).

To grasp what it means to exist, man needs to recognize and accept the unalterable fact that at any moment he may cease to exist. He lives side by side with death and can never escape the fact that death will arrive at some unknown moment in the future. Confronted by non-being, existence assumes a vitality and immediacy; the individual experiences a heightened

consciousness of himself, his world, and others around him. "Being" then should be understood as the potential inherent in everyone to become what he wants to be. "Being" is dynamic and ever-changing; it is the continuous process of a person becoming. Understanding another can only begin to happen when: (1) he is seen as always in the process of becoming; and (2) the observer is aware that at the very moment he is observing, he, too, is moving and becoming.

Becoming is not something, therefore, that is achieved once and for all; it does not automatically unfold like the petals on a rose. In order to become himself, man has to be aware of himself and be responsible for himself. The vital element in being human is self-consciousness and the knowledge of the inevitability of death. Self-consciousness reveals itself in the degree to which a man chooses "to be or not to be," or as Sartre (1956) calls it, "Being and Nothingness."

As Marcel (1949) points out, the sense of "being" is lacking in contemporary man. Modern man relates his sense of "being" to his function; he is aware of himself not as a person, but only by the roles he plays in life--butcher, baker or teacher. Modern society's stress on conformity has contributed to man's loss of his sense of unique "being." Modern society has made man afraid to be himself.

Kaplan, too, (1961) sees man as "being" more than just a type or character defined by some role. At any given moment "becoming" lies ahead. "Being" and "becoming" are perpetually in front of man. Although there is an infinitely complex set

of factors present in any individual situation, man can actualize himself only if he possesses the element of freedom to choose how to be in every situation, no matter how limited the choices are. For example, the dying man can choose to die with his eyes open or shut, with laughter or a scream. Man has the ability to be aware of the forces acting upon him, and the potential and capacity to pause before acting. He can choose in which direction his action will go. Most importantly, he is not "being" unless he is making choices and acting upon them. Man is not just a collection of drives and stimuli which determine his behavior. Rather, he is an active participant in the creative process.

Heidegger (1969) has his own orientation toward "being." For him, in order to study "being" it must be seen as standing between what he calls the "psychic apparatus" of the individual, and the cultural and social forces around him. "Being" is a unique and irreplaceable subject confronted with the world and other "beings" who are also subjects. The "I" encounters another as a "thou" of equal dignity and value. The world is not something which exists independently; psychic reality is what is experienced and reflected in our imagery of the world. Thus, each man lives first in his own world of imagery. Man's predicament lies in trying to share and communicate his world with others, a task that he can never fully achieve.

Buber (1965) attempts to see man as a "whole." He sees being and becoming as a process that requires day to day living experiences. For Buber, being encompasses all of life's

experiences. Buber is describing the unique image of man when he writes:

In spite of all similarities every living situation has, like a newborn child, a new face, that has never been before and will never come again. It demands of you a reaction which cannot be prepared beforehand. It demands nothing of what is past. It demands presence, responsibility; it demands you. I call a great character one who by his actions and attitudes satisfies the claim of situations out of deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way that the sum of his actions and attitudes expresses at the same time the unity of his being in its willingness to accept responsibility, (1965, p. 114).

Responsibility, to Buber, means the response of the whole person to what touches him every minute of the day. Buber believed that man's responses and decisions that he brings to each specific situation produces the moral action. Therefore, moral codes are reaffirmed or changed through the decision and action taken in each situation. This does not mean for Buber, as for Sartre, that one resents all norms and invents one's own value system. Rather, as Buber states in his criticism of Sartre:

One can believe in and accept a meaning or value, one can set it as a guiding light over one's life if one has discovered it, not if one has invented it. It can be for me an illuminating meaning, a direction giving value only if it has been revealed to me in my meeting with Being, not if I have freely chosen it for myself from among the existing possibilities, (1957, p. 69).

Buber concludes that in order to be and to become one does not repress one part of self in order to obey other parts, but instead responds with all that he has--passions, reason, senses and intuition.

Man must be considered as "being" in the world; he cannot get outside himself in order to comprehend or describe the world completely. Man is only able to see things by participating,

experiencing, and being aware of his choices and consciously choosing what he wants to be. Only then can man create meaning for his being.

Anxiety Function in Man

Existentialism views anxiety not as an emotion such as joy or sorrow, but, as May states: "It is rather an ontological characteristic of man, rooted in his very existence as such," (1958, p. 50). Anxiety is not a peripheral threat which one can take or leave; it is a threat to the foundation and center of man's existence. Anxiety is not something picked up and put down, rather it is something we feel. Anxiety is the subjective state of man's becoming aware that his existence can cease and that he can lose himself and his world, that he can become "nothing" (Sartre, 1956). Anxiety strikes at the core of man's self-esteem and his sense of value as a being.

May points out that anxiety occurs at the point where some potentiality or possibility for fulfilling one's being is emerging within the individual. May writes: "But this very possibility involves the destroying of present security, which thereupon gives rise to the tendency to deny the new potentiality," (1958, p. 52). Anxiety, therefore, is a sign of becoming.

If there were not always some potentiality crying to be born, man would not experience anxiety. Anxiety, then, is profoundly connected to the issue of freedom to become. Man has the freedom, however limited, to choose and act to fulfill some

new potentiality. Thus anxiety is an integral part of "being."

Kierkegaard was the first modern thinker who recognized the role of anxiety in normal life. Before him, anxiety was regarded as a "morbid symptom." He, (1954) describes anxiety as the "dizziness of freedom" that takes place before freedom materializes. The experience of anxiety is the sign of potentiality striving to be born. There is always some new possibility of "being" continually threatened by "non-being."

Recently another view has emerged which stresses the importance of anxiety and the role it plays in human existence. Heidegger's theory of anxiety is carefully thought out and widely accepted. For him,

Anxiety is not only anxiety in the face of something, but, as a state-of-mind, it is also anxiety about something. That which anxiety is profoundly anxious about (sich abangstet) is not a definite kind of being for Dasein (self-existence) or a definite possibility for it. Indeed the threat itself is indefinite, and therefore cannot penetrate threateningly to this or that factually concrete potentiality-for-being. That which anxiety is anxious about is being-in-the-world itself. In anxiety what is environmentally ready-to-hand sinks away, and so, in general, do entities with-in-the-world. The world can offer nothing more, and neither can the Dasein--with others. . . Anxiety thus takes away from Dasein, the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the world and the way things have been publicly interpreted. Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about--its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world," (1969, p. 137).

For Heidegger Dasein, (self-existence) is all the possible ways for man to be faced with the fact that there is no final content to existence because it is always "becoming," accompanied by anxiety. When a man assumes responsibility for his own Dasein then he is "being" authentically. To move from unauthentic to authentic existence man has to pass through the ordeal

of despair and "existential anxiety"; i.e. the anxiety of man facing the limits of his existence--death, "nothingness."

Man Being in the World and His
Relationship to Other Men

Existentialism has also contributed to an understanding of man in his world and his relationship to other men. To understand another is to try to be with him in the same world. The world of another can only be partially understood from the inside; it cannot be understood if it is seen only as an external collection of objects.

Kierkegaard (1954) points out that the two primary sources of modern man's anxiety and despair are: (1) his loss of a sense of being, and (2) his loss of his world. There is a great deal of evidence that a sense of isolation and alienation of self from the world is suffered not only by people in pathological states, but by the countless "normal" people as well. Reisman (1953) presents a great deal of psychosocial data in his book, The Lonely Crowd, to demonstrate that the isolated, lonely, alienated person is characteristic not only of neurotic patients, but also of people as a whole in our society. He makes the significant point that the alienated person has only a "technical communication" with the world around him.

As an existential analyst trying to rediscover man in relationship with the world, May observed that:

The two poles, self and world, are always dialectically related. Self implies world and world self; there is neither without the other, and each is understandable only in terms of the other. It makes no sense, for

example, to speak of man in his world (though we often do) as primarily a spatial relation, (1958, p. 59).

A person's world cannot be understood by describing the environment around him--no matter how thorough the description is.

The world is not limited to past events, it also includes the "here and now" and all the possibilities which the future holds.

The world starts to have meaning only when man discovers it for himself. As Sartre (1956) points out, value, custom, art, music, etc. have no meaning to man until he discovers them for himself. The world is not static or preordained, an object which man accepts, adjusts to, or fights. It is, instead, a dynamic pattern which is in the process of being formed and shaped as long as the person in it possesses self-consciousness.

For May,

World is the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates. Thus world includes the past events which condition my existence and all the vast variety of deterministic influences which operate upon me. But it is these as I relate to them, am aware of them, carry them with me, molding, inevitably forming, building them in every minute of relating. For to be aware of one's world means at the same time to be designing it, (1958, pp. 59-60).

Sartre (1956) feels that man is only in the world through his body. All his ways of existing are through his body. Man is a living unity not a disembodied self or a mechanical organism. His body is the means by which he presents himself to the world; it is the spontaneous door into the world which surrounds him. A person cannot feel, touch, assimilate, understand or perceive anything in the world without his body because it alone is the ever-present bridge to the world.

However, while the body makes the world available to man, it also limits his awareness of the world and therefore also limits the world's availability to him. The field of his bodily presence in the world--his senses and movements--are limited in space and time. He cannot see and touch everything that is visible or touchable in the world. His own bodily limitations give rise to varied and yet limited perceptions of the world.

Not only is man's perception of the world limited, his relationship with, and understanding of, other men is limited too. For example, when a person tries to enter another person's life; he may touch, smell, hear, and even taste the other in order to see him. He may ask him how he himself feels about his movements, what makes him think as he does, and ask him what he is trying to communicate through his actions. Using all the sensory and intellectual tools at his command, he can try to paint a complete picture of the other's behavior. His picture, however, will never be complete.

A man's ability to perceive and understand the object of his perception is limited by his own body. His own body--its sensations, feelings, and perceptions--is perpetually shifting position in relationship to others. Since his knowledge is composed of partial perceptions, his understanding of another will necessarily remain fragmentary. A man's perception of another is never complete since the observer is in motion while observing another who is also in motion. Therefore, man's approach to the world and others and his understanding of them is never complete.

PhenomenologyIntroduction

The study of phenomenology in the United States is still in the early stages of development. To date, it has been largely influenced by European achievements. In fact, in order to introduce phenomenology, the work of Hegel and Husserl must be considered.

Hegel (1949) was the first to struggle with phenomenology and to attempt to develop a theory of it. In his work, Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel attempted to consider knowledge solely as it appears to consciousness. For Hegel, phenomenology is the science that describes the emergence of natural phenomena through a conscious awareness of them.

Husserl (1965) believed that an immediate vision was the basis for all rational assertions. His call "back to the things themselves" means that to know, one has to return to the immediate data of consciousness. This consciousness manifests itself in "bodily presence." Husserl did not want to deduce or analyze phenomena; he felt that intuition was the basis for any valid explanation of phenomena.

Phenomenology, then, requires an "attitude of disciplined naivete," in Macleod's phrase (1947). This attitude indicates how difficult it is to be open to new experiences. Everyone enters a situation with preconceptions. The challenge is to make these preconceptions flexible enough so that one can listen, experience and be with other people in unique and

different ways every time they are encountered.

Phenomenology represents an effort to accept phenomena as givens. It is a disciplined effort to "empty" the mind of preconceptions which so often mean that others are seen only as reflections or proofs of one's own theories. Phenomenology is an effort to experience phenomena as they present themselves. It is an attitude of openness and readiness to hear, see, and feel. This approach sounds easy, and is often taken for granted. Phenomenology, however, argues that this process of experiencing in order to understand is extremely complex.

Phenomenology holds that every person has his own way of communicating and being in the world. Phenomenologists like Husserl (1965), Macleod (1947) and Laing (1969) point out that in order to begin to understand or communicate with another, one has to recognize that one's presuppositions always limit one's knowledge. They stress that the starting point for experiencing phenomena is by cultivating the ability to hear what the person is saying on many different levels. This includes not only the spoken words but also his facial expressions, his gestures, and his posturing in relationship to others.

When phenomenology in therapy is spoken about, the work that has been done is still in the embryonic stage. This section will attempt to look at phenomenology's views on:

- (1) Understanding man--Objective and Subjective Knowledge;
- (2) Man's Knowledge of Others; (3) Intentionality.

Understanding Man: Objective
and Subjective Knowledge

The controversy over subjective and objective knowledge is one that continues unabated in the social science field. The social sciences frequently argue that it is impossible to be scientific unless one is "objective." From this view, a genuine science of a person must attempt to be as unbiased as possible. Laing argues against this approach by writing: "If it is held that to be unbiased one should be 'objective' in the sense of depersonalizing the person who is the 'object' of our study, any temptation to do this under the impression that one is thereby being scientific must be rigorously resisted," (1965, p. 24). For the phenomenologist, then, knowledge of people is necessarily subjective.

Rogers (1961) defines this subjective way of knowing as follows: What a person experiences or thinks is actually not yet reality for that person; it is instead a tentative hypothesis that may or may not be true. Judgment is suspended until the hypothesis is tested. What is this test? It consists of checking the validity of the information received--and on which he bases his hypothesis--against other inner sources of information. For example, a person who wishes to salt his food is faced with two identical shakers, one of which contains salt, the other pepper. He believes (has formed a hypothesis) that the shaker with the larger holes contains salt, but not being sure, he shakes a little of the contents on the back of his hand. If the particles are white rather than black he feels

reasonably sure that his hypothesis is correct. However, if he is a very cautious person, he might put a little to his lips because it could be sugar. What this example represents is the testing of hypothesis against a variety of sensory data. The test consists of checking less certain information against more direct knowledge.

Rogers' article (1969) "Toward a Science of the Person" further discusses the question of subjective versus objective knowledge. Subjective knowledge comes from within oneself; it represents one's own personal frame of reference. A person may know that he loves or hates, understands or is confused, he may believe or disbelieve, enjoy or dislike, be interested or bored. These are all subjective hypothesis which are checked out with oneself. The subjective way of knowing is a valuable way of acquiring knowledge and plays an important role in therapy, (Laing, 1969; May, 1958; and Rogers, 1965). When a person in therapy discovers a world that more accurately describes his feelings and perceptions, there is a profound sense of relief. This new subjective knowledge of oneself allows the person to become more "congruent" within himself and with the outside world.

When knowledge, on the other hand, is learned "objectively," hypotheses are not checked against an internal frame of reference. The objective way of knowing transforms all that is studied into objects. Objective knowledge consists of data that are observable, measureable, and reproducible. Rogers (1969) believes that objectivity can only be concerned with

objects--even if the object is animate. Terms such as behaviorist, impersonal, and operational are associated by Rogers with his definition of objectivity.

Man's Knowledge of Others

May (1958), Rogers (1965), and Laing (1965) all devote time to explaining how phenomenology perceives interpersonal knowledge. For them, it is a process whereby one person uses his skill and whatever empathetic understanding he has to get to the relevant aspect of someone else's "phenomenological field." One person tries to get into another's private world to see whether his own hypothesis and understanding of that person are valid. To do this, he may check out his hypothesis with the other, or he may observe the other's voice quality, gestures, or other non-verbal messages. Through empathy and acceptance of the other, he creates a non-threatening climate where true subjective feelings can be expressed.

Knowledge can be gained only if hypotheses are validated by testing them against the most complete and accurate picture obtainable of another's internal frame of reference. Most importantly, this picture must be checked out for confirmation with the other person himself. From the knowledge gained by this method, generalizations can be formed which can be tested in the same way. This method provides scientific leverage for examining the non-observable (therefore non-objective) experiences which are occurring inside an individual, (Rogers, 1969).

Laing points out that in trying to enter someone else's

phenomenological field it is important to remember ". . . each and every man is at the same time separate from his fellows and related to them. Such separateness and relatedness are mutually necessary postulates. Personal relatedness can exist only between beings who are separate but who are not isolates," (1965, p. 25).

At this point, it may seem that there is little difference between phenomenological knowing of oneself and phenomenological knowing of another person. One crucial difference between the two, however, is that knowing someone else involves a contact with someone else's unique experience in the world. This contact occurs even though no one can ever completely know how someone else is experiencing the world. To know both oneself and others, phenomenology maintains, one has to become aware of consciousness (intentionality) and its unique interaction with one's own world and with the world of others.

Intentionality

The concept of intentionality is central to the phenomenological method. It should be borne in mind that the concept of intentionality and consciousness are used interchangeably in phenomenology. Briefly stated, intentionality means that when you intend to do something you must be conscious of what you intend to do. Husserl (1965) concluded that intentionality always begins with mental acts.

Natanson (1966) further clarifies the concept by explaining that phenomenological methods are dependent on one's being

conscious as he intends. Without this consciousness no one can be aware of the subjective nature of his experiences. Sartre (1956) emphasizes the consciousness of the "I" in any action and focuses on the "I" in the process of acting. He stresses both conscious choices and action. Action is essential for Sartre. It is not, therefore, enough to intend, man must act. Action is the way to get in touch with the "I" in a situation.

Man's freedom to act is closely related to the concept of intentionality. Kelly (1969) attempted to clarify this relationship between intentionality (consciousness) and freedom. He postulates that a person's behavior is determined by the constructs he chooses; however, a person is not free unless he is able to redefine and change these constructs. He cannot grow and develop unless he is able to alter his concepts to conform to his experiences.

Kelly (1969) and Heidegger (1969) further say that man is only free when he is conscious of his subjective being in the world. This consciousness enables him to become aware of each separate situation and each experience. Unless there are free choices available to man, and unless he is conscious of those choices and acts on them, he can never be free. For example, Ames (1960) believes that "free will" is inconceivable unless the possibility of choice exists for man and those choices are known to him. These choices, he emphasizes, must be in the chooser's consciousness.

Conclusion

To make more explicit what is implicit above: man's

capacity for transcending the immediate phenomena is the basis of his freedom. The unique characteristic of a human being is that every situation presents a vast range of possibilities for conscious choice. Man's choices, in turn, are dependent upon his self-awareness and his capacity to realize alternative ways of acting and, in turn, be conscious of his actions.

Summary

This chapter introduced the vocabulary, concepts, and methods of understanding self and others as presented by Existentialism and Phenomenology. Many of the ideas and constructs employed by these two schools of thought have not been extensively used or incorporated into family therapy. Moreover, much of existential and phenomenological writing seems alien and hard to understand for people accustomed to the technological, objective, scientific world view of the twentieth century.

One of the most important contributions of existentialism to this study is its special understanding of man as always in the process of "being." Many existentialists feel that motives or drives in an individual can only be understood in the context of his existence. This understanding is always tempered by the recognition that the process of "being" and "becoming" is neither an automatic nor a completed process. Man is unique because he is aware of his mortality and therefore has the potential and the responsibility to fulfill himself. Sartre, Kierkegaard, and May all stress that only by consciously choosing and acting upon his choices can man develop his potential

and affirm his existence. Phenomenology was introduced as yet another valuable view toward understanding self and others. Phenomenologists do not look at the impersonal, external, objective, borders on man's self and world, rather they seek to describe and to understand man in terms of his own "subjective" phenomenological field. This field can only be incompletely entered through empathy and by trying to have one's own preconceptions as flexible as possible. In phenomenology, man's knowledge of himself and others is acquired through internal or "subjective" experiences. Man's behavior is determined by his unique, inner, personal frame of reference--his own phenomenal field. Phenomenologists believe that man's "intentionality" or consciousness is an integral part of his subjective knowledge of himself. Man alone, of all organisms, is free to choose the expression of his behavior.

CHAPTER IV

APPLICATION OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction

For the humanistic psychologist, the total person is the natural unit of study, since the "normal," "healthy" human being--or any other organism for that matter--always functions as an organized whole. Although recognizing that present research techniques and quantitative analysis may not permit the psychological investigator to realize the organismic goal of studying the whole person, humanistic psychology argues that if quantitative methods for studying people are not available then qualitative methods should be used. Proponents of this view think that psychology also needs to develop methods to study the person as a whole organism.

Humanistic psychology is much more a set of directions than a system of facts, principles and laws. It is an attitude, an orientation, a frame of reference rather than a systematic behavioral theory. Before going further, it is important that humanistic psychology be defined so that it will be clearly understood. The American Association for Humanistic Psychology defines it as follows:

Humanistic Psychology is primarily an orientation towards the whole psychology rather than a distinct area or school. It stands for respect for the worth of persons, respect for differences of approach, open-mindedness as to acceptable methods, and interest

in exploration of new aspects of human behavior. As a 'third force' in contemporary psychology it is concerned with topics having little place in existing theories and systems: e.g., love, creativity, self, growth, organism, basic need-gratification, self-actualization, higher values, being, becoming, spontaneity, play, humor, affection, naturalness, warmth, ego-transcendence, objectivity, autonomy, responsibility, meaning, fair-play, transcendental experience, peak experience, courage, and related concepts.

(This approach finds expression in the writings of such persons as Allport, Angyal, Asch, Buhler, Fromm, Goldstein, Horney, Maslow, Moustakas, Rogers, Wertheimer, and in certain of the writings of Jung, Adler, and the psychoanalytic ego-psychologists, existential and phenomenological psychologists,) (August, 1963).

This chapter presents the pragmatic aspirations of humanistic psychology. It will emphasize humanistic studies of human experiences. It will explore three principle themes chosen for their critical relevance to this study: (1) The growth and development of a person as a whole; (2) Interpersonal relationships; (3) How a person is helped to enter the "self-actualizing" process.

Humanistic psychology draws upon the broader philosophical and psychological constructs of existentialism and phenomenology. It translates them into more specific techniques and theories applicable to understanding and working with people.

Although many practitioners and theorists have contributed to the growing knowledge of this field, three individuals were selected because of the special influence they have exerted on the development of humanistic psychology. Their ideas, knowledge, and experiences regarding man's potentiality and their methods of helping him reach his full measure of growth have been extensively published and widely incorporated into therapy.

Their work offers a unique opportunity to study the process, the patterns, and the problems man faces in his efforts to achieve authenticity. These men are: Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Frederic Perls.

Maslow's Contribution to Humanistic Psychology

Maslow was critical of science. He felt that classical mechanistic science, as represented by behaviorism, was not a suitable vehicle for studying the whole person. He advocated a humanistic science, not as an alternative to mechanistic science, but, rather, as a compliment to it. Such a humanistic science could deal with questions of value, individuality, consciousness, purpose, ethics, and the higher reaches of human nature.

He further criticized psychology for its pessimistic, negative, and limited conception of man. He felt that psychology had dwelt too long upon man's weaknesses. It had spent too little time upon his strengths; man's virtues had been neglected while his ill thoughts were emphasized. For him, psychology had been preoccupied in viewing man as making desperate attempts to avoid pain rather than taking active steps to get pleasure and happiness. Maslow felt that if psychology studied only crippled and neurotic people then it was bound to develop a crippled psychology.

Where is the psychology, Maslow asks, that takes account of love, exuberance, gaiety, and well-being to the same extent that it deals with misery, conflict, shame and guilt? For him,

"Psychology has voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction, and at that, the darker, meaner half," (1954, p. 354). Maslow undertook to paint a portrait of the whole person--to supply the other half of the picture of man--the brighter and better half.

Maslow's concern with the "healthy" self-actualizing individual is his unique contribution to humanistic psychology. He felt that a study of healthy people would produce answers to many age-old questions concerning man's nature.

Three principle areas of Maslow's concern follow:

(1) Theory of Motivation; (2) Theory of Human Growth (The Self-Actualizing Tendency); (3) Study of Self-Actualizing People.

Theory of Motivation

Maslow developed a theory of motivation which distinguishes between basic needs and meta-needs. The basic needs are: hunger, affection, security, and self-esteem. The meta-needs are: justice, goodness, beauty, order, and unity. The basic needs are deficiency needs whereas the meta-needs are growth needs. The basic needs are prepotent over the meta-needs in most cases and are arranged in hierarchial order. The meta-needs, on the other hand, have no hierarchy and are equi-potent; e.g., they can be fairly easily substituted for one another. The meta-needs are as instinctive in man as the basic needs. The deprivation of meta-needs produces such pathological states as: alienation, anguish, apathy, and cynicism.

Maslow's list of needs were organized in terms of the degree to which satisfaction of each is a pre-requisite to the search for satisfaction of the next on the scale. The lower on the hierarchial scale a need stands, the more physiological and the less psychological it is. In other words, when the physiological needs are satisfied--the needs to eat, drink, sleep, etc.--then the safety needs arise and can be attended to. When the safety needs are met--the needs for security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear, freedom from anxiety and chaos, need for structure and order--then the higher psychological needs can be satisfied.

The two highest needs, for Maslow, are the needs for self-actualization which is succeeded by the need for cognitive understanding. These two needs are independent of each other although Maslow felt that the need for cognitive understanding is an even higher expression of man's nature than the need for self-actualization.

Maslow believed that a person had a central tendency to push for actualization of the potentiality inherent within him. Actualization of innate potential insured the development of a self-concept. Maslow called this ever-present thrust towards realizing one's potentiality "the self-actualizing tendency." However, Maslow recognized another tendency common to all men. This consisted of an innate drive to satisfy needs to insure not only physical but psychological survival.

