INTERVIEW

Deploying the Podcast in the Service of Humanistic Psychology? – an interview with Catherine Llewellyn

Richard House [**RH**]: Catherine, thanks to a kind invitation from yourself, I've recently been introduced to the world of podcasting![1] Of course I've heard the term bandied about over the years, but I'd never really taken any trouble to investigate what podcasting is – until now! Can we start by you telling us a bit about yourself, perhaps in relation to how you've found yourself embracing podcasting as a medium of communication in the realms of personal and professional development and transformation (if that characterisation is accurate – do put me right if it isn't). No doubt this will have been 'a journey' for you – and I'm sure our readers would like to hear about that journey.

Catherine Llewellyn [**CL**]: As I mentioned in our episode conversation, I came into life with a strong voice and was pretty articulate and clear speaking early on. Private school probably added to the 'Oxford Voice' that some people find attractive, and that to some suggests intelligence and good breeding. Sadly – not a safe assumption at all in many cases! On top of that, I was encouraged at home to speak out and have thoughts, and to say what I thought.

This was all great until puberty – when I hit the dual issues of adolescent confusion/angst, along with my father's terror at my emerging womanhood (sadly my mother passed away years earlier and was not there to help him), which manifested in a degree of oppression at home. I became – temporarily – somewhat suppressed, at least internally. Externally I still appeared quite resilient and outspoken. The resulting internal chaos, mixed in with my genuine love of life and enthusiasm for unbridled living, put me in the market for some deep personal work.

My need was answered by The Exegesis Programme in my early twenties. Through Exegesis, I met a rag-tag group of very interesting people who wanted to 'make a difference'. We had no idea what we were doing. but we hit on the idea of business-to-business Telephone Marketing, with a heavy emphasis on authentic communication, creating rapport, and enthusiasm.

On the phones, I quickly discovered that my voice and delivery were alienating people. I simply could not get secretaries to put me through to their boss! I wasn't listening, I was sounding superior and bossy – it wasn't working. I embarked on an intensive piece of work to change my communication style radically. A big part of this was about unlocking stuff held in my body, opening full-body breathing and releasing my voice. I'll never forget the first time I said to a secretary, 'Hello, may I speak to Mr X, please?' and she just put me through without a murmur. I had discovered the power of a resonant, warm, respectful voice. This was not manipulation – this was me expressing greater humanity and regard for others.

Later, I began to hold group courses on voice work and communication skills. The negative aspects of my communication style re-emerged, triggered by my intensified survival reactions to the task of working with groups. I had to learn the same lesson all over again – a long and painful process – again. I managed to do this, and learned how to use my voice to help people to relax, participate, learn and grow.

Over the years my voice evolved further and became a significant tool of my trade. People began to say, 'You have a great voice – you should do a podcast!' or 'So-and-so does a podcast and makes a fortune selling courses and memberships! – you could do that!'. I hated this! I absolutely did not want to do a podcast. I had never listened to a podcast. I was annoyed by people telling me to do something that I was sure they didn't know how to do, would never do themselves, and seemed to me like a thankless and onerous task. Not a chance!

Then – lockdown. I was outraged by what seemed to me the utter stupidity of lockdown and the rest of it. I was sure it wouldn't work, would ruin the economy and destroy lives, with hectic money-printing only making it infinitely worse. After several conversations with my ex-husband, he directed me to a series of podcasts about money, economics and libertarianism. Three things resulted. I learned A LOT. I began to enjoy podcasts as a medium. And I began to see how the hosts do it. They talk about whatever they wanted to talk about. They are unregulated, unsupervised, not controlled externally (well – most of them). They can be as outrageous as they like. They can invite whomever they like to be a guest. I love the freedom and flexibility of it.

Alongside this, I wanted to relaunch my work, and undertook a great deal of study and research about how people do marketing these days, especially during lockdown. A variety of online strategies stood out as being effective, videos and podcasts included. All the wisdom of the day told me to create a website with a short video, and a sign-up option for a longer video. I had to learn how to do videos! Back on the learning curve once again. Very very challenging – discovering my barriers to talking to camera,

being real and authentic. I was terrified. Someone half my age coached me through this – much gratitude to him. I made the required videos and they still sit there and they are OK. Phew.

