EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONAL HELPERS

A Residential Workshop Innovation

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Preface

This book springs from, brings into detailed view and reaches beyond an innovation that took place half a century ago, though it remains fresh in the human processes involved and up to date in this telling. Venturesome participants from across Australia converged for a novel developmental experience in the then rather isolated small city of Armidale in the New England region of New South Wales. They were drawn to an unfamiliar learning experiment on a new-forming path that their resulting experience helped to illuminate and define. We called the project they were drawn to a "workshop in therapeutic counselling." Nearly all who came to it were already working in personal and social helping fields (and based in mental health disciplines) but keen to extend their capacities and personal reach in their work. The people conducting the workshop were exponents of new thinking and practice in counselling and psychotherapy. The workshops would run for nearly two weeks in a university residential setting (almost everyone came from somewhere else) so that the interest and motivation were strong and the workshops were exceptionally eventful experiences to virtually everyone who took part.

What motivates me now to revisit and search deeply into the process, effects and meaning of this landmark episode in my professional life and the lives of colleagues who participated and carried effects into their work and relationships with so many others? This question contains part of the answer, that is, that the episode and its consequences strongly

stand out in my earlier work and life. Moreover, my files still bulge with precious records and data from that singular experience, so that close documentation is no problem. The fresh tracking here of what happened, how it unfolded and with what short- and long-term effects and wider implications is a search that extends far beyond earlier scattered, partial and relatively inaccessible accounts. It has relevance for the extensive current work with small groups whose raison d'être in varied contexts is to serve developmental needs and aspirations of the participants themselves. Perhaps most important, I believe that this story has unique potential value for students and trainees learning about intensive groups and how to be an effective facilitator and acute thinker in this complex sphere. It also could find its way to thoughtful experiential and therapy group "consumers" as well as a range of interested practitioners and teachers.

When the workshops began, I was relatively fresh from my doctoral studies and training in Chicago, with Carl Rogers and others, and had about four years of post-Ph.D. teaching and therapy experience that included demonstrations in groups of summer school participants (mainly teachers, while still in the United States) and one stand-alone multisession group. The then young University of New England (UNE) in Armidale that I had come to was building its reputation in a conservative academic climate that encouraged established content in its degree programmes – nearly all undergraduate. I needed to search beyond my regular teaching for expression of the most distinctive resources and interests I came with. There was some interest in Australia in Rogers's new thought and practice, although no one here besides myself had gone through focused training and first-hand experience with him. Other newer therapies mostly had not yet surfaced or were barely beginning, and behavioural and cognitive approaches still lay in the future. A special feature and resource at UNE was its energetic and strongly developing adult education/extensions department. This also was a crucial factor in helping to make it possible in practice for the events in the early chapters of this book to take place.

When it first became clear that there was considerable interest "out there" in coming to where I was located for a mooted full-time two-week workshop, it became possible for me to call on the other best-qualified person in Australia to collaborate with me in this initiative. This colleague,

Prof. Pat Pentony at the Australian National University, also was known to a good many of the prospective workshop members. The fact that we would be working intensively in smallish groups grew in part from Rogers' strongly facilitating person-centred style in his leadership of the University of Chicago Counselling Centre and from the early interest in group therapy (Hobbs, 1951) and group-centred leadership (Gordon, 1951) by some of his colleagues. The residential Armidale workshops broke new ground in their process nature and effects as a concentrated experiential learning group experience, for all of us involved.

The chapters in Part 1 of this book closely describe and illustrate the workshop process, especially from transcriptions of many group sessions, and account of how this experience was perceived and judged by members at the time. The transcribed "voices" of members in the intensive small groups, and their rating appraisals of a spectrum of qualities at the end of each session, are the compelling main avenues in this first Part. Part 2 of the volume focuses on member experience, observation and activity following the workshops. It begins with a collation of communicative feedback letter reports from members, now back home in their work and personal life situations. Separately, follow-up questionnaire data gathered more formally after six to eight months was closely studied and is reported in Chapter 7. Other chapters in this second part are based on very long-term follow-up inquiry. They search into rich information from life events data from ex-workshop members and from interviews with a cross-section of these members, all of this gathered some ten years after their workshop experience.

The further Part 3 of the book advances an encompassing systematic view and theory of experiential groups, as a main feature. A great part of human life takes place in and through a wide diversity of small groups, most of which are vital member parts of varied bigger systems. My search moves on to a close outline of the continued Armidale workshop story and some of its ripple effects and emergent later manifestations of which I have direct knowledge. The broader contemporary professional and social importance of low-structure participant-centred learning and discovery groups is a further topic.

Finally, there are two appendices, the first describing an exploratory study calling on the viewpoints of outside observers in significant

ongoing relationships with workshop members. The author's Relationship Inventory was variously used to tap estimations before and after the workshops. The second appendix is inventively designed to assist students, and interested others, in their active discovery learning and idea development, from engagement with individual chapters of the book.

Altogether, this volume follows a career-long interest and finally does sufficient justice to the courageous "voyages" of member-participants who in effect were contributing architects to the original workshops (there were no passive consumers) and who went on to be influential contributors to the development of many others. I have woven together the data and evidence gathered from this band of explorers and the systematising of ideas growing out of the experience and process we engaged in – as well as my related later experience and thought as outlined in the final chapter. As I faced the project of this further book, unwritten, I asked myself, "Am I still up to it?" Once envisioned, however, this was a rhetorical question. I found myself working on a path of increasing and often intense absorption as the varied parts and accompanying thought of the volume grew into its present state. I am very glad to have taken the plunge and emerge now feeling the result is a kind of gift to those who value and would wish to draw on it.

Godfrey T. Barrett-Lennard

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The "Armidale" Residential Workshops: Concept and Beginnings

The workshops that are focal in this book contributed to the emergence of a distinctive approach to learning and development, especially for counsellors and related helping professionals. Extending from my Preface, a sense of responsibility as well as interest, a desire to search into and develop a fuller knowing of the phenomenon focused on here, and a belief that the story and implications of this innovation can be of valuable interest to others, all energised me in preparing this book. Although extensively documented, it is not the same account I would or could have given when the experience involved was close behind me. As I pored over the detailed records, many of the events and participants came to life again, but not in a replay of the original experience. I view it now from a consciousness that has moved on and that I believe permits greater objectivity as well as a freshness of perspective. This short chapter pictures the starting context, aims, setting and arrangements for the events it focuses on, and it foreshadows the full scope of this volume.

The working plans for the first "therapeutic counselling workshop," initiated by the author, were conceived and announced in 1962. This step tested the waters of likely interest and of preference in regard to timing. Who the workshop was for, who would lead it and their pertinent

background, the expected scope of the experience, and the accommodation setting and likely direct cost were outlined. The announcement specified that the University of New England departments of Adult Education and Psychology were jointly sponsoring this innovation and that the "seminar/workshop" would run for two weeks in February *or* May 1963. The crisp portrayal of essential information was circulated to a range of practice, training and other groups and key individuals in the mental health field across Australia, with content as follows:

> The seminar/workshop will be open to people already engaged professionally in psychological counselling, guidance or therapy. It is expected that those taking part will represent a variety of disciplines and that they will be working in such settings as child guidance clinics, mental hospitals or outpatient clinics, school guidance or counselling services, marriage guidance and other social service agencies, vocational guidance or rehabilitation services, university counselling services or private clinical practice.[1]
>
> The general purpose… is to assist those taking part to further develop their capacities to engage in psychologically helpful relationships with other people. Related to this practical objective, there will be opportunity for members to extend their thinking on such topics as (a) the nature of constructive personality change, (b) the qualities of a therapeutic relationship, (c) characteristics of personal maturity or optimal psychological functioning, (d) the place of values in psychological therapy and (d) recent theoretical and research developments in client-centred therapy.
>
> [Participants] will not be confronted with a pre-arranged syllabus or programme of topics, and every effort will be made to ensure that the specific content of the workshop experience does, in fact, grow out of the thinking and concerns of those who choose to engage in it. Material resources will include … a specially prepared collection of books, reprints and tape recordings and films of therapy interviews. These will be available to members to draw on individually or (in the case of films and tapes) for use in collective meetings.

My background as workshop leader was briefly sketched, as were the arrangements for residential college accommodation during university

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[1] This paragraph and the first sentences of the two that follow apply also to the main announcement of the second workshop in the series, held the next year – with three facilitators and groups.

vacation time and the fact that enrolment would be limited to allow for the intensive experience envisioned. Responding enquiries and applications quickly began, and there was back and forth correspondence by postal mail (email and mobile phones did not exist). A general follow-up communication from an Adult Education colleague who managed the more formal administrative communication indicated that over 30 people had indicated serious interest, and it confirmed the May 1963 timing. In a further message, we gave the significant fresh information that my colleague Prof Pat Pentony from the Australian National University had accepted an invitation to co-lead the workshop with me.