Maslow, however, envisioned the self-actualizing tendency as more important than the survival tendency. The survival

tendency can only maintain life; it cannot enhance it. Only the actualization tendency can insure the expression of man's special individuality and worth. Only the actualization tendency can lead to a rich and deeply meaningful life. Thus, although both the survival and actualization tendencies are clearly central to man's growth, the special importance given to the latter makes Maslow's position different from others. He does not stand as an antagonist to tradition because he does not view the survival and actualization tendencies as mutually exclusive. Maslow stated that "in the normal development of a normal child it is now known that most of the time, if he is given a really free choice, he will choose what is good for his growth. This he does because it tastes good, feels good, gives pleasure or delight," (1966, p. 73).

Theory of Growth

Maslow believed that man had a psychological skeletal structure which could be treated and analyzed like his physical structure. Man had needs, capacities, and tendencies which are genetically based and which cut across all cultures. He has other needs which are unique to himself. These needs are either good or at least neutral; they are not inherently evil. To be "normal" and "healthy" an individual must actualize these needs. Maslow wrote, "What a man can be, he must be. He must be true to his own nature. This need we may call self-actualization," (1970, p. 46).

Man, therefore, essentially grows from within rather than

being shaped from without. His potentialities are fulfilled and his growth developed along lines that may at first be difficult to observe.

Growth, for Maslow, is seen as anything which leads to the actualization of the inner nature of man. Dysfunction or abnormality is seen as anything that blocks or twists the course of self-actualization. Psychopathology in man is anything that frustrates or denies this course. Therapy is viewed as any means of any kind which helps to restore a person to the path of self-actualization and development along the needs of his inner nature. Maslow wrote that "This inner nature is not strong and over-powering and unmistakable like the instincts of animals. It is weak and delicate and subtle and easily overcome by habit, culture, pressure, and wrong attitudes towards it," (1954, pp. 340-41). Further, he writes, "Even though weak, however, it rarely disappears in the normal person--perhaps not even in the sick person. Even though denied, it persists underground forever pressing for actualization," (1968, p. 4). Maslow felt that a great deal of clinical evidence and other research data indicated that in every human being, and certainly in every new-born baby, there was an active will toward health, an impulse toward growth and the actualization of human potentialities.

Man's inborn nature and the growth it generates is essentially good. This is a positive and noble concept of man. Many theorists assume that most instincts are anti-social and that they must be controlled, trained, and socialized. Maslow

feels that many people are afraid of becoming full human beings; they draw back from self-actualization. He does not believe that destructiveness and violence, for example, are indigenous to man. They appear when the inner nature has been twisted, denied, or frustrated. Maslow distinguished between pathological violence and healthy aggression which contends with injustice, prejudice and other social ills.

The conditions under which growth occurs are very similar for Maslow and Rogers, although there are some superficial differences in terminology. For Maslow, if the survival needs are satisfied then self-actualization will occur naturally. If a person is nurtured, loved, and respected, then he can begin to realize himself to the fullest. Maslow's position is that it is not only in childhood that a temporary halt can occur towards self-actualization. He further maintains that if such a halt does occur, human needs are never destroyed and the tendency towards self-actualization can be reactivated at any time.

Study of Self-Actualizing People

In order to develop a more complete and comprehensive science of man, Maslow felt it was incumbent upon psychologists to study people who had realized their potentiality to the fullest. Maslow stated:

. . . the most pertinent and obvious choice of subject for a positive psychology is the study of psychological health (and other kinds of health, aesthetic health, value health, physical health, and the like). But a positive psychology also calls for more study of the

good man, of the secure and of the confident, of the democratic character, of the happy man, of the serene, the calm, the peaceful, the compassionate, the generous, the kind, of the creator, of the saint, of the hero, of the strong man, of the genius, and of other good specimens of humanity. . . We have a very rich vocabulary for psychopathology but a very meagre one for health or transcendence, (1970, p. 292).

Maslow undertook an intensive and far-reaching investigation of self-actualizing people. (They are few, as Maslow found when he sought to secure a representative sample.) Some were historical figures such as Lincoln, Jefferson, Walt Whitman, and Beethoven. Others were living at the time they were studied such as Einstein and Eleanor Roosevelt; another group of individuals studied were found among Maslow's own friends and acquaintances. Maslow investigated his sample clinically in order to discover what characteristics distinguished self-actualizers from ordinary or non-self-actualizing people.

Their distinguishing features were: (1) They were realistically oriented. (2) They accepted themselves, other people, and the natural world around them for what they are. (3) They are problem-centered rather than self-centered. (4) They have a great deal of spontaneity. (5) They are autonomous and independent. (6) They have an air of detachment and a need for privacy. (7) Most of them have had profound mystical or spiritual experiences although not necessarily religious in nature. (8) Their appreciation of people and things is fresh rather than stereotyped. (9) Their intimate relationships with a few specially loved people tend to be profound and

deeply emotional rather than superficial. (10) They identify with mankind. (11) Their values and attitudes are democratic. (12) They do not confuse means with ends. (13) Their sense of humor is philosophical rather than hostile. (14) They have a great fund of creativeness. (15) They resist conformity to the culture. (16) They transcend the environment rather than just coping with it.

Maslow extended his study of self-actualizers by investigating what he called the nature of "peak experiences." He requested his subjects to think of the most wonderful experience in their lives. The reports he obtained revealed the following: people undergoing "peak experiences" felt more integrated, more at one with the world around them, more their own boss, more spontaneous, less aware of space and time, and more perceptive.

Conclusion

Maslow's concern with the analysis and study of the "healthy" self-actualizer contributed much to the development of humanistic psychology. His study of "healthy" people rather than "sick" ones focused attention on and generated knowledge about "normality" and "health."

Maslow, himself, saw this and wrote:

Now coming back to the question with which we started: the nature of normality, we have come close to identifying it with the highest excellence of which we are capable. But this ideal is not an unattainable goal set out far ahead of us; rather it is actually within us, existent but hidden, as potentiality rather than as actuality.

Furthermore, it is a conception of normality that I claim is discovered rather than invented, based on empirical findings rather than on hopes or wishes.

It implies a strictly naturalistic system of values that can be enlarged by further empirical research with human nature . . . If the organism tells us what it needs--and therefore what it values--by sickening and withering when deprived of these values, this is the same as telling us what is good for it, (1970, p. 279).

Carl Rogers' Contribution to Humanistic Psychology

Rogers, like Maslow, is also an exponent of humanistic psychology, the "third force"--in addition to behaviorism and psychoanalysis. His thinking and writing have generated theory and a number of techniques all aimed at achieving better self-understanding and a greater expansion of consciousness and self-awareness.

Rogers has been in clinical practice for over forty years. He is also one of the most thoughtful and prolific writers in the field of psychotherapy. As a clinician, like Freud, Jung, Adler, and Horney before him, his theories evolved out of his clinical experience. Unlike them, however, he is not a medical doctor. His approach to the field, therefore, is not influenced by the medical model, nor by intensive training in psychoanalysis. He views growth, for example, not in a series of stages, but as an ever-continuous process towards self-actualization.

It would be impossible, within the scope of this study, to treat every aspect of Rogers' work. Therefore, only certain concepts and techniques relevant to the thrust of this study will be discussed: (1) The Organism and the Self; (2) Theory and Process of Growth; (3) Theory of Client-centered Therapy;

(4) Process of Client-centered Therapy; (5) Characteristics of Self-actualizing People.

Rogers writes so clearly and cogently that whenever possible his own words will be used to elucidate his theories. As one of the foremost representatives of the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy, his method of theorizing is well illustrated by the following:

I came to the conclusion which others have reached before, that in a new field perhaps what is needed first is to steep oneself in the events, to approach the phenomena with as few preconceptions as possible, to take a naturalist's observational, descriptive approach to these events, and to draw forth those low-level inferences which seem most native to the material itself, (1961, p. 128).

The Organism and the Self

Although Rogers' principal energies have been devoted to the change and development of a person, he has spent considerable time analyzing the concept of the organism and the concept of self. His theory of personal growth and the goals and techniques of therapy rests on these two constructs.

From a psychological perspective, the organism is the locus of all experience. Experience encompasses all that is potentially within the scope of awareness experienced by the organism at any given moment in time. According to Rogers, the totality of this experience makes up the phenomenal field which is the individual's unique frame of reference which can only be known to the individual himself. "It can never be known to another except through empathetic inference and then can never be perfectly known," (1959, p. 10).

For Rogers, "Behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived," (1951, p. 491). Behavior is dependent upon the phenomenal field (subjective reality) and not upon the stimulating conditions (external reality). The phenomenal field, however, should not be confused with the field of consciousness. Rogers makes the distinction:

"Consciousness (or awareness) is the symbolization of some of our experience," (1959, p. 158). The phenomenal field at any given point in time, therefore, is comprised of both conscious (symbolized) and unconscious (unsymbolized) experience.

Inappropriate behavior arises when the individual has incorrectly symbolized his experience. An individual, however, tends to check his symbolized experiences against the real world (external reality). This ongoing reality testing provides the individual with reliable knowledge of the world so that he can behave realistically. Some perceptions, however, may remain untested or inadequately tested. These experiences may cause the individual to behave unrealistically and even to his own detriment.

How does the individual distinguish between a realistic and an unrealistic subjective image? Rogers answers this question by moving away from the conceptual framework of pure phenomenology. An individual's experience and thoughts are not reality, they are merely part of a tentative hypothesis that may or may not be true. Judgment is suspended until the hypothesis is tested. Rogers adopts a Gestalt theory position. "The

outstanding fact which must be taken into theoretical account is that the organism is at all times a total organized system, in which alteration of any part may produce changes in any other part," (1951, p. 487).

The Self

The construct of self is critical to Rogers' theory. It is, therefore, worth noting how he arrived at his formulation.

Speaking personally, I began my work with the settled notion that the 'self' was a vague, ambiguous, scientifically meaningless term which had gone out of the psychologist's vocabulary with the departure of the introspectionists. Consequently I was slow in recognizing that when clients were given the opportunity to express their problems and their attitudes in their own terms, without any guidance or interpretation, they tended to talk in terms of the self . . . It seemed clear . . . that the self was an important element in the experience of the client, and, that in some odd sense, his goal was to become his 'real self,' (1959, pp. 200-201).

As the organism develops, a portion of the phenomenological field gradually becomes differentiated. This is the self.

The self (self concept) denotes for Rogers:

the organized, consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the 'I' or 'me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions. It is a gestalt which is available to awareness although not necessarily in awareness. It is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, but at any given moment it is a specific entity, (1959, p. 200).

In addition to the self, in Rogers' theory, there is an ideal self: that which the person would like to be. When there is incongruence between the self and the ideal self, or between the organism's symbolized experience and his actual experience, then there is malfunctioning.

On the other hand, when the symbolized experience that constitutes the self accurately reflects the experiences of the organism, the person is adjusted, mature, and fully functioning. He can accept the entire range of organismic experience without threat or anxiety. He can think realistically. When incongruity, however, exists between self and the organism then the individual feels threatened and anxious. Thrown on the defensive, his thinking becomes constricted and rigid.

Theory and Process of Growth

Rogers' theory of personal growth evolved over the years, and although influenced by others--Goldstein, Maslow, Sullivan, Raimy, Lecky, and Kierkegaard--it remains a unique and original conceptualization. Rogers characterizes personal growth as follows:

This theory is basically phenomenological in character, and relies heavily upon the concept of the self as an explanatory construct. It pictures the end-point of personality development as being a basic congruence between the phenomenal field of experience and conceptual structure of self--a situation which, if achieved, would represent freedom from internal strain and anxiety, and freedom from potential strain; which would represent the maximum in realistically oriented adaptation; which would mean the establishment of an individualized value system having considerable identity with the value system of any other equally well-adjusted member of the human race, (1951, p. 532).

Rogers assumes that the organism is a dynamic system. Its basic tendency and thrust is ". . . to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism," (1951, p. 487). The nature of the organism determines personality development. As the organism matures, it becomes more differentiated, more

expanded, more socialized, and more autonomous. This basic tendency towards growth can best be seen when the individual is observed over a long period of time. There is forward movement in the life of everyone. In fact, this forward movement is the only force the therapist can rely on to effect change in a client. The forward moving tendency, however, can only operate effectively when the choices available are clearly perceived and adequately symbolized.

Rogers, in 1959, introduced a distinction between the actualizing tendency of the organism and the self-actualizing tendency:

. . . this general tendency toward actualization expresses itself also in the actualizing of that portion of the experience of the organism which is symbolized in the self. If the self and the total experience of the organism are relatively congruent, then the actualizing tendency remains relatively unified. If self and organism are incongruent, then the general tendency to actualize the organism may work at cross purposes with the subsystem of that motive, the tendency to actualize the self, (1959, pp. 196-197).

Although the organism and the self both have an inherent tendency towards actualization, they are subject to strong environmental influences. The social environment is particularly important. Rogers is not a "stage" theorist like Freud, Erikson or Sullivan. Instead Rogers concentrates upon the ways in which other people evaluate the individual. He called these evaluations "feed-back." He observed that often this feedback, particularly in childhood, tended to produce distancing between the experience of the organism and the experience of self. If the feedback, especially from parents in childhood is

exclusively positive then there is no incongruity between the organism and the self. However, often the evaluations of the child's behavior are sometimes positive and sometimes negative (in extreme cases they would be exclusively negative). The child learns to distinguish between actions and feelings which have been labeled worthy and those which have been labeled unworthy. Unworthy experiences, although they are organismically valid, tend to be excluded from the self-concept. This results in a self-concept which is out of line with organismic experience. The child tries to be what others want him to be instead of trying to be what he really is. A conflict then arises between adopted values and genuine unconscious ones. If more and more of the "true" values of a person are replaced by values taken over or borrowed from others, the self becomes a house divided against itself.

Throughout childhood, the self-concept becomes more and more distorted by the feedback from others. Any organismic experience, therefore, which is incongruent with this distorted self-image is felt as a threat and produces anxiety. In order to protect the integrity of the self-concept, such threatening experiences are either denied symbolization or are given a distorted symbolization.

The gap between self and organism can produce distortion and increased defensiveness. It also can affect a person's relations with others. A defensive person is apt to feel hostile towards others whose behavior, as he sees it, may represent his own denied feelings.

Therapy, according to Rogers, can be used to bridge the gap between the self and organism and to aid the client to become a fully functioning person capable of actualizing his potential.

Theory of Client-Centered Therapy

For Rogers, the therapeutic process is only one example of all interpersonal relationships and communications. His theory of interpersonal relationships rests on the following assumptions:

(a) a minimal willingness on the part of two people to be in contact; (b) an ability and minimal willingness on the part of each other to receive communication from the other; and (c) assuming the contact to continue over a period of time; then the following relationship is hypothesized to hold true: the greater the congruence of experience, and awareness and communication on the part of one individual, the more the ensuing relationship will involve: a tendency towards reciprocal communication with a quality of increasing congruence; a tendency toward more mutually accurate understanding of the communications; improved psychological adjustment and functioning in both parties; mutual satisfaction in the relationship, (1961, p. 344).

The therapeutic relationship provides a non-threatening environment where the client's true feelings and experiences may be brought out and examined.

Rogers, himself, clearly defines the nature and goals of the therapeutic relationship:

1. The therapist enters an intensive personal relationship with the client. He relates to him ". . . not as a scientist to an object of study, not as a physician expecting to diagnose and cure, but as a person to a person," (1961, pp. 184-185).

2. To do this, the therapist must feel that his client has unconditional self-worth. Regardless of his behavior, feelings, or condition, he is a person of value.
3. The therapist must not hide behind a defensive facade, but enter the relationship honestly and openly, meeting the client with his own feelings.
4. Using empathy, the therapist tries to be aware what it feels like to be the client at every moment of the relationship.
5. The therapist provides a tolerant and sympathetic climate so that the client has absolute freedom to express himself.

If the therapist can create this atmosphere then the client can explore increasingly strange and unknown and dangerous feelings in himself. He can do this because he is unconditionally accepted. Gradually he can become aware of those experiences which he formerly denied to awareness because they had been too threatening or too damaging to the structure of the self.

In the security of the therapeutic relationship, the client can experience his fear or anger, tenderness and strength. Through living such varied feelings in varying degrees of intensity, the client discovers that he has experienced himself, that he is all these feelings. His behavior, therefore, will begin to change in accordance with the experienced self. New experiences can be accepted without fear and freely welcomed in accordance with his changing and developing self.

The Process of Client-Centered Therapy

The process of client-centered therapy is extremely humane and personal. It seeks to develop an atmosphere of acceptance and trust so that the following changes in a person can occur:

1. Under certain conditions involving an absence of any threat to the self, inconsistent experiences can be perceived and examined. The structure of the self can then be revised to assimilate and include these experiences.
2. The therapist, by being completely accepting of everything the client says, encourages the client to explore his unconscious feelings and bring them into awareness.
3. The client "will be, in more unified fashion, what he organismically is . . .," (1955, p. 269).
4. The client's social relationships will improve and the incidence of social conflict will decrease. This happens because the client "perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system all his sensory and visceral experience, then he is more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals," (1951, p. 520).
5. As the client perceives and assimilates more of his experiences into his self-structure he will begin to replace his present value system--one which had been based largely on introjections and distorted symbolizations. He will replace it with an ongoing and continuously valuing process.

To be healthy, integrated and fully functioning, the individual must constantly evaluate his experiences to see whether they require a change in value structure. Any fixed, inflexible set of values will tend to prevent an individual from reacting effectively to new experiences.

Characteristics of Self-Actualizing People

Like Maslow, Rogers drew on his clinical experiences to describe the attributes of the fully functioning, "healthy" self-actualizing individual.

1. They are open to experience.

. . . every stimulus--whether originating within the organism or in the environment--would be freely relayed through the nervous system without being distorted by any defensive mechanism. There would be no need of the mechanism of 'subception' whereby the organism is forewarned of any experience threatening to the self. . . . Thus, one aspect of this process which I am naming 'the good life' appears to be movement away from the pole of defensiveness toward the pole of openness to experience. The individual is becoming more able to listen to himself, to experience what is going on within himself. He is also more open to feelings of fear and discouragement and pain. He is also more open to his feelings of courage and tenderness and awe. He is free to live his feelings subjectively, as they exist in him, and also free to be aware of these feelings, (1961, pp. 187-188).

2. They are living existentially.

One way of expressing the fluidity which is present in such existential living is to say that the self and personality emerge from experience, rather than experience being translated or twisted to fit preconceived self-structure. It means that one becomes a participant in, and an observer of, the ongoing process of organismic experience, rather than being in control of it.

Such living in the moment means an absence of rigidity, of tight organization, of the imposition of structure on experience. It means, instead, a maximum of adaptability, a discovery of structure in experience, a flowing,

changing organization of self and personality, (1961, pp. 188-189).

3. They are organismically trusting.

Yet as I observe clients whose experiences in living have taught me so much, I find that increasingly such individuals are able to trust their total organismic reaction to a new situation because they discover in ever-increasing degree that if they are open to their experience, doing what 'feels right' proves to be a competent and trustworthy guide to behavior which is truly satisfying. . . If they 'feel like' expressing anger they do so and find that this comes out satisfactorily, because they are equally alive to all of their other desires for affection, affiliation, and relationship. They are surprised at their own intuitive skill in finding behavioral solutions to complex and troubling human relationships. It is only afterward that they realize how surprisingly trustworthy their inner reactions have been in bringing about satisfactory behavior, (1961, pp. 189-191).

Conclusion

Rogers' theories and techniques arose from his clinical experience. Rogerian therapy is essentially client-centered, non-directive, and non-interpretive. Change occurs only when the client sees that the therapist has an unconditional positive regard for him by sensing an empathetic understanding. During therapy, the client becomes increasingly aware of his true feelings and experiences. His emerging self-concept, therefore, becomes more congruent, more harmonious with his total experiences. When congruence is achieved, then the client can become fully functioning and display such characteristics as: openness to experience, absence of defensiveness, accurate awareness, unconditional self-regard, and harmonious relationships with others.

Rogers' theories have, however, been criticized for being

based upon naive phenomenology. He has been criticized for ignoring unconscious factors which motivate behavior. His reliance on self-reports has been seen as relying on memories or perceptions distorted by defenses and unconscious self-deceptions. Rogers, however, has countered these arguments by maintaining that there is no need to interpret, probe and excavate layers of psychic strata because the person reveals himself in what he says about himself. Moreover, Rogers recognizes that the organism has many experiences which the person has not brought into consciousness. Experiences which are inconsistent with a person's self-image are denied entrance into consciousness.

The basic, and more important difference between Rogers and psychoanalysis is Rogers' belief that excessive "repression" can be prevented in the first place by parents giving their children unconditional positive regard.

Rogers, while recognizing the difficulties defensive behavior presents for his theory of self, prefers "to live with this dilemma until we understand it more deeply and perhaps can develop more sensitive theories as well as better instruments to deal with it," (1954, p. 430).

If one measure of usefulness for any theory lies in the amount of research and commentary it provokes, then Rogers' views are certainly useful. His theory of self has served the purpose of making the self an object of empirical study. Although others have given theoretical status to the concept of self, Rogers' ideas have led directly to investigative

activities. His theories, therefore, have been an extremely influential and pervasive force in contemporary psychology.

Frederick Perls and Gestalt Therapy

I do my thing, and you do your thing
I am not in this world to live up to your
expectations
And you are not in this world to live up to mine.
You are you, and I am I,
And if by chance, we find each other, it's
beautiful.
If not, it can't be helped, (1972, p. 4).

Frederick Perls, the author of this inspirational poem, was the founding father of the Gestalt Therapy movement. Although he was severely criticized by his colleagues most of his life, his theories and techniques have become more acceptable to an increasingly large number of both educators and therapists. The widespread acceptance and use of his ideas and methods has occurred not because Perls changed his views towards more traditional ways of approaching psychotherapy (although his work did undergo some transformation and evolution,) but because the current trends in therapy have come closer to his position.

Perls was trained as a psychoanalyst, and he developed his theories, in part, because much of classical psychoanalytic theory only half-explained or did not deal with many of the phenomena Perls observed during years of extensive clinical practice. Perls felt that psychoanalysis, with its orientation towards the past, tended to obscure more valid explanations of self and growth. Perls found that psychoanalytic theory

tended to view the ego as resistant, the id as unconscious, and personality as a formal construct. Psychotherapeutic methods, he wrote, "have produced situations of observation--and employed criteria of cure--in which the evidence is prima facie confirmatory of such theories," (1951, p. 399).

Perls did not write a great deal, he was more interested in doing rather than in theorizing about what he was doing. Many of his theories and techniques, therefore, have been extrapolated from the intensive verbatim reporting of his therapeutic sessions. It is important also to realize that theory and technique in Gestalt Therapy are interwoven and extremely difficult to treat separately. This section will be devoted to a discussion of: (1) Antecedents of Gestalt Therapy; (2) Theory of Growth; and (3) The Process of Gestalt Therapy.

Antecedents of Gestalt Therapy

Gestalt Therapy is not oriented exclusively to Gestalt psychology; it is indebted to many branches of the psychoanalytic movement. It was influenced by Freud, Otto Rank, and Wilhelm Reich. Perls' great contribution, however, according to Wallen (1971) was in applying the principles of gestalt formation (proximity, the law of good continuation, pregnanz, similarity) to the organic perceptions of feelings, emotions, and bodily sensations.

Perls' definition of a gestalt is important. For him, it is any experienced phenomenon. He wrote, "The world, and especially every organism maintains itself, and the only law which is constant is the forming of gestalts--wholes,

completeness. A gestalt is an organic function. A gestalt is an ultimate experiential unit," (1972, p. 16).

The very nature of a gestalt, Perls felt, made gestalt therapy the first existential philosophy which was self-supporting. Perls believed that his theory did not need "aboutism" (explanations,) nor did it need "shouldism," (moralism). The support for the theory lay in its formation because, as Perls stated: "the gestalt formation, the emergence of needs is a primary, biological phenomenon," (1972, p. 17).

In addition then to being self-supporting, Gestalt therapy is also existential in approach since it maintains that a person like any other organism, exists, and that he relates to the environment. It is impossible, therefore, to separate the organism from his world. Gestalt therapy is not concerned with symptoms or personality structure but with the total existence of the person in the "here and now."

To do this, Gestalt therapy takes a phenomenological approach. Any thought or experience, whatever else they are or represent, is, for Perls, "first of all something that exists in its own right. Even if something is 'only a wish' it is something--namely, the event itself of wishing. It is, therefore, as real as anything else," (1951, p. 82).

Perls, (1969) himself, thought that the essence of gestalt therapy lay in its effort to combine behaviorism and phenomenology. Phenomenology emphasizes awareness of what is; behaviorism emphasizes behavior in the now. Perls' theories and techniques involve using the awareness of the experience

in the present in order to induce change in the individual.