Meanwhile, I saw people suffering, voices stilled, suppression of all kinds. At this time I was at home, largely by myself, with very little client work. I needed an immediate outlet for my voice and my creativity. Things needed to be said. I did a burst of weekly short videos, commenting on the situation and how people were experiencing and managing it. This was circulated to my list, and people liked it. But for me it didn't hit the spot, and it wasn't accessible to enough people. Suddenly – literally from one day to the next – I decided to do a podcast. I wanted to further my mission to help leaders of any stripe develop their self-mastery, apply it in their work and life in general, and make more of a contribution to fixing the disastrous situation we collectively find ourselves in.

Next up – how on earth do I do a podcast? There's a prolific podcaster named John Lee Dumas (JLD) who started with no experience, and broadcast an episode EVERY SINGLE DAY for five years, and is now a podcast guru and makes a lot of money out of it. Extraordinary. His theme is not my theme, but no matter. He put out a free short podcast series on how to do podcasts. I took that in. It was a great start. One of his processes facilitated me to find the 'Truth & Transcendence' context for the podcast.

Then I found another person in one of my networks – this time a third of my age – and he gave me all the instructions I needed, software recommendations, which 'hosting platform' to use, and so forth. He literally sent me pictures of web pages telling me which buttons to press. He of course has his own podcast, was a DJ for eight years and is entirely tech savvy – whilst having empathy for a newbie such as myself.

The final point in this – rather long – introduction is about *starting*. JLD and all the other good podcasters say the same thing: just start your podcast. Don't wait until everything is

perfectly set up. And don't over-edit. Just start, and learn as you go. I followed that advice and started in July 2021. I was in a state of some tension, let me tell you! My first anniversary episode will come out next week as I write, on Friday 22nd July.

RH: Happy anniversary! :-) I'm always fascinated to discover whole worlds that are clearly hugely important in people's lives and in modern culture – yet which I personally know nothing about. Thank you for this great introduction, Catherine – I'm about to be deliciously educated!

What comes to mind on reading your final paragraph is the way in which Humanistic Psychology (HP) as a praxis developed in the 1960s and 70s in such an experimental, experiential way – and definitely (and *necessarily*) without frills! Producing some slick, glitzy, intrusively over-edited output might well risk the medium itself betraying all that Humanistic Psychology stands for. I know I'd far sooner hear an unedited, raw conversation than one that had been choreographed in order to produce an effect in myself and the audience ('...I do it so it feels REAL' – Sylvia Plath).

This leads me to wonder, just how many HP-aligned podcasts (if I can use that term) are there out there? I guess you'll have got a feel for this in the course of your engagement with the medium. And I'd love to hear more about how you came up with 'Truth & Transcendence' as a theme (no-one could accuse such a theme of not being quintessentially humanistic).

CL: Thank you! Yes, it was touch-and-go a few times there, as I 'hit the wall' on occasion. I'm gratified to be one year in now.

I agree with you that an over-engineered offering can become somewhat inauthentic and, at best, entertaining or informative – not formative. That said, my friend and podcast buddy Reuben (alluded to in my previous answer) puts out occasional guest episodes that are extremely and touchingly real and personal, sometimes including the pair of them conducting some sort of process that reveals vulnerabilities and

insights. His recording quality is excellent, he creates his own music and uses this as a prop for the episodes, and the whole thing is very well produced. This standard of presentation does not reduce the meaning and very human realness of his episodes at all. It just makes them more delightful – for me, anyway.

There is a plethora of podcasts out there on any and every topic imaginable! – including coaching, therapy, self-help, personal growth and all of the other labels. There are also many podcasts dedicated to people simply telling their story – with varying degrees of depth and self-exploration in the telling. I haven't conducted an exhaustive search, but I have tapped into a few here or there.

These days I mostly listen to the libertarian-style discussion podcasts, which are not about HP at all. There was an exception, when Tom Woods had Antony Sammeroff on The Tom Woods Show for 'Sammeroff week', five episodes in a row. Antony is a life coach, an Austrian economist and a libertarian. He spoke about the topics of the day from a humanistic perspective. He threw that light on the discussions about freedom, free market, covid 'mitigation' measures and so forth. Tom loved it, and so did I – hence Antony recently coming on to my 'Truth & Transcendence' podcast as a guest.