We also advised that our preparation of the collection of resource materials included recent papers by Carl Rogers, Eugene Gendlin, myself and a range of other contributors. Some of the included papers not readily available in published form were to be duplicated so that members could keep them. In the event, our total list included about 60 items. It had occurred to us that some members may have papers of their own of potential interest to others taking part, and we offered to prepare copies of one such article of modest length from any participant, for distribution to interested others. Thus, although we anticipated an experiential discovery-learning emphasis, there was organised provision for people to study professionally relevant materials, in keeping with their practical and theoretical interests. As far as possible in its context, the workshop would be a cooperative enterprise, although new in kind to virtually all participants. Exactly what kind this would be, in terms of process, could not be specified fully; only its broad qualities and basic direction were envisioned.

The therapeutic counselling topic and context of the workshop, the carefully worded aim of participants being able to further develop their capacities to engage in psychologically helpful relationships and the stated reliance on content growing out of member concerns all implied a responsive context and hinted at a growth aim. The idea of a personally involving experiential learning emphasis was we thought implicit though not directly stated. There was considerable reference to the collection of available readings and recordings and various theoretical and professional issues that might be addressed. Looking back, there was sufficient ambiguity about the process of the first workshop for readers accustomed

to quite structured training/learning contexts to have somewhat differ-ent expectations than those already acquainted with the idea of learning though intensive experiential interaction.

In some respects, the experience and even style of the workshop began before members arrived in Armidale. It included the acknowledging cor-respondence and periodic follow-ups to the original announcement, and the stimulation for some people of refreshing or extending their read-ing from Rogers' writing or other pertinent sources. Many intending members would have considered and discussed with colleagues what they hoped to get out of the experience. This advance anticipation no doubt was more specific in the case of those who came to the second work-shop, a year later – most of whom knew someone who had taken part the first time or had heard or seen reports of it. Indeed it was clear that some members had been strongly encouraged to attend Workshop 2 by colleagues or people senior to them in the same organisation. They had a better idea in advance of what they were getting into, and thus were not pioneering and creating the nature of their experience de novo as much as the first group were. Two substantially qualified members of the first workshop were co-leaders with me the second time, each of us facilitating a group. They were not as steeped in client-centred thinking as Pat Pentony and I had been and there was somewhat more diversity in leadership style.

The workshop members met formally (there had been an informal welcome the previous evening) as a whole group on the first morning for self-introductions, final practical briefing and, especially, to work out and settle the composition of the two subgroups and their meeting times. Just how to divide the membership was a primary issue for collective deci-sion. I have no record of exactly how we did this, but know that it was an "inefficient" participatory process in which everyone could have a voice and many did. Probably, chance played a part, as it would have done, for example, by assigning every second person in an alphabetical listing or in their seating arrangement in the whole meeting, in a "draft" break-down that could then be refined on other grounds. One of the grounds that I remember came up was to avoid placing people who worked in the same setting together, into the same workshop group. It is likely also that Pentony and I effectively tossed a coin after the groups were

provisionally composed to see which one each of us would work with. Whatever the exact process, opening it to all suggestions and views in a group problem-solving process no doubt helped to set the tone of what followed, although evoking a degree of impatience in some participants.

Pentony and I had significant research as well as practical interests. As the workshop initiator-leaders, we felt responsible to carefully gather information that would be helpful in evaluating the process and impact of what we thought could be a deeply involving and eventful experience, one that some people might struggle with and have strong reactions to. Being in residence together and meeting day after day in the groups was potentially a pressure-cooker situation, and we did not take it for granted that everyone would react positively all the time to the exchanges and dynamics or feel a continuity of valued learning and/or growth. With participant consent, the group sessions were regularly audio tape-recorded for later study, *and* short rating forms were answered by each person at the end of each of the morning and afternoon two-hour group sessions (17 in all). Given that the groups met for self- and interactive exploration of professional and personal issues, without set agendas or direct guidance, there was considerable experimentation and unevenness in the process (see next chapters), including instances of stressful frustration as well as freeing new insight, and a constant evolution of mutual awareness and relationships.

The residential feature meant that opportunities for significant contact continued in the workshops beyond the organised experiential group sessions. This interchange naturally was more selective and sometimes happenstance, more socially informal though at times intense, and often one-on-one or in small clusters. Self-inquiry, expressive behaviour and relationships evolved through the whole experience and in the absence of immediately present engagements at home and in work. The regular official groups tended to be highly eventful and in the foreground of the participants' experience and what challenged them, as will be further documented through this report. Members soon came to feel strong affiliation with their ("my") group and its emergent character, struggles and ethos and to feel a considerably looser affiliation with the other parallel group or groups. They were of course privy to the flow of exchanges and evolving interconnection of people and meaning in their own group,

while having no first-hand experience of the process in another group. Given the residential context and cross-group relationships, people did gain impressions of the other group(s).

The first nine chapters of this book flow in their detail from Workshops 1, 2 and 3 in the original series, including all the after-workshop and later follow-up information from the participant members. Along the way, there also are some observations from related contexts. These include a workshop, also held in the same setting but outside the data-rich series in focus here, conducted by Carl Rogers during his visit to Australia early in 1965. The further chapters, as noted in the Preface, have a wider compass although also centred in the experiential group sphere. Chapter 10, in particular, articulates an embracing descriptive theory growing out of the author's whole journey of experience and thought in this area – as a region of special interest intensified by the Armidale workshops and benefiting from much later experience. It is long incubated and an integrative satisfying contribution in its own right.

Some of the Armidale participants went on to return for one or more further workshops, each time with its new membership and potentialities. Given the challenging new approach to professional development and learning, the relatively small disciplinary circles in Australia that members came from, the depth of their involvement and the arousal of interest among peers at home, the workshops were quickly visible and variously appraised from the outside. Besides the informal follow-up interchanges, some participants gave talks and people involved continued to process their experience. We invited feedback letters from participants on their retrospective view of the workshop relatively soon after they got home again. This was valuable information as closely documented in Chap. 6. Follow-up data were gathered systematically after half a year had passed and from a reduced sample after 10 years – and is presented and discussed in Chaps. 7, 8 and 9.

The second (1964) and third (1965) workshops were not simply a replication of the first although the same in concept, duration and setting. Each of the experiential groups (seven in all) was distinctive in the background experience, expectations and mix of members and leaders. Being without precedent in Australia, the pioneering first workshop probably attracted the most venturesome souls, although all groups in

significant ways were venturing into the unknown. As each person and group felt their way, there was a degree of struggle and sometimes conflict. Experienced setbacks were not uncommon and the evolving dyadic and group relationships naturally varied. This work speaks to differences between the groups examined as well as to their overall character – each group with intense and deeply involving episodes. New experience and even crises in which established patterns do not suffice, or don't work, create potential for fresh learning.

Shortly after Workshop 1 ended, I wrote to everyone, mainly about the circulation of articles that were copied for all workshop members. The letter, in personal voice from that time, also expresses something not unlike my present reaction. It reads, in part:

> I have started to listen back to the recordings of our early sessions, and find this fascinating. It is not just like reliving something deeply felt (although it has this quality to some degree), but a different and exciting experience in its own right. I hesitate to say more until you have had an opportunity to crystallise, perhaps still tentatively, your own after-thoughts and reactions relating to the quality and significance of the experience.

This message came to people on their home grounds away from the workshop immersion and may have further encouraged their communication back to us with their own personal after reflections (see Chap. 6).

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 stay with the rich content of the dialogue itself from the daily group sessions. They set forth and examine extended transcript material from the two rather different groups from Workshop 1, and what these recordings reveal about the unfolding ways participants engaged with each other in sharing and declaring their varied feelings, attitudes, ideas and interactive/relational responses and shifts within the workshop crucible. The chapters focusing on session content are complemented by evidence from participant ratings made at the end of each group session and the highly communicative feedback letter reports of members when they were at home again in their personal lives and work.

Further chapters turn focused attention to the extensive and varied follow-up research information from workshop members, gathered both short term and up to ten years later. This interconnecting tapestry of

information illuminates a domain of outcomes and indirect effects. The unfolding of systematic theory that is presented in the next to last chapter can be viewed as a different kind of significant outcome of the workshop and later experience in groups. Finally, the flow of ensuing residential workshops in Armidale is traced, and still later adaptations are considered, in course teaching (counselling and small group fields) and private practice contexts.