Theory of Growth

Perls, like Rogers, found that there is frequent disparity between the real self and the image of self. He wrote:

Many people dedicate their lives to actualizing a concept of what they should be like, rather than to actualize themselves. This difference between self-actualizing and self-image is very important. Most people live only for their image. Where some people have a self, most people have a void, because they are so busy projecting themselves as this or that, (1972, p. 20)

Perls, like Rogers, also believed that the capacity for growth and change lies within the individual himself. The therapist cannot deliberately bring about changes in people. However, by taking an active role in the therapeutic process, he can facilitate growth. For Perls, "The therapist provides the person with the opportunity to discover what he needs," (1972, p. 40). These needs, for Perls, are "the missing parts that he has alienated and given up to the world," (ibid).

The therapeutic situation itself provides the opportunity for the patient to grow. The therapist actively and carefully "frustrates" the person's often continuous efforts to avoid his real feelings. As Perls wrote, "People have to grow by frustration--by skillful frustration," (1972, p. 77). The person is not allowed to rely on the therapist or others in a group situation. He is forced to find his own way and discover his own potential. The therapist allows the person to find out for himself that whatever he expects the therapist or others to do for him, he can do for himself. Perls also believed that when

the therapist himself was open and willing to grow, the prospects for beneficial therapy was enhanced.

Growth, in Perls' view, is a continuous process of integration of parts: the formation of, awareness of, and completion of gestalts. The fully functioning person is one who is, according to Perls, "the most aware of his component parts, most accepting of them, and (who has) achieved an integration," (1972, p. 29-30). Maturation is the continuous transition from environmental support to self support. In gestalt therapy maturity is achieved by the individual developing his own potential. This is accomplished by decreasing environmental support and increasing the individual's support. The therapist continuously points up the individual's artificial playing of both childish and adult roles.

Perls' theory of growth and personality change is illustrated by his "Top-Dog" "Under-Dog" technique. While a technique, it is also the starting point of a theory of personality. For Perls, personality was comprised of three layers. The first, or "phoney" layer of personality is made up of the "top-dog" (super-ego) and the "under-dog" (infraego). These "two clowns," as Perls called them, are perpetually quarrelling and acting out "phoney" roles on the "stage" of the ego (self). By having the person compose "scripts" and having dialogues between the "top-dog" and the "under-dog" these two could be recognized for what they are: the former righteous and authoritarian, the latter powerless, childish and petulant.

When the first layer of personality has been stripped

away a second layer appears: the "implosive" layer where the individual experiences great reluctance to accept pain and unpleasantness. This is the "phobic" layer of resistance where the individual is afraid to be himself. At this point, the therapist urges, supports, and helps the person to stay with his feelings. If the person is able to do this, he can move beyond the phobic layer on the path to self-actualization.

At this point, the therapist and the individual he is working with face what Perls called the impasse which he defined as the point "where environmental support or obsolete inner support is not forthcoming any more, and authentic self-support has not yet been achieved," (1972, p. 31). The impasse is characterized by a feeling of deadness. If the person can stay with this feeling, then he will reach the "explosive" layer of personality. This is the final "neurotic" layer. Depending on the amount of energy which had been invested in the "implosive" layer, the explosions can be mild or strong. There were, for Perls, four kinds of explosions: "explosions into joy, into grief, into orgasm, into anger," (1971, p. 22). In order for an individual to achieve authenticity he must progress through these stages of development.

A fully mature, authentic person is one who can take responsibility for his own emotions, feelings, and actions. For Perls, like Buber, responsibility is not synonymous with obligation, but rather what Perls called "response-ability." Growth occurs through awareness of, acceptance of, and responsibility for one's self. Gestalt therapy developed many

techniques to foster this awareness and responsibility so that integration--the ultimate goal of therapy--could occur.

The Process of Gestalt Therapy

Perls was far more interested in developing techniques to help others develop than in formulating a theory of neuroses or in explaining and predicting human behavior. Techniques feed in and out of theory; they are mutually dependent. As Naranjo points out:

The uniqueness of Gestalt therapy does not lie in a theory of personality of the neuroses, nor for that matter does it lie in theory at all. It is essentially a non-verbal creation, an approach to people in the therapeutic situation which has developed out of understanding, experience and intuition and continued to be transmitted non-verbally, (1966, p. 1).

As both a technique and a theory of technique, Gestalt therapy, unlike most other current treatment methods (with the possible exception of psychodrama which it sometimes resembles,) is essentially non-verbal. Although words are used, they are given less importance than non-verbal expressions of feelings and awareness. It seeks to develop congruence between the spoken words and the underlying emotions which often express themselves more clearly and powerfully through non-verbal communications. Interestingly, too, Gestalt techniques lend themselves more readily than others to self-treatment. Many of its methods and "experiments" can be practiced alone with useful results, (Perls, 1951).

The fundamental assumption of Gestalt theory rests on a paradox which Beisser defines: "Change occurs when one becomes

what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not," (1971, p. 77). In order to facilitate change, the immediate goal of gestalt therapy is to restore awareness to the individual. Gestalt theory assumes that awareness in itself will foster growth and change.

Awareness in Gestalt therapy consists of three layers: an awareness of self; an awareness of the world; and an awareness of what lies in between--the intermediate world of fantasy that prevents the individual from being in touch with either himself or the world. Perls recognized Freud's contribution to therapy in discovering the world of fantasy. He felt, however, that Freud did not go far enough, since he neglected to develop techniques which the individual can use to get in touch with himself and the world again. Gestalt techniques are designed to reestablish awareness and contact.

Gestalt therapy focuses on awareness in the "here and now." Feelings, sensations, and emotions themselves are the materials used, rather than intellectualization, rationalization, and explanation. Emotions are seen as a continuous process, since every minute of an individual's life carries with it some sensation--either pleasant or unpleasant. Perls felt that modern man had suppressed (cut off from awareness) this continuity of emotional experience. Emotion, Perls thought, was usually viewed as some sort of periodic upheaval which occurred at the very moments one had been trained to exercise control. Awareness of emotion and acceptance of it is the crucial factor in behavior. Perls wrote:

Emotion, considered as the organism's direct evaluative experience of the organism/environment field, is not mediated by thoughts and verbal judgments, but is immediate. As such, it is a crucial regulator of action, for it not only furnishes the basis of awareness of what is important, but it also energizes appropriate action, or, if this is not at once available, it energizes and directs the search for it, (1951, p. 95).

Many of the techniques developed by Perls were designed to elicit emotions, not words, and to assist the person to experience and therefore become and integrate his feelings into himself.

Perls had no use for methods which sought to uncover past emotions or anticipate future ones. In fact, he criticized psychoanalysis for treating the memory of past events as reality. On the contrary, he believed that the traumas which supposedly lay at the roots of neuroses are, as he wrote, "an invention of the patient to save his self-esteem . . . lies to be hung onto in order to justify one's unwillingness to grow," (1972, p. 46). Interpretation and explanation of the past, the "whys" and "because" of many other treatment methods are taboo measures in gestalt therapy, because they can so often lead to rationalizations and suppression of true feelings in the present.

Perls' entire treatment technique focused on awareness in the "here and now." For Perls, "Nothing exists except the now. Now-experience-awareness-reality. The past is no more and the future is not yet. Only the now exists," (1971, p. 14). In order for anyone to understand Gestalt therapy the "now" and the "how" must be understood. He wrote, "Now covers all

that exists . . . Now includes the balance of being here, is experiencing, involvement, phenomenon, awareness. How covers everything that is structure; behavior, all that is actually going on . . .," (1972, p. 47).

Gestalt therapy assumes that being aware of one's feelings in the "here and now" is natural. Naranjo (1971) calls this "present-centeredness" and says that it happens when a person experiences rather than manipulates his environment. "Present-centeredness" occurs when the person is open to and accepting of all experiences and their accompanying emotions rather than being fearful or defensive. Deviations from "present-centeredness," for Naranjo, are: "in the nature of an avoidance or a compulsive sacrifice," (1971, p. 57). Naranjo further writes that openness to and acceptance of experience are two fundamentals in the philosophy of gestalt therapy i.e., "things at this moment are the only way they can be, and behold, the world is very good," (1971, p. 68).

In order to assist a person to enter and stay in the present, Gestalt therapy uses the technique of the "continuum of awareness." A person is repeatedly asked to express what he is feeling and experiencing. He is encouraged to stay with a description--verbal or non-verbal--of his feelings, no matter how intense or painful they may be. If the person appears to be avoiding his feelings, then the therapist intervenes and offers support and encouragement. By pointing out discrepancies between the verbal and non-verbal language, by showing the person, for example, that his breathing has become

constricted, or his eyes have filled with unshed tears, the therapist helps the person to enter the "here and now" through awareness. He continuously asks questions like: "How are you feeling?" "Are you aware that your fists are clenched?" "Can you hear your voice?" "What are you doing now?" By focusing his attention back to himself, his body and his feelings, the therapist helps the person get in touch with his avoidance of his feeling and his inability to express himself.

For Perls, awareness is not only the aim of therapy, it is also the basis of all knowledge and communication. Without communication there is no contact between people. Instead the individual finds himself bored and isolated. Perls felt that difficulties in communication or in expressing one's emotions were based, in part, on "unfinished business," those things which have happened in the past which have not been integrated into the present. This "unfinished business" is carried around as incomplete gestalts preventing the formation and completion of new gestalts. Perls further believed that most problems in communication were based on resentment which he characterized as one of the worst possible examples of "unfinished business" or incomplete gestalts. As he wrote, "If you resent you can neither let go nor have it out . . .," (1972, p. 52).

The reluctance and difficulty to express one's feelings was not based, for Perls, on a Freudian system of resistances, but on the organism's natural tendency to avoid pain. The therapist's task is to help the individual to recognize, endure, and assimilate this pain. The person in therapy had

failed to complete the gestalts of "unfinished business" because, as Perls wrote, ". . . it was so painful that he had to flee. Now, if he is encouraged to go back and finish it, it is still painful; it reactivates his misery, and from the short-run view, it is still to be avoided," (1951, p. 140). Growth is extremely painful from Perls' point of view. It must be met and worked through in order for change to occur. As Perls put it, "To suffer one's death and to be reborn is not easy," (1972, p. 310).

Perls also believed that there was no such thing as repression in a Freudian sense. He felt that a need, a gestalt, could not be repressed but only certain expressions of that need could be blocked. An individual may be unable to express his feelings, or he may even deliberately suppress them. However, Perls felt that his emotions and needs will be communicated through his body language.

The gestalt therapist believes that it is more important to be aware of non-verbal communications than verbal ones. Perls even gave therapists permission to go to sleep when people in treatment were not expressing any feelings but only "talking." For Perls, the quality of the unspoken language is more revealing than the content of the words. As he wrote, ". . . the voice is there, the gesture, the posture, the facial expression, the psychosomatic language. It's all there if you learn to more or less let the content of the sentences play the second violin . . .," (1972, p. 57).

Repression, or non-expression, is then, for Perls,

largely a motor-reflex resistance to revealing emotions. Blocked tears, choking, constricting the diaphragm, shallow breathing, clenched fists, tapping feet, are all real emotional expressions, and better clues for the therapist than exploration and analysis of past events.

The inability to communicate was also caused, for Perls, by anxiety, which again he did not view in a Freudian way. He called anxiety "stage fright." He felt that people were continuously rehearsing for the various roles they have to play in front of others. Usually, too, the immature person is uncertain about how the "critics" (others) are going to receive his performance. Therefore, when he reaches the moment of walking on stage--expressing himself and communicating with others--he develops "stage fright" (anxiety). Perls used the therapeutic situation as a stage where the person could learn to play his "roles" openly and honestly. The therapeutic setting provided the opportunity for him to overcome the two tools which Perls (1972) felt people used to falsify their existences. First, "the catastrophic expectation," which means that if a person expresses himself he thinks he will run the risk of not being accepted or loved by others. The other is "hypnosis" which means that a person accepts everything the therapist or others tell him and presumes that it is valid for himself, (1972, p. 34).

The dream was one of the techniques which Perls used widely to help a person become aware, to experience, and to complete gestalts. For Perls,

The dream is an existential message. It is more than an unfinished situation; it is more than an unfulfilled wish; it is more than a prophecy. It is a message of yourself to yourself, to whatever part of you is listening. The dream is possibly the most spontaneous expression of the human being, a piece of art that we chisel out of our lives, (1971, p. 27).

He did not use dreams, or fragments of dreams, to interpret a person to himself. Rather he used them as "mini-dramas" available to the person to foster integration and to complete "unfinished business." He would assist the person to become and thereby integrate his dream by having him act out the setting, the characters and the props which appeared in the dream.

Perls not only used pieces of dreams as material for therapy, he also encouraged people to write "scripts" for parts of their bodies, for important people in their lives, and for their own feelings. The aim of these techniques is to promote integration, which is the ultimate goal of gestalt therapy. If a person can recover, assimilate, and accept all the parts of himself which he has disowned he can become "whole." His "unfinished business," his disowned feelings or parts of his body are incomplete gestalts which have prevented him from achieving authenticity and from fully functioning in the "here and now." As Beisser puts it: "Experience has shown that when the patient identifies with the alienated fragments, integration does occur. Thus, by being what one is--fully--one can become something else," (1971, p. 78).

Conclusion

The gestalt therapist is an active participant in the

therapeutic process. Perls believed that once the process is started it is autocatalytic and self-maintaining. A Gestalt therapist recruits the person as a co-phenomenologist. He does not want to learn something about the individual and then teach it to him. Rather, he wants to teach the person how to learn about himself. Through awareness, present-centeredness, acceptance and recognition of body-language, the individual can grow.

Gestalt therapy, however, seems to serve the needs of our rapidly changing society. Older methods of treatment were developed in more stable times when perhaps therapy was successful if it helped an individual to accept and adjust to his more clearly defined roles in society. Today, however, as Beisser points out, "the individual is left to his own devices to find stability . . . The goal of therapy becomes not so much to develop a good, fixed character but to be able to move with the times while retaining some individual stability," (1971, p. 79).

Summary

Maslow, Rogers, Perls, and others are all representative of humanistic psychology. Although there are differences in the therapeutic techniques of these writers, their theories all have a common goal: to de-emphasize such medical analogies as symptom reduction, cure, or adjustment. They are all oriented towards growth, and believe that the drive for growth and self-actualization is inherent in man. Their primary aim is to help the person become the best possible version of himself as a human being; a human being essentially defined by his own

values, aspirations, needs and limitations, and not those of the therapist. Their emphasis is on increasing individuality, with living authentically and comfortably with oneself.

The merits implicit in this self-directed therapy is that the individual is free to organize and select his own behavior. He can be at peace with himself and his fellow men. He can enjoy life, recognizing that pleasure and satisfaction are as important as suffering and pain; that individuality is a basic inherited given, and that his own self-hood, individuality, and autonomy are more valuable than social norms, stereotypes, or living up to the expectations of others.

Humanistic psychology is phenomenologically oriented because it accepts the immediate experience of the person as the governing factor in behavior and in therapy. Moreover, it considers experience itself as real in the sense of governing the individual's behavior. By permitting the individual to experience himself more fully, humanistic therapy tries to increase the individual's capacity to tolerate all experiences both pleasureable and painful.

The humanistically oriented therapist views free choice and personal responsibility as the basic ingredients in therapy. He emphasizes the individual's potential for organizing and determining his own behavior in the present or the future, regardless of the past. Humanistic therapy, therefore, is neither predictable nor controlable. In fact, the more successful such therapy is, the more responsibility and freedom the individual possesses to determine, for himself, what

successful therapy means. As rigidity in emotional expression decreases, spontaneity and creativity will start to emerge. Similarly, the more successful therapy is, the more congruent the person becomes within himself and with his environment.

Although Maslow, Rogers, and Perls all have different perspectives on man's growth and development, they share a common ability to look at man as a whole rather than as a collection of parts. They concern themselves with those aspects of human experience: the self-actualizing tendency, internal frame of reference, and the formation and completion of gestalts which lead to growth and the achievement of potential.

Humanistic psychology has sometimes been criticized by those who feel that self-actualization will lead to selfish, aggressive, anti-social behavior. Maslow, Rogers, and Perls, however, all agree to some extent that man's inner nature can basically be trusted. Self-actualization, by releasing man's fullest potential--emotional, rational, and creative--will not only benefit himself but his relationships with others and the society around him. Rogers, in describing what he calls the "good life," puts this position well:

. . . the basic nature of the human being, when functioning freely, is constructive and trustworthy
. . . When we are able to free the individual from defensiveness, so that he is open to the wide range of his own needs, as well as the wide range of environmental and social demands, his reactions may be trusted to be positive, forward-moving, constructive. . . As he becomes more fully himself, he will become more realistically socialized, (1961, p. 194).

CHAPTER V

SECTION I: FAMILY GROWTH THEORY

Introduction

This chapter will present the Family Growth Theory. Previous chapters have examined various ideas, theories and techniques, many of which have been incorporated into the Family Growth Theory. This chapter, however, will introduce my own special way of conceptualizing family growth, individual growth, the relationship between them, and the process and techniques I use when working with a family.

The Family Growth Theory is an evolution of what I have learned from others--ideas and techniques which I have borrowed and tailored to fit my own needs and experiences. More importantly, perhaps, it is the outgrowth of all my personal and professional experiences. I grew up in a large family. I have a family of my own. I have worked with, and been close to, many people in many different capacities--therapist, teacher, counsellor, and friend. My theory has grown from my own understanding of how a family functions, and how its members relate to each other. It is the outcome of all my own life-experiences, struggles, excitement, distortions, joys, and influences that have helped me to be where I am now. Where I am now, however, is only for now.

It is difficult for me to put my experience into a

conceptual framework. I am reluctant to try to encapsulate human experience, human beings, and human growth into words. I think words can only partially express meaning. Then, too, I view any experience, idea, or person as a whole. I feel that to fragment the wholeness for the sake of analysis may seriously weaken and distort any understanding of the complete picture.

Theory and technique, philosophy and method, are not separate for me. They are interwoven, mutually supporting entities. They cultivate, influence, and mutually nourish each other. When, for example, I find a new technique which seems helpful, my theory changes to include it. When I discover some new way of perceiving or understanding a person and the growth occurring within him, I adapt my techniques to reflect this new perception.

My analysis of human growth, and my methods of working with people is flexible. Just as I see the individual and the family as growing, changing, and integrating new experiences and feelings, so I view my theory as ever-changing to reflect my own growth. Therefore, this theory is more a set of directions coupled with observations that people have an amazing ability to grow, change, and actualize their potentialities. This study, then, is an attempt to capture my thoughts, feelings, experiences, and observations in words. I am me, and the theory I am presenting is an intimate part of me.

There is an image that I like to use to describe my orientation to Family Growth: the whole world is moving in a continuous and never-ending dance. Often we find it hard to

make sense of the dance, we can see no pattern to it. I believe that there are patterns to the dance, and they can be seen, but only by a person who involves himself in living, who involves himself in the dance of life. The patterns change. I see now whatever I see. Later I may see a new pattern. But, I say again that I am in movement while I try to comprehend the patterns of life. I do not wish to stop dancing, to get uninvolved and make observations from the outside, from a static position. That's not me. Remember these images as you read this theory on family growth. What I say here about the patterns of family growth and development represents what I see now. I am open to seeing patterns that I have never seen before. According to my image, I intend to remain an active dancer, to stay involved in life and growth experiences.

Just as I find it hard to separate the dancer from the dance, I find it difficult to divorce theory from practice. However, for the sake of discussion this chapter will be broken into two sections. The first section will present the theory of Family Growth, and the second will focus on various ways of translating theory into practice.

This first section will be organized as follows: (1) a brief account of my debts to others who have contributed to my understanding and working with individuals and families; (2) a consideration of the principles guiding the formulation of the theory; (3) an analysis of how I view the Self and Individuality; (4) my concept of human growth; (5) my understanding of the family as a human system; (6) "I growth" and "we growth"

and the relationship between them.

Acknowledgements

Any accounting of my debts to others will be incomplete. Many people can have profound influence on the way we see ourselves and others, and how we comprehend and assimilate knowledge and experiences. Often we are unaware, or have forgotten these influences as they have become such an integral part of ourselves. However, I have a fairly clear idea who has been important to me professionally in contributing to my theory and techniques.

My debt to Nathan Ackerman is a deeply personal one. A few years ago, I was ready to abandon the field of counselling. After several years of clinical practice, I was confused and frustrated. I was not comfortable in what I was doing. I was afraid of the people I worked with. None of the methods or theories I had learned in school seemed to offer me many satisfying answers. At that time I went to New York to work with Ackerman. I watched him work. What I learned from him changed my approach to myself in working with families. He was not afraid to be himself, to take risks, to share his feelings and personal experiences in the therapeutic process. I learned from him that it is all right to be yourself while helping families grow. In fact, being yourself may be essential to effective family growth. Ackerman's writings, particularly his formal theories of family therapy seem to me pale reflections of the man.

I also owe a personal debt to Virginia Satir. She, too,

helped me to become myself. Until I was able to do this, I do not feel I was an effective counsellor, by my own standards, although professionally I was considered "successful." A few years ago, I took part in several workshops run by Satir. During these sessions I personally experienced the growth process. For the first time I felt the process and, therefore, in some measure, knew what growth was like. I had read, studied, observed, and been supervised by people who had different definitions of and methods to achieve that mysterious something called growth. It was not, however, until I, myself, began to grow, to accept and express my own feelings and thoughts, to begin to like myself, to take responsibility for myself, to accept my abilities and limitations, that I am now able to help other people enter the process of growth and change. I have also found many of Satir's concepts valuable to me in working with people, such as: family rules, communication, and helping people bring their feelings into awareness.

It is difficult to accurately pinpoint what I have incorporated from existentialism and phenomenology into my theory. In fact, most existentialists would be annoyed if they thought that I had taken their ideas and turned them into techniques. However, I do believe that existentialism is relevant to human growth. "Being" and "becoming" are always with us and ahead of us. As I try to help a family to "become," I recognize that I, myself, am in motion at the same time, and that my perception of them is always limited. I work with families in their "existence" and meet them with my own "existence." My only

entrance to their world is through myself and my body. I use both as freely as I can in my work. Most importantly, I agree with Sartre (1956) and May (1958) that man always has choices and the freedom to act, no matter how limited his options appear or actually are. Learning, growing, understanding, are only lifeless concepts until they are translated into action. I try to help the people I work with to recognize their "existential choices," to act, to take risks, to do what feels good and right to them. I believe that values or rules only have validity if the person discovers them for himself, and not because he should. I ask no one to accept my rules, or to act as I might act in any situation. I ask them only to try to define and act upon their choices for themselves.

Phenomenology has lent me several concepts. As I continually try to eliminate discrepancies between my inner self and outer world, I try to help people realize and accept that there are many "realities," and that the way they make sense of the world and themselves is valid. I try to share my own inner space with others as fully as I can, and am grateful when they invite me to share theirs. I accept people as they are. I ask them to accept me as I am. If I can openly and honestly establish this mutual acceptance, then I feel I have created a non-threatening atmosphere of mutual trust where feelings, emotions, secrets, "skeletons," (unmentionable family secrets) and "old tapes," (memories of imagined or real hurts and fears) which are largely determining behavior in the present, can be brought out into the open and discussed together.

One of my frustrations with the field of family therapy stemmed from its focus on illness, symptom, diagnosis, and therapy. Until I sorted out what suited me and what I felt uncomfortable with in the field, I accepted the pronouncements of all authorities in the field. I worked like someone wearing someone else's shoes--they may have pinched my toes, rubbed my heels, or fallen off my feet, but I was extremely uncomfortable wearing them. Maslow, however, helped me find a pair of shoes that fit me better. I agreed with him that the tendency for health, growth, and self-actualization is never lost--no matter how traumatic a life a person has had. My aim in family growth is to work on strength, on health, on loosening the ropes that have hobbled people's natural drive to be themselves. I have extended Maslow's (1970) theory of individual self-actualization to the family as a whole.

I owe Rogers thanks for the concepts of unconditional positive regard and for his understanding of the "self." I often use his theory of congruence--the balance between the image a person has of himself and that projected onto him by others, the harmony between thoughts and feelings, body and mind, and inner and outer worlds. More importantly, however, I agree with him that a person knows himself better than anyone else. Any hypothesis I may form about a person can only be validated by that person himself, and not by any textbooks or research data. It is not easy to lay aside preconceptions; it is not easy to approach a growth session openly without expectations and fantasies about what should, could, or might happen.

I must work hard to enter someone else's phenomenological field, leaving my own on the doorstep. However, I have found that it is only when I can do so with "disciplined naivete" that I can help a person validate his own experience, his own hypotheses, and learn to know him as fully as I can.

Perls has assisted me in developing techniques to help people grow. His ways of working with people's awareness in the here and now have been extremely useful to me. I agree with him that everything is grounded in awareness and that people can be helped to accept and find joy in the here and now, feeding on the past, looking to the future, but essentially living in the present. Perls' emphasis on listening less to what people say, and more to how their voice sounds and their body acts, has been very helpful to me in my practice. I think that words are often the source of more confusion than clarification. Most people are unaware of how they look when they talk. They do not realize that their feelings are always being expressed through the tone of their voice, the look in their eye, the headaches and backaches they carry around with them. One of my principal aims in family growth is to elicit congruence between the verbal messages and non-verbal ones.