Anyway, back to the question. I've come across a variety of podcasts that might be considered to be HP-aligned – at least to some extent; some examples of 'type':

- A therapist or life coach offering monologues discussing ways to live better, deal with issues, be happier (I can't think of an example!)
- A therapist or life coach discussing therapy with an actual client, who shares their experience of wanting help, getting help, and the resulting experience and outcomes (e.g. John Kim, The Angry Therapist – https://www.theangrytherapist.com/)
- A practitioner interviewing a thought leader in the personal-growth world, showcasing the guest's philosophy and practice (e.g. Michael Banks, Leadership Luminaries – https://tinyurl.com/3ktkvevy)

- A practitioner chewing the fat with another practitioner on a chosen personal-growth theme (e.g. Antony Sammeroff, Be Yourself & Love It – https://tinyurl.com/3cwzbr2x)
- Podcast focusing on some specific theme – e.g. marriage, divorce, addiction etc.

Many of us still believe we have to 'perform', and many of us fear feeling vulnerable; in the podcast world, this manifests in people showing up with a pre-prepared set of ideas, designed to deliver sensible information, and perhaps to avoid any uncomfortable self-exploration. In some cases, the 'pre-prep' is helpful because it allows hosts and guests to share some very meaty and helpful material. In other cases, the resulting discussion is dry and not very revealing. Finding a great balance between preparedness and improvisational flow is a challenge for podcasters and their guests.

In the end, experience counts for a lot. As I write, Tom Woods, for example, recently celebrated his 2,000th episode. He is extremely competent, engaging, fun and very human. He is able to reveal himself, and create a space for his guests to reveal themselves. Albeit the topic is not about HP – but the atmosphere is human and engaging, and supports self-directedness and inquiry.

Just as it is with any individual therapist or coach, it's impossible to get a true sense of how 'humanistic' any given podcast may be: one has to tune in and find out.

As for how I came up with Truth & Transcendence…. Basically, I followed a process, and the words popped out. The process was part of a free course offered by John Lee Dumas – a highly experienced podcaster. I don't recall the exact details; he prompted reflection in a number of key areas, and the writing of associated words in lists. I remember ending up with two key lists, and selecting the item that was most important to me in each list. Truth and Transcendence were those two words. The phrase 'when we connect with our truth we can transcend' came to me soon afterwards.

RH: All fascinating, Catherine – thank you. I can see a case for arguing that podcasting at its best is indeed an example of Humanistic Psychology in action. This also perhaps aligns with the discussion that people like Keith Tudor have initiated in the HP literature,[2] that perhaps (in a sense) 'we're all Humanistic Psychologists now' – with the values and practices of HP having become deeply embraced by modern culture (and the psychotherapies) more generally. I'm thinking that it would be a great service for someone to compile a resource list of HP-friendly podcasters that could be circulated in our field. From what you say, Tom Woods might well be on such a list! – re the atmosphere he creates being 'human and engaging, and support[ing] self-directedness and inquiry' (your evocative words).

You express it beautifully when you describe how 'Finding a great balance between preparedness and improvisational flow is a challenge for podcasters and their guests'. In the parlance of the professionalisation question that has vexed HP so much since the late 1980s, it's like asking, 'How can one be professional, whilst retaining genuine authenticity and not becoming over-professionalised?'. I suspect this is a key struggle that all humanistic practitioners work with all the time – and perhaps necessarily so in the spirit of best enabling practice.

I hope it's OK to pose you a few 'devil's advocate' questions, Catherine – not at all in the sense of point-scoring or wanting to do a destructive job on podcasting (as far as I'm aware!), but rather to bring an open criticality and self-reflexivity to the practice, to engage as fully as possible with the complexities of the medium and the practice, and perhaps to shine a bit of light on any 'shadow' aspects of the activity. Three issues immediately came to mind for me when bringing a critical sensibility to our subject, which I'm sure you'll be able to shed a lot of light upon.

First, as a self-styled techno-neo Luddite (my invented term), it's difficult for me not to question *any* activity that entails engaging with the unavoidable limitations of communications technology.[3] As I write, I just learnt about a new

paper on technology and addiction,[4] which speaks to some of these issues. The paper starts with this epigraph: 'If technology is a drug – and it does feel like a drug – then what, precisely, are the side effects?' (quotation from Charlie Brooker, creator of the Black Mirror TV series). So I think the question that comes from this goes something like this: 'To the extent that these communications technologies are (or at least *can* be) addictive, could it be argued that any engagement with them is colluding with this cultural addiction, and even helping to legitimise and cement it into late-modern culture?' This also raises the question of to what extent podcasting is in alignment with all that Humanistic Psychology stands for, in terms of real, person-to-person, body-to-body engagement and relationship. I realise what a big question this is – and I'm fascinated to hear your response. I'll try to keep my other two questions short!