Since Workshop 1 was quite new and unique in its organisation and nature at the time, there was no established pattern of expectations regarding its specific process or effects that should flow from it. A "cost," twinned with exciting opportunity of breaking this new ground, meant that no descriptive reports from close examination of very similar intensive workshops or their outcomes were available for potential members to consult. As the subsequent member letter reports and follow-up data were coming in, audio-recorded regular sessions of the two distinctive groups in Workshop 1 were being laboriously draft transcribed. I invite the reader to accompany me next through the opening substance of this story, especially as conveyed in the highly process-informative member dialogue reproduced in the next three chapters. Chapter 2 starts with an introduction to the challenges entailed in producing and presenting this rich content. Each of these chapters, and those that follow, also have a place in the final appendix to the book, which presents follow-up exercises for their interest and value to readers, especially students – as also referred to in the Preface.

Part I

'As It Happened': The Process Documented

2

Finding Our Difficult Way: Group X's Transcribed Beginning

Transcribing group sessions with voices from up to 19 people is a considerable challenge. And a single two-hour session fully transcribed and from a confidently verbal group can easily run to 10,000 words. Typing assistants worked on recordings of at least 25 group sessions from the first Armidale workshop, and up to half of their typescripts were closely checked to achieve as complete a record as possible in terms of identifying each speaker and their whole wording. This chapter is largely filled with generous portions of the dialogue in the first two regular meetings of "Group X" in the first workshop. Some notes are inserted, principally to more fully track the process around omitted passages. Chapter 3 follows the process through the mid-point and late stages of the same group's life over the course of the workshop.

The unscripted group dialogue between very active participants finding their way remains as fresh as it was originally. Some of the members, however, are no longer alive, and the others by now are elderly. With the half-century time lapse, confidentiality recedes as an issue and minimal disguise is needed. Even so, here and in later chapters, substitute names are used and other identifying details such as the exact place of work are

generally omitted. My own name (informally, Goff), when spoken by members, is left in the transcript. Otherwise, designations such as Lx (leader of Group X) identify utterances by the official group leader.

Workshop 1 began, as described in Chap. 1, with an organisational meeting of all participants, most of whom were already checked into a university residential college, during vacation time. This meeting provided them with further information about various practicalities and an opportunity to work out together the broadly planned division into the two experiential groups, and set the specific timing of regular group sessions. The breakdown of the groups (Chap. 4 centres on "Group Y") was largely determined in this meeting. Suggestions were made, there was considerable discussion, and chance certainly played a part. I have no notes on the exact process, but the interested listening to various ideas and the consultative problem-solving spirit of that meeting helped to set the stage for what followed.

Over the last half-century, idiomatic language has further evolved, swearing is less inhibited (hardly any occurred in this gender-mixed workshop), and of course, masculine pronouns are no longer used for either gender as was the case then. In direct quotations, I prefer not to change the original wording unless to reduce "uhms" and repetitions, edit out non-essential parts of the longer statements and *slightly* streamline the included text of hesitant or cumbersome expressions. Dots (ellipses), such as …, imply that words have been omitted. Square brackets enclose words occasionally substituted or added to clarify meanings. Four or five dots imply that whole sentences or paragraphs have been skipped. Complete omissions of the contributions of one or more speakers are mostly signposted by three long dashes, – – –. Double or triple hyphens usually indicate that a person's speech has been interrupted or has tailed off. *The participants' own statements taken from transcripts are reproduced in italics,* and inserted comments and explanation for the reader are in different fonts.

The numbering of each member's included statements, *in the first session only,* has been retained for convenient reference. The selection opens with the self-introductions by all members of the group, indicative of their varied styles. These introductions begin to speak of why each person is there and their varied expectations and preferences. The situation

is novel to most of them, in the basic aspect of having no predetermined agenda or clearly defined procedure. Naturally, some people speak more often and/or at more length than others do, although all seem able to express themselves confidently. *Their speech is reproduced in italics.* Lx opens the interchange, feeling his way:

Session 1: Who Are We and What Do We *Want?*

Lx-1: …I suggest that we begin by giving each person an opportunity to comment briefly on what you hope will come out of this *experience for you personally. Perhaps we could make it a bit more specific than that. What sort of immediate questions or interests or aims occur to you at this moment? Either that, or the more general question of, simply, what is it that brings you here? If you would be agreeable to our starting out this way and going round… I would be happy to say, since I've suggested it, a word or two in a more personal way than I have shared so far with reference to myself. How does anyone else feel about this procedure as a starting point?*

> Everyone wore name tags, and most were at or near the starting point of their acquaintance. The idea of self-introductions made sense to those who responded, and no one signalled objection to this way of beginning. In this unknown and just-getting-to-know-each-other situation, most conversation at the start was carefully expressed, and it began after a brief pause before the group leader resumed, still feeling his way and (in retrospect) "explaining" more than facilitating optimally.

Lx-2: … Well, I haven't thought out what I wanted to say, really. I have been…I feel quite fortunate in having had the experience that I did have in working with Rogers, particularly in the period of working with him in the University of Chicago Counselling Centre…. I've also had the opportunity of being quite free to work with groups on a number of occasions in whatever way I personally felt was most congenial and productive… And I felt that if there were others, as there proved to be, like yourselves, who were interested in this general approach to therapy and human relationships, then it would

be something I would be very interested in doing, to organise an experience to make it possible for you to pursue that interest further. And so, basically that's why I'm here … and my motives for initiating this venture. I feel just a little bit apprehensive, less so at the moment than I was a day or two ago, about how it would really work out in practice. …. Do you [speaking to Ralph, next to Lx] *feel like – would you be willing to take the next turn?*

Ralph-1: Well, I'll go a little way down the road. I'm [name, department and institution]. I think that the first idea you proposed I really couldn't say because I don't have any particular expectations in terms of issues or whatever. The second, what did bring me here, what I'm looking for – I think first the idea of a workshop in therapeutic counselling, when the co-leaders both had experience with Rogers, I expected this would be part of it and I look forward to this part of it too. And I wanted to get together … with other people who I presumed to be especially interested in therapy and I seem to recently have not found so many people who are terribly interested in therapy. This latter thing was rather important to me.

Anne-1: Yes, I'm _____ [name] and I'm a psychologist in an adult unit in [city] and I also work in marriage guidance, training some counsellors and doing some counselling. And my objects in coming here, well, first of all because I hope to be able to talk to some other counsellors and some other therapists, and particularly those interested in Rogerian methods of counselling. But I also feel that I have some reservations and some conflicts that I'd like to work out about this theory and I thought this might be a good way of doing it.

Mary-1: I'm _____ and I'm a social worker with [names organisation] and I think that I was interested in, also, in clarifying my own ideas about the values of these techniques and different kinds of therapeutic approaches. And whether in the tremendous hurly-burly of pressures in the family agency whether it's possible to use Rogerian techniques fully. And I'm also very interested in group therapy as such…

Barry-2: [Gives name and city] I'd like to listen a little, and have my say later if I may.

Cliff-2: [Gives name, position and institution]. As one who is fairly sympathetic to the Rogerian approach, I came here realising, like you, that since this was organised by Goff and Pat Rogerian methods were going to be put forward pretty strongly. I had hoped that I'd get a chance to rethink… [and] I had hoped that we might have a fairly wide cross-section of interests…. I

think probably I'm correct in saying that amongst the group I've met so far there are a number of people who are – who wouldn't class themselves, let's say, as Rogerian counsellors, who are interested to know more about it and are quite sceptical, perhaps, on some points… This is one of the reasons that added interest to me because I think that if we have this sort of person present, this makes us rethink our own point of view.

Will-1: I'm [name]. I'm a psychologist with [organization and city]. I'm a bit confused about why I'm here really. Originally I got very interested in Rogers through his writing, and I wrote to him and asked could I come over there and [indicates why this did not work out]—and I continued to be interested in him, notwithstanding this, and eventually I was referred to Goff and wrote to him…. I suppose that basically I came because I was interested in Rogers, that I wanted to amplify my views… But–and as far as the feelings are concerned I too feel somewhat anxious that you're going to get far too personal, and consequently, I feel some anxiety about the situation when I didn't expect this.