Guiding Principles for Family Growth Theory

Although I have incorporated a lot from other people's theories, I have synthesized it and organized it in my own special way. A theory, for me, is only a starting point; too often it can turn into a self-propelling, inflexible dogma. I think,

therefore, that it is appropriate at this point to explain how I view any theory and the guiding principles of my own.

There is a tendency in Western Society to presume that in order to understand any complex system, the component parts must be broken out and subjected to independent analysis. The composition and function of each part must be understood first, before an attempt can be made to understand the working of the system as a whole. The rationale behind this approach seems to be that if one piece is not working properly it can be removed from the total system, cleaned, repaired, or rebuilt, and then plugged back in so that the system will function smoothly once more.

Many theories in social science often tend to follow this approach. They try to provide an explanation for observable phenomena, make predictions, and define and analyze the components comprising the theory. They attempt to organize the relationships between various components of behavior in a logical and testable fashion. They become preoccupied with analyzing the components, the pieces of the theory come into the foreground, while the theory as a whole tends to be overlooked.

In my opinion, this approach may have some validity in the mechanical sciences, but I don't think that dissecting and measuring aspects of a human being will necessarily lead to a better understanding of him.

For me, any theory is tentative. No matter how great the store of knowledge behind the theory, new knowledge and new experiences can always serve to clarify and revise original

concepts or estimates. No theory should be a final, immovable, static set of rules. Following this perception, my Family Growth Theory is more a series of observations, a frame of reference, rather than a systematic effort to understand the various factors and their interrelationship which comprise an individual, a family, or the growth process itself.

For me, every concept in my theory overlaps with each other. When, for example, I am discussing the self, everything which I say about this aspect of the individual is applicable to the family or to growth. The following, therefore, are some of the broad guidelines which organize my theory.

For me, the organism always behaves as a unified whole and not as a series of different parts. The mind and the body are not separate components. If, for example, I try to describe an individual's behavior in terms of such factors as motivation, learning, sensation, or perception, I may very easily relate only to that aspect of his actions and overlook his behavior as a whole and what it is telling me.

I believe that every human being has an innate drive towards harmony between every part of him--physical, emotional, and rational. It is not enough to discover which string on his instrument has been broken and replace it with a new one. It is more important to try to find out how the instrument has been compensating for that broken string and how its absence affects the music which he plays. As Laing (1965) has pointed out, the thoughts and behavior of a "psychotic" make sense to him.

The human being does not come off a precision tooled

assembly line. There are no spare parts. Every organism is unique. Even if it were possible to isolate each part and accurately label its composition and function, the relationship between each component is unique. An engine does not choose how it works. A human being can choose, and the way he translates his options into action determines his uniqueness.

The human being, moreover, does not need an outside organizer to organize him, nor does he need to hire a driver to help operate his system. The human organism's self-propelling energy and organization is built into the system from the beginning. A drive for growth, unity, and harmony, (or self-actualization) is the energy perpetually driving the organism. This energy may dim, diffuse, or weaken, but it can always find new channels for expression. Even if life circumstances bank or dampen this energy, it is never extinguished. If circumstances change, or if the individual begins to act upon his choices, the flame receives new oxygen and flares up into brilliance again.

Furthermore, the human being is an open system. In order to grow and develop it needs to interact with its environment--drawing nourishment from its surroundings and returning nourishment to them. Just as the human being seeks to achieve harmony within himself, so he seeks to achieve harmony with the world around him. The human being has the ability to shape the environment to suit his own unique needs. I agree with Gestalt psychology that in any perception of man, the person represents the foreground, and his experience the background against which

he is seen.

Although the environment is extremely important in the shaping and growth of the inner self, it cannot force the individual to act in a way that is foreign to his nature. Even if the environment is oppressive and crippling to growth, the individual still continues to function, even though he may be uncomfortable or unintegrated. Even under the most difficult circumstances, the human being chooses how he will interact with, and react to, his environment. His way of functioning will be, in large measure, determined by the nature of his inner needs which only he can know. Anyone else's knowledge about the human organism is dependent on the person's description of what is happening inside himself. This description will inevitably lose some validity in transmission. The message will further be distorted by the decoder.

There is no easy formula for understanding human beings. The very word "understanding" carries different meanings for different people. For me, empathy and sympathy are vital in understanding another human being, prediction is less important. When people's behavior remains relatively static, predictions may be useful. If, however, they begin to grow and develop, predictions start to have less meaning.

The form human behavior takes is largely learned. Any behavior which has been learned can be un-learned, or adapted to new experiences and perceptions. The organization of the self and its relationship with its environment is ever changing. New Methods are learned, and old ways discarded or altered.

The wholeness of human beings, their inner drive towards harmony, their uniqueness and capacity for adaptation and change, their ability to interact with and shape their world in accordance with their needs, their freedom to choose and their capacity for learning are, then, the general guidelines around which my theory is organized.

Since the family growth theory is one method of working with families, and as any family is composed of individuals, I will next discuss how I view the self and individuality. Some broad appreciation of the general elements each individual's inner space shares with another's is needed as a first step in understanding the process of growth.

Self and Individuality

The self cannot be understood unless it is seen as an organismic whole. To examine a piece of the self distorts and confuses any comprehension of its wholeness. There is an image I like to use to describe the difficulties involved in analyzing the self. The self is a kaleidoscope in the hands of a child. He is describing what he sees to his father. The father wants to analyze the description and break it down into colors, shapes, and patterns. The father may even have taken the toy apart before giving it to his son, and carefully measured, counted, and weighed all the bits of colored glass concealed within the toy. As the boy looks through the lens, he sees a beautiful geometric picture which he begins to describe, but as he turns the toy, the pieces tumble, fall, and rearrange themselves into

new patterns and pictures. It is useless for the father to ask him to count the colors and their relationships, to describe the angles and the shapes, as they are always moving and changing. Even if the father took the toy apart, he would destroy the picture before he could see it. The self only emerges in action and can only be understood after it emerges.

While it is impossible, therefore, to analyze with precision its composition, the self does have certain characteristics which can be identified and which are important to growth. These characteristics, however, are an inseparable part of the total kaleidoscope image.

The self is a unity-in-action. Its wholeness and uniqueness are apparent in every thing the self undertakes. It is not simply a physical object with measurable boundaries. It is always growing, changing, and evolving to meet new experiences and find new solutions. It can never be simply a description. It is the core of the human being and underlies all his activities. The self can never be completely understood, because it is known--when known at all--only to the individual himself.

Unity-in-action is an essential characteristic of the self. Knowledge, perception, learning, feeling, and all the other factors which compose the self are only evident during action and by means of action. This self-unity and self-action are so intimately associated that they always appear together, and disappear together, increase and decrease together, and are so inseparable that they are two sides of a single coin.

The self as a unity-in-action can be compared to a highly

trained athlete. Athletic skills are examples of physical "self-in-actions." Body movements are coordinated--running, pole-vaulting, wrestling become naturally synchronized efforts. The athlete must also continue to perfect his skills, to keep in shape, and to adjust to the demands of the match. The activity of the self is similar to an athlete's, but it is much more complex. Intellectual, psychological, as well as physical skills must work in harmony if the self is to develop its talents. Its range of activity and ability is much broader. Usually an athlete is skilled at only one, or maybe a few sports. The scope of competency for the self is practically unlimited.

The athlete's brain can formulate motion, but if the body is not fully coordinated the player may stumble or miss his shot. Similarly, the brain can become aware of a need, but to satisfy it, emotional and physical cooperation is necessary. The body is the instrument upon which all the self's skills are played.

More than this, however, the body is a continuing "action-unity" even in repose. It is always functioning and articulating. A man stretched out on a sofa is still an "action-unity," if he is reading a book, listening to music, or sleeping. Asleep, a person still breathes, his organs still function, and he dreams.

The self, however, is not just a physical object. Like the body, it is a continuing, functioning process entity. Like the athlete perfects his skills, the self is always seeking to grow, improve, learn new ways to do whatever it is doing better.

To cope with the environment, the self creates individual "action-unities," comparable to athletic skills. To perceive a problem, certain elements in the environment must be isolated, and then regrouped to form a new unity. Sometimes we do not see a problem even though it is sitting on the end of our nose. We have not done enough active selection or sorting out of the stimuli to make any sense out of them.

The self can grow and change when it recognizes that each problem, situation, or experience encountered in life is unique and presents different information and alternative ways for coping with it or enjoying it. Before it can act to solve a problem, satisfy a need, or explore a new experience, the self must process the new information and seek new answers for harmony and integration. Each situation may appear similar to others. It may have many common elements. However, every human experience represents a recombination of elements and information. To recover from a crisis, for example, the shattered pieces of the self-structure must be puzzled together in new ways to form a new functioning entity.

I have often noticed, however, that when people are under stress, the self has a difficult time processing new information. They may be relating only to the pressing immediacy of the situation. Trying to find answers, they may use old methods which may have served at other times, but which, when used in the present situation, only serve to confuse it or compound its intensity.

When the various aspects of the self are functioning

harmoniously, goals can be selected, decisions made, errors corrected, relationships established, and disrupted plans re-made. When, however, the self is not functioning harmoniously, there is a tendency for it to tune in only to the cacophony, and shut itself off from exploring options. Under stress, the self is less spontaneous, more passive, and controlled. Free from threat, or functioning smoothly enough to cope with threats, the self is more alive and more open to growth.

The self is not a definition or description, but rather the central being of man. The self is not definable only in words. Language tends to categorize and fragment the self into communicable elements. The self can only be experienced, and the meaning of that experience can only be partially communicated to others. When the self is understood only through words, the full experience of self is lost. Partial understanding of the self-of-others is possible through total acceptance of them and empathy with their experiences. In spite of many recent advances in psychometrics, one of the ways to understand a person, rather than index or correlate him, is to enter his inner self, his own phenomenological field, (Rogers, 1961). No one can ever know another fully, but if you can suspend your preconceptions and your hypotheses and listen to his experiences empathetically, partial knowledge can be gained. This is, of course, not always easy; it is, however, an effort I try to make.

However the self is defined, described, or understood, it is, above all, unique. A continuing, evolving, general

self-unity underlies and supports all individual actions. The self, its attitudes, orientations, skills, integrity, and coherence persist in the face of changing circumstances. The self puts its own signature on all its accomplishments and creates its own style of living.

Although there are many factors which can foster or inhibit the expression of the self, even when curtailed or evolving, the self is always unique. Its very uniqueness insures our individuality. We cannot help being unique individuals whether we like it or not. Each child brings different qualities and energies into the world. Temperament, activity level, and excitability are technical terms for the individuality a child brings with himself.

Each child also enters a distinctive environment. Children in the same family, with the same parents, do not share identical environments. One child may be either a symbol of joy or a burden to his parents. Parents are individuals, too. In fact, during different times in their lives each parent may act very differently towards his children. The individuality of the child is partly innate, and partly shaped and nourished by the interaction of the child with his world.

I can name "factors" that are related to individuality: genetics, prenatal nutrition, ease of delivery, number of siblings, physical illness, and so on, but the list is very long and dry. I prefer to talk on another level about some of the questions which all of us struggle to answer in the process of growing. The answers we find shape our individuality.

What kind of person am I? Who are the people around me? How do I relate to them? How do they relate to me? What can I learn from them? What kind of place is the world where I live? What can I give to people and the world? This questioning involves every one of us from the earliest days of childhood until the end of life. The answers we get will determine how we value ourselves and the level of our self-esteem, (See Satir, pp. 20-29, 1972).

Self-esteem is a critical factor in individuality. Integrity, honesty, responsibility, compassion, and love all flow from someone whose self-esteem is high. He is able to appreciate his own work and respect the work of others. He radiates love, trust, and hope. He sees the world around him in full color. In contrast, a person whose self-esteem is low, may hide behind walls of distrust, slowly slipping into loneliness and isolation. If he distrusts himself, and disloves himself, he may mistrust or have difficulty loving others. His perceptions may be dulled to shades of gray, he may find it hard to see, hear or think clearly; he may have a hard time seeing and appreciating himself and others.

It is so natural and inevitable that we are individuals that I sometimes wonder why people feel reluctant or embarrassed to acknowledge it. Too often people only recognize themselves in terms of the labels others have assigned them: mother, father, sister, wife. The appreciation of our differences is at least as important as the appreciation of our commonality. Differences, if allowed to develop and flourish,

bring imagination and creativity to all fields of human endeavor: science, art, music, or philosophy. If differences are avoided, stifled, or stamped out, conformity, boredom, and sameness result. I believe that when respect for differences and appreciation for commonality go hand in hand, creative progress in human affairs will result.

I assume that the individual knows himself better, more fully, and more richly than anyone else. He is the only one that can develop his own potentiality. His perception of his feelings, attitudes, and ideas is true and valid in a way that no outside observation can ever be. Objects, ideas, and situations have no meaning in and of themselves. It is the individual who discovers and experiences them who endows them with meaning and reality, (Sartre, 1965). This reality is a reflection of the individual's own personal frame of reference. Everybody is logical within the context of his own experience even though his behavior may be misunderstood or labeled "crazy" by others.

An individual learns and integrates only those things which he feels will lead to self-fulfillment and growth. No one can force an individual to learn. Any kind of knowledge that is inconsistent with the self and its unique needs is like an organ transplant. It will be rejected by the self, like the body rejects the alien tissue, as soon as the threat--or the potent medication--is removed.

Each individual needs many different kinds of food in order to grow. Proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals

are necessary for physical growth. The affects of their absence, excess, or balance can be scientifically measured. Emotional nourishment is more difficult to define. Over-indulgence of guilt or starvation of love is less easily analyzed. Physical growth can be measured in feet and inches. Emotional metabolism and growth, however, is less easily charted.

Human Growth

Since Family Growth is the central focus of this study, it might be useful to ask, What is Psychological Growth? How is it measured? There are no simple or final answers to these questions, but my experience has given me so many examples of changes in people and families that I can offer a tentative description. I think that often the quality and magnitude of growth are better observed and felt than verbally defined. I anticipate that the following may not completely or adequately express my understanding of growth. Growth is difficult to talk about, let alone measure. Often the things one sees, feels, and thinks most clearly come out crooked or incomplete when put into words.

Although I cannot draw a graph to measure human growth, I can try to draw a map which indicates some of the paths to growth and some of the roadblocks in its way. There are many factors contributing to growth: learning, touching, loving, feeling, need-fulfillment, and uniqueness. Most importantly, perhaps, before anyone begins to follow my map, they must

realize that the roads are endless, and that they must take responsibility for the paths they choose to take.

No one can make another grow. People can help foster or inhibit growth, but unless the individual chooses his own way, recognizes his choices, and accepts full responsibility for them, his growth will be limited. If a person follows another's path, he will get lost. If he attempts to imitate another, his own image will not be projected.

Growth takes place when the self is involved in action. Growth is, in large measure, the fulfillment of needs. Growth is limited or halted if needs are put aside, or if they are always met in the same way at the same time. Feelings, both pleasant and painful, are expressions of ever-emerging needs. If we cannot get in touch with our feelings, we will not be able to get in touch with our needs.

In general, I equate growth as a whole with Maslow's self-actualizing tendency. Like so many other aspects of the theory presented here, growth and self-actualization are sometimes interchangeable terms and sometimes separate entities. Growth is the process of fulfilling needs in different satisfying ways. As needs are fulfilled, the person can move up Maslow's hierarchy of needs towards a richer and more satisfying existence. In order to achieve full and complete authenticity there must always be growth. However, just as the growth process is never-ending, self-actualization is never finally attained. As each need is met, yet another emerges. As an individual moves from one emotional level to the next,

there is still further to go.

According to Maslow, (1970) the basic needs for food, water, and shelter when fulfilled only maintain the organism. They do not enhance the quality of life. Psychological needs are very important for human growth. Everyone has basic emotional needs for love, acceptance, support and belonging--to name only a few. These needs are basic to our emotional survival. How they are met is basic to our emotional growth.

All of us go about getting our emotional needs met in our own clumsy way--often in a way that no one else understands. Some people may demand need-fulfillment, others may beg for it. Still others may pretend that they don't need anything, or give the false and ultimately self-depriving impression that all their needs have been met. Emotional needs are not fulfilled once a day, once a year, or once for a lifetime; they are always with us. Life circumstances may affect what our needs are at any given moment. The quality, intensity and importance of the needs is always changing. At every point in life there are ever-emerging needs seeking actualization. If emotional needs remain unmet, the body will begin to compensate and express these needs in another way--through tears, tension, anxiety or depression.

In order to grow, we first of all need to know ourselves. Polonius' advice to his son is appropriate here, "This above all: to thine own self be true," (Hamlet, I, iii). Knowing oneself involves awareness of thoughts, feelings, and needs. It also requires acceptance, expression and satisfaction of

them. Knowing oneself, however, is only the first step because, "No man is an island, entire of itself," (Donne, Devotions). All of us need to live, love, and interrelate with others.

Growth can be fostered in part through honest feedback, i.e., when a person sees you and relates to you as you are, and does not project his own feelings or ideals onto you, and through unconditional positive regard from others. However, in addition to others communicating with us and touching us, we need to touch others--intellectually, empathetically, and physically. When we are not afraid to touch and be touched, we will learn to share our inner selves with others and learn to understand ourselves more fully. The more we know of ourselves, the more we have to share with others. Sharing with others further increases self-understanding and self-esteem. The more we love, the more we are loved.

Growth also involves learning. Although emotional needs are intrinsic to the organism, an ability to recognize them can be learned. How we express our needs, to whom, and when, is largely learned. Circumstances may cause one person to suppress his needs from awareness; another may be aware of his needs but not know how to meet them. Learning to meet emotional needs is not like learning the multiplication table. The factors are always changing and so are the answers. The equation which suits one moment may not suit another. I believe that too few people realize that any formula for life which has been learned, can be unlearned, and new solutions

found.

Growth also involves the recognition that every individual is unique. Each individual, his experiences, and his needs, although similar to another's, are never exactly like anyone else's. Until people realize this, they may go through life memorizing formulas and copying someone else's answer sheet. To grow, a person must regard himself as unique and valuable in his own way.

Love is one of the most important ingredients in growth. When I speak about love, I am using the word in its broadest sense: loving ourselves, loving others, loving the world around us, self-love--the ability to love our virtues and limitations, aesthetic, spiritual, and love of nature.

People spend most of their lives tiptoeing around love, afraid to touch it or be touched by it. Tiptoeing around love, and not being able to experience it, makes us hungrier, and once we find a "love object" we often fall in love from emotional starvation. People who fall in love, however, may tend to lose their identity by asking the loved one to assume all responsibility for them, to make their decisions, to tell them what they should feel, and how they should act. When a person falls in love, often his self dissolves. By falling in love and committing himself to one person, an individual thinks that he has answered his need for love forever. But there is no forever in any relationship because the future is unknown, and death will claim one partner before the other. Our need for love is always with us, seeking new forms of expression. Unless

this need is recognized, expressed, and fulfilled, growth will be limited or distorted by focusing need fulfillment in too narrow a channel.

Because no one person or aspect of love can meet all the needs a person has for love, life is often filled with pain--the pain of unrequited love. It is hard for us to appreciate that love comes to us piece by piece from people, nature, art, music, work, and play. To love is to find joy and love all around us, to find excitement and exhilaration in what we do.

Although we need to receive feelings of love, affection and acceptance, more importantly we need to learn how to return these same feelings to others. Expressing love, as well as receiving it, is essential for growth. Many people are under the false impression that self-esteem and self-love increases in proportion to the amount they receive from others. I believe, that unless we open ourselves up and give and share ourselves, the opening for receiving love remains so narrow that whatever love we get can only sustain us and not enrich us. Fromm summarizes well the importance of love when he writes, "Love is the foremost component of spontaneity; not love as the dissolution of the self in another person, but love as a spontaneous affirmation of others, as the union of the individual with others on the basis of the preservation of the individual himself," (in Maslow, 1970, p. 195).

To grow, then, involves learning, loving, touching, and being touched, and this, in turn, leads to increased self-worth and self-esteem. Growth, however, cannot be understood before

it happens. Growth takes place when the self is involved in action, and not before. To understand growth, it must be seen first and analyzed second. To more fully comprehend its essence, it must be felt before it is described.

In order for growth to be maximized certain conditions are necessary. If they are not present in childhood, then very often they may be experienced in a growth session or other life experiences. Growth sessions offer an opportunity for the individual to feel free to affirm, reject, express, and experience his own uniqueness and the uniqueness of his relationships to others. If he feels that he is fully accepted as he is, and not as someone else thinks he ought to be, he can begin to exercise his choices in order to be himself. If through support, trust, and love, he can begin to grasp the exhilaration of the here and now, he can begin to feel what it is like to be alive. To be alive is to experience feelings as they emerge. The expression of feelings provides the energy for growth and development.

My map for guiding human growth may seem easy to follow. There are, however, many internal and external forces working to inhibit growth. The curriculum for life is often incomplete. People are often taught how to "feel," and it takes a rare combination of circumstances, inner strength, or outside luck to enable an individual to teach himself about himself and to like himself. Too often people measure their needs against another's map. Envy, guilt, shame, failure, are real roadblocks to growth and development, and they are often built

into the socialization process.

Too few people learn to accept themselves, to trust their thoughts and feelings to guide them on the journey of life. Too few people trust themselves, or have enough confidence in their experience and intuition to use them as a basis for social interaction, or use them as the compass on the path they want to follow.

In Western civilization individual autonomy is often suspect and mistrusted; often it is labeled resistant or "deviant" behavior. Many people believe that an individual must be conditioned, taught to memorize acceptable rules, socialized, and categorized so that he behaves like everyone else. Most parents, for example, seem satisfied when their child is like others; they become distressed if he appears "different."

Our society does not encourage people to learn about themselves. Our schools teach about things, facts, and figures. Society thereby reinforces "thing" learning and neglects "self" learning. Few of the people entrusted with learning--parents, educators, institutions--seem to believe that if man is allowed to explore his interests, needs, and "internal" frame of reference by himself that he will become a "beautiful" human being. They are afraid that if inner selves are free to develop, the individual may misuse this freedom and develop destructive, selfish, and anti-social behavior.

Many settings and situations, therefore, determine how, what, and how much a person can show of his feelings. Different learning patterns will determine different people's

ability or inability, ease or difficulty, in expressing emotion. Growth and self-actualization can usually occur only in a setting where the individual can feel and experience his own inner world as it relates to his environment. In an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, the individual is able to freely explore his capacities and discover meaning in life for himself. When a person does not have this freedom to explore and accept himself and his experiences, most of his energy will be used to protect himself from life and others. Defending a false self-image, or protecting himself from feelings, the individual will have little energy to grow.

Most of us are taught to rely on others to tell us who we are, what our needs are, how we feel, and when, where, and how we can express our feelings and our needs. Any feeling is a need-seeking actualization. Unless we are aware of our feelings, we will not be aware of our needs. Even so basic a need as hunger expresses itself through a recognizable and identifiable sensation. We are taught to recognize hunger pangs and allowed to eat. When it comes to our emotional needs, however, confusion begins. It is easy to accept hunger, thirst, and cold, and find ways to alleviate them. It is far harder to recognize loneliness, anger, gaiety, or joy, and learn how to satisfy them.

Very often a person will experience his feelings, but his environment will forbid him to express them, except in certain "legitimate" ways. A person denied expression may begin to feel doubtful and inadequate. Incongruity will begin

to develop between his inner feelings which he believes worthy, but which the world around him has labeled "unworthy," (Rogers, 1951).

Feelings are often bottled up and locked away in secret wine cellars. Energy is spent protecting the bottles, keeping ourselves and others from opening them. Many of us decide that the corks can only be breached in very special moments, and only with very special people. Energy is expended searching for these moments and these people. When they finally appear, the feelings have often gone flat, and the ability to express them evaporated.

For most people, too, positive feelings are much more difficult and dangerous to express than negative ones. If they have low self-esteem, a compliment means giving away more than they can afford. If I say, "I love you," I am vulnerable and open to rejection. If, however, I say, "I hate you," I am liable to be attacked. I can use my fists against attack, but I may not have the self-love to protect against rejection.

Feelings are "checked" out against the rules for appropriateness. Many are suppressed or controlled and not expressed directly. Intellectual values are so dominant in our society that people try to analyze and understand their feelings rather than allow them to emerge, experience them, and express them. By placing each emotion under the microscope of rationalization and explanation, they create further and further distance between their thoughts and their feelings, between their needs and their body.