Secondly – and we've already touched on this in another conversation – I wonder about the time-poor question, and the extent to which very busy people overwhelmed by information (and links incessantly being sent to them) are able to carve out the time needed to listen to a long conversation that's at least an hour long (and sometimes nearer to two hours). (I realise as I write this that I can't have it both ways! – as HP has a lot to say about the importance and the quality of time and space, and fashioning a life that isn't subject to, and a victim of, the unremitting tsunami of information and the manic speeding-up of life that modern culture propagates.)[5]

And finally, I also found myself wondering whether there's such a thing as 'confessional vanity podcasting' (cf. Vanity Publishing); and if there is, what impact this might have on the overall quality of the podcasting world. (Again, playing devil's advocate with myself – maybe that's fine; and from a HP viewpoint, perhaps it's a good thing that there's a legitimate medium that enables people to speak their own truths, and be heard by at least some people.)

I ask these critical questions very tentatively, Catherine! In the rest of the interview there'll be ample space to show-case what I'm sure are the many wonders and blessings of podcasting! That's more than enough from me – you can just pick up on whatever my meanderings bring up for you if you like, rather than directly answering my questions.

CL: I agree; in my opinion, HP is now largely integrated. Martin Pollecoff yesterday (as I write) said it's like dropping ink into water: the ink spreads throughout and becomes almost invisible, but is still there and present. And yes, that seeking of balance is absolutely a live question for me as a practitioner – and in fact for me in life in general! When to flow, and when to be intentional, and how to know that.

Your 'devil's advocate' questions are actually discussed in depth in some of the podcasts! I think that part of what's happening is that people are taking the conversations that matter to them, and simply using the podcasting medium to share them more widely. So this naturally includes your sort of questions, as these are being asked by some very bright and gregarious people all over the world.

Something that's been interesting me lately is the matter of human beings moulding their situations and circumstances intentionally – to support thriving. Collectively, we've developed housing, travel, lighting and all sorts of other things that help us to live more comfortably, and in many ways more productively and happily. We live longer. Fewer of us die from disease, broken legs, childbirth and other previously potentially fatal conditions. A lot of this is clearly a good thing. And the power to do these things also provides the potential for damage to the environment, damage to our health (too much time indoors, overworking, over-processed food etc.), and a dumbing-down of our consciousness (lack of creative challenge, too much comfort and ease). I think this is a crucial matter that we have utterly failed to highlight and explore effectively. We jump too quickly to 'all progress is good' or 'all intervention in the natural order is bad'. To me this is lazy thinking, it creates polarisation, and it doesn't help.

That's a long run-up to my answer to your question about communications technology, which I see as an absolutely fantastic facility when used for the thriving of humanity. And – like the items I mentioned above – the power it provides can be used for degenerative interventions, a dumbing-down of consciousness, and burnout. Addiction to social media is just one example of this. The topic is of course discussed at length on self-help podcasts. On one of my episodes I talk about how we are as yet infants when it comes to knowing how to use communications technology. It's still very new. We've only just got it out of the box, and are still flailing about working out what it's for, how to use it sensibly, how to use it creatively, and how to interrupt our own shadow when it comes to our addiction tendencies and our willingness to hand over our power to an external agency. Some of us have done extensive work on this personally and professionally – and have written wonderful pieces about it. Some of these 'masters' of the medium coach people and help usher in a greater collective responsibility, acuity and facility with the medium. These guys, by the way, are not always looking at their phone. They are not addicted. They are in control of the tool, not controlled by the tool.

Someone once said, in relation to people becoming addicted to working out at the gym, that the definition of addiction is when you go to the gym instead of going home and feeding the kids. Perhaps there's an equivalent when it comes to comms tech addiction. Are we using the medium, or is it using us? Does it have a suitable place in our life, or are we neglecting really important aspects of our lives? To me, these are questions we can only ask and explore for ourselves – individually, in relationship and collectively.

