



## Gene's Three Points

### **FIRST THEORETICAL POINT:**

#### **INTERACTION FIRST**

A human being is not a box full of content—whether you call them experiences or feelings or dynamic circuits or however you want to think about what I call the content, a human being is not the content. A human being *is* interaction. I'm violating grammar and saying something strange. I'm saying I think we *are* interactions. Living bodies are interactions with the air and the ground and the food and other species members. We are interactions. If you're looking at me, you can see I'm interaction. You can see I've got these eyes and hands and feet on the ground and sexual organs and this inhaling and exhaling and sweating out and taking in – you can see I *am* interaction. I'm not just interaction on the physical level, but with other people. Nine months with my mother before I was born. And then everybody else. I am also a special kind of interaction with myself. While I'm talking, that's going on more below, but when I stop, right away, I talk to myself. So that, too, is interaction.

When I think of a person as being interaction, then it makes sense that in interacting with a new person they're going to *be* different. Sense yourself in different versions, how different you are with different people. And what different things they would say about you, too, from that difference. It isn't that different friends of mine have different perspectives, I'm different with them. My job as a therapist is to be the kind of interaction that we would expect to make the person better. With each person it's different. And it's very different from doing it alone. The content is different even if it sounds the same. Even if a person says all the same words that they've said alone in his room, it's different when he says them to you. It's a different living process. And that's where the possibility of change exists.

- A human being is an interaction, not the content.
- The content is a different living process even if it sounds the same. The same content is a completely different physiological and psychological and personal and electrical living process – a different living process because it is a different interaction.

In recent years it's become understood that just repeating your trauma is retraumatizing. It's necessary to be sure if we're going to relive the trauma, that we're reliving it *as* a wider, thicker present interaction. That's when it's going to heal. If it's just repeating and there is no relational thickness, then it's retraumatizing. That's the same point which I'm theoretically explaining.

What marks theory for me is when I lay it out, in front of me, then I get to say *OH! That explains it!* And you know this, but I'm explaining it and that has a certain value. Theory is very precious...at the same time I think all theories are at least partly wrong. The explaining is valuable. I'm explaining what you already knew by saying human beings are interaction.

- When two people are interacting in a room together, there is only one interaction, even though there are two people. Because the interaction is first.

People can be derived from the interaction. So if you say who or what will you be there with this person. Say my client goes home and I'm sort of not satisfied and I'm investigating what happened and I'm saying, *Well, who were you? And what were you?* Well, I was whatever I was in that interaction. And so was my client. We are derivable – of course not in every way – from the interaction. – there's only one interaction and two people. So if you interview the two people, they'll tell you violently different things, but they're talking *from* the same interaction. There's only one interaction. So when Carl Rogers put up his theory of 3 conditions: empathy, genuineness and positive (garbled) he added a condition, he said, the client must perceive those conditions. And I was in therapy at the time and I argued with him. I said that's not true, the client does not have to perceive the conditions. The client can be absolutely clear that the therapist is not positive

about the client and does not care about him and is not genuine and still the therapy will work if the therapist is actually positively attuned and genuine and empathetic. And at that time I didn't have the theory. It took me a year and a half before I perceived these conditions but how did I get there in my therapy? I was absolutely sure that this nice middle class mid-century lovely man couldn't possibly understand me...this monstrous thing that I was. So if you'd interviewed me then I would have said that none of these conditions obtained. In retrospect I know they were there. There has to be a way for someone to get from 2. I'm saying the interaction is much more basic. Than the perception the two people have of each other. If you want to know what the interaction is, you have to sense it. Feel it. You have to say to yourself, *What's going on with me here, now?* Then you can feel it and if it's unsound you can find where it's unsound. *Oh, I'm getting tight, oh, I'm withdrawing, oh, I wish I weren't here.* Well, that's not the kind of interaction that's going to help anybody. So I'm asserting that if you can make the kind of interaction that's going on, the kind from which you can expect that somebody would be better, then you're doing the job. Focusing is also an interaction.