Most people, after peering through their microscope long enough, start to think what they feel instead of feeling it. They seem to have borrowed Descartes' dictum, "Je Pense, Donc Je suis" (I think therefore I am) and carried it into their emotional lives. I have often worked with people who tell me, "I am very happy. I have a wonderful husband, a fine life." Their unshed tears, wrinkled forehead, or clenched fists express a different set of feelings to me. If I am able to help the person become aware of this discrepancy between what he thinks and what he feels, he may be able to tell me, "I am miserable. I don't like my husband; I hate my life; I thought I ought to be happy and, therefore, I presumed I was happy."

Too often, too, feelings are allowed to be expressed only in remembering the past, or dreaming about the future. Very few of us can permit ourselves to feel in the here and now. In order to grow, a person must have a sense of actuality, an ability to appreciate every event happening to him when it happens.

Few people, however, have this ability. Some people hang onto whatever they have, regardless of the price they pay by not living fully. They have great difficulty, or are unable to grasp that the present is fluid and ever-changing. This "ever-changing something," however elusive, insubstantial, irrational, or "crazy," is the only existing reality. These people want to freeze the present, make it permanent, store it away in the deepfreeze, to be warmed over later as the same joyous or painful experience. They become confused when the reality of one

moment is no longer reality in the very next second. If a person can accept the reality of the here and now as his, his creativity is free. He can reveal his intrinsic nature and this freedom enables him to move higher and higher on the ladder of self-expression, self-discovery, and self-actualization.

It may take a long time to work with a person before his innate capacities for growth are freed from suppressions and distortions. Old habits die hard and are never really entirely extinguished; they have a way of popping up when least expected if similar circumstances which created them and perpetuated them arise. However, I feel that by looking at children, many of the answers of what growth is, and how it may be stunted, can be found.

Children are by nature sensitive, playful, eager to explore and express themselves freely without self-censorship. When they fall, they cry. When they are joyous, they laugh. When they are frustrated, they scream. There is harmony and congruence between their thoughts and feelings. Slowly, but surely, however, their natural spontaneity gets more and more controlled, organized and taken away from them.

Children are taught to become less and less aware about their senses and their feelings in the course of what is referred to as their "socialization." They stop touching themselves and others; others stop touching them. They are forbidden to express what they feel, or why they feel it. They are taught to keep their hands to themselves. To enforce this order, they are isolated in playpens, in fenced-in yards, in

special chairs in school. They are taught to stay away from others, especially from people who are "different." Keep your distance! Shake hands only if you have to, then do it quickly! Avoid contact with other human beings! They are taught what feelings are appropriate. They learn what feelings may be expressed, when, and to whom. Their immediate and natural awareness of what they feel may gradually be replaced by rules. Their instinctive ability to express their feelings may be replaced by increased intellectualization.

Behavior that has been taught can be distinguished from spontaneous body movement that is more integrated with and more representative of the inner self. Spontaneity guarantees the honest expression of the nature and style of the freely functioning organism and of its uniqueness, (Maslow, 1954).

The family is the earliest "teacher" of a child. It can tutor spontaneity or inculcate rigidity. It can nurture independence or insist on conformity. Since the individual's growth is so dependent upon his family, it is important at this juncture to examine the family system.

What is the Family?

The family is a complex structure of individuals and relationships within a particular social context. In order to understand and help any family, it is necessary to examine the family as a human system. The way someone works with any given family, or relates to his own, is profoundly influenced by the way he views the institution of the family.

Most family therapy theories, in trying to understand the dynamics of the family, developed terms such as: "roles," "socialization," "family structure," and "family function." These concepts were important tools in analyzing families. However, as our society has moved into a period of rapid change, these terms have lost much of their value. These concepts were more useful when the family was, in general, a more uniform, recognizable unit.

The family structure today has started to take different forms and shapes in our society. People are experimenting with different ways of living together which make sense to them. More people are living in "open marriages," more children are being raised by one parent or step-parents, homosexual marriages are more frequent, communal families are increasing. These different combinations often produced a struggle for family members trying to explain their system to themselves and others. People need each other, and gravitate towards some semi-formalized unit. We can see that the family has changed and is changing. The family growth theory will offer some guidelines to reflect this change.

As Beisser points out:

Today . . . the problem becomes one of discerning where one stands in relationship to a shifting society. Confronted with a pluralistic, multifaceted, changing system, the individual is left to his own devices to find stability. He must do this through an approach that allows him to move dynamically and flexibly with the times while still maintaining some central gyroscope to guide him. He can no longer do this with ideologies, which become obsolete, but must do it with a change theory, whether explicit or implicit, (1971, p. 79).

In earlier days. the conditions of family living

generally favored the development of close, mutual interest and personal interaction between parents and children. The children worked around the farm, the store, or the home right along with their parents. The children did essential jobs which would have required the time and attention of adults if the children did not do them. There was, thus, no question about the contribution the children made to the economic welfare of the family.

The family worked together, learned together, and played together. This tended to foster knowledge, appreciation of, and a personal interest in children. This interest was the natural by-product of mutually shared family activities. Even unimaginative parents, with little spontaneity or attraction towards their children, were still vitally concerned with developing and maintaining interaction between generations. Their economic survival and support in their old age were dependent on their children. Close family ties, therefore, ordinarily occurred without anyone consciously trying to bring them about. Ties grew gradually, they were probably not even marked as a special event.

These general conditions of family life, however, have drastically changed. Increased urbanization, job mobility, technological specialization, have all contributed to the breakdown of the extended family and produced the nuclear family which has a difficult time functioning in a rapidly changing society. The individual, and the family, must redefine and learn new ways of relating to each other and to society

at large.

In today's family, the adults' activities, in general, are no longer the same as the children's. There tends to be only a minor amount of tangential interaction between the generations. This diminished interaction, moreover, tends to be formalized, organized, routinized, depersonalized, mechanized, and, above all, highly intellectualized. There is not enough of the close person-to-person kind of interaction that is necessary if children, or adults, for that matter, are to come into "existence" to become themselves.

For individuals in the family, self-identity and authenticity comes neither as a sudden revelation, an effortless gift, or a gradual natural growth. Rather, if it occurs at all, it is likely to come as an achievement, a slow, laborious, painful emergence accompanied by doubt, confusion, perplexity, and loneliness.

Who am I? Who are my Family? What does belonging to a family mean? These questions face every one of us today, when, perhaps, they were never raised so urgently before. People feel that they could and should be somebody, doing something, but what? and how? Some people feel that they could master the problems of living in a family if only they could learn the "right" technique. There is a feeling that in spite of all the difficulties and handicaps we face, it is still possible to achieve the "good family life." Happiness and success lie within our reach if only we knew how to go about obtaining them. There is a particularly frustrating feeling that the key to

existence is really quite simple even though it persistently eludes us. Parents and other adults often fail to help the child answer these questions or to actualize himself. Often they may actually block the emergence of the child's self-identity.

This is not because parents are worse than they used to be, but because effective parenthood and being a family no longer just happen. They require some attention. Families, in raising each other, have always done what came naturally; but this is no longer enough. Identity-fostering interaction between family members does not occur often enough in today's fragmented family life. If enough such interaction is to occur, it may have to be contrived. One cannot be an effective member of a family today without giving some specific attention to the job. It is not enough to create a family and label it one's own. For a family to be and to grow they must experience life together. Family relationships must have a special meaning, a sense of people "touching" each other through words, activities, and shared feelings.

If a family wants to achieve actualization, time and thought must be reserved for, and devoted to the family. If advance reservations are not made, time is usually found only in small, barely usable scraps. In the impersonal flow of high priority events, countless duties and concerns clamor for attention. Few parents today find it convenient to be only parents. Motherhood used to be an acceptable full-time job. However, the pressures and stimuli present in today's society make few

parents want to be just parents.

The extended family and the nuclear family, however, share one thing in common. The particular family which confronted any child in any age was a given. It was not, and could not be chosen ahead of time. Everyone still to be born, (unless the predictions of Brave New World materialize), will be like all his ancestors--taking what he gets for a family. Just as he cannot select his family, he cannot select the world around him. This issue of taking what we get, of accepting the inalterable parts of our family, is elementary but crucial. This acceptance is one of the simplest things we ever have to do, yet it can be the hardest. Failure to accept the given lies at the heart of many of the problems individuals experience in living in a family.

A child soon discovers that his family has developed as a result of prior experiences. His family has a history. His father is rich or poor. Thus, his family members have their own inner dynamism and momentum. They also came into existence, are coming into "being" by evolving from something else. Moreover, as the child himself is in motion--growing and changing--so is his family growing and evolving along with him. Most of their development will be completely beyond his comprehension. He has no more to say about their "becoming" than he had to say about the givens of his world. He must learn to accept his family's growth, and the growth of individuals within it, just as he had to accept the life topography into which he was born.

Today, children are able to catch only glimpses of what self-actualization is all about. Children have to find their

own way; sometimes they have to literally fight to be themselves, and, more importantly, fight their way into their own families. Formerly, parents raised their children. Today I believe it is important for the family to realize that in many important ways they are raising each other, and that to grow together everyone must help each other to enter and maintain the self-actualizing process.

It is usually easy for us to recognize the unchangeable when we see it in a family. My special interest, however, is to help family members toward self-actualization. I try to help them find ways to be together, touch, grow, and interact in such a way that every one can enjoy and appreciate each other. This is not an easy task, but it is a challenging one.

Individual growth ("I-growth") and family growth (We-growth") are distinct and yet interrelated. Family-actualization cannot precede self-actualization, nor can "I-growth" be accomplished without the "We." They tend to appear and disappear together. They tend to enrich or weaken each other.

"I-Growth" and "We-Growth"

Early family growth is nebulous and embryonic, blurred like a photograph taken out of focus. It gradually becomes clearer and more distinct. As the family develops and shares new experiences, its unity and integrity will change. It is through action and interaction that the family grows. The family maintains its unity by continuously perceiving, accepting, and integrating new experiences.

Family growth originates in the interaction between

members. At first the family is indistinctive. There is only the barest suggestion of awareness of others. There is usually confusion between where the "I" starts and ends, and where the "we" starts and ends, and how the two interact. Small children, however, share little of this confusion. Children are active; they initiate things; they examine and interact with the people and objects in their environment. They are instinctively curious and spontaneous. Their in-born drive for self-actualization and growth is evident in everything they do. It may gradually be curbed by parents and schools, because curiosity, openness, acceptance of things as they are, is sometimes considered "unnatural" and possibly "dangerous."

A child judges things only in terms of himself. Gradually, however, he may be taught that certain people, things, and ways of behaving are "good" or "bad", regardless of how he himself may feel about them. Most importantly, before he has had the opportunity to experience many facets of life, they have already been labeled for him and put off limits, (Rogers, 1951).

"Play" is one of the most significant activities that the self and the family undertakes. I am using "play" in the broadest sense of the word to describe behavior which is less determined by outside rules and regulations, and guided more by "inner voices." Family members that are "playing" with each other are more spontaneous and honest, they take more chances to say, do, touch, and feel each other. When parents play with a small child, for example, they may indulge in nonsense,

using their bodies and voices in ways which they may not use at other times. "Play" involves the whole self, there is congruence between thought and feeling, between mind and body.

"Play" is uniquely valuable because it can be so completely undirected, exploratory, and random. When unstructured and undirected by others, it has unity and harmony. Without even thinking about it, one's mind and body are cooperating in an "I" or "We" unity-in-action-experience.

Early play is hardly supervised at all by awareness. It is almost entirely free of inhibition or preconceptions, so it is an ideal means of "we-exploration." Sometimes, however, early play may become bothersome to siblings or adults. It is the time when children get into things, do damage, and cause trouble. It is often the time when they are pushed into playpens, strapped into harnesses and car seats. It may be the time when "I" or "We"-exploration and interaction is permitted only at certain times, under certain conditions, and only with certain people or objects. The process of "We-discovery" and "We-integration," instead of being nurtured, is slowed down, just when it is most effective.

Early play is important because it provides an opportunity for the "I" to find, by trial and error, the unities that serve best, and the approaches to environmental difficulties that it can use most effectively. The "I" discards the possibilities that are unsuitable, uncomfortable, or unworkable. A child at play is perpetually forming and testing hypotheses. Exploring possibilities before unifying his experience, a child

at play is the "I"-actualizing himself. Play provides a means of discovering new expressions for individuality and authenticity. A child's success in catching a butterfly or flying a kite are proof to the "I" that the ways he explored worked. The child finds joy in his success and expresses it spontaneously. His instinctive ways of relating with others can also bring self-joy and joy to others. This happens when the "we" supports, accepts, and values the "I's" experiences.

"Play," then, offers one of the best ways for the "I" and the "We" to come into existence and awareness. It offers one of the surest ways to achieve a relationship of joy and trust so that adults can teach and communicate with children. If the "We" reaches the level of self-awareness, then people can show themselves, offer suggestions, and give and receive honest feedback. Members of the family will be able to communicate with and listen to each other. When the "I's" in a family start hearing each other and sharing experiences together, then the "We" comes into existence, and starts to emerge as a caring human system.

Play can be integral to any activity. Spontaneity and joy can help take the "work stigma" out of many routine family experiences. Play can help bring a family into actualization because the process is more attuned to the special needs of the people involved in play. For example, after many painful falls, after trying various fruitless ways of getting started, a boy suddenly finds himself rolling along--if wobbling, at first--on his bicycle or skates. At the very moment he realizes he

has learned to do it, he finds himself already doing it. Similarly, at the moment a family learns to handle life, they find themselves already handling it effectively. A child discovers himself at the same moment he discovers the "We," the "We" discovers itself at the moment they accept the "I's" uniqueness and self-actualization.

At first the process of family-growth and family-actualization does not take a particularly prescribed course. It veers and tacks with the winds of circumstances and time. Eventually, however, definite and particular ways for coping with the world are developed. These ways may be often difficult to change until they are brought into awareness and re-examined for their validity at the present time in the family's life. The family may commit itself to very varied types of behavior and draw up many different rules--often before they know what they are doing. From the very beginning, the family is putting together a framework of its own structure.

If the self-activity or play of children is encouraged and enjoyed and shared, a steady increase in the integration of the "I" into the "We" will develop. Play, whatever else it does or fails to do, creates an atmosphere for open and spontaneous relationships between family members. If family members can play with each other and honestly and spontaneously express their feelings, there is movement in the family, and movement may result in change and growth.

Sometimes, however, adults who were not allowed or encouraged to play freely when they were children have forgotten how

to do it. They may feel embarrassed by spontaneity, they may feel uncomfortable in freely using their bodies, they may chastise themselves or others for being tempted by "childish" things. They may feel that to be an adult is to always try to be serious, concerned, shapers of play into constructive utilitarian "work." They may also feel that children are too young to experience or share "grown-up" feelings. If they believe that play belongs only to children, they may slowly, but surely, create a generation gap which may prevent family growth from taking place.

Although family growth may be slowed, it cannot be entirely stopped. Sooner or later, gradually or suddenly, one of the family members will start up the process again. Many seemingly unimportant or trivial events can serve as the catalyst for reactivating the growth process. Joy and spontaneity, sorrow or isolation, can be infectious. If the family's immunity is not incomplete, any shared experience can be the occasion of a "coming-into-awareness-experience." Although these kinds of experiences may be simple every-day events, structurally they serve to continue the process of family-actualization.

I assign a great deal of importance to a family reaching a level of "We-awareness" and "We-learning," rather than following ancestral road maps. This increased level of "We-awareness" makes new dimensions of "I-activity" and "We-activity" possible. Families who reach this level become present-oriented. They can select goals, choose problems to attack, and

make decisions. This can lead to: awareness--spontaneity--play--creativity. The family can think reflectively and become happier with themselves and with others. They can become more aware of their potential and more accepting of limitations and mistakes. The unification that is achieved through each other's help is richer and more versatile than an earlier kind built on chance or plans.

Prior to experiencing growth, a family may often feel confused, uncertain, indecisive and disintegrated. A family, however, which has entered the actualization process is very aware of the changes taking place within themselves, in others, and in the family as a whole. I-awareness and I-actualization, and We-awareness and We-actualization compliment and nurture each other. Each process is both a catalyst and a reactor at one and the same time.

One of the most important themes of this study is the relationship between the "I" and the "We." They are separate, independent systems at times, and at other times they will become interlocking and overlapping circles. If the "I" and the "We" respect their separate natures, then they can integrate when they need each other. Sometimes the "I" will lose part of his identity by joining with the "We." At other times the quality of the "We" will change because of the particularly intense needs of one of its members. However, one of the most important things for the "We" is to recognize, respect, tolerate, and appreciate the "I's" autonomy, freedom, and ability to move in and out of the family system.

A family does not own its members. Each individual in the family is first of all himself, and secondly, a member of a particular family cluster. If adults pay more attention to the surnames of the children, and little to their patronyms, the Alices and Jonathans are going to have a hard time finding the "I" and may well be swallowed up in the "We."

"To be" is also to be related to others. In order for the "I" to actualize, there needs to be continuing changing, and growing relationships between the "I" and the "We." Family members need to spend time with each other, and work and play together. In short, experience each other. Indispensable as they are, however, relationships between family members are not enough in and of themselves to bring the "I" freely into the self-actualizing process. The "I" can be intimidated by the "We" or the environment. He may reject the terms of his "existence," stop on the threshold of life and fail to enter the growth process.

Full emergence of the "I" can only take place when one first experiences whatever thin slice of freedom is available to him, (May, 1958; Sartre, 1956). The "I" appears when he sees and recognizes that the various opportunities, handicaps, and limitations he faces are in large measure manufactured by himself.

If the "I" is allowed to create new relationships between himself and others within and outside the "We," he suddenly realizes that he is devising his own way of making sense of himself, the world, and the people around him. Self-

actualization can begin when the "I" first becomes aware of his own activity-in-action and accepts the consequences of the actions he takes. When the "I" is permitted to encounter the infinite possibilities for human interaction, he learns that there are many different ways to express one's needs and to fulfill them.

If the "I" is allowed to preserve his autonomy and feel that he can be a prime mover in the search for greater possibilities beneath and outside the "We," then the "We" will grow and prosper. As the "I" actualizes himself, the quality and richness of the experiences he shares with the "We" will increase.

An actualizing family, for me, is a "We" that allows the "I" to be who he is, to develop at his own pace and through private and shared experiences. The "We" does not order the "I" to join them, it places no restrictions on the quantity or quality of time or activities shared together.

My principle goal in "We-growth" is to encourage both "I"-actualization and "We"-actualization. The "I" cannot actualize when he is alone, as even a holy man alone in the desert communicates with his god. People who have entered the growth process need support, encouragement, and feedback from others who are themselves growing. A person who is growing radiates confidence, love, and gaiety. If only one person in a relationship or a family is self-actualizing and "healthy," others whose growth has been temporarily blocked or twisted will begin to try to feed on the "healthy" one, slowly reducing his spontaneity and joy.

If an individual is living in a family which is not fostering his growth, and if he is not allowed to relate to others, he may not be able to realize his potentialities. The "We" represents the closest, most intimate, and most obvious source of support and encouragement for the "I". I believe that one of the most important functions of the "We" is to help the "I" achieve, maintain, and appreciate his own authentic sense of identity.

It is also important that both the "I" and the "We" realize that no two people can ever grow at the same rate. Sometimes the "I" may fall behind the "We," sometimes he may move ahead of them. No two people, not even the proverbial angels on the head of the pin can stand at the same point at the same time. A failure to appreciate this can often lead to distress, confusion, and alienation between family members.

I also feel that it is important for the "We" to recognize that although relating with and to others is critical for the "I" to come into "existence," once the growth process has begun, it can continue through interrelating with others outside the "We," with enjoying one's self, and through interaction with, and appreciation of, the world around us.

Conclusion

This section has analyzed certain philosophical and psychological aspects of the theory underlying Family Growth that included: the self, human growth, the family, and the interrelation between "I" growth and "We" growth. This next section will attempt to describe certain methods and techniques which serve to elicit the "coming into being" of the "I" and the "We."

SECTION II: THE APPLICATION OF THE FAMILY GROWTH THEORY

Introduction

I believe that people grow, develop, and flourish in an open system of communications and relationships. I also think that any individual or family is only partially understood by an outside observer. One of my principal interests and aims in writing this study is to try to describe, as best I can, how I work with people.

I feel that each therapist's unique self is one of his most valuable tools. I try to incorporate my own peculiar style and flavor into my practice and techniques. For example, I often joke with people and, although I do not recommend that everyone do this, my experience has shown me that by maintaining my sense of humor and using a light touch in the struggle a family is going through, I help the process continue. I also use a great deal of imagery. I find that this often helps people to see their situation in new ways.

In describing the way I work with people, I would like to express my discomfort with words like: therapist, therapy, client, patient, symptom, and diagnosis. They mean distance, coldness, and separateness to me. I would like to develop a different vocabulary that stresses humanism, intimacy, deep respect and appreciation for individuals. Knowing that others, like Maslow, expressed their dissatisfaction with the traditional

vocabulary before me, encourages me.

Therefore, I would like to call a client--a person, therapy--the process of growth, family therapy--family growth, individual therapy--individual growth. Although to avoid confusion, I will continue to use the word therapist, I prefer the word "awakener," borrowing Perls' use of the Eastern concept of satori, (the great awakening) as the goal of growth. People's feelings, selves, and potentials have often fallen asleep, been numbed and anesthetized by life situations, or other people's shoulds and musts. I try to awaken them to themselves and to their world. If they go through life as sleep-walkers, they may never learn "to be."

I also feel that we "professionals," with our certificates and licenses, do not have an exclusive claim on the field of human growth. Psychotherapy, or human growth, is all around us. It is being done by neighbors, friends, clergymen, bartenders, and taxi drivers. Man is helping man every day. To dismiss this fact, and with it man's humanity, ability, knowledge, and charisma, is simplistic..

When you start to examine different theories or methods of encouraging human growth, you begin to realize the gulf which separates theory from every-day practice. If you are learning, teaching, or practicing, however, there is a tendency to adopt allegiance to a particular theory or school of thought. Many professionals are willing to argue that the only theory that can work is their own. "Believers" in one school, moreover, often quarrel bitterly among themselves over their

differences.

It is possible, on paper, to criticize, analyze, and offer good empirical, "objective," scientific arguments for, or against, any theoretical position, even though no theory fails or succeeds all the time. Professionals are often busy publishing proofs of their "successes." I often feel that I could also learn from reading about their mistakes.

Sometimes I see a person only once, and he reports and demonstrates improvement. This boggles my mind. I have found that growth can occur even when my contribution has been very limited. For example, one day I was very tired and counting the minutes until I could leave for home. A man came to see me who had been struggling for months with personal problems. I said and did little for the hour he was with me. When he left, however, he said, "I learned a lot today about how I make myself miserable." He came "alive" in my office and left full of new hope and energy.

Phenomena like this happen all the time and immediately raise the question: "Where is the theory to explain it?" Since I can offer no quick answer, I have concluded that human growth happens to some extent regardless of the method employed to facilitate it. Most theories neglect to emphasize the importance of the therapist's personality. They stress the techniques and theories he uses, rather than who he is.

We have spent a great deal of time in the field of individual and family growth struggling to develop a theory that works, regardless of who formulated it, or who uses it. I

think that some of the most significant contributions to theory have been highly personal rather than scientific. Freud, Ackerman, Rogers, and Perls, for example, all developed theories which suited their abilities and limitations.

When I read a theory, it tells me more about the person who wrote it, than about what he does. I learn about his personality, his life experiences, beliefs, temperament, how he incorporates and integrates himself with the world around him. I also find out how he assimilates and synthesizes all that he has learned, and how he presents this back to others.

If, for example, he believes that feelings are to be treated delicately and cautiously, he may wind up sitting behind a couch. If he believes in the bodily expression of emotional states, he is likely to adopt bioenergetics as his theory. If he believes that people are responsible for their feelings and that everything else is intellectualization or projection, he is likely to become a gestalt therapist. I think that people adopt theories which suit their position in life, and the meaning they make of themselves and the world around them.

Some of my psychoanalytic colleagues have become able to work less cautiously with feelings and face-to-face interaction. They have begun to help more people who are sitting facing them than lying down. Every one of us in the field of human growth adopts a theory and then feels compelled to defend it. Perhaps what we are defending is ourselves and our own self-worth.

My theory is not a list of do's and don'ts; it is not a finished product. In contrast, it is evolving and changing.

It is continually integrating what I see around me, and the new ways I find to be with people and understand them.

This second section will present the process and techniques of Family Growth as they have evolved from the theory behind it presented in the first section. It will describe certain methods of translating theory into practice. It will examine the following themes:

1. The goals of the family growth process.
2. Some attributes of actualizing families.
3. The process of family growth.
4. Common themes in working with families: hypothetical living, communication, rules, "I" time and "We" time.
5. Techniques used in family growth.

Goals of Family Growth

Before briefly listing some of my goals in Family Growth sessions, I would like to point out that they are a series of guidelines, rather than a checklist which I feel needs to be completed. I do not think it is helpful for a therapist or a family to enter the process with a yardstick already notched with expectations. If a family enters the growth process with clear-cut goals and dreams of the way things ought or should be, they may have an almost impossible task of finding out the way things are. If a therapist indulges in certain anticipations, or sets certain goals for the family, such as new jobs or rules, for example, he runs the risk himself of measuring growth only in terms of his own hopes and expectations. He may

have difficulty relating to the family as they are.