Another quick point comes to mind…. If comms tech is a tool, and a given person does not need it to live their life well or do their work, then why should they use it? I'd like to once and for all call out the notion that we all 'should' use e-mail and have an iPad and so on. Nonsense. It's a tool for us to use if we want to or need to.

I don't think the answer to all of this is to allocate blame to comms tech for our individual and collective failure to use it properly, safely. If we don't want to use it, fine. Otherwise let's not allocate power to something that only has power over us if we give it that power (small rant!).

Coming back to podcasting specifically – yes, it is absolutely possible to fill one's day with fascinating podcasts, to not relate with others in person, and to kid ourselves that we are in touch with the human race. This is a genuine danger, IMHO. We can do it with television, too. Again, it's up to us to manage ourselves. Most podcasts are audio only, so we're not staring at a screen. We're listening whilst driving or doing the washing, or whatever. So we don't have the 'screen hypnosis' that we spoke about in another conversation the other day.

As for engagement, podcasts vary enormously when it comes to authenticity. The ones I think are best are those where we are invited into a genuine, open and exploratory conversation between two conscious, courageous and generous people who are prepared to share and be witnessed. These podcasts can be extraordinarily beneficial for listeners, inviting them into some deep reflection, without the need to show up to a session, or join a group. I've had numerous messages from people who've been deeply affected by one or other of my episodes, with life-enhancing effects. For me this is the goal.

Your 'time-poor' question…. There are podcasts of every length imaginable. Kris Wilder's 'The Back Channel' podcast (see https://tinyurl.com/55x6zmmk) puts out three-minute episodes about once a week. Joe Rogan's episodes (https://tinyurl.com/4587bbkf) run up to three hours long and beyond. Again, we pick those that work for us. And as most people listen to podcasts on their phone with headphones or an earpiece, it's possible to do this while driving etc., so they don't use up as much time as we might imagine. And if someone can't carve out the time – what of it? Perhaps what they're so busy doing is more important than listening to podcasts.

'Confessional vanity podcasting' is a great term! And yes, this happens – a lot, in my view. But then something I might see in this light could be, for someone else, a wonderfully mind-opening and heart-touching experience. Very subjective. Again, this is talked about a lot.

Having wandered all over the place with my answers, my feeling is that the HP response to the podcasting phenomenon is to remember that we are all self-directing persons, with the right, the possibility and the potential to make our own choices and run our lives well. The thing exists. It's evolving and expanding over time. We each have the opportunity to choose how we make use of it, the chance to learn from how we do that, and the optional challenge to evolve significantly as a result. Not to mention the possibility of grabbing the medium and using it intentionally to expand our contribution. I'm trying to do exactly that with my podcast.

RH: Wonderfully rich answer, Catherine – thank you. Much of what you say here chimes very closely with an eminently wise book on these issues written by Paul Levy back in 2014, titled *Digital Inferno: Using Technology Consciously in Your Life and Work – 101 Ways to Survive and Thrive in a Hyperconnected World*, and about which I penned a long review essay at the time.[6]

What you describe as 'people... taking the conversations that matter to them, and simply using the podcasting medium to share them more widely' really does convey the sense of people using the technology to further connection and sharing, rather than technology using them. Yet I wholeheartedly agree with you that 'We jump too quickly to "all progress is good"', and that 'we are as yet infants when it comes to knowing how to use communications technology' – and especially in a world where there is still a pervasive 'willingness to hand over our power to an external agency'.

Your self-styled 'small rant' I think nails why it is that Humanistic Psychology – and indeed the whole 'victimhood' question[7] – is so centrally important in all this. You write, 'let's not allocate power to something that only has power

over us if we give it that power'. Yes – yes – yes!, on the one hand; yet on the other, there's something about these technologies that can so easily lead to disempowerment, addiction and the loss of our own sense of volition. Conversations like the one we're having right now seem so important to have, to enable, to facilitate, when discussing this medium and these technologies, if we're going to start developing a truly Adult, responsibility-taking relationship with them.

I was really struck by this – 'I've had numerous messages from people who've been deeply affected by one or other of my episodes, with life-enhancing effects'. That's deeply moving. And it leaves me wanting to ask you a therapy-centred question for a moment. Picking up what you said in your previous reply, it got me thinking about things like Film Therapy, which approach uses the medium of film as a vehicle for facilitating a therapeutic process for clients. I'm wondering if anyone has thought of the possibility of 'Podcast Therapy'; and if not, and if it's not a crazy idea, what kind of configuration could Podcast Therapy take for clients, I'm wondering. You're clearly ideally placed and qualified to answer such a question. (And lest people think I'm joking, this is a deadly serious question – looking at how we might creatively work *with* the grain of technology in soul-work. And I realise, finally, that you may well be doing this already.)

