

## Further Reading

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Jocelyn Chaplin, *Feminist Counselling in Action*, Sage, 1988

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Stanislav Grof, *The Holotropic Mind*, Harper, 1992

John Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, Princeton University Press, 1993

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Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, (abridged by Martin Yeomans), Darton, Longman & Todd, 1986

Alvin R. Mahrer, *How to Do Experiential Psychotherapy*, University of Ottawa Press, 1989

David H. Malan, *Individual Psychotherapy and the Science of Psychodynamics*, Butterworths, 1979

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Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: the Spirit of Evolution*, Shambhala, 1995

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# Integration, Intention, Dialogue and Difference

Hilde Rapp

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The art of integration rests on two preconditions. The first is that we find a way of stating what each wants from the other and how this may be similar or different. The second is that we find a way of stating as clearly as possible what each of us believes is necessary if we are to achieve what we want, and how this too may be similar or different. Integration requires the stating of difference, and the will to transcend this difference.

2

If there were no difference, there could be no life. In order for two people to make a new integration, there has to be difference. And for this difference to become productive, there has to be dialogue. It is through dialogue that we find the courage to dare to disturb the universe.

3

Each approach to psychotherapy rests on similar or different aesthetic and ethical

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underpinnings. For some of us the starting point is our embodiedness. For others it is our social and intimate relatedness as adults that is distinctive. For others still, the key is the security of our early attachments. For yet others the point of entry is our subtle interconnectedness with all creation.

#### 4

Each theory focuses at a particular level of complexity, which means that at other levels its explanations may become cumbersome or fuzzy. Each practice pursues a particular intention which gives it its therapeutic thrust. One approach may foster conformism, while another may further nonconformism. The same approach may use one set of techniques to help a client make judgements about the relative risks and benefits of fitting in, and another set to explore what is involved in standing out.

#### 5

Humanistic psychotherapy endeavours to give us the freedom to explore what enhances or curbs our courage to want and to assert. It aims to provide us with the space to move between communal forms of relatedness and on to that articulation of individuality and self-actualisation which lies beyond the bounds of what can be shared with another.

#### 6

Integration requires of us that we first become ourselves. This task we cannot delegate to any other. If we pass up the challenge we remain half alive, muted, afraid and lonely. We can never be free to move towards one another without first

valuing and confirming our own uniqueness. This requires that we acknowledge our fear of the other's otherness.

#### 7

To attempt integration we must recognise and value what each of us can uniquely contribute to this shared work of mapping the compass of human qualities and activities. This means that we must stay with what each of us knows how to do uniquely well, and master the craft of transforming it into an accurate description of our individual understanding of reality. We also have to take responsibility for delivering a clear message, and stand still for long enough to face any reply.

#### 8

Free yet focused sharing of our knowledge and experience is central to the project of humanistic and integrative psychotherapy. Its roots are in the humanistic movement and date back to the fourteenth century. Humanism stands for embodiment, clarity, enlightenment, and the demystification of power relationships. Humanism champions a democratic imagination and free speech.

#### 9

Psychoanalysis springs from the humanistic tradition, in attempting to develop a science of the human mind and permitting the objective study of lawful relationships between thoughts, feelings, intention and action. Freud championed the lifting of censorship and was vehemently opposed to all that is superstitious, obfuscatory, clandestine and rigid. As psychoanalysis moved towards dogma, independent-minded analysts strove to

move away from the excessive objectification and universalisation of human experience. Some returned to the original project of humanism, where they met up with other humanists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow.

## 10

Many contemporary humanistic practitioners have taken it upon themselves to act as agents of our collective conscience, with the task of monitoring how we communicate with one another. We must reinstate dialogue at the heart of our society, so that the medium does not become mistaken for the message, or worse still, for the messenger. We must take responsibility for being the source of the messages we transmit to one another. Our theories are the stories we tell ourselves, so that we may become less afraid in the face of the human suffering we meet in our consulting rooms.

## 11

Stories require a teller and a listener and are therefore always dialogic. The fifteenth-century humanist literary critic Lorenzo Valla, in his treatise on *The Causes of War*, taught his students to pay scrupulous attention to the processes by which human intentions are encoded in words in such a way that they move us to act. He taught how to look for the subtle cues of grammar and words which identify the source of a message, the rules used to formulate the message, the medium of the message, and the delivery of the message to its intended destination. Anyone who has read Derrida and Lacan will recognise how such studies have been developed in the twentieth century.

## 12

In order to identify the source of a message we must attune our feelings. This involves listening deeply to the unique quality of the voice of the other, and to value the other in their difference from ourself. Each voice comes from a particular embodied source, and bears the marks of its particular context.

## 13

To formulate the message requires the alignment of thoughts. This involves identifying the unique standpoint which gives rise to my understanding of my reality. To the trained eye an idea is always constructed along a line of gaze.

## 14

Dialogue requires the co-ordination of actions, a shared intention and common purpose which gives meaning and significance to the effort of aligning our thoughts and feelings with one another. The trained heart will always register inauthenticity.

## 15

Dialogue is the process of making shared meanings. To affirm one set of values, beliefs, preferences, intentions and actions means disconfirming others. This requires that at any one time there should be only one viewpoint to pay attention to, though there should always be the opportunity to answer that viewpoint from other uniquely distinctive viewpoints.

## 16

Dialogue asserts choice. Choice involves letting go of that which has not currently

been chosen. Choice involves turning towards one person and one topic, and turning away from another. Each of us is only worthy of another's attention as long as we have a sincere question or intent which is relevant to the other's concerns.

## 17

Dialogue therefore involves the hope of a gain at the risk of a loss. As we move closer to a person, value or idea, we confirm a particular aspect of our humanness. We prioritise a particular contact with a particular quality of being, doing or belonging.

## 18

What is this commitment that we are making through agreeing to make time for one another? Why are we willing to work at aligning our feelings, thoughts and actions with those of others? How do we know whether our investment will turn out to have been worthwhile?

## 19

Humanistic practitioners share in the hope of acquiring greater integrity, purpose and direction. If we could own our wish to create one clear message from one unmistakable source, we might together find the courage to mourn that we have not yet achieved such single-mindedness of purpose. We speak in many voices, and this fact is both our undoing and our salvation. It is our undoing because it confuses us. It is our salvation because it protects us against totalitarian omnipotence.

## 20

The capacity to specify purpose and intention is the hallmark of human identity. Each of us may stand up and stand still to

be counted. In order to communicate each of us must have an unmistakable address from which to send messages, and a unique address at which to receive them. Our multi-voiced discourse comes from hearing, translating into our own idiom, integrating and re-transmitting messages from all around us.

## 21

Identity and intentionality are the preconditions for dialogue. At the same time, as Marx pointed out, dialogue is the precondition for identity. Intentionality is that which connects the speaker with the listener.

## 22

Only through dialogue can we share how each of us is risking ourself in this intimate encounter. Shall we succeed in creating an arena in which we can collaboratively enquire into our common humanity and challenge every boundary? Shall we dare to ask questions about individual and collective authority and its relation to the exigencies of professional administration? Shall we work together in order to affirm one another in our difference to one another?

## 23

The art of integration requires that we learn to understand that we risk ourselves with every communication. Therapy is not safe. Life is not safe. We will never be safe, but we can become more responsible. Communication means risking ourselves with one another. Our words are alive.