Ros-1: I'm [name, organisation and city]. We've been acquainted with Rogers from way back because this has been the basis of the approach of our training. There is a great attraction for me personally in coming to be part of a free group and to also be involved in relationships with people who are involved in relationships with clients and with patients. .. The organisation have what they want from me too and I'm involved with counsellors once they have done their training and are doing case work. And it was hoped that through me coming what benefit that I achieved as–or that I had–could be disseminated amongst them gradually over years probably, and also they are interested in what personal effect the group media has.

James-1: I'm aware of a surge of anxiety at the moment. [Gives name, profession, institution and city]. I'm not too sure exactly what my expectations are in coming here. I think I've always been mostly interested in therapy and I have found, too, in working in the unit that I am in that I need to have quite a large concern with training. With these two areas … I'd like to be able to learn more, and I hope too to see Rogerian methods in a different perspective to what I have in the past. I haven't always felt that they really did apply very much to my particular work. In fact, I have partly tried them and I partly rejected them. So that I hope that I may get a rather different perspective here. I hope, too, that what I can pick up here would be of value in taking back for training purposes into the [names setting].

Arthur-1: [Gives name, positions, organisation and city]. I came here for two reasons: One is an academic reason–I have a strong leaning towards the Rogerian method, technique and attitude. I want to know more about it and to see why it works when I'm involved. … Secondly, for my own mental health I came because my life is streamlined in such a way that for months and months I'm counselling other people, I'm an authority figure, I'm referring people, I have to make decisions about people in all sorts of ways. And what I anticipated, and it would appear that here I'm going to be involved in a group. And I can express myself in the group and through the group and while someone else is doing a sort of leadership–also I can see it's going to be a leaderless group. I have some experience on that, I like that, and two years ago had it in University and I thought, well, here is the same thing…

Dave-2 [already self-introduced]: I think I can best describe my motivation by a moth and a candle. I had a growing conviction that I needed to learn somehow to manage better as a counsellor–-I had a look at some of Rogers' writings recently and have come more and more to the conclusion that I wondered whether this way of working was for me at all. It seemed to me to be demanding more and more a particular kind of person and I very much doubted not only that I was this kind of person but very much doubted that I wanted to become this kind of person. So I wanted to gain from this seminar what I could in the way of understanding people better, but with very real reservations about how far I wanted to go in this. Now, I knew this was going to happen and I can see that it is happening–a feeling of pressure towards involvement beyond the level at which I anticipate I am going to feel comfortable… and I have a combination then of anxiety and expectancy to see how this is going to work out. Trying at the moment to sit on the fence and just see what happens for a while.

Tess-1: I'm [gives name, organisation, city and profession]. I think from the personal point of view one of my motives in wanting to come is that I've been working for four years in a busy clinic with a very stable kind of staff and we know each other so well that we communicate entirely in shorthand, sometimes rather vulgar shorthand, and I felt it was time I experienced some other people's ideas and had to both explain myself more clearly and allow other people to explain themselves more clearly than is customary with us. From the point of view of Rogerian methods I've always been very interested to discover whether the kind of people who are Rogerian are one particular kind

of person. Being myself intensely aggressive, very dogmatic and suffering from extreme doubts about everything under the sun, I doubt very much whether I'm any good at the non-directive technique. I doubt even more, and I think this is more important, whether I'm very receptive to being managed in this way and I should be very interested to find out how the group manages my aggression (laughing).

Janet-1: I'm _____. A short while ago my husband retired ... which meant that we stopped travelling from place to place and we've settled down [indicates new situation]. I felt it was important to me as a person to be able to continue these interests I have in social work and psychiatry and that sort of thing. And so I got in touch with Goff and he suggested that I join this group and I'm very happy to do so. I'm inclined towards the Rogerian methods but not entirely convinced by them.

Chris-1: My name is_____ from (city and organisation). I was originally trained in the Education Department and was a teacher in schools for many years, and then joined research and guidance and somehow then I found myself faced with the opportunity to begin [names new probation service he heads] So that I don't think it is too extreme to say that the system that grows in my state, at least immediately, will be just as good or bad as I am. We have – I have been fortunate to be given a very free hand .... Our primary duty [is such that] we can't be too non-directive. But I felt that the more skilful we become in counselling, the more the supervisory aspect of our work can recede into the background, and we may be able to fulfil eventually my ideals that [our service] should be more heavily therapeutic than just supervisory...

Keith-1: I'm _____ from_____ I'm in charge of the school there, which presumes to offer what we call educational therapy.... My specific interests are I think in trying to determine what we mean by a relationship with people and to then in some way orient the sort of knowledge that I hope to receive from – to gain from this workshop – to orient this to children, feeling at the moment that whenever I read about Rogerian application to children and from seeing people who claimed to have such an orientation I thought they did it very badly. So this is what I have come to look for.

Ellen-1: I'm _____. I'm a psychiatric social worker employed training marriage guidance counsellors with_____ [organisation]. I wanted to know what it would feel like to be in a group-centred group. I'm interested in failures, because it seems to me that all techniques of interviewing are built

up on those that work. So consequently we never make predictions or try to falsify our hypotheses and we build up a whole system of interviewing purely from the ones it has worked with. We don't do very much looking at failures or why they failed. I'm also interested … in all the things that Rogers … and all the writers of other text books don't deal with, because from my experience … there are always things that come up which the principles don't fit…. I thought perhaps I'd have the opportunity to discuss these things in a group of this kind.

Roger-2: My name is _____ associated with (gives organisation), and my interest is both in the educational and in the therapeutic side of things. In my training for a counselling situation I found myself fed with very heavy doses of Rogers and I found it necessary at certain stages to modify some of these principles enunciated by Rogers and I am keen to evaluate this position as I see it today. Secondly, part of my function is also in the training of counsellors, lay counsellors, and again here I'm desirous of developing better techniques and procedures as well as in assessing further the degree to which the Rogerian approach can be embraced by some people and not others in virtue of their personality pattern. Further, I'm hoping that this permissive workshop group situation will be for me also a growth procedure and that it might lead to a greater degree of self-understanding.

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Barry acknowledges – interspersed with good-natured comments
from others – that he is due to give some kind of self-
introduction that he delayed early in the session, but he is
still hesitating and there is a pause that initiates a
discussion of silences, starting with the next comment. (The
numbering here of each person's statements is not continuous
since there are omissions.)
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Dave-3: I'm reminded of a number of times I've been told and heard other people being told that silence is not something you should worry about – you must learn to tolerate silence. –

Tess-3: I think one of the difficulties of silences is knowing what an earth they are about. If they are an aggressive silence or consenting silence or a nice peaceful silence this is fine. But I think sometimes though in silences we wonder what on earth do we do now, and I'm not sure that this kind of silence should go on too long.

After a few more related comments, another member who is bothered
by the lack of any clear agenda suggests a focus.

*Mary-3: I wonder if it would be possible to take – there was a question pos-
tulated over here as to what a relationship was – whether it would be possible
to see if everybody's agreed on that, as a starting point.*

Dave-4: This would be safely on an intellectual level, wouldn't it?

*Tess-7: I don't know whether it's possible to discuss relationship on an intel-
lectual level.*

*Barry-8: Curiously enough I think the intellectual level is one that can be
the most anxiety provoking in some way. It's the thought of intellectual heresy
to some degree that's probably got some of those worried, including myself.*

*Dave-6: No, no, I would simply have to say I don't agree. Goff's use of
the word, reiterating words like experience, experiencing, suggests to me that,
whether he would admit to it not, he's after another hare and it's not an intel-
lectual discussion at all.*

*Will-3: … I'm sorry, why shouldn't an intellectual discussion be anxiety
provoking? I've missed the point there somewhere.*

Finally, Barry – without responding to the preceding speakers –
gets to the point of giving his self-introduction:

*Barry-9: Yes, well, I've been away from counselling and general clinical work
for some time. Excepting that I've been in regular contact with it in the sense
that I teach it and go to institutions and talk to people in institutions–I've
even done some work in variety of institutions around_____ . But my
interests have shifted … and I find a gap widening between myself and the
old clinical field…. Now, to me it's something of a threat to come back to
a group of people whose occupations, and interests in general, may pull me
back in the direction of the orthodox clinical field. I've developed an intel-
lectual contentment in going towards other things. I feel that I'm going to be
challenged. This'll be good in some ways. I think it will do my students some
good too, as well as myself. But I may cool the discussion at times by getting
up and saying "But look, isn't this just a lot of words, now let's get down to
tin tacks." I may never get the opportunity to do that and that may be good
for all of you.*

Will-4: You meant really that the intellectual discussion might be more anxiety provoking to you rather than –

Barrry-10: I meant that.