CL: I quickly scanned the review article of Paul Levy's book. I am 'linked' to Paul somewhere. I saw something by him and liked it a lot – on this topic, if I recall correctly. We had a brief exchange. I can see why you draw a parallel with what I was saying. I believe I may have been influenced by him in some small way. Or at least reinforced.

Re 'podcast therapy'. Yes, I do believe that people are trying to do actual work via podcasts. For example, there are podcasts that take the listener through meditations, or through experiential exercises. I haven't looked into this much at all; I've just noticed it going on in passing. Whether this is 'therapy' is up for discussion. My immediate emotional response is

one of 'not keen'. I should probably say here that I don't see what I do as therapy. I am very far from an authority on what therapy is, how it works – and therefore how it might be delivered through the podcast medium. Perhaps my 'not keen' reaction is simply a recognition that I wouldn't try to do it – because it's not my thing and I wouldn't know what I was doing – and would be very uncomfortable messing with it and potentially doing harm. So I'm not sure.

I do know that there are experienced therapists with their own podcasts. I'm not sure how far they go in terms of attempting to provide therapy in that context.

There's another related medium which is courses. Some people create courses that are delivered just like podcasts, but are only accessible to subscribers. Some of these courses are therapeutic or developmental in emphasis, and designed to help the participant/listener/client make positive changes. Some of them are charged; others are offered free as a way to get people through the door and offer them other services.

I'm afraid I haven't given you much of an answer here. However, I do think it's an interesting question.

RH: That's a more than fine answer, Catherine, and very illuminating. Thank you for your forthrightness in saying that '...I don't see what I do as therapy. I am very far from an authority on what therapy is, how it works'.... For me this statement raises fascinating issues – not least, the question of whether 'therapy' is – or is best conceived as: a professionalised *thing*, or an enabling *process* that can come about in all manner of different, and even novel ways. It's very possible that what you do in your own professional work is at least as therapeutic, if not more so, than that done by practitioners claiming or aspiring to offer 'therapy'. This indeed is one of the key arguments against the over-professionalisation of therapy as a practice. My hunch is that many if not most people who do therapeutically enabling and empowering work in the course of their professional or vocational activities commonly underestimate the

therapeutic value and impact of what they do. Indeed, one of my own passions is to diminish the perniciously hierarchical schism that exists between 'therapy' per se configured as a commodity, and the therapeutically enabling work that so many people do. (And I know that at least some professional therapists will be affronted by my deliberate muddying of the differentiation between 'therapy' as noun and thing, and 'the therapeutic' *as a process*.) I wonder what sense you might make of this.

Moving on, I hesitate to even ask the following question in print, as I don't want to give 'them' ideas!... – but could government ever get away with introducing the state/statutory regulation of podcasting? Alas, I'm not completely joking when posing this question. It seems to me that possibly a large proportion of podcasting is pretty subversive and counter to the mainstream narrative, and it's certainly unregulated; and in an age where freedom of speech continues to come under concerted attack from various quarters (Big Tech, the government and the mainstream media), could podcasting conceivably come into the sights of some jobsworth bureaucrats determined to silence anything in the public sphere that questions mainstream narratives?

And finally – what are your own visions for your podcasting work in the future? And please also take this opportunity to say anything you'd like to say to round off this fascinating conversation. Thank you so much for taking our readers and myself into the world of podcasting in such a skilful and inspiring way, Catherine. The final words are fittingly yours.

CL: Yes, I'm enjoying it too!

Re therapy/not therapy – I think the distinction I best understand is to do with the intention of the work. The intention in my work is 'developmental' as distinct from 'remedial'. I take the position that the client is fine already, and I am there to assist them with their growth and expansion. Of course issues and woundings do come up, and we do address them to whatever extent we both agree upon – but these are the primary thrust of the work. As I understand it,

'therapy' can imply starting from the position that the client is damaged/flawed/wrong in some way – and working to get them to a place of OK-ness. Both approaches – in fact anything we do for ourselves or for one another – can be therapeutic in the sense that we feel better and are more well as a result. Dance, massage, hanging out with friends, deep discussions, some reading – these can all be deeply therapeutic – but they are not 'therapy'. So yes, I feel the distinction between 'therapy' and therapeutic' is a good one. I do think some of my episodes are potentially therapeutic for listeners, and they are not therapy.