My main interest in working with people is to try to start the process of "I" growth and "We" growth. If I can help an individual or a family become excited about themselves, I get excited, too, for myself and for them.

While I do not draw up clear-cut goals and estimates for success or failure, the following is a guide for some of the changes which I hope family growth can effect in the lives of the people I work with.

1. I try to start the process of self-actualization for every member of the family.
2. I try to guide the family, as a whole, along the path of recognizing their choices and acting upon them, so that as a family they can begin to achieve authenticity.
3. I work with the family on their communication patterns, trying to develop clear and open communication between family members. I try to help them listen and talk to each other. I try to help them express non-verbal as well as verbal messages openly and honestly.
4. I work to help them exchange "hypothetical living" for living and accepting the here and now.
5. I help the family look at their rules and change the ones they want, so that they will be more suited to their present needs and situation.
6. I work with the family in developing "I" time and "We" time, so that the family can continue to grow.
7. I help the family explore alternative ways of freely and

- honestly relating to each other, ways which help them compliment, support, and enjoy living with each other.
8. I work to help the family become aware of the entire spectrum of human feelings--joy, rage, spontaneity, and sorrow--so that they can become aware of the need to express them.
 9. I try to help the family members become aware of how they perceive others, and how they, themselves, are perceived.
 10. I try to help the family realize that they help each other grow.

Attributes of Actualizing Families

Growing up in a family is probably the most difficult job that exists. Children are not given road maps to help them learn their way around their family. Everybody draws his own unique map while growing up in his family. Some draw their maps on heavy poster board, making the lines black and thick. Others make their maps on fine paper, full of color. Some people hang their finished map on the wall, and take it down once a year to dust it and make sure that the lines they drew years ago are still correct. Others sadly or gaily change their maps to reflect the topography of the here and now.

Many of the people I work with have drawn maps which got them confused and lost. They come to me to "buy" a map which they can take home and faithfully follow. I do not believe that you can buy or borrow these maps. they have to be your own, drawn by yourself with the ink of your own experiences.

Family "therapy" has often examined a family in terms of pathology, analyzing the "sick," "destructive," or "disturbed" aspects of family life. I would prefer to concentrate upon the "healthy," "nurturing," "loving" characteristics of the actualizing family. Although I have rarely encountered a family which has all the characteristics which follow, I think that using "health" as the main highway on the map of life is a helpful approach to the growth process.

In an actualizing family, members realize that change is inevitable. Parents and children grow older and develop new interests and needs. The world they live in is "becoming," too, and they learn to adapt to the changes within themselves and around them. They accept change for themselves and for others as "being" part of life, and not as something to be fought or denied. They also realize that they cannot deliberately change others without warping them physically. Each individual in a family has his own unreproducible floor plan about psychic interior decoration and function. Family members realize that they cannot invade each other's internal living rooms and rearrange mental and emotional furniture without scratching the antiques or breaking the sofa springs.

No one in the family decides where any other member is or should be on a space time continuum. They check their hypotheses by asking, verifying, and being willing to change their perceptions in accordance with the information they receive. They recognize that any relationship can be renegotiated. Any relationship which at some point may become strained, or

even damaged, can be examined and rebuilt if the family is willing to live in the here and now. Old hurts, and deep scars, although never entirely forgotten, are not allowed to determine the relationship. Collections of "old tapes" are opened up to include recordings of new music--the laughter and sorrow of the present.

The relationships in the family are based on mutual respect, positive regard, and acceptance. Guilt, shame, or old rules are not used to influence, confirm, or reaffirm the boundaries of any relationship. Members are free to relate or not to relate, depending on their needs. They make genuine, spontaneous contact with each other, realizing that everyone is a unique individual. They are willing to share their commonality and are not afraid of their differences.

It is not enough for a family to want to be "healthy" and actualizing. Awareness of actualizing attributes must be felt and put into effect, as well as known. Attributes are like statutes which are not very useful unless the system permits their citation. A "healthy" family lives in an open system whose parts are the people in the family, their relationships with each other, their individuality, and all the combinations of these. The system is constantly in motion. Each action, reaction, or interaction influences every other part of the system. There are many different qualities and grades of fuel for operation: food, air, water, play, thinking, touching, anger, joy, sorrow, fear, happiness, loneliness, and laughter.

A family whose actualization has been slowed, or

temporarily halted probably lives in a closed system. The main difference between the two is their interaction with the outside world and the fuels they use for operation. The open system provides many exits; a closed one has few, if any, fire doors. To keep the system running smoothly and harmoniously, the open system uses many different kinds of fuel in varying amounts, depending on the needs and activities of the system. The closed system may use excessive amounts of certain kinds of fuel--guilt, anger, hate, or loneliness--which can clog or freeze the system.

If an open system suffers a temporary breakdown, it will seek out the proper kind of fuel to reactivate and restore the system to operation. The closed system has trouble admitting that there has been any breakdown. It may keep on running the engine no matter how much noise it is making.

There is also a third kind of system where the family automobile is kept locked in the garage, polished lovingly, and often with pride, but rarely run at all. Sometimes, however, "special" visitors may enter the garage, pat the double headlights, comment on the chrome, and leave full of praise.

I do not believe that people can grow in any closed system. At best, they can only survive. One of my main goals in family growth is to help create an open family, i.e., an open system of relationships. I do not think, however, that most families operate a system which is either completely open or completely closed. Usually a family will have some characteristics of both systems. For the sake of discussion, however,

let us examine some further attributes of the two systems, (Satir, 1972).

Open Family System

The family members are open with each other and with the outside world. Feelings are spontaneously expressed. Family members support and respect each other. There is limitless potential for individual and family growth. Honesty and trust are the "lubrication" for all relationships. Self-actualization is encouraged. Rules for the individual and the family are flexible. There is freedom to act and to be. Feelings are expressed openly and honestly--not just love and laughter, but bitterness and frustration as well. New experiences are allowed; they are incorporated and assimilated into the system. If necessary, the system will change to accommodate them. The family lives in the here and now rather than the past or future.

Closed Family System

The family is self-maintained and shuts out the world. There is limited emotional oxygen, feelings are suffocated or, at best, "cultivated." Family members criticize and "put down" each other. No one's potential is encouraged. Confusion, mistrust, and "games people play" govern relationships. The family lives hypothetically, tied to the past and worrying about the future. Any individual growth is seen as a threat and preventive measures are taken. Rules are rigid. Love is contingent on certain conditions being met. This means that new conditions continuously replace old ones on the obstacle course of relationships. New experiences are feared and not allowed. Rules

are rarely re-examined.

The Actualizing Family

The family members nourish each other and do not only feed upon each other. Everyone in the family realizes that the process of "becoming" involves feelings and sensations as well as intellectual knowledge. They find joy in their own self-development, in that of others, and in the family as a whole. Members are permitted to be themselves. Talents and differences are appreciated. The family realizes that shared experiences are crucial to the growth process. They believe that the non-verbal aspects of experience are as important as verbal ones. Thinking, feelings, sensing, touching, and knowing are allowed. Love, affection, as well as anger and annoyance, are expressed spontaneously and honestly. The family enjoys nonsense, fantasy and laughter. Family rules and values are re-examined and changed to suit the stage and time of life where each family member finds himself. Family members are allowed to relate closely with each other and with people outside the family unit.

Process of Family Therapy

In the beginning of the process when a family comes for help, they usually come about a problem. The specific content of the problem is less important to me than the fact that usually there has been communication and emotional blockage between family members which has created distance and pain. When a family, or an individual, is in emotional pain his

natural thrust towards actualization may be twisted or paralyzed.

Every family, and every member in the family, are at different levels of emotional development. I try to approach them at the level where they are and not pressure them to move faster than they are able. The rate of growth and distance traveled will vary between families and individuals within the family. I place no minimum or maximum upon the growth process.

I have found that often the best measure of whether or not growth is occurring is observed through body language-- through the spontaneous expression of people's feelings. If I ask someone to tell me what is happening to him, he may not be able to do so in words. He may, however, be able to show me with a hug, a smile, tears, or laughter. If new feelings of strength, confidence, trust, and openness have awakened from a long sleep, these feelings, themselves, may continue to foster more measurable changes in the family's life.

Other approaches to family growth may concentrate upon the reasons why people's family maps got them lost in swamps, or why they dust them only once a year, or why they need a "therapeutic AAA" to find their way home again. I am not as interested in the reasons why maps were faulty in the past. I am more concerned in drawing maps using the "better and brighter half of human nature," (Maslow, 1970) as guides.

One of the first things I do as a therapist is relate to each member of the family individually. The reason for this is that I do not believe anything happens without human

interaction. If I am unable to relate to each person present, I think the possibilities of my facilitating growth are limited. I try to make contact with each individual and to respect him and his opinions. I begin by shaking hands with everybody in the family, and making sure that I know their names. I ask them how they want me to call them. I look at them as much as I can, and try to communicate to them that I want to hear what they have to say.

I feel that if my communications are open and honest, that I can then relate to each member of the family. I want to convey a feeling of interest and trust so that he will try to hear what I am saying and not distort it through the loudspeaker of his expectations. I try to have him understand that I am also trying to hear what he is saying and communicating to me.

Every member of a family who comes for help has a wide range of expectations. Some of them think that I will become an authority figure, that I will tell them what to do, provide them with road maps of their life together. Others expect that I will probe deeply into their "psyche" with the scalpel of my "expertise," and get to the roots of their difficulties. Still others expect me to be a judge or father.

All of these expectations are based on previous experiences or "hearsay." They are loosely connected pieces of reading, anecdotes, or fantasies about the "helping process." I see people's expectations as clues that they are trying to leave me out, and not to relate to me as I am, but only as an idea.

People often come to a session angrily dragging the past

with them, or speculating about the future. I try to go with them, at first, where they are, to return to the past, if necessary, to resolve the problems there which are hindering their living in the present, or to take a journey to the future. I work to try to bring them into the here and now so that we can use the time together as a laboratory in human experience. I want us to learn and teach each other about what we know and who we are.

In order to accomplish this, I work to help overcome the anxiety present in every family growth session. I try to establish an atmosphere of trust and openness. Anxiety can take many shapes and forms, many different circumstances or events can produce or alleviate it. My observations, however, are that when people are "playing" in front of a strange audience, they can become frightened. They are afraid that the "critics"--the therapist or members in the family--may laugh at them or criticize their behavior. If an atmosphere of encouragement, trust, and empathy is established, people may find it easier and easier to play different parts, read new scripts, and express their own feelings and needs.

Often, too, family growth sessions will help a person become aware of the many hats he wears which do not fit him. He may have felt uncomfortable or foolish for a long time in trying to be something he wasn't. As he begins to reveal his inner thoughts and feelings, as he starts to get in touch with himself, he may become frightened and anxious. He may be scared or bewildered by all the possibilities and changes which

his bare-headed self may entail.

At every moment in life, and in a family growth session, there are innumerable potential needs emerging within a person, and many choices and actions to be made. However, any choice or action may lead to change. People tend to prefer the status quo; it feels familiar and, therefore, safe. "Existential anxiety" appears when these potential needs emerge and begin knocking on the door of consciousness, (May, 1958; Kierkegaard, 1954). This is why I encourage people to take risks to express these potential needs. If the risk succeeds, their anxiety may diminish.

Reducing anxiety or pain, however, is not sufficient to initiate the growth process. This approach may lead to retreading the tires, without realigning the wheels, so that future blow-outs may happen. Growth involves getting in touch with the entire gamut of human feelings.

Although I do not think in terms of "stages" in family growth, I have observed that very often "therapy" ends when the family's pain or immediate problem has been reduced. Helping people express pain is difficult enough, but, for me, this is only half the process. The other half may be even harder--to help people learn to express love, joy, laughter, and enthusiasm. I consider that one of the most important parts of the growth process is to help the family develop new ways to be together, play together, and live together after the pain recedes.

In this sense, I see myself as a mediator in contract

disputes. I help the family work out new contract terms which will include all the appropriate "fringe benefits" for life, such as: sick leave, "I" time and "We" time, profit sharing, work incentives, bonuses of love and affection, and so forth. I think that every human relationship can be renegotiated. I hope that the new contracts we work out together will be flexible to allow their structure and clauses to change--without a general strike. I hope that they will contain recommendations, not only for inter-personal relationships within the family, but freedom to negotiate contracts with the larger society as well.

I have few criteria for selecting the material to work with in a session. I work with whatever material the family presents--family rules, intrapersonal or interpersonal relationships, the difficulties the children are having in school, and so forth. However, when I do not understand what they are saying, when I don't feel they are hearing me, when I feel uncomfortable, when I think someone is having difficulty relating to me, or when I find myself having trouble relating to someone, then I intervene and express my feelings and thoughts.

I also find that it is often better if I choose to ignore certain powerful and infectious emotions such as depression or hostility. Emotions can be contagious. A therapist is human, too. If he is not careful, he can get caught up in a maelstrom of feelings and become paralyzed. I have found that if I tackle certain feelings head on, I may get into a war with the family. I do not think competition is very helpful between a therapist

and a family. There are many ways to get in touch with people. I do not mean to suggest that I never work with these feelings. I do, however, gauge their intensity, examine my own feelings and needs at the moment, judge my ability to handle them, and decide whether or not to respond to them or try to pick up on other feelings present in the family.

I also try never to seem to ask anyone to grow. Sometimes a person will be frightened, unsure of himself, or critical of the process. The very thought of expressing his feelings may overwhelm or annoy him in the beginning. I have found, however, that many people can learn about themselves and their feelings simply by observing others who are growing, changing, and expressing their emotions. I think that all of us are capable of growing, to some extent, by osmosis.

My goal in family growth is helping people towards self-actualization. For me, this means helping them experience themselves by themselves and with others. I try to elicit their ability to love and relate freely and spontaneously, to experience and express their feelings fully. When this happens, people start trusting their senses, and not just their thoughts, to guide them. What they say, think, and feel really matters. The individual no longer gets in the way of himself. He becomes who he is. He is aware of himself, and is able to communicate this awareness to others.

Every human being can experience and enjoy a rainbow of feelings in full color, shape, and intensity. Most of us learn to be aware of, and show, only a few of the colors of our

spectrum. Many of us respond to every human encounter with the same feelings, whether appropriate or not. The rest of our feelings we put in our "attic"--our storehouse for unopened gifts, inherited oddments, unexplored trunks, and secret unexpressed emotions. Helping a person grow and develop his potential means taking him to his "attic," and helping him unlock the trunks he has stored there.

After he has visited his "attic" and explored his feelings, I try to help him put them back in use, to take a small risk, and express these feelings. If the small risk somehow works, and the person is able to integrate this experience into himself, there is a greater chance that the risk will develop into a venture.

I am using risk here to refer to the person's ability to express emerging needs that he might otherwise ignore, censor, or fear. To take a risk is to be willing to cope with the unknown, to do something without knowing its outcome beforehand. It means trying new behavior and taking responsibility for the results of your action. Many people don't take risks because they want to know what the consequences will be before they act. Many people feel that they have to ask permission to do something for themselves, or to express their needs and feelings.

I think that the process of taking risks generates emotional energy that can be used for thought processes, decision making, changing behavior, and doing what the person would like to do. Taking risks involves anxiety, but I think that anxiety can, with encouragement and support, be used as a helpful energy

in the growth process. If by taking a risk, a person is helped to get in touch with himself and his feelings, then he can begin to draw more meaning from life. He can learn that it is not wrong to ask for something for himself, or to do something for himself and others. Being himself does not have to bring guilt or shame. He can start to create his own music and slowly join the "orchestra" of mankind. He can begin to recognize that life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved.

The following pages will present some of the themes and methods I use in Family Growth to help elicit rainbows. Most of the techniques I use are designed to help families get in touch with their feelings and thoughts and learn to integrate them in a way that makes sense and pleases them.

Common Themes in Working with Families

I have encountered many problems and themes in my work. However, I have found that there are four salient ones present to some extent in every family. To facilitate growth, I need to help the family become aware of them and find ways to deal with them to their own mutual satisfaction. These themes are: hypothetical living, communication, rules, and "I" time and "We" time.

Hypothetical Living

Family members often fail to realize that some of the painful feelings inside them must be accepted before growth can begin. "Owning one's feelings." as Perls called it, is crucial for the development of an individual or a family. A failure to

face and express feelings often stems from "hypothetical living"--a deceptive and distorted way of thinking, dealing with one's self and one's relationships to others. If families are living hypothetically, their interpersonal and intraper-sonal relationships are limited. Their life will be incomplete in many ways.

For example, I once worked with Michael, a college sophomore. For several sessions I had a difficult time reaching him. He spent these sessions talking about what was going to happen when he graduated. Somehow he thought that his diploma was going to solve all his problems for him. He felt that when he graduated he would be freer, more independent, more open, and less reliant on his parents. Michael was worried that he had no friends to talk to or be with, but he was unable to look at how he might be contributing to this problem. He blamed his lack of friends on his mother's coldness and strictness. By living hypothetically, Michael was unable to become aware of himself in the present. He seemed to be willing to postpone "living" until graduation. He seemed to want to remain friendless by playing his "old tape," It's all my mother's fault.

After some time, I was able to help him become more aware of what he was thinking and feeling in the here and now. I tried to help him turn down the volume of his "old tapes" and his all-will-be-well-in-the-future loudspeaker, when he entered my office. I used to refer him back to his body and thoughts by asking him how he felt about what was happening between him and me. I tried to keep him from moving beyond this

point. I kept asking him what he saw, what he heard, and what he felt. After several sessions of working on his inner feelings and our relationship in the here and now, he became more attuned to himself. He was able to begin to live more in the present and not use the past or the future as a means of dealing with every situation.

"If things were only a little different," "If only my parents had not been so mean," "If only I hadn't made the mistake of marrying Tom," "If only I had a new car." These are all forms of the "if only" way so many people approach their daily lives. They feel that everything would be "wonderful" if they could only change or rearrange some of the details of their lives. They use up most of the emotional energy available to them for exploring life in wishing things were different. They daydream and hypothesize about the past or the future.

I have often felt that in our society many people think that the way to achieve the "good family life" is to define it in terms of material possessions. So much time and energy is spent in working and saving to buy a new car or house, that there may be little time left over to enjoy each other. Sometimes people also say, "If only we could go away for two weeks together, things would be better." They work, save, and plan for their vacation. When it comes, however, they may be too tired, too irritated with each other or the children to enjoy it. So much energy is spent upon the plan, as if its fulfillment in itself could create warmer and more open relationships. that when it rains, or the children get sick, or the car breaks down,

disappointment and frustration tend to get directed at each other.

I hear wishful thinking all the time when I work with families. This same kind of thinking, however, is often expressed in more subtle and indirect ways. There are many extremely sophisticated methods of rejecting the present and, thereby, robbing it of life. Authenticity can only be achieved--if it is to be achieved at all--if a person recognizes and accepts himself. For example, some people become absorbed in the academic task of comparing their situation to that of others who seem to be "more" fortunate. Envy and jealousy are crippling, corrosive, and often paralyzing emotions. They can prevent people from interacting with others or from taking action relevant to their own lives.

Another underhanded way of rejecting reality and the family is for people to start what Satir calls a "skeleton collection of injustice," or what I call "old tapes"--verbatim memories of all the unfair treatment they have received. These injustices are filed away, brought out, and played over and over. People can become preoccupied with their collection; they continually check it over and bring it up to date. As the collection grows, it gradually enervates them.

There is another way to reject the family which is so subtle that it can superficially resemble acceptance. This consists of spending a great deal of time in passive contemplation of a gloomy future. If enough attention is paid to handicaps and limitations, they may become more and more ominous and

ultimately downright malevolent. This contemplative process is fascinating and frightening. If it goes on long enough, some curiously unpleasant feelings appear--indignation, resentment, bitterness, and hostility. These feelings hypnotize and demobilize.

There are many other ways--naive and sophisticated--to reject one's family. I will not try to consider all of them, but will only note that whether the methods are devious or direct, simple or complex, subtle or obvious, they have the same effect on family members. They reduce the ability to cope with the family. They obscure whatever area of freedom may be available to them to interact with each other. They may not be able to take advantage of the choice they have. They reduce self-activity--which is the same thing as saying they reduce life.

In a sense, no matter how sophisticated or elaborate a rejection of one's family may be, it is still essentially naive. It is always a form of the "if only things were different in my family, I would have an opportunity to live," approach to life. They are all attempts at hypothetical living. Living with a family cannot be hypothetical, only thinking can. When people try to live hypothetically, they limit themselves. They behave as though they had received a promise which has perpetually been broken. They behave like people who, after having agreed to play a game, quit over a misunderstanding about the rules. They pause on the threshold of their families and refuse to enter.

Communication

As Perls (1972) pointed out, all communication is grounded in awareness. It is hard to help people become aware of their feelings and help them to express what they feel without clear communication. Often family members are talking at or around each other, and not communicating with each other. One of my tasks in family growth is to help family members learn to try to communicate what they want to say, what their needs are, and who they are. If they are unable to do this, or have difficulty in trying, they can cry, sulk, beg, scream, rage, or withdraw into stoney silence, but they may rarely get what they want or need, because they cannot tell anyone--not even themselves--what it is.

I wonder if many of us have the talent or language to express what we feel. I think that one of the reasons we have difficulty in becoming aware of, and expressing, our inner selves is that we rely on our brains too much. I think that we use our brain like a "computer." We use it to process all kinds of verbal and sensory input. Our past experiences, however, generally comprise the "program" for the computer. We bring this program to the brain and the "print-out" determines how we feel. The interpretation we place on any message will determine whether we are going to feel comfortable or uncomfortable; our body will express this interpretation by tightening or loosening up.

My experience has shown me that family members tend to incorporate the data they receive from others into their responses. This data, however, is made up of guesses.

expectations, and fantasies. which may quickly be accepted as facts. I assume that unless all hypotheses about what other people are communicating are clarified and verified, these guesses may lead to distorted relationships. I also assume that change can take place when a person is able to process new information and to reorganize the "program" to suit present circumstances. If the "program" is not changed, the computer can only keep reproducing the same old "print-out."

One of my efforts in family growth is to help people learn how to re-program their computers. I think that all forms of communication are learned. I feel that everyone of us is in the position of learning new methods of communication to help us achieve what we want. I try to communicate this to the family. If they are able to hear me, then they are in a position to experiment with new forms of communication.

Satir defines the importance of this learning process when she writes:

All communication is learned. By the time we reach the age of five, we probably have had a billion experiences in sharing communication. By that age we have developed ideas about how we see ourselves, what we can expect from others, and what seems to be possible or impossible for us in the world. Unless we have some exceedingly unusual experiences those ideas will become fixed guides for the rest of our lives.

Once a person realizes that all of his communication is learned, he can set about changing it if he wants to. It will be helpful to remember that every baby who comes into this world comes only with raw materials. He has no self-concept, no experience of interacting with others, and no experience in dealing with the world around him. He learns all these things through communication with the people who are in charge of him from his birth on. (1972, p. 31).

In order, however, to learn new ways of communicating, it

is important to recognize that there are two kinds of communication--inner communication between various parts of ourselves, and outer communication with others. In order to achieve harmony within ourselves, we need to have clear communication between all the instruments in our orchestra. When we communicate with the outside world we are trying to use communication as a means of making sense of our world and others. We are trying--as best we can--to share our inner music with others. One of my goals in family growth is to try to produce harmony between these two levels of communication.

Spoken language is highly symbolic. The way each person understands words, interprets or decodes them, is not the same. In my experience, verbal communications often create misunderstandings, confusion, and distance between family members. The more family members speak in the abstract, the more their meaning may become obscure. Untangling verbal and non-verbal communications becomes one of the most important goals of family growth. Families often get entangled in conflict simply because one member is using sentences, laughter, anger, or tears which mean one thing to him, but others understand them in a different way.

Communications also require a transmitter and a receiver. It is very hard for people to both talk and listen. They are usually either talkers or listeners. If they are talkers, they often don't even listen to what they themselves are saying or how their voice sounds. If they are listeners, they may be able to understand messages, but don't know how to respond to them.

One of my functions in family growth is to help people learn to talk and listen, to express what they think and feel, and also to be quiet, check, and clarify the messages, rather than jumping to conclusions based on "old tapes."

A family cannot survive without some communication. Confusion, boredom, apprehension, or prickly silences can replace spontaneity, laughter, and clarity, if communication lines are jammed, "bugged," garbled, or broken. Many families, if they pay attention to each other, listen only to verbal messages. They often do not see or hear non-verbal communications.

One of the things I try to accomplish in family growth sessions is to help clarify what each member is trying to say, and help him identify the feelings behind his words, and to make sure, as best I can, that other family members understand his message. I do not assume that when a message is clear to me, it is, therefore, clear to everyone else. I check with everyone in the family to find out what meaning the communication has to him. If I find that someone has not understood the message, I ask the sender to repeat it again and again until it is clear--even if others are unable to accept what he is trying to say. Repetition of messages is often essential to make sure that meanings and feelings are understood.