## SECOND THEORETICAL POINT:

### CARRYING FORWARD

Experience is a carrying forward. Carrying forward is a theoretical term that I made up, which turns out to be extremely useful. Almost everybody that ever hears it starts using it because almost everything in life is neither the same, the same, the same, nor exactly different. Most things have to do with carrying forward and how the carrying forward works. I use carrying forward for when life moves forward. So if I say to myself, *Well you wanted to talk about carrying forward, now did you do that?* Then I get a distinct sense that yes, as far as it's gone, it carries forward about, it carries your feeling about carrying forward – you follow me? When we speak, except in very rare times when we write out what we're going to say, we speak directly from the body, have you noticed that? You open your mouth and the words come out. And if they don't come, you're stuck. So I'm speaking directly from my sense that, *Oh, I'm going to tell them about carrying forward.* The point is that what will carry something forward that you feel or think or are or live – what will carry it forward is not really known in advance. And since we know a lot about ourselves, we often think we do know. You know when you've said something back to your client that you've carried them forward, or you said something to your client and you know that you didn't carry them forward. Now, you can still be right, you can try again, you can say it three times but if it never carries forward, don't. Instead of that, say, *Well what do you have there, where I'm pointing?* Because so often we say very useful, very good things to people and they're totally useless and wrong because we don't invite them to go there, where pointing, and say, *Well what do you have there?* Because what is always there is a texture, a massive experience, ongoing, living process that is always more ordered and more complicated than anything we can say or think. So if you say something that's absolutely right, it may still take five or six (what I call) carry forward steps and then the person may be able to use what you've said, but it'll still be really different. Because after five or steps in there, the most you're going to is, *Oh, I was in the right direction. Oh, I knew it would have to be something like that.* But what comes will be so much more specific and different – nothing you could have said yourself and yet you can often have the satisfaction, *Oh, I was looking in the right direction.* But carrying forward steps is what I want to make a concept for. And these are life process steps. Carrying forward is life moving forward. And you can feel that. It's like exhaling when you're holding your breath or it's like inhaling when you haven't breathed. It's like eating when you're hungry. It's like going to the bathroom when you need to. It has a continuity to it that you don't make up.

Life is not just static. It carries forward. And when it gets stuck, it wants to carry forward. I call it implies a carrying forward step that hasn't happened yet. And maybe it'll never happen, but it pushes for it, wants it, implies it, hints at it. It makes you all kinds of messes because it needs some kind of carrying forward there that hasn't come.

In the beginning the carrying forward steps are very characteristic – they wouldn't make a good Hollywood film – they don't usually come, *Oh, this is the solution!* It comes as, Oh, it's a little different than what I said, I don't think I'm exactly ashamed, I think I'm like that, I don't have a word for it. Or a little transference steps come there that you don't really understand, funny steps that you don't brag about, about five or six of those and then finally something comes that you could write an article about. Carrying forward applies to every living thing.

Life wants to move forward. And you can rely there on that's why positive steps come. I'm explaining why they come. They come because life is like that. Life is a forward moving, living process. Living things tend to stay alive. When we provide a certain kind of interaction, the person gets different in the interaction, but not just different, but better. Life can move again. We can then use this framework to put details in there.

## **THIRD THEORETICAL POINT:**

### **IMPLICIT INTRICACY**

The living process, the experiencing process is, even in plants and animals, is an implicit intricacy. Anything we say or think about it, any scientific theory about it, anything we ever say is wrong, if you think that that's what it is. If you think that it may be helpful to think about it this way then the theory can be right and help a lot. If you think that living is actually made up out of these verbal conceptual units, then you're wrong before you even start to say what the theory is. Sometimes a theory is wonderful and helps and sometimes it's all wrong. Life is not made up of theoretical units, or any units. It's a carrying forward interaction. And so it's always implicitly more intricate, implicitly more complex, implicitly more interesting.

Sometimes I beg my client, *Let's be interested in you, so that we can have some joy in finding how interesting and surprising and intricate and complicated and unexpected and unpredictable this really is once it opens up.* I hope that we can be interested because even though right now it looks exactly like type A diagnostic this and that, if it's going to be allowed to breathe, within five minutes it's going to be different. It's going to be more complicated...yeah, that's true, but..and it's going to have all these shades ... I call that an implicit intricacy.

If you theoretically assert that that's what human being are, that's what pathology is, that's what all the dynamics are, that's what the arc types are, that's what the behavior circuits are, whatever you name it, underneath it's implicit intricacy. If you theoretically assert this, then all your practice will have a support to it. This way most people have a theory here then when you go to practice if you tape record them, there's hardly any relationship. What life—a person, a living thing—all these words really refer to, what's really going on is an implicit intricacy. But it's an implicit intricacy that *wants* to be carried forward and it is already an interaction. It's at least partly and mostly importantly an interaction with you if you're working with, well, either way. If you're working with yourself or if you're working with other people, you need to look at what is the interaction that is going on. How am I treating myself? Who is this person focusing, this spider in the middle of this spider web focusing saying, well wait a minute, that's not going to get me any different. Let me first go in there where it isn't just that. Where I can be in touch with the murky ongoingness.

The implicit intricacy is really, really different in each person. Each person is a completely irreplaceable take on the universe.

We're each completely different and yet we're all interhumanly social so that your living there is completely different. But if you speak from there, then we can all relate to it. The more private and autistic and unspeakable, the soggier, the more meaningful it's going to be when you can speak from it because it will be further away from all the jabber.