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After two or three minor comments the further main part of the
session begins with a continued focus on silences and their
meaning.
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Dave-7: I'm amused at the vague, the vaguely amused looks which I can see–which is as much as to say "Now I wonder who is going to be next, or I wonder how this is going to sort itself out."

Ros-4: This mightn't be so at all. Those amused looks mightn't mean that at all.

Mary-6: Well, mine means I'm just reminiscing on having been through this before, and enduring silences for about a quarter of an hour and everybody – because they all happen to be professionals – making up their minds that they're not going to break the silence because it will mean that they are the most anxious.

Will-8: Yes. Well, haven't you sweated out silences and at the end realised how this patient or whatever you like, client, has wasted time really … I feel that if we sat here in silence for the next two weeks we would waste our time too. – – –

Tess-9: I think we have difficulties in a group of this kind, also, because we are to some extent sophisticated. In other words most of us know some of the theory associated with silences, so that you can say well now are you so anxious that you break the silence or are you so aggressive that you maintain the silence. ….. And I think in this kind of group we have to be a bit careful of this one because otherwise we may get ourselves horribly tied up in what we think other people think we're experiencing.

Dave-8: But it's interesting that we set such a narrow set of alternatives. What about the much more obvious one that we all in a very real sense want to make this thing work, and for me at the moment that would be a much more compelling reason for being involved, I think, than out of some notion that opening one's mouth is dangerous. I haven't got that sort of feeling at all.

Will-13: Yes, but we're all perhaps experiencing that … we are not going to be told what Rogers says or anything like this. We're not going to have our

viewpoint of Rogers clarified because in fact Rogers is not here… We may learn this through experience in the group but this I think comes as a shock to me, in a sense. I think you expressed this too, didn't you–comes as a slight shock to find that you are not going to be lectured to in fact.

Dave-9: Yes, without being able to feel that the usual justification is there – that there is something waiting to be brought out and if this something is allowed to get restive enough it will stick its nose out. I don't feel that that matches the situation so I do have a feeling that an absence of something happening is an absence of progress. At the same time I've got no notion of what sort of thing happening would indicate progress, and I'm back on the fence.

Janet-3: I'd feel happier if the thing were more structured. If we knew we were working towards a certain goal, and what that goal was and where we were going.

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Janet repeats her concern for clear-cut structure or aims at
several points in the session. She lives locally and thus is not
in residence with the others. Chris, in the next remark, could
be challenged on the point of not being able to learn while
talking.
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Chris-2: Yes, the silence may just mean that we are all very anxious to learn, and you can't learn while you're talking.

Dave-10: Oh, but we know better than that. Could we really hope, could any of us really hope that here we could be told something that we haven't already had a chance to find out anyway in what's been written. The–in a real sense we've got to be involved in this learning ourselves. It's not going to be a matter of sitting and waiting for someone to give us the good gen. This was my moth allusion–the wings have got to be burned to some extent or there will be no learning that we couldn't have made by just not coming.

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Here and elsewhere, Dave put eloquent words to his thought, which
at this point ended discussion of the "silences" issue. Attention
turned to something unexpected about the physical setting that
was bothering some participants. Everyone's chair was without
arms, and with a small rectangular table in front of it, the
whole arrangement was in broadly rectangular configuration. Chairs
with arms, or one flat arm, had been expected. About 20 short
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exchanges expressing various views, some humorous, on this topic ended with a remark by Dave, tuned to what a good many others were feeling by then: "*Somehow this seems to be an inconsequential difference, doesn't it, whether we have tables or not?*" Roger, who had been mostly silent, expressed again his earlier concern.

Roger-3: Earlier you were saying that you [Will] felt a measure of apprehension by reason of the absence of any real structure to the course to date.

Will-18: Well, I tried to generalise this and to keep myself safe, in a sense, by saying that my impression was that we all – or a number of us – felt rather surprised that it was so unstructured. But this doesn't surprise me, my surprise, because I think this is the first comment in this situation so frequently, isn't it, that 'let's squawk about it being unstructured'.

Mary-8: At the risk of being thought too theoretical again, I would like to just – it seems to me that there is a kind of basic goal of some sort that even if you're going to be unstructured you would have in mind, and I can see two things. One would be that we experience a non-directive group process and that we look at ourselves and our relationship in the group and that sort of thing.... Or the other thing is that everyone of us, I think, is a practising therapist of some sort and presumably we are using all sorts of different techniques and variations. And I think that another way of … working this group, would be to look at our own technique....Can we learn more or gain more ideas from other people, who are using varying techniques, to improve our own? It seems to me that the group would have to decide one way or the other: do you want self-growth in this group therapy process? Or, do you want more of an intellectual—

Tess-14: I can't agree with your division here. Are you implying that one can only have self-growth if one has an unstructured and presumably a Rogerian kind of group set-up? Is it not possible to have self-growth and intellectual discussion and comparison of ideas at the same time? The other thing that strikes me is what is it that is so inhibiting in this situation? ....This morning I was intensely irritated at the non-directive approach – I think it was a hell of a waste of time. It seems to me it would have been much simpler to write down the list of groups [members] and say "here's your group, this is selected on an alphabetical basis"–or a random basis or what you like–"we are going to meet in room such and such and such. We suggest two sessions a day. Now let's get on with it." I don't think anybody's self-determination would

have been damaged by this, because we had no knowledge of the University set-up – hours or rooms or anything else – and it made me mad. I think part of my feeling this afternoon is "Okay, I'm on this spot. I've got to experience this non-directive technique, get on with it Goff, show us how it's done." This probably is intentional–I make no apology because I don't think I respond well to non-direction.…. But it seems to me that at the moment we have definite inhibiting factor in this group and until we find out what this inhib- iting factor is we are not likely to get onto a line of discussion which is very productive.

Lx-13: I gather you're still feeling quite a lot of the impatience and irrita- tion that you felt very strongly this morning.

Tess-15: Well, let me say that this is my normal state of mind, so don't feel too badly about it.

Dave-14: But we could note that it is on her feeling level that this is being taken up and not on the procedural level. Is it her feelings we want to be both- ered about, or is a change of procedure that we ought to discuss? The – and of course it seems to be the presumption of the meeting that we will now proceed to deal with her feeling rather than with the substance of what's been said.

Lx-14: You can see that we could quite easily make a choice, take a differ- ent approach, Dave. – – –

Dave-16: Well, since one can't apparently, can't avoid being personal, it seems to me you [Goff] are simply acting on a view of the situation … which, in a sense, we had to anticipate to some degree. But it didn't seem to me at all to follow that at this time of the afternoon we should find ourselves in this position doing what we are now doing. It's like saying why does somebody have to be lost in a fog. You might be lost in a fog because there simply isn't a light out in front of you to walk towards. (Pause) But at the same time I'm not saying I want somebody to put a light out there because this is very interesting.

Barry-11: Well, I can empathise with these view-points that are being expressed–but on the other hand I feel that we are not doing too badly after such a short time. I'd be inclined to take the view that we hadn't been together very long. And it is true we are not sure where we are going, we're in a fog and so on, but I don't imagine that we will remain in it for very long because these comments are coming out of it … We don't seem to want to get out of the fog, anyway, because there have been two suggestions of focusing discussion which are ignored.

Ralph-3: …. If this were a group therapy situation – which I have been in on both sides of the desk, if you will – … you know what you're there for. It may be difficult to get there, it may be very anxiety provoking, but you know what you're there for. And I realise more and more I don't know what I am here for and I, as I hear the comments, I'm not sure that many people clearly know what we're here for. One example could be, we could have two weeks of client-centred group therapy …. And people have obviously expressed, although ambivalently, they might like to be given some material, some information, and we've said "no." But if the group did want this, how do you go about getting it, and could we? Could we, for example, turn to the moderator and say "Well, we've made our decision, what we'd like is a lecture from you on non-directive therapy."

Lx-16: You could certainly ask me (laughter).

Will-20: Ask him, Ralph. (More laughter)

Ralph-4: If I have the backing of the whole group I will.

Lx: So you're saying too, Ralph–at least in a way that seemed pretty clear to me–that at the moment this is quite an ambiguous situation the way you look at it, and it seems to you that this is the way most other people are looking at it too. [Lx then restates the alternatives raised.]

Ralph-5: I think as you said that, it's come a little clearer. What I'm thinking about – even though I'm thinking the two are closely related – is the focus to be on me as a therapist or me as a person. I know they are not independent beings but I think I could focus on one or the other, and I'm not at all sure what I want to focus on or what the group wants to focus on. I think this is part of my ambivalence. In a sense we could get on with either part of it if we once decided to do that, but in the midst I kind of feel that it's going around both ways.