I work on the assumption that change can take place if a person is allowed and is willing to receive new information about a problem, struggle, or a person. If a person can try on a new pair of glasses, his interpersonal, and inner myopia may improve. He may be able to see more clearly what was blurred,

confused, joyous, or painful to look at before. If a person opens himself up to communication, he may begin to hear feelings and not just words. He may begin to listen with his whole self and not just with his brain and ears. He may begin to be able to communicate with his whole self and not just his voice. If a person can accept new pieces of information, he may become more open to new ideas, thoughts, and feelings. He may become more aware of himself and others.

For example, I worked with a father and his teenage son. The father sent the following message: "I am really worried about you this time." The son had his "old tapes" playing on his expectations loudspeaker and decoded, "For your own good, I am going to give you a lecture on how to run your life." The minute his father began to speak, he turned off his ears and turned up his internal volume which drowned out the meaning of the words. I helped the father to clarify what he meant. I asked the son to sit facing him and to try to listen to what his father was saying--if he could. The repetition and clarification produced this more empathetic form of communication. What the father said was, "I am really worried about you this time because the police called me. I never realized before how much trouble you were in. I am really worried and fearful. I want to help." The father was able to express his concern and fear; his face, as well as his words, transmitted his message. The son answered. "You mean you really care about me? You really care about what happens to me? I never thought you did."

There is another reason why repetition and clarification

are important in the family growth process. They give every member a chance to express his own ideas. This makes him realize that he is special, unique, and important in his own right. He realizes that he has something to say. that people want to listen to him. and that his feelings, ideas, and messages are important.

In helping families with their communication problems, I try to help them look at how they process the information they receive from each other and themselves, so that they can describe what they are sending and receiving. I try to help them see that they may be making judgmental statements based on old data and computer programs. I try to help them have their communications congruent with the music and feelings their bodies are hearing, as well as listening to the harmonics of their brains.

In many families there is frequent discrepancy between what members say and what they really want to say. Their words and their feelings may be contradicting each other. Their sentences and body language may be at variance. One of the main goals of clear communication. therefore, is to develop congruency between thoughts and feelings, between verbal and non-verbal language.

Many people also confuse "verbal action" with action. They think that if they say, "I am happy," that they will be, or are, happy. They think that if they say--through clenched teeth--"I am not angry," that the tension they radiate won't be noticed. Sometimes, too, a family member announces firmly that, "From now on I am going to listen to other people." These words

may not necessarily mean that he is going to be able to do this. Verbal action is often a convenient or necessary-emotionally--substitute for real action.

If family members start to communicate and listen to each other, they will begin to be able to allow each other the right to make choices and to act upon them. Choices and actions are essential in the process of "becoming." If I give you the right to make choices, however, this also implies that I give you the right to make mistakes.

I try to create an atmosphere in family growth sessions where family members can explore new ways of communicating without being penalized or punished for mistakes. Family growth involves the courage to take a risk, to express new thoughts, and try new behaviors, to develop new ways of saying and doing things to see how they work. If the risk doesn't work--if someone is hurt or offended by it--I do not think that punishment will help the person learn. If he is encouraged to examine his new experience and incorporate it into himself, he may be able to try another risk at another time in a different way.

The process of "becoming" an individual or a family involves the challenges of new experiences, of trying the unknown. This inevitably results in mistakes. One of my dreams, and I am also a dreamer, is that people will be rewarded for honest efforts that may result in mistakes. Rewarding them may help them realize that they are human. For example, if a child studies really hard for an algebra test, and fails it, punishment may not help him do better the next time. If, however,

he is rewarded for his effort, he may do better on the next test.

I try to help the family understand that making mistakes is human, and a natural part of the learning process. A need to always be right, whether imposed by standards or the result of a negative self-image, can limit and threaten the learning process. I am always willing to learn about the mistakes I make. When I find myself in error, I try to share this fact as honestly as I can. For example, sometimes because of my personal need, I will share myself too soon with a family and frighten them. I have lost several families by revealing my inner self before they were ready to accept me.

My experience in working with families on their communication problems has led me to another observation: when one family member is going through an emotional experience, spoken words are often obstacles. They often cannot express inner voices of pain or joy. One sign of how much a person has grown is how much he trusts himself and is willing to start to be able to share his inner space with himself and with others. As Satir states, "What is so important to remember is to look at one another in the present, in the here and now. Eyes clouded with regret for the past, or fear for the future, limit your vision and offer little chance for growth or change," (1972, p. 41).

Honest and open dialogue between people can only take place in the here and now. If everyone understands each other, if people begin to make sense of messages and clarify their

guesses, feelings can start to change. If new awareness and new data about a person is appropriate to what is being communicated now, feelings can be expressed and changed.

In family growth, it is important that verbal messages be understood. It is also important that family members become aware of their feelings and become able to communicate them. Most family members are unaware of the feelings within themselves or between themselves. One method I use to help elicit feelings is to have people sit close together, face to face. I ask them not to just listen to words, but to also use their senses--to become aware of how others sound, sit, smell, touch, and look at each other.

I try to vary my intervention in the communication process. Sometimes I need to be the leader. At other times someone else directs the discussion. I try to avoid over-controlling or manipulating communications. If I don't, the family may feel uncomfortable or restrained from being themselves. They may become afraid to say or do what they feel. I encourage every member to say what he wants to say, and not what he thinks that I or other family members want to hear. If people are allowed to experience themselves fully, they can become more open to new data that will permit learning and change to take place.

I try to provide varied opportunities in family growth sessions for non-verbal experiences. I try to help the family develop new ways to communicate with each other through visual, tactile, and auditory devices. Family members need to explore

the meaning of sound, motion, taste, and touching. I try to provide a setting and the means for a family to explore new sensory experiences and to enjoy feelings.

I think that any process which emphasizes abstract language exclusively may limit the development of appreciation and awareness of sensations and feelings which are such an important part of a family relating to and being with each other.

To encourage this process of "being" with each other, I try to help the family experience self-learning. If they can learn something about themselves by themselves, it may stay with them for a long time and lead to growth.

If family members have begun to be able to communicate openly and honestly how they think and feel, and to express who they are, the following things may also begin to happen in family growth sessions: People start listening to each other. The therapist and the family provide feedback when new ideas are explored. There is less looking for the right answer, and more exploration of alternative answers. There is less domination of the discussion by one or two members, and more mutual encouragement to discover satisfactory solutions to their problems. There is less rubbing of salt in old wounds, less destructive criticism, less emphasis on failures, and more acceptance of mistakes.

The therapist is able to refer the individual back to his own feelings for clarification and understanding of messages. Individual efforts are appreciated, and children are heard and not just seen. Rules are flexible and can be commented upon.

Goals are communicated, and family structure understood and accepted by the group. Family members are allowed to express what they feel. They seem secure in thinking that the therapist and their family likes them as they are. There is an attitude of, "Let's find out," rather than one of, "I know that."

Motivations for sharing and communicating come from within. Family members appear to have enjoyed some self-learning when they seem to be saying to each other. "I want to share with you." "I want to hear how you are feeling." "I want to tell you more about me." "I want to tell you how I feel."

Family Rules

Helping an individual or a family to grow is often accomplished by helping them discover the rules which govern their lives, and helping them change them to better serve the family's unique needs in time and space. Satir thinks that, "Rules have to do with the concept of should. They form a kind of shorthand, which becomes important as soon as two or more people live together." (1972, p. 96). I also think that rules can sometimes serve as a way to insulate ourselves from any situation which we cannot handle emotionally, or from experiences we have never had.

Rules are shaped by the interaction and experiences of people. We adopt rules that help us make sense of who we are and our relationship to others and the world around us. Rules become the frame of reference we use to anchor ourselves in

relation to others and our environment.

Who makes the rules? What is their content? What do they accomplish? What happens when they are broken? These are some of the questions I try to help the family answer in family growth sessions.

The best method for acquiring rules is to choose them deliberately after having examined--in full awareness--all the implications of what we believe and what is important to us. This is the direct method, but it is not simple or easy. An individual or a family cannot just take an afternoon off to shop at the "Department Store of Ideas and Values" to pick out a set of rules they would like to look at and try on like a new coat. Direct choosing of rules inevitably leads to lengthy and complicated struggles.

My own observation is that everyone picks up most of his beliefs and rules indirectly from a variety of sources. Most rules are acquired during childhood, before the person is very aware of what he is acquiring. A man who starts out to make a deliberate selection of rules to live by will find that he already has some of them in his possession. He does not find, however, that he has a coherent set of strong rules, all indexed and filed for efficient use. Rather, he finds that he continually encounters rambling ideas of varying degrees of strength and importance. Most importantly, he will find that many of his rules have limited practical application.

Most of us, however, live by rules that we are not conscious of. Satir points this out: "I think you're going to

be very surprised to discover that you may be living by rules of which you're not even aware," (1972, p. 96). The first step, then, in helping families to examine their rules is to help them find out what rules they already have, and how these rules are working for them.

Old rules, however, are very close to us. We use them so constantly and unconsciously that it is very hard to isolate and identify them. Rules are like a pair of glasses we use to see the world. We are so preoccupied with what we see, that we forget about the glasses and take them for granted. If we took the glasses off, we might have a hard time seeing people clearly, or have difficulty getting a good look at the glasses themselves.

For example, if a family member thinks that human nature is basically "good" or basically "bad," he will see the other members in his family through the lenses of this belief. He does not see individuals in his family; he sees "good" or "bad" people. If the lenses of his convictions are unusually powerful, they will enable him to "see through" people and focus on pure goodness or pure evil. If, however, he tries to look at his family without the help of his rules, he may find it hard to recognize them. If he tries to look at his rules themselves, he usually can't see anything at all.

No matter how much effort one makes, no matter how much experience one has had in self-examination, this job of searching out our rules remains so difficult that I wonder if anyone has ever finished it? Can you, for example, quickly make out a complete list of basic rules that have guided your life?

How long will this job take you--15 minutes, an hour, a week, a year? A lifetime perhaps?

When, however, a rule is brought into awareness, the family's difficulties have only just begun. They must then appraise the rule and decide whether or not it is worth retaining in their present circumstances. This same procedure takes place with any newly encountered idea which looks as though it might make a good rule. No one can tell at a glance if a rule is sound or desirable. The evidence upon which the rule rests must be examined first.

Examining the evidence means, in part, having some experience in which the rule may be tried out. If a family member develops a rule for himself, it is a generalization of his own experience. If, however, he is thinking of adopting someone else's rule, he needs to find out--if possible--what experiences produced and validated it. He further needs to acquire some experience relevant to himself to test out the rule.

It would be nice if any idea under consideration for adoption as a rule could have its implications and consequences thought out in detail in advance. However, I think that many rules are adopted because they feel right. No amount of reflective thinking or intellectualization can make a rule feel right; they can only produce reasons for enforcing it.

For example, suppose the father of the family's own experiences have led him to suspect that children are by nature either inherently "good" or inherently "bad." He begins to wonder if this is really true. To test his idea he takes his

hypothesis about the nature of children and begins to work out its general consequences to see whether they are believable. If some of these consequences seem to be acceptable and to make sense, his idea is probably consistent with his other general rules, so he can adopt his view of human nature as a rule.

If he assumes that all children are generally "bad," then some of the consequences of his rule can be easily seen. Civilization and education, for example, should concentrate on overcoming weaknesses, shaping people, stressing conformity and control. If, however, we find a father who has made the opposite assumption--that children are naturally "good"--then he will view society and education as efforts to give people the best possible chance to obtain "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

In addition to inferences drawn from our assumptions, we must also consider their immediate practical consequences for everyday living, both inside and outside the family. When we adopt a particularly strong conviction, it will have all kinds of application down to the most trivial situations. Rules are nothing if they cannot also serve as practical life guides.

A small boy, for example, does something boisterous and noisy that bothers the adult in his vicinity. Maybe he damages the furniture or breaks a window. In any event, he is disturbing the "peace." Parents holding different convictions about children's natures may cope with this situation entirely differently. The parent wearing dark glasses may try to change the impulses in the boy, if possible, to squelch them and stamp

them out entirely. He may try to train the child to be submissive and under control, to quiet him down, to stop him from acting naturally, because "doing what comes naturally" is "bad." Dealing with this childish behavior is, for him, probably not very different from the process of breaking a wild horse. In order to tolerate the boy in his vicinity, he wants him to behave in the "right way," instead of helping him develop any momentum of his own.

In contrast to this approach, however, the parent with a collection of different glasses would respond with an effort to elicit some of the goodness he believes is innate to the boy. He would try to educate him, (in Latin, educire means to lead out or draw forth). He would encourage his activity, while pointing out the possible consequences of damage to himself or things in his world. He will try to help the boy to do something, rather than to do something to him.

Either of these rules, then, would provide a firm base for working out a unified, consistent, and coherent approach for dealing with many of the practical problems encountered in family living. Either of them is an effective tool for dealing with ambiguous situations, but they are totally opposite tools which lead to profoundly different orientations to, and integrations of experiences. A family, or an individual, who chooses their rules with complete care and deliberation--if there are any--will adopt an instrument with sweeping power.

Another of the subtle difficulties involved in self-examination and a family's struggle to examine their rules, is that it is easy to stop the research too soon. For example, there are many other views of human nature besides the two I have used for illustration. It may be that human nature is neither "good" nor "bad," but carries within it the entire spectrum of potential behavior from good to evil. Or, it may be that the real essence of human nature has nothing to do with good or evil. In giving so much attention to only this aspect, I may be missing the truth. To examine good and bad alternatives is an enormous undertaking. It is, however, only the beginning of the entire task. Finding truth involves unending research and investigations; it is a continuous pursuit.

One of the ways I help families discover their rules is to ask each person to outline his rules, and what he thinks his family's rules are. If a blackboard is available, (or a large white sheet of paper), one person becomes a secretary and writes them down. There are two advantages to this technique: everyone can see the rules in black and white, and it is an activity where everyone can participate.

Some of the rules that come out in the beginning have to do with money, family chores, or special needs family members have. The others, which I call "secondary rules," are much harder to get at. They have to do with feelings: How can I express my fear, loneliness, helplessness, anger, love, need to touch and to be touched, tenderness, and joy? To whom can I express them? When can I show them? In addition to these two

types of rules there is a third category--rules made by others for adoption. This is especially true of rules made by adults for children. Often the parents will still be obeying the rules their parents made for them and still enforce. It is hard for children to question their parents' rules.

I ask every member of the family to express and clarify his rules. Everyone has a chance to examine them, to say what he really thinks and feels, and not what he thinks or feels people want him to say. To facilitate this process, I ask these questions: What has the rule accomplished for them up to now? What changes does everybody want to make? Which of these rules suit them at this moment? Which of the rules is outdated? In seeking answers to these questions, many families discover that they were not aware about most of their rules. More importantly, they begin to realize that they had limited awareness about each other.

I worked with a family of three: Mother (Susan), age 32, son (Billy), aged 12, and son (Jimmy), aged 8. In the beginning the list of the family rules looked like this:

1. You can never be noisy in the house.
2. Susan always wants to be left alone.
3. You cannot mention dad's name around the house.
4. When grandma comes to the house you need to be nice to her, despite the fact that Susan and grandma fight constantly.
5. Adults tell children what to do.

After this family was able to examine their rules, Susan's first reaction was laughter. The children were afraid that

they had revealed secrets that they weren't supposed to. We spent several sessions questioning these rules to see how applicable they were in the here and now--three years after the father had left home. After several sessions of negotiations, they came up with a new list of rules. These new rules better expressed their present situation. They looked like this:

1. You can't make noise in the house only when Susan has a severe headache, (not "never" as the children had previously thought). Susan will tell them when she has a headache.
2. Susan only wants to be alone when she has had a hard day at work, and then only for a few hours, (not "always" as the children had understood).
3. Susan was willing to talk about dad to her children. It is all right to talk about him and to ask questions about him. (Susan couldn't bear to talk about him only during the first year when she had felt devastated.)
4. Billy and Jimmy could be more honest with grandma. (What the negotiations revealed was that Susan was afraid the children would get as mad at grandma as she does.) The children reassured their mother that they were not mad at grandma, but admitted that sometimes she irritated them. They expressed a desire to have a chance to tell her this.
5. Adults tell children what to do. (At this point, Susan felt that she needed to tell her children what to do.) The difference was, however, that she was able to explain her rule to the children. She felt she needed this rule because

it was important to her, and that she was too afraid at this point to change it. This explanation made it easier for the children to accept Susan's position.

Rules are not very useful if they don't also give us practical answers to daily problems. The final step in acquiring a flexible set of rules is to put them into practice, to build them into the family structure. An individual's feelings, interpersonal family relationships, and clear communication are all guides to the validity and application of their rules.

If we have decided, for example, that human nature is "bad," then we had better put our rule into action. We had better begin to check every facet of our business dealings carefully, to make sure that no one is cheating us. We had better start pointing out the straight and narrow path to the children, dragging them back immediately when they stray from it. Since such wanderings are inevitable, we had better prepare an appropriate list of punishments to eliminate this tendency. We had better learn to be wary of our friends and neighbors--we know now, thanks to our rule, that they won't return things they borrow, and that they are trying to take advantage of us all the time. We had better get involved in tightening discipline in the schools, in getting more stringent laws passed against deviants and youthful offenders. We had better try to strengthen the police force . . . and so on . . . and so on.

If we apply newly adopted rules patiently over a sufficiently long period of time, they will become internalized--second nature to us. Then we no longer need to apply the rule

so deliberately; it applies itself. It is not enough to bring old rules into awareness, to initially examine every new rule, to absorb chosen rules into the structure of the family. A more important problem remains--re-examining and restructuring values and rules in the light of new information and experiences.

It is not always possible to study an idea long enough or to test it in a wide range of situations. We can never be sure the rule will prove workable in all circumstances. Practical exigencies often force us to adopt some rules before they have been completely examined or sufficiently tested. Indeed, many times, we may find that we have to modify our rules or discard them completely in the face of new evidence.

An individual, or family rule, is, therefore, like scientific theory. In principal it changes when new evidence is discovered which explains the phenomenon more fully. Rules involve a never-ending process of discovering, choosing, refining, and changing; in order for us to make sense out of our patterns of living, the rules must change with us. Probably few people, and fewer families, have ever extensively examined their lives and the applicability of their rules. How many of us make the continuing effort to formulate and accept a set of rules and try to live in accordance with their dictates?

Many people have examined their lives a little; others a lot; but many of their rules, and, therefore, much of their lives, go unexamined. The family that has no taste or talent for self-examination, however, isn't necessarily forced to depend on rules picked up by chance from others. They can

still develop in their own way, even though they have little interest or capacity for reflective thinking. Satir puts this position well:

If your rules say whatever feeling you have is human and, therefore, acceptable, the self can grow. This is not saying that all actions are acceptable. If the feeling is welcome, there are good chances for developing different courses of action and more appropriate action at that . . . Giving yourself the ability to get in touch with all parts of your family life could dramatically change things for the better. I believe that anything that is can be talked about and understood in human terms, (1972, p. 101).

"I" Time and "We" Time

The way that each person handles time is closely related to his awareness of himself and others. A person needs "I" time, time alone with himself; and "We" time, time to be with others or the whole family. Relationships cannot flourish and grow if there is no time to spend with other members of the family. People cannot leave it up to chance to find time to be with each other.

In our complex society everyone in the family is extremely busy. Some people hold two jobs to support their families. Children have school, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, piano lessons, dentist appointments, etc. I once worked with a family where the only time they were able to see each other was early in the morning, when everybody was rushing off to their destination. When we started to make a time chart on the blackboard to find when the family might find "We" time, it turned out that, at this point, the family members did not want to be together, because no one was allowed any "I" time. Whenever

one member of the family went to his room, outside, or to the garage to be alone, someone always came and "bothered" him. The family first negotiated and worked out ways for some "I" time. After enjoying this privacy for a few weeks, they were able to sit down together and negotiate for some "We" time.

It is interesting to note that we have time for every activity--occupational, recreational, social, and civic, but there are few people who set aside time for each other, or for their families. I would hope that people would begin to value relationships to the extent that they would be willing to have time to be together.

Too few people, moreover, are allowed, or allow themselves "I" time. This kind of time is essential for our mental health. The pressures, experiences, and stimuli which press on our self are so numerous and varied that "I" time is essential for integration and finding peace within our self. Small infants often find their "I" time, when confused by all the activity around them, by instantly falling asleep, even in the middle of feeding or playing.

When I work with families I often hear people say, "Leave me alone!" After exploring and clarifying this common request, people discover that they need time and space to put together their thoughts and feelings which so often are overwhelming. This time and space is especially needed when people feel that their inner space is being intruded upon, that their self-identity is being slowly flattened between inner and outer pressures.

"I" time is needed for everyone, without the so often accompanying guilt that by doing something for ourselves, we are rejecting or neglecting someone else. Satir defines this need clearly:

Every member of the family needs to count on some space and some place that he can call his own, where he is free from invasion from anybody else, whether it is little or big doesn't matter, just so it is his own. It is easier to respect and value the place, if I have one, and it is respected and valued by you. To be able to feel I have a place, literally a place that's assured, has the meaning of 'I count,' (1972, p. 275).

We need dyad time to be with another person in the family, to be able to communicate and express our feelings about what is happening to us. We need to have time to be open and honest, look for support, try to support others, touch, and be touched by others. This cannot take place if we do not negotiate and make time available for each other.

"We" time, or family time, is also vital for the emotional survival and growth of the family. There are a lot of things for families to discuss, negotiate, and change that involve everybody in the family. "We" time needs to be set aside so that every family member is able to comment on rules, chores, or experiences, to be heard, listened to, appreciated, and understood--even if everything is not fully understood or accepted. This kind of time can release many bottled-up feelings, and clarify many distortions which may be being magnified. "We" time is important if a family system is to remain open and continue to grow. If there is no time to eliminate suspicions, check out hypotheses, or express feelings, even an open system

may gradually become closed. "We" time is also a time for "playing," sharing, laughing, loving, touching, and learning together.

One of my principal efforts in family growth sessions is to help families negotiate time with each other. "I" time and "We" time are rarely clocked by chance. Whatever growth, awareness, honesty, and self-examination which may have been awakened through family growth sessions may quickly fall back asleep, if there is no time for them to be expressed.

Techniques for Helping Families Grow

Role Reversals

I use this technique as one way to help family members step into another's shoes, and to understand how they feel, think, and act. At first people may feel silly, but if they can get into the part, they can begin to walk, talk, and move like the person. It can become fun and a learning experience. Role reversal often loosens up stereotyped images of others in the family, and begins to give the "player" some appreciation of another's point of view. It helps people understand each other, and often paves the way for changes in attitudes as well.

In addition to changing roles, I often have members of the family exchange chores for a day or a week. Susan can put out the trash, while Jimmy does the dishes. Any task normally done by one member of the family can be exchanged. By doing this, a person learns something new, and can become more aware about other people's gripes or pleasures, and gain additional

respect for what they do. Friction frequently arises over the household chores which must be done. By freely sharing and exchanging these jobs, a better atmosphere around the house may result. In addition, this kind of exchange helps break down stereotyped masculine and feminine categories.

Here and Now

I try to help a family stay in the here and now, dealing with what is present rather than with what is absent or unknown. I try to decrease over-intellectualization or talking, and encourage seeing, hearing, and feeling. I ask people to express their emotions rather than explaining, justifying, or making judgments about them. I work to help people stay with their feelings--to ride out the flood when it begins to crest. I have often noticed that people tend to dam up the spontaneous expression of feelings just when it begins to swell. I try to help people become aware of this "sand-bagging," and to not be afraid of their emotional rivers. I try to point out to a person what his body is trying to tell him, and encourage him to listen to it, and allow his feelings to flow.

I also extend the here and now technique to any two family members that are experiencing difficulties in communication. I ask them to sit face to face, close enough so that they can be aware about each other's body expression. The face, especially, usually communicates what a person feels rather than what he is trying to say. By helping people to be in the here and now, experiencing and expressing their feelings to each other, a great many misconceptions and distortions may be

cleared up.

I find this technique useful also because the growth session itself is in the here and now, representing only a small fraction of the family history and outside world. If the family can learn to live in the here and now during a growth session, the chances of extending this new ability to the rest of their lives are improved.

Family Posturing

I use this technique to assist family members to become aware of the inner and outer pressures they are experiencing in their emotional lives. This method helps people express physically what they are feeling in their inner space. It also helps them understand how they view others in relationship to themselves. For example, one mother felt that all the members of her family were making a lot of emotional demands on her. I asked her to stand up and to describe how and where in her body she felt everybody pressing on her.

After some thought, her feelings began to come into awareness. She began to be able to tell us that her son, Jimmy, was pressing on her stomach with one hand. I asked Jimmy to do this. She felt her daughter, Nancy, pressing on her back; her little son, Johnny, was pulling on one hand, and her daughter, Anne, on the other. She felt her husband pressing on her head. I asked everybody to do exactly what the mother described them as doing. I asked them to press and pull on her and to hold this position for several minutes.