The issue of government regulation is firmly on the radar for the top podcasters. They are revelling in the current 'unregulatedness', and keeping an eye out for any indications of government managing to put in controls. A key factor is that most podcasts are independently owned and run. Unlike some of the mainstream media, how government or anyone else feels about them is irrelevant. Their key relationship is with their listeners. It's not easy for government to put pressure on them. Joe Rogan, for example, is a source of great worry – as I understand it – for some of the mainstream media, and for government. The existence of his podcast undermines attempts to blanket the public exclusively with the mainstream narrative. There have been attempts to control him, all of which (I believe) have been rebutted and ridiculed at length on his podcast.

If government does come up with ways to regulate/control podcasts, I am certain that the tech buffs will come up with ways to circumvent this. Just as they are now doing with Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and did with file sharing, e.g. Pirate Bay (https://thepiratebay.org/). The Swedish government has been trying to shut down Pirate Bay for years, and has utterly failed. People have been imprisoned for short periods and fined, but the thing itself carries on. There's a significant revolution going on in regard to intellectual property and online broadcasting/publication. There are currently many unknowns. My expectation is that government will attempt to regulate podcasting, both to control the narrative and to generate new

revenue streams for themselves; and that they will fail to control the more important 'dissident' voices.

One more thing. The Online Harms Bill in the UK could be a problem for podcasters. It's in its early stages right now, as I write, and we don't know how much traction it's going to get, or how effectively it would be enforced if it became law.

With my podcast Truth & Transcendence – I'm not sure where it'll go over time. Reaching its first anniversary is a significant accomplishment, and part of me can hardly believe this has happened! I am still learning as I go, still loving it, and feeling stretched and challenged. The podcast provides me with the opportunity to relate at quite a deep level with a variety of wonderful people, provides good content for listeners all over the world, and showcases aspects of me as well as aspects of my guests. Those things of themselves are enough of a reward in this moment.

For the first anniversary coming up soon, as I write – the plan is to put out a 'guest host' episode. This will probably be quite a meaty and unpredictable conversation – given the eclectic nature of Steve, the guest host. I'm guessing we'll talk about the podcast, and I'm guessing I'll come out of that conversation with new ideas and inspiration for the next phase.

I absolutely intend to keep going, and I'm interested to see how it evolves and where it takes me!

Notes and References

1 See Richard House & Catherine Llewellyn, 'Truth & Transcendence' Podcast – 'Fearless Speech, Responsibility, Freedom & The Possibility of Being Wrong', 8 July 2022; available at https://tinyurl.com/zsk7jmfc (accessed 11 July 2022).

2 See, for example, Keith Tudor, 'From humanism to Humanistic Psychology and back again', in R. House, D. Kalisch & J. Maidman (eds), *Humanistic Psychology: Current Trends and Future Prospects*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2018, pp. 222–36.

3 Aaron Balick & Richard House, 'Interview: Psychologists on the Case of Social Networking', *Self & Society*, 48 (1), 2020, pp. 41–51.

4 See Ido Hartogsohn & Amir Vudka, 'Technology and addiction: what drugs can teach us about digital media', *Transcultural Psychiatry*, DOI: 10.1177/13634615221105116, 2022, pp. 1–11; available at https://tinyurl.com/yc2sxpxv (accessed 13 July 2022). See also Elizabeth Moroney, Steve S. Lee, Ashley M. Ebbert & Suniya S. Luthar, 'Digital media use frequency, online behaviors, and risk for negative mental health in adolescents in high-achieving schools', *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, https://doi.org/10.1177/13591045221108834, 2022; abstract available at https://tinyurl.com/2re6a9x5 (accessed 13 July 2022).

5 See, for example, Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, Verso, London, 2014.

6 Paul Levy, *Digital Inferno*, Clairview Books, West Hoathly, W. Sussex, 2014, 208 pp. My review appears in *New View* magazine, 76 (Summer), 2015 (available from RH on request).

7 See Jill Hall, *The Reluctant Adult: The Problem of Choice*, Prism Press, Dorset, 1993.

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