Dave-16: In the midst we are dealing with one side of it, I think. We've declined to deal with you as a therapist. We are very much … worrying you and ourselves at the same time, on the personal level. If you were going to continue on a personal exploration – somebody has already said well isn't that what we are doing – and it's a bit hard to see how we would just suddenly set up a new procedure to deal with that different from the one we have now got. …. I have the feeling that talking about us as therapists isn't as profitable a line as this other one. – – –

Barry-12: Would a problem approach lead in both directions - that is to say the problem expressed by a worker in any particular field may lead to an

exploration of the technique, it may lead to an explanation of the person as a therapist and it may lead to an explanation of the person as a person. Is this one way of getting around it? (Pause) I'm sure we've got bucket loads of problems that we could bring up.... Which means of course that I'm hoping to learn something (coughing, words missed) something about myself.

Ellen-6: You mean it is not necessary to make the sharp divorce in this as to whether one discusses things from a therapeutic point of view or from a personal point of view but one automatically leads into the other? Is that what you mean?

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Barry says "yes" he does mean this. Janet also seems to agree
that this would avoid "just waffling on about this and that" and
the therapist as a person would still emerge. Dave is uncomfortable
with Janet's language and reacts after brief further exchanges:
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Dave-18: I can't agree with the word, waffling, somehow, it just doesn't –
    Ros-13: You don't feel waffly?
    Dave-19: No, I think it's more than just that ….I don't get a tummy reaction when I'm just waffling (Laughter).
    Ros-14: And I bet everyone here has got a tummy reaction.
    Lx-18: Evidently you really struck a chord there, Dave. Most of the rest of us.
    Tess-16: I would be very interested to know, Goff, if you have a tummy reaction.
    Lx-19: Yes, I do, m-hm.
    Tess-17: [This] reminds me of all the groups I've ever started which all seem to start in this uneasy and jockeying position way. And then I'm led to thinking about the difference in this group, which is of course that it's primarily, I think, a learning situation – that although we may also be emotionally involved we are here as a professional group, and a sophisticated professional group, intending to be in a learning situation. Now this being so, I think we are all trying very hard to find our way … and we have some vague conception of what is going on. Now, in groups that I'm reminded of, this hasn't been so [and] I generally find … I find it incumbent on myself to start giving some kind of direction because of my varying anxieties about people wasting time and we'll never get anywhere and this is usually proceeded by the feeling in the tummy, which is why I was asking you if you had one.

Tess then turns to James and asks for his reaction.

James-3: Yes, I feel a bit of a danger myself in that I tend to – I want to be an observer on the one hand and want to get involved in it on the other. This is perhaps coming back to the feeling, too, whether one wants to be seen as a therapist or to be part of an actual group therapy. I rather feel that I want really to get involved, and get involved in some sort of a group therapy, and only out of this can come something that is going to be worthwhile and going to grow.

Some contributions are like short speeches, with people speaking from inside their own thoughts and attitudes, triggered partly by what others have said but not directly and conversationally linked. The next statement, sparked by the context but not following on from what anyone else has said, is a marked example.

Arthur-2: This is interesting - that this business of involvement needs courage, and I feel that we, this afternoon and most of the next two days, the whole group is gradually and slowly going to be a group. We gain courage to accept each person, himself or herself, a courage to be, and well, after each afternoon or something one more mask will fall down. We're sophisticated (with) ideas, but also after a week we will be able not only to just accept the other person as just, as a simple human being, but suddenly it appears nicer as a simple human being, feelings, repressions, guilts and all the rest of it. And … we start to grow together, which is not a picnic at all … And most certainly when we go on back to our particular field and all the status symbols, and big desks and white coats and titles we might make less projections in our counselling situations and we might be more therapeutic. It's a long, long process. But a fortnight like this on it, it's a very good shot in the arm.

Dave-22: We're going to need that Sunday picnic, I think. (Laughter)

Will-21: You're sure we won't all be sitting under a separate tree though. (Laughter)

Dave-23: It's the people sitting on the edge of that escarpment [deep gorge by the picnic area] that we have to worry about. (More laughter)

Mary-9: Seems to me that we're a very divided group, and that half of us are interested in sweating blood in this kind of looking at ourselves as persons. … But others in the group seem as if they'd rather have a look at themselves

as therapist and person, combined. I would … go along with your feelings about this. Just to experience a Rogerian kind of group leadership, I wouldn't be particularly interested in.

Anne-4: I don't think – first of all I can't quite see how I can look at myself as a therapist without looking at myself as a person. I don't know whether anyone else feels they can do this but I can't. I think the one is involved with the other. My other feeling about this is that … I want to be more efficient as a therapist, but to do this I feel that this involves a personal improvement in attitudes, if I've got the techniques. Well, then … then this becomes a therapeutic situation of some sort or another, no matter how deep or shallow it is.… And I don't see how anyone else here – and almost everyone professed a fair knowledge of Rogerian theory – I don't see how anyone else here can see it as any other way than this. And I just wonder whether we're not, I know I am, feeling all a bit defensive about it even though some of us might have expected that this would be the situation anyway.

Mary-10: Well, if you're going to look at yourself in this way, it involves a whole lot of genetic insight. Which means a whole lot of looking at ourselves and how we, our attitudes were formed. It's going to be a long business for each of us, isn't it?

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Mary's stance is off-putting to Anne – and probably to Ros and
maybe some others. A response by Ros is missed as the recording
tape is reversed.
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Ralph-10: Do we want to be in a therapeutic situation? This is my question - in the very broad sense, yes. But this is my question, it hits here—to me there are different roles a person takes. …. But my role as a therapist, my role as a teacher, my role as a husband, my role as a parent - these have a lot of common elements, all me, but they're different parts of me. I think this is one [issue] that sort of keeps me wondering. I know it can work separately and I think I've been in a lot of experiences where the group dealt with themselves as therapists [which] brought some of themselves into it necessarily, but this was the focus - myself as a therapist. And I've also been in a group of therapists which was oriented completely the other way, and in looking back on that I feel that I learnt an awful lot about myself as a person - I hadn't anything else to call it except therapy, which is what it was.

…. But except for experiencing group therapy as a patient or client rather than as a therapist, it didn't really involve a great deal about ourselves doing therapy. …. I'm certain that there are two aspects here and I'm not sure again where I stand, and I can't get a very clear feeling where other people stand on this. – – –

Will-33: … I think perhaps in my preliminary statement I said that … I got very interested in Rogers and I haven't ceased to be interested in Rogers. But as time went by I decided that personally I wasn't suited either to Rogerian therapy or any other for that matter. … But I think, from my point of view, this indicates to me that something needs to be done to me if ever I'm to be a therapist – I don't need to learn any therapies. …. I strongly feel that any therapy does depend … on the person, and I think … we have a moral obligation, if nothing else, to improve ourselves personally if we want to do therapy – of any sort.

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Shortly, Janet objects to where she sees all this leading. She
has a degree but lacks the therapy-focused background or helping
practice experience of most others. She probably would agree
that she is looking to learn, explicitly, from others.
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Janet-7: I feel in our outside lives we can get to know other people as persons and that each person here has something to contribute in the work that they've been doing, to the group and to others - and that we should work along those lines rather than spending this precious time (words lost) in interpersonal relationships.

Will-35: Is this important? If you want my experience, I will write to you. Correspond to you and tell you the stories, and you can read books on this sort of thing. This is not the sort of stuff you need come to a group to pick up really, is it? We can take each other's names and correspond and get all the data, this intellectual data which you are referring to –

Dave-25: Whatever else we say, personal experience is so much more real - in the immediate sense - than if we imaginatively put ourselves in say the place of somebody who is functioning at [city] in an office that we don't know the look of, with a client, and we can only imagine it about third hand. It seems to me we are a long way from working out what we might learn from the situation or the mess or whatever you'd like to call it that we're now in. To give this up voluntarily would seem to me to be just a pity….

Janet cannot accept, and seems not to understand, this view. She argues again that we "can't just talk on without any goals or any structure at all." Shortly, Dave comes in again:

Dave-28: But I do feel out of all this I would get a much better understanding of what that other person sitting there must feel like. And I don't feel I'm going to get this on the cheap by hearing somebody else talk about it.

    Barry-15: Is this right then (Dave), that you are looking for something specific? In other words what you're looking for you hope is going to benefit you when you go back to your job? It's going to benefit you in your counselling work.