This technique helped the mother learn about the forces

that were paralyzing her. Once she recognized the position she put herself in, and how others helped her stay there, she was able to move from that position both physically and emotionally.

Family posturing is quite an effective method of helping someone become aware about his feelings. It is especially helpful for people who are experiencing incongruence between their thoughts and feelings. It also gives other members of the family a vivid picture of how they stand in relationship to themselves and others.

Play

Any family growth session can become uncomfortable or rigid with the therapist on one side and the family on the other. I often encourage families to play, hoping that this will enable them to see each other in fresh, different ways.

When a family is playing together, it dares to do things, think thoughts, and say things that they might avoid if they were behaving less spontaneously. Play can produce many surprises that we often might not receive otherwise. These surprises are often unsettling, but enlightening. Play is, I think, one of the ways of extending our general awareness. I have the feeling that there may be a positive correlation between playfulness, fun, enjoyment of life, spontaneity, liking ourselves, and general awareness. By playing together as a family--the game doesn't matter--the family can loosen up, learn to have fun, and laugh together.

By helping the family enjoy games and activities together,

I hope that they may relearn the joy and spontaneity of "play," and find other ways to express harmony between thoughts and actions, between their feelings and their bodies.

The importance of play has often been neglected by therapists. Perhaps, because they feel that all behavior is motivated. I tend, however, to agree with Maslow when he writes, ". . . (the organism needs) to give up pressure, tension, urgency, and necessity, to loaf, laze, and relax, to putter, to be passive, to enjoy the sun, to ornament, decorate, and polish the pots and pans, to play and have fun, to observe what is of no importance, to be casual and aimless, to learn incidentally rather than with purpose; in a word, to be (relatively) unmotivated, (1970, p. 71).

Family Members Conducting the Session

Every member of the family has a chance to run one session or a couple of sessions the way he wishes. This technique gives every member of the family an opportunity to express himself, his special interests, and his creativity. The session can focus around anything the person likes to do or dreams up. Usually this gives a person a chance to show what he is all about and to extend himself. It gives each individual a new found respect for himself and his knowledge; it also gives other members a new perspective on his talents, capacities, and special abilities.

I have spent sessions cooking, listening to music, learning about fish, birds, trees, and so on. One of the most touching sessions I have ever had was spent in building kites with a

family and then going out and flying them.

This family of four, father, (William), mother (Ruth), daughter (Martha), and son (Ted), had been having difficulty relating to each other for some time. Ted ran this particular session. First, we all went together to buy the necessary materials. Ted explained to us what we needed and why. When we came back, he carefully showed us all how to build our kites.

This was the first time that Ted had ever showed his father how to do anything. Usually William had told him what to do and how to behave. William was very receptive to his son's instructions, without having thought he would be in the beginning, when he had found the whole idea rather ridiculous and a waste of time. With Ted's help, William was able to build a kite.

When we all went outside to try them out, Ted helped his father get his into the air. As William watched his kite soar into the sky, he began to grin and look at his son with pride. Ruth burst into tears at seeing the two of them enjoying each other, talking and laughing together, cooperating and playing together in a way she had never seen before. She shared her tears with us, and told us that it was the first time she had ever cried from joy.

I think that all human beings are gifted with a variety of skills and talents. Sometimes they are unaware of these talents, or are not allowed to experience them very often. Sometimes the people around them are unaware of their hidden abilities. By letting a family member run a session, he is

helped to discover himself, and to extend and express his gifts beyond everyday activity. I believe that people need opportunities to demonstrate their skills in order to discover their unique abilities and to share them with others.

Taping and Video-Taping Sessions

I often use a tape recorder to tape sessions. When I play the tapes over for the family, it can be very revealing for them to hear and listen to the way they sound--their vocal inflection, tone, pitch, timbre, and resonance. Satir has stated the value of this technique clearly, and I cannot say it any better:

I'm convinced that few people would talk as they do if they knew how they sounded. Voices are like musical instruments--they can be in or out of tune. But the tunes of our voices are not born with us; so we have hope. If people could really hear themselves, they could change their voices. I am convinced that people don't hear how they really sound, but how they intend to sound, (1972, p. 38).

I have also found using video-tape helpful. People often find it hard to believe how they look, even if someone else described this to them. If they can actually see their facial expression, posture, and gestures, it often helps them get in touch with their inner feelings.

I remember one mother who watched herself and heard her voice on video-tape. She then burst into shouts of disbelief. "Is that how I look? Am I mad all the time?" The family provided her with feedback that meant, "Yes, mother." People had been trying to tell her this for several years, but she had been unable to hear them. This discovery she made about herself

enabled her to reorganize her behavior in ways more satisfying to herself and others.

One-way Mirror

If I am working somewhere where an observation room with a one-way mirror is available, I frequently use it in my sessions. Often a family member is so intimidated, irritated, or alienated from his family--or particular members in it--that it is hard for him to suspend his preconceptions or emotional entanglements. If he can watch his family without being seen, and without his own feelings perhaps affecting his family's ability to relate, he can often gain a new perspective on himself and his family. He can watch them without interfering with the process. When he returns to the session, he is often able to become aware of himself and his family. He may be able to see the position he put himself in, and how the family perceived him.

Children-Swapping

Often a child, or children, are having a hard time in their "given" family. Children are people and often their idiosyncrasies are irritating or difficult for others in their families to tolerate. Often the family's peculiarities are also irritating to the child. If children are "traded off" with another family whose experience and style is different, he may be related to in new and different ways. The children may learn that they can live in a "family" without pain or irritation. The parents may learn that they can relate to

"children" easily. The two sets of parents could provide valuable feedback to each other, and learn something about their children without looking at them through the lenses of their irritation or preconceptions.

Sharing Myself and My Values

I share myself and my life experiences as much as I can with the people I work with. I feel that by expressing to them that I am a human being like them, who has struggled, learned, changed, and who is still learning, this will give them encouragement and hope. I know that when people share their inner selves with me, it gives me courage to continue. I always remember that I am made of the same materials as other people. If I can't convey this to them, then there may be a distortion of me and of what I am trying to do.

Many therapists seem to adopt the view that, as therapists, they should have no value orientation. They think that they should maintain a neutral position in the helping process. These same therapists maintain that the value orientation of the person in "therapy" should be the sole determinant of the direction, pace, and goal of the "therapeutic" process. People with this perspective seem to think that the individual possesses all the resources he needs in order to achieve growth. Although I have a deep respect for the individual's ability to tap his own resources for self-fulfillment, I do believe that interacting and sharing with others accelerates and enriches the growth experience. An individual often desperately needs others to help him grow.

Family growth is highly personal for me. I would, therefore, advocate abandoning neutrality in favor of an open and explicit value orientation in the helping process. The people who say that they do not have value judgments, are making a value judgment in that very statement. Value judgments are implicit in every action undertaken. The therapist, therefore, cannot avoid introducing his own value system into the process. Even if the therapist's values are unclear to the people he works with, or perhaps even to the therapist himself, they are influential in the growth session. His emphases, his choice of where, when, and how to intervene, and with what techniques, are all judgments that he makes.

I think that my value system is expressed in every session. My values change and grow according to my needs. The more I know about my own values, the better I can express them to others. I have learned that when I am uncomfortable with my values, I feel less need to push them on others. I am in a better position to help someone else explore, re-examine, and perhaps change his own.

One of my basic values is that nothing I believe in is to be imposed on anyone. If someone wants to borrow a value from me, after I have shared it as openly and honestly as I can, that's all right. I hope, however, that he will try it on, and if it doesn't feel comfortable that he will throw it away.

Summary

My presentation of the Family Growth Theory has attempted to integrate knowledge and ideas from different philosophic and

theoretical view points with my own personal and professional experiences. I have tried to demonstrate how I view growth as an indivisible whole consisting of many parts which are interwoven and dependent upon each other. I also believe that progress and change in an individual will facilitate growth in the family as a whole. Getting in touch with feelings means getting in touch with needs. Learning about any part of the self makes it easier to learn about the whole self.

I also view theory and practice as an inseparable whole. Each element of theory corresponds to an element of practice. Each technique is merely one way of expressing theory. The relationship between theory and practice is not a one-way street with room for only one at a time. For me, the interchange between the two is constant and mutually beneficial. Progress or change in theory results in progress and change in practice.

To summarize this chapter, I would like to describe a technique I often use. I think it expresses my approach to writing this study, my views on theory and practice and the interrelation between them, and my observations about people.

In this technique, I present myself to a group as the proprietor of an old-fashioned general store. My store has every kind of feeling, principle, or value tucked away on its shelves. It is a trade-in store. My customers can try on any product they like and take it home on approval. In exchange, they can leave with me the excess of any emotion or rule they may have, an excess which may have prevented them from using all the products in their own stores. The goal of this

technique is to help everyone open his own branch, stock it with his own merchandise, and arrange his own displays of products.

Many different sorts of customers come to my store. Sometimes a person will only know what he thinks he wants from my store--love, confidence, or understanding, for example. He may not know what his own store is overstocked with, or he may not know how to use the product he is looking for. Other potential shoppers may want to unload a few extra cases of guilt, anger, or misery, but not know what feelings this excess has prevented them from expressing.

Sometimes, too, I have people standing outside my store--windowshoppers--too frightened to enter. I also have trouble with shoplifters who sneak into my store and take something they think they want, without knowing if it fits them or is the right color. These customers rush from my store without trying on the product. It often ends up crumpled in the street or stored away in their "attics."

Bargain hunters also come to my store. They touch, carefully examine, and squeeze the merchandise and then put it back. They may think it costs too much, that they don't need it, or that they can find one cheaper at some other store. They are suspicious, perhaps, that my products are not "genuine" or useful.

I see my store as an experience in human interaction. As proprietor, my relationship with my customers is an active and enthusiastic one. I try to provide an atmosphere which

will encourage shopping. I also try to have all the tools on hand which a person might need to help choose any of the products. I like my store and trust the quality of its merchandise. I am always busy brightening it up, cleaning it, and preparing eye-catching displays of my wares.

I try to help my customer in any way I can. I will make alterations in any product he is trying on to make it fit him better. Sometimes a customer will leave my store without borrowing anything. Sometimes his own clothes fit, but didn't make him feel handsome. In this case I help him rearrange his own store so that he may be able to radiate self-confidence.

I try to keep my store stocked with every kind of emotional and intellectual merchandise, and to push nothing on a customer. I am pleased when he leaves my store wearing a value, a feeling, or a point of view which he has chosen for himself and which makes him feel comfortable and happy. No transactions are final in my store. I am always willing to take my products back, if a customer takes something home on approval and becomes dissatisfied or displeased with it. I learn a great deal from my customers. Sometimes they will ask for a product which I have never heard of before. Sometimes they will leave me something which I have never thought about before.

As manager of the store, I try to share myself as openly as I can. I find that I get new energy for my job when someone shares himself with me and becomes able to open his own store.

In many ways, I see this study as an academic extension of my store. I have tried to display a wide range of merchandise which I offer "on approval," only to anyone who reads it.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This study may well be criticized for being "subjective." It is not based on "objective" research data and offers no apologies for this fact. I think it is an illusion to insist the research study provide knowledge for application in clinical practice. Social scientists often assume that by using research tools, they can develop theories which "work." My experience has shown me, however, that practitioners have contributed more to the "Theory of Practice" than they have received from research investigators. Freud, Erikson, Rogers, and Perls are only a few outstanding examples of practitioners who have contributed a great deal to the field of psychology. Their ideas and theories were based on their clinical work and observations. They have generated considerable applicable knowledge about human behavior, and stimulated many studies.

I have often felt that some therapists feel that before they can begin to intervene, they want to know the outcome of their intervention with reasonable accuracy. I have found that human growth is surprising, unpredictable, and hard to measure except in general terms. If I have been able to help someone, he is a far better judge than I of the changes that have occurred. He can look back at where he started and gauge the distance between that point and where he finds himself now.

I think it is time to leave the stage of preoccupation with the psychological dissection of human beings, and to start studying the whole person, and not just fragments labeled: "personality," "motivation," "perception," and so forth. As Maslow wrote, "Many psychologists are content to work with but a portion of the human being, indeed making a virtue out of such limitations. They forget that ultimately their task is to give us a unified, empirically based concept of the whole human being, i.e., a philosophy of human nature," (1957, p. 23).

When I work with people I try to see, appreciate, and enjoy the whole person. I am principally interested in trying to understand, feel, and listen to how a person presents himself as a unique "unity-in-action." Sometimes it is easier to relate to only part of a person. I try, however, to listen to the entire orchestra of feelings. No matter how unhappy, angry, or joyous a person is, I try not to concentrate on the instruments which are too loud or out of tune.

I believe that the human organism has great restorative, compensating, and creative emotional abilities. I think that in the proper setting, with sympathetic and enthusiastic listeners, the human being has an amazing ability to retune himself. I don't think that we have to take man apart in order to adjust his keyboard. I think that study which concentrated on the whole person, on his inner drive for health and growth, might be more valuable to practitioners than studies which are devoted to analyzing separate pieces.

The Family Growth Theory offers some general directions

for further study and also raises some questions which I am still struggling with. This chapter will present some suggestions for further study, ask some additional questions about the field of family "therapy," present some additional observations, and discuss what I have learned from writing this study.

I would be uncomfortable, however, if anyone accepted anything suggested here as immutable doctrine, something to be automatically accepted, because they think I am "experienced," and "expert," or because I have cited many "authorities" in the field. People who follow authority often tend to forget to trust themselves. They are like people who have been correctly following elaborate recipes which they may not have liked, but thought that because they didn't like them, they must have done something "wrong." I do not like "recipes" or labels. I think they can cause distortion and dampen creativity.

Family "therapy" has often neglected to study the "healthy" family--a family that nourishes its members and does not put them in a "double-bind," that supports and encourages each other, instead of "scapegoating" each other. I think that the field of family "therapy" has been overly preoccupied with "troubled" families. This preoccupation may have tended to create a "troubled" knowledge. We know a great deal about the "sick" family and have many ideas about the kinds of "medicine" to use. We know very little about how the "healthy" family functions.

I think that when a theory stresses pathology, a therapist who relies on it, may tend to see the family through the lenses

the theory gives him. I think that he may have a helpful "bedside manner" when the family is "sick." I often wonder, however, how effective he will be when they start to get "well." Will he be watching carefully for signs of a "relapse" or "metastasis?" Or will he be able to see that people in pain can still laugh, that angry people can still love, and that bitterness can often subside under a loving touch.

I would be glad, then, if this study added something to the small, but growing, knowledge of the "healthy" family. I would find a study which examined the actualizing family valuable. Maslow developed a methodology for empirically examining the characteristics of the self-actualizing individual. I feel that many of his criteria and techniques could also be applied to studying the actualizing family.

The Family Growth Theory has presented some guidelines which could be used for further study in observing the actualizing family. Joy, spontaneity, laughter, sorrow, and bitterness are only part of the gamut of human emotions. I think that the entire orchestra needs to be studied. It is always present, even if hidden behind the curtains of pain, self-doubt, traumatic life circumstances, confusion, or bewilderment.

I think that with effort we might be able to develop ways to learn more about an open family system, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, communication, "play," the value of sensory experiences, rules, and the importance of the self. It takes a long time now for the symphony of family growth to achieve harmony. I think that study might provide the musicians

with shorter scores. Musicians, however, while they do learn to play for themselves, are also usually practicing for a public performance. To a large extent society and its institutions influence what the "program" is going to be.

The orchestra's "patrons"--society--influence what families will value, ignore, support, or discourage in their children. Contemporary composers often have a hard time getting their compositions performed. The musicians have trouble coordinating new combinations of notes, conductors have difficulty persuading musicians to make the attempt, and the public at large often shuts its ears and says, "That isn't music. That's noise."

It is an enormous task to try to analyze the effect of "public opinion"--society--on the family. Today we are living in a culture in transition. Experimentation in every form of behavior and human activity is widespread. The structure and value of institutions--of classical versus contemporary music--are being seriously questioned and often attacked. This phenomenon makes any explanation of the social pressures which help shape the family even more complicated.

I have noticed, however, that more and more people are slipping into the back of the concert hall as observers or participants. Today men's lives have become more and more closely involved with each other. Events happening across the world, or next door, have assumed an immediacy which has their neighbors puzzled, concerned, or worried.

At this point, I would like to raise some questions which

have puzzled me for some time, and for which I have not yet found any satisfying answers. Why do hurt feelings and "negative feedback" tend to stay with people for so long? Why are joy, laughter, praise, tenderness, and enthusiasm so ephemeral? Do we place too high a value on pragmatism, stoicism, martyrdom, or competition? Can't we applaud spontaneity, creativity, and nonsense louder? Is being oneself and enjoying and learning to interact with one's family and others often viewed with thinly disguised distrust? Is it jealousy? Is our self-confidence and self-esteem so low that we are frightened or surprised by compliments? Why is touching a stranger often considered a prelude to attack? Are we trained to accept criticism as proof that we aren't trying hard enough? Do we often fail to hear praise, or regard it as the erroneous judgment of someone who doesn't know us any better? Do we have to spank children often, or can we hug them and play with them more? My answers to these questions are still incomplete. I would find sociological and psychological studies which examined some of them valuable.

At this juncture, someone might ask, "Why do we need Family Therapy?" I can offer only the following tentative explanation. I don't think that people just belong to families, they also need them. The structure and meaning of today's family is undergoing considerable change and questioning. Today the family takes many forms--open marriage, communal living, nuclear, extended, and homosexual. People are trying to understand their families and to tailor the system so that it feels comfortable, and satisfactorily meets their own special needs.

If a person who is confused or bewildered by his family system seeks help alone, I think he may have a hard time gaining any better understanding of his family. His family, moreover, may have a hard time accepting or appreciating the changes which may have occurred within him when he tries to explain them or put them into effect. I have often observed that, when they are not part of the growth process, the family may become suspicious and disbelieving about it. They may not like or be able to cope with the changes in the individual. They may think that the growth process is some dark and rather unsavoury secret which they really don't want to know about. This attitude may make it hard for the family to support the individual. It also may make it hard for the individual to appreciate and implement the changes he has felt within himself.

I have observed, however, that if the family as a whole participates in--or at least observes--the growth process, they tend to be more understanding, accepting, and supportive of changes in themselves and others. They do not view growth as a secret, but as an open, mutually-shared human experience.

Most importantly, perhaps, I would hope that anyone reading this study would have come to know something of me--who I am, how I feel and think, and how I view the individual and the family. I personally believe in the value of self-learning. This study has presented me with the opportunity to learn more about myself and my work. I have felt comfortable working with people. I also believe, however, that any emotional or intuitive experience is enhanced and strengthened when it can grow

under intellectual scrutiny. In this study, I have had to try to examine my inner space, my theories, and techniques under an intellectual microscope. I have found this experience both difficult and valuable.

I have looked again at existentialism, phenomenology, and humanistic psychology and rediscovered many ideas and concepts which I use in my work. I found that many of the techniques and ways I use of relating to people are all efforts to elicit the kind of self-understanding, self-acceptance, and freedom "to be" which underlie these philosophical systems.

Writing this study has given me an opportunity to look again at some of my own rules, to listen to some of my "old tapes," to rummage through my "attic" to see if I have overlooked some special treasure of feeling and caring. I have examined my wine cellar and like the bottles stored there, which I am glad to share with everyone. I have looked again at my roadmap for family life and changed some of the legend and width of its highways.

I believe that we are all connected to others whether we like it or not. We are all part of different systems--our families, jobs, or social institutions. In order to blend harmoniously with all these systems, I think that our own needs to operate smoothly. Everyone needs to find his own way, to learn as best he can how he works, what fuels he needs, and when he runs well or poorly.

I am always trying to learn about myself so that I can share myself more fully with others. This study represents a

sharing of my inner self--my struggles, joys, values, and doubts. I feel that it is only by sharing myself that people will share with me. I am always thankful and grateful to anyone who invites me into his inner space. In many ways this study is an expression of this gratitude.

SUMMARY

This study has presented the Family Growth Theory, the outgrowth of my personal and professional involvement with individuals and families. The theory was built on some of the ideas, concepts, and techniques found in family "therapy," existentialism, phenomenology, and humanistic psychology. The Family Growth Theory, however, has synthesized and reorganized these borrowed ideas in a special way to harmonize with my own knowledge and understanding of people and families. The study was ordered as follows:

Chapter One outlined the rationale and methodology of the study. It presented some of the principal objectives of the Family Growth Theory--to develop a more humanistic approach to the field of family "therapy," by stressing "health" rather than "sickness," by working with the whole person and not just fragments of personality, and by viewing the growth process as a cooperative rather than an authoritarian effort. The study concentrated on five principal themes: the growth of the self, objective and subjective reality, anxiety, the relationship of the self to others, and the importance of bringing one's feelings into awareness. The limitations of the study precluded any detailed analysis of the important influences society has on the shaping of the family and fostering or inhibiting growth.

Chapter Two offered a broad overview of the theory and

techniques of family therapy as they are generally conceptualized today. Drawing principally on the work of Ackerman, among others, the chapter analyzed family therapy's orientation towards the "sick" family, its preoccupation with developmental "stages" in human growth, and its concept of homeostasis. Certain themes central to family therapy--the double-bind, scapegoating, transference and counter-transference, resistance--were discussed. The methods family therapy has developed to deal with these themes were also presented. The chapter also discussed the importance of the therapist in the growth process and the many roles he plays in order to facilitate change--teacher, initiator, prober-of-defenses, expediter, and reality tester. Framo's conceptualization of the "stages" of family therapy, and the function of the therapist in each, were delineated. Family therapy's techniques for handling destructive communication were described. The chapter concluded with a brief critique of family therapy, examining the function and roles of the therapist, questioning the value of assigning "stages" to human development, and asking whether anxiety might not be viewed as an energy for facilitating human growth.

Chapter Three introduced existentialism and phenomenology. These philosophical systems underlie much of humanistic psychology, as well as the Family Growth Theory. The work of Laing, May, Rogers, Sartre, Buber and others was discussed. This chapter dealt with the important existential theory of "being" and "becoming"--man's unique awareness of his mortality,

and his potential and responsibility for determining the course of his life and shaping his unique inner self. Other themes central to existentialism were also introduced: man's unique "existence," his relationship to his environment, man as a "being" who is always in motion and whose perception of others is always incomplete, the idea that man's world has no meaning or value until man discovers them for himself, and that "being" is determined by action. "Existential anxiety" was also discussed--the view that there are ever-emerging potentials in man which require choice and action. Anxiety arises at the moment man becomes aware of these potentialities.

Chapter Three also presented phenomenology as a way of thinking--accepting phenomena as "givens." Phenomenology's concept of subjective versus objective knowledge was described. According to this theory, partial knowledge of another is possible only if judgment is suspended, and hypotheses checked and confirmed with the individual himself. The theory of intentionality, critical to phenomenology's understanding of human behavior was also introduced.

Chapter Four examined the contributions of humanistic psychology to the Family Growth Theory. The work of Maslow, Rogers, and Perls was presented in some detail. The theories of these three writers all seek to help the individual become the best possible version of himself as a human being defined by his own values, aspirations, needs, and limitations. Their emphasis is on increasing individuality and authenticity through the self-actualization of individual potentiality.

Maslow's conceptualization of human needs as being divided into basic needs essential for survival, and secondary, psychological needs necessary for emotional growth and enhancement of the organism, were discussed. Particular attention was paid to his theory of the self-actualizing tendency, his stress on "health," and his studies of the self-actualizing individual and "peak experiences."

Rogers' theories of personal growth, the structure of the person, the organism and the self, congruence and incongruence, individual growth and development, and the goals of client-centered therapy were analyzed. Particular attention was paid to his concepts of unconditional positive regard and the importance of a therapeutic atmosphere of acceptance and positive "feedback."

Chapter Four concluded with an analysis of Gestalt Therapy based principally on Perls' work. A discussion of gestalt therapy, as both a technique and a theory of technique, was presented. The importance of awareness, of the integration of all experiences, the tremendous capacity for human growth were analyzed. Perls' use of the continuum of awareness, his theory of personality, the here and now technique, his concentration upon the non-verbal aspects of communication, and the importance of dreams, were also presented.

Chapter Five integrated chapters two, three, and four into the Family Growth Theory. The chapter was divided into two sections. The first dealt with the philosophical and psychological foundations of the Family Growth Theory--its view

of the self and individuality, its understanding of human growth, its view of "I" growth and "We" growth, and the relationship between the two. The second section described the application of the theory and presented the goals of the Family Growth Theory--how to help the individuals in a family and the family as a whole on the path towards actualization. Certain themes common to families--hypothetical living, family rules, communication, "I" time and "We" time--were described. Some of the techniques used to elicit the growth process were also presented.

Chapter Six discussed certain directions for further study and raised some additional questions about the field of family growth. It recommended further study on the actualizing family. It asked some questions concerning social influences on today's family. It also presented a summary of the entire study.

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