

BOOK REVIEW

EMERGING WOMAN by Natalie Rogers - Personal Press

Jung says *'loneliness does not come from having no people about one but from being unable to communicate the things that are important to oneself'*.

Natalie Rogers uses this quotation in her book **'Emerging Woman'** and much of the journey she describes seems a search for that place or state where it is possible to communicate important things. In another quote from Jung *'My understanding is the only treasure I possess'* she again crystallises much of what the book is about and in her fidelity to her understanding shows us that what is deeply personal is universal.

She describes her happy, harmonious traditional childhood home where she takes in all the usual messages about a woman's role.

'I observed the division of labour and the feeling of who was dealing with the world and who was taking care of home. Later I acted on what I had learned without being aware of it'.

After her marriage Natalie automatically assumed that the second class work was hers. It did not occur to her to feel resentful. Only when her husband went away on a business trip for the first time did she recognise the extent to which she was submerging herself. Her marriage went through an identity crisis which it did not survive and, energised by her anger, she hurled herself on the world to try and bring herself to life again. Movingly she describes the experiences of separation, disorientation and exhilaration as she searches for that condition where it is possible to *'communicate the things that are important to oneself'*. She discovers the *'freedom of being here, of being me'* and at the same time the disorientation that comes when the traditional role is removed. . . . the confusion of dating new men after being 19 years with the same one and the experience of listening to her daughter's advice on her dating endeavours.

But we experience with her the excitement of learning, of coming through the increase in available energy as she rejects sex role stereo - types and comes to terms with the masculine and feminine inside

herself. She quotes a great deal from herself, from her own journals and this gives the book a fresh, immediate feel. There is a good chapter on uprooting and rerooting, which is an inspiration to anyone going through a time of change: *'surrendering to the condition that IS seems to be the beginning of the process of change'*.

In her chapter **'Solo'** Natalie looks at her choice to be alone after 46 years of family life. She does not shirk the desolation and bitter side and yet can end the chapter: *'Because I enjoy who I am and what I am doing, the clutchy loneliness seldom creeps in. I am excited about my womanness in this world'*.

She also talks about how she comes to have a new relationship with sexuality and the political implications of this: *'It is in the coupling that the personal becomes political. What I allow to exist in my bedroom is what will exist in the larger society'*. She clearly describes her confusion as she enjoys letting her man take important decisions and yet is filled with rage at what she then receives as his machismo. She knows she needs to be strong and free and wants to combine this with intimacy and sharing. She experiences the confusion and elation of loving two people at once. As she moves towards fifty Natalie becomes aware of a need to open herself further and describes how she goes on with the task of integrating the unconscious and how she learns to accept and value her right and left sides. In the final chapter she pays tribute to the women in her life. I found this book a heartening and joyous celebration of womanhood.

Mary Charleton

Natalie Rogers published **'Emerging Woman'** a Decade of Mid-Life Transitions herself after various U.S. publishers made such comments as *"we don't wish to advocate your lifestyle"*. She has in fact written a sensitive, open and courageous book about being a woman, who divorced in mid-life, and who faces the implications of *"going solo"*. Her father Carl Rogers writes *"My daughter has written a personal, sensitive and moving book about her own journey as a woman. She has used her psychological knowledge as she looks into the mirror to view her inner changes. To learn from understanding our own experience is a difficult task, indeed, and to share it through writing and expressive art is courageous . . . it is a beacon illuminating the pathway to a strong, creative, loving womanhood."*

She faces the issues of uprooting and rerooting, sex roles and relationships, empowering oneself, spiritual awakening, alone vs loneliness as these have related to her own very personal journey through a time of transition. A reader in Israel wrote "*you are basic . . . Your experience is mine . . . You become the support group I can't find.*" It is a book to give new insight and peer support to those who are emerging into their own autonomy after the break-up of marriage partnership and dependent relationships.

Jean Clark

Emerging Woman can be obtained from Personal Press, Box 789, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956, U.S.A., at \$ 9.75 post free.

The Benefits of Psychotherapy by Mary Lee Smith, Gene V. Glass, and Thomas I. Miller. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. 269 pp.

With an impressive display of investigation and scholarship and some rather surprising results, three researchers from Boulder, Colorado have boldly entered into a controversy that has been alive for at least three decades. The hottest conflict has been over whether one form of psychotherapy is more effective than another, but the larger conflict has been around the question of whether **any** psychotherapy is really beneficial at all. This book presents the evidence and gives a clear answer to both questions.

These three researchers entered the fray with an allegiance to science, not to therapy and especially not to any particular form of therapy. Using a method called meta-analysis they investigated 475 controlled studies of psychotherapy involving tens of thousands of subjects from 1900-1977, and including at least 18 different kinds of psychotherapy. Much of the book is devoted to methodology and statistical findings and for most readers the interesting part will be in the conclusions which are drawn.

Their results show unequivocally that psychotherapy is effective. The average person who receives psychotherapy is better off at the end of therapy than 80% of the persons who need therapy but do not get it. This is a conservative figure and if one were to interpret the data more liberally, the figure would be 93%. Little evidence was found for the alleged existence of the negative effects of psychotherapy.

Some other findings:

- 1) With psychotherapy consistently beneficial to people of all ages, its greatest contribution is to the improvement of the subject's inner experiences of emotion, feeling, and satisfaction. It reaches a part of life that nothing else touches too well.
- 2) Different types of psychotherapy do not produce different types or degrees of benefit, yet there is little reason to believe that being eclectic will lead to better psychotherapy. While all the therapies included in the study are equally effective, one must choose only one to learn and practice. Nor can any school of psychotherapy claim that research proves its effects on a particular problem or type of client are superior. The essence of healing in all psychotherapy seems to be in its ability to arouse patient's hope, bolster their self-esteem, stir them emotionally, and strengthen their ties with support groups.
- 3) It should be more seriously considered that the locus of those forces that account for success in therapy reside more within the client and less within the therapists and their actions.
- 4) Psychotherapy is scarcely less effective than Drug Therapy in the treatment of serious psychological disorders. When the two treatments are combined the net benefits are less than the sum of their separate benefits. This research has seriously brought under question a widely held view, (a view the researchers call a "myth"), that in serious disorders drug therapy is necessary before psychotherapy can be usefully applied.

You can be sure that these surprising and sometimes startling findings will stir up a lot of discussion and probably instigate more research. Those who agree with the results will cheer, while those who disagree will discount or try to disprove the findings. The researchers end their book with a note that puts things in perspective:

"And so this inquiry ends where each one does: Old questions are answered and, in their turn, new questions arise. Science issues only interim reports".

**Valerie Henderson &
Charles Devonshire**