    Dave-29: In the direction through not of–not of managing my end of it better, but of understanding that other person's situation better. And I think of a number of the cases I've had that have gone astray–the person must have left with feelings not dissimilar to the ones I've got now. And I think maybe I'd better feel these things a bit more.

Further exchanges continue to focus on the alternatives of a personal exploratory focus and an emphasis concerned with principles and the doing of therapy, but with gradual convergence by most participants towards the more personal exploration option without locking out discussion of therapy. Dave sums up his sense but Ralph isn't quite there:

Dave-35: ….Among the members here, my boss isn't here - and an authority role makes it very difficult in the normal staff meeting to make any use of a situation of this sort. I think this is a unique situation, and with a lot of reservations I still feel it's a pity to fill it with the sort of material that one can use other situations. It's not like the _____ conference. … It is an opportunity, if we want to, to do something different.

    Lx-23: But you (to Ralph) feel as though this is a bit too restrictive really, in terms of what you have in mind at the moment. You, if I'm following, you (Ralph) do feel that … one doesn't have to avoid talking about therapy as such, in order to become involved. Is this true at all?

    Ralph-15: I think so - this latter part - I think I would – I use the word advisedly, I think - I'm not at all certain but I think I would prefer to talk about therapy and talk about it openly, honestly, with feelings, etc. Rather than – I think (Dave) has at least posed, very clearly, the alternative – use

this as a group therapy experience. You didn't use the word but this is what you were suggesting. I think this does –

Lx-24: I suppose another part of the impression I get, Ralph, from what you're expressing at the moment is that you are becoming a bit more definite in your own mind that you do want to talk about therapy - with - under the conditions that one can become involved as a person as much as one likes. …. Is that true or is it? …. And (to Dave) I guess I certainly have the impression, which several other people have reflected already, that you're, for the time being at least, coming down on the other side of the fence.

Ros-25: Do we have to separate them?

Lx-25: This is a very real question in your mind at the moment, and guess, probably, still in several other people's.

Ros-26: Well, I can't imagine even a group therapy with a lot of therapists that excluded talk about therapy. But I can't imagine the other either.

Lx-27: So it really isn't an either/or situation -

Ros-27: Well, I feel it would be a pity to say "Well, we are not going to do that, and we're not going to do that." (Shortly, Ros adds, "It's my feeling that the group's inevitable anyhow – it will come out, with the people in it.")

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Mary has had experience of "group therapy" that makes her very
mistrustful of this apparent option. After her, Janet protests
again:
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Mary-11: Well, I've sat through a long group process with a whole lot of therapists, and therapy didn't come up once. And what we did get was a detailed account of what everybody's grandfathers, and aunts and uncles said to them when they were children –

Janet-11: I think we must have some goal or some outline…something more definite than if it's just a therapeutic situation and vague thinking.

Ralph-18: I think you're putting a restriction a bit there in what you say in the sense that if you really get into this exploring yourself - which I perceive all therapy to be, group or individual - that inevitably you are going to think about (if you're really playing the role all the way through) you're going to bring out things about your family and so on, your past. I can't separate present and say I'll talk about and feel only what relates to what goes on in these four walls, and I won't feel (or) bring out those things that relate to all the rest of my life, past and present. – – –

James-5: I know that I personally find myself constantly sort of - relating a patient's experience and feelings to my own in terms of the past, as well as the present. I can't see how I can really divorce them.

Dave-47: ….But I'm clear on the feeling that I would feel a sense of loss if we simply all very rationally and sensibly said "All right, well, now let's get on and talk about cases – and bring in group dynamics if you like, sort of incidentally and on sufferance." I think this would be a pity.

Mary-14: I think you're - you're making the subject either black or white, and are pushing the other end – the opposition – into a position that they're not in. I don't think that in just talking about ourselves as therapists you could avoid talking about how you see – whether you see yourself as kind, or the attitude you've got, or all these sorts of things would be involved in it anyway. But it would be a way of staying in the here and now rather than going back – into this kind of genetic insight. I mean it isn't really relevant to anybody if you've got basic dependency needs, for instance. ….

Members are now alive in argument and passionate in expressing their views. Cliff, largely silent so far, breaks in to express his increasing interest, even excitement, about what is going on.

Chris-3: This is all entirely different from what I expected when I came here. But I must confess to this, that I'm enjoying it thoroughly. And I want to go on like Dave – not imposing any time limits on this type of experience, so that I can experience just exactly what happens as we all grow into this group and we all start talking happily and uninhibitedly together. I want that experience now, so that if I am playing the role of the therapist in the group situation I'll be able to empathetically understand what's happening within the group and recognise the signs when they're coming around to some sort of therapeutic achievement … So that I want to see this just go on and on, now. Ten minutes ago I didn't (Laughter) … I'd like to see that growth is taking place, perhaps, in me – and I'd be most disappointed now if we start talking about – if we start getting lectures from you (to Lx).

Chris soon speaks again, and the comparison with a tennis party is mentioned. After further exchanges, this triggers Janet to further comment. In addition to not being in residence with the others, she also gives the impression of being in a different

place in her thought—certainly different than Dave's thought, as
he indicates shortly afterwards.

*Janet-14: Couldn't you go to a tennis party and feel that? (Pause) How is this
group situation going to benefit us all more than any other group situation
where you make friends and you gradually feel more comfortable and you
gradually tell people about yourselves and experience growth.*

*Dave-51: The analogy with a tennis party struck me as just so different
from what I would have thought. I've certainly never been in a tennis party
that gave me the kind of impression this group has.*

Shortly, Tess, after listening for a while, and as she has done
before, initiates a change of topic in the group.

*Tess-19: I think you have a spontaneous group, perhaps not in a tennis party
…, but I've been for instance in the Service and places like that where sponta-
neous groups do grow up which in fact I think are therapeutic groups. I don't
think … that the therapeutic group is something quite different than anything
that arises in ordinary life. I don't want to break the thread but I would like to
bring up one organisational thing, before we have to finish, which is triggered
off … partly from the discussion that was going on about feelings of involve-
ment as a therapist, and whether one plays a role or whether one is oneself;
also, from the fact, at the moment I'm experiencing far more awareness of the
things that are going on in this group because I think I feel less anxiety because
nobody here is really very sick and having great needs. And this makes me
want to go onto a discussion of how far a therapist can be involved and what
are the limits of involvement and how far can one control involvement, and
how far this is desirable if one's in a therapeutic role. I'm not suggesting that
we necessarily go into this now, but what troubles me is that …. this is going
to leak out from the group. Now in some ways this is a good thing – critical
discussion – but I wonder whether it is desirable to have any kind of conscious
control on leakage from the group, and whether otherwise we're going to dif-
fuse a lot of material without really getting the best part of it in the group…
I'm not expressing this very well, but I wonder if you understand what I mean.*

*Lx-32: I'm not quite sure what you mean. Are you meaning that it seems to
you as though the suggestion has been made that we should regard what we've
been talking about as just among ourselves?*

Tess-20: I'm not sure whether we should do so or not. You see, I would like now – we haven't time – but I would like to plunge into a discussion about therapeutic involvement because this is what is triggered off in me out of this discussion. (Lx-33: M-hm, at the moment –?) We can't do it because our time is running out. Now, is it a good thing for me, for instance, to go away and discuss this with somebody else in an informal situation or should we try to keep some of this material as group discussion because it maybe it will build up into something better that way…

Lx-34: Are you a bit afraid that if you go and talk about with other people now, perhaps even some of the others here, it will become sort of dissipated … and evaporate in some sense?

Tess-22: Yes.

Lx-35: Should you kind of hold on to it until we're back in this position?

Tess-23: This is what I'm wondering about. I wonder what people think about it.

Cliff-8: This presupposes that any benefit you get out of the discussion can only occur within this group. I can't go along with this.

Tess-24-25: No, I don't mean that. It's not what I mean at all. But I think that if within the group one's ideas grow, and they move together, and because we all contributed to this discussion and we all have more to contribute to it that something is coming out of this which may be lost if we go and talk about it outside and then it ceases to have immediate impact for us and we perhaps forget it and go onto something else.

Cliff-10: This doesn't worry me if people feel they want to carry this outside and want to talk about it with smaller groups well, fair enough, if they don't–

Tess-26: I'm only afraid it won't come back.

Lx-36: I sense in what you're saying that this–that you've reached a point, and perhaps you feel that the whole group has reached a point, of being ready for something that you don't want us to lose.

Tess-27: I think that is what I mean, yes. And I'm a bit concerned about how to keep it.

Lx-37: Well, [just now] I'm afraid our time has run out. …. I feel as though there are probably a number of you who'd be very interested to respond to this question that has just been raised. At the same time perhaps we should – I guess my own feeling is that I'd like to keep pretty much to our time limit unless we decide in advance to change it. Now I don't know if other people feel this way –

*Arthur-4:-5: I feel that the time limit that we discussed was four o'clock, that's what you mean? (*Lx-39: *Yes.) I think it would be a good thing is a sense of frame, discipline and therapeutical (words missed). But somehow I, personally – I strongly feel that so far we as a group, slowly, but we emerge and we have started to appreciate a degree of growth which is our common property. And I feel it would be a pity to see any sort of fragmentation, that is to say three, four, five people would carry on any part of that sort of atmosphere [conversation]. It's much better if we keep it for ourselves and tomorrow we start again and share with each other.*

Lx-40: So essentially you share Tess's feeling about this, is that right?

Arthur-6: Yes, I wouldn't like to see any fragmentations. The temptation is very obvious - I've had the same temptation as many others but I've tried to resist it.

James-10: I'd like to feel, a little aggressively, that we should - in the future if we wish to continue our discussion to a point where we feel that perhaps something has been [achieved] –

Ros-39: You mean within the group?

James-11: Within the group. Yes, I mean to go on past the time, four o'clock, until we reach a point perhaps –

Arthur-7: You'd like to see a flexibility.

Lx-41: In other words, you're saying you do disagree, for example, with the view that I just expressed that we should make this a limit. You disagree with this.

James-12: I disagree.

Dave-53: But what about the other question, the fragmentation issue.

James-13: I doubt if we can avoid that - it probably is going to happen. I think we're all going to feel a bit of pressure - I think I am, perhaps a little bit - to want to talk about it to someone -

Dave-55: Some people must feel less strain arising out of this – at the moment I feel I'd just like to drop this for a while and have a bit of a rest.

Tess-28: I think there are two issues here. I think on the one hand there is the question of whether we should add to our time as a group, certainly; but however much we add to our time with the group I think we're likely to have the same problem of diffusing issues by outside debate in small groups. I think they are two different problems because we could go on from now probably 'til ten o'clock tonight and still have something that we were in the middle of.

Anne-6: I don't know, I don't see that it matters where the experience and the growing takes place - whether it's right here within this group or whether it's in the seminar as a whole. Really, does it matter?

Dave-57: I feel that the more material we have to work over the better chance we have of satisfying ourselves at the time when we want to shift this kind of approach. It would be a pity if it steals up on us by default because we'd in fact been conducting some groups outside, extensively –

Ralph-21: It seems to me a big issue here that does concern me - it seems to touch on both of these – on whether or not this is in fact a therapy group. It seems to me that the questions being asked depend on that. If you are conducting a therapy group you do try and cut the time off because the clients have come to depend on you as a leader to stop this. ….You usually instruct a therapy group, it might be better if you don't continue afterwards but bring it back to group. You certainly wouldn't say that in a seminar of any other kind - you know, you're kind of pleased if everybody leaves talking about what was going on in the group. And it seems to me we've got to come face to face with "Is this going to be a therapy group or not?" …

Tess-31: I don't think it's a therapy group in terms of the fact that I don't think any of us really are here for treatment – I hope. But on the other hand we are learning about therapy groups and we are learning in a sense by experience, aren't we? And therefore it's perhaps worthwhile to apply some of the problems of therapy groups to this group, and see how they work out.

Chris-10: I think we should vote to knock-off now at four o'clock because we've got some films - some tapes to listen to, haven't we? And if some of us are a bit anxious to hear the tapes well then our minds are going to wander from the situation at issue here and nothing much will be gained. I don't think it matters much if we talk about it afterwards, when we go outside. There's no dearth of material – not likely to run out of material in a fortnight from what I know of the number of people who sit around and talk. So let's go now –

Cliff-12: The fact that there's always something unfinished when you get to four o'clock or whatever the time is, which I think is a very good reason for making a point of finishing at four o'clock every day – unless you happen to run out of steam and we're not likely to do that. We're going to be in the middle of something or other (but) if we all realise at the outset that we're going to be here till four o'clock in the afternoon, well, that's okay, let's be here

till then. If it's unfinished business, we'll resume it tomorrow, we hope, or go away and talk about it if it's appropriate.

Lx-43: I sort of sense – and perhaps it's partly because I did introduce this – that most of us now do feel as though for this time we've come to an end of something. … I think we arranged didn't we that anyone who would care to – and I presume that will mean most of you – but we weren't feeling that this is something we wanted to have a definite expectation that everybody would come to. In this tentative way we did arrange to have this (other meeting) – four-thirty was it? Was that the time we – that I suggested?

Tess-32: I think what was said was after [afternoon] tea.

Lx-44: After tea. Oh, well, let's leave it a bit flexible. We might be running a bit later than that.

Note on the Structure of Session 1

Different phases in the session could be discerned, as members begin to connect with each other and search to find their own or the group's way. It can be said that they are spirited, articulate and well able to assert their own views while they also respond or react to what other people are saying, and a number of them engage with humour at moments. Issues are raised, explored, clarified and resolved for some people or left to come back to. While there is no absolute set of themes, one broad-gauge approach yields four content phases:

Theme 1 centred on self-introductions, including something of why each person came to the group and what their work contexts and interests are.

Theme 2 involved discussion of silences and their meaning in therapy and groups. This came partly from brief uncertainty about how to go on from the "round robin" introductions.

Theme 3, occupying the main part of the group time, was concerned with discussing the nature and purposes of the workshop group, especially whether the aim is to learn more about therapy or whether it is to engage in a form of group therapy, or whether perhaps these could be combined or come together naturally. Component issues were explored,

and, along with some clashing of views, there was movement towards increasing comfort with, or even active desire for, a personalised level of exploration and learning through experience within the group—yet, a quality of debate was largely maintained, and couple of people remained quite uncomfortable with a self-exploratory direction. What happened in the group evidently mattered increasingly to the participants, as they connected more with each other and with their own feelings and thoughts. Personal styles were quite varied, and some differences were openly and even bluntly expressed but mostly with little acrimony.

Theme 4 was initiated by Tess, who, by then in a different felt attitude space from her more "armoured" starting point, was valuing and wanting not to lose the momentum she felt in the group. She was afraid this would be lost by directly related follow-up discussion outside the group (even amongst subgroups of members) and suggested that this not occur. Others who expressed themselves on this issue did not think it is realistic or necessarily advantageous to be silent on issues raised in the group until we met again, which happened the next morning.

Session 2: On What Is *Variously* Felt to Be Happening and Possible

Lx opened the session, briefly expressing appreciation of the discussion and increased contact he felt with everyone through the previous day's session. Shortly, Dave followed on, saying, in part, that he *"was reminded of yesterday's discussion about [silences, and that]… one might break silence because of anxiety or one might feel in a cooperative mood."* He *"wondered why it was that Lx chose to come in and say something"* at the start. Lx did not acknowledge, as he might better have done, that Dave was curious and questioning of his need or purpose in being the first to speak. Instead, he explained and justified: *"It was just that this thought was in my mind at that moment and I realised that we had to start with somebody saying something and, as the thought was there, I thought I'd express it."* This moved the focus from silences to the issue of self-censorship versus free expression in communication:

Dave: This notion of speaking as the spirit moves you is a quite alien one to me. I've gone through years and years of precisely not doing that.

Ros: Waiting your turn?

Dave: No, just that of seeing every situation as requiring essentially a censorship of what you say…. I find it vaguely alien this notion of, well, because a thought has come to me it's somehow now the appropriate thing to do to open one's mouth and let this thought out. It's the same idea that there is an inherent virtue in communication with people. I don't know that I'm altogether confident about that either. It seems to me there are lots of things about myself I'd prefer, just frankly, not *to communicate.*

Janet: Do you think perhaps that psychologists and people studying psychology lose spontaneity?

Dave: … my feeling would be that this is a traditional part of our training – that all of us are trained as much in inhibition as we are in spontaneity. Most of our training runs against being spontaneous. It wouldn't matter whether you are psychologists –

To one side of Dave's last comment, James is moved to assert "that I find it difficult to conceive that Lx was actually saying this (his starting of the group) relatively spontaneously, off-the-cuff." Rather it was more of a planned statement. Dave follows on, suggesting that the attitude "I will say this is how I feel because it will help is a more congenial notion" than to imply that "simply the experience of something constitutes a ground for expressing it," and shortly he switches to a related concern:

Dave: I think it's an alien notion to me that people do express their real feelings. It's the same sort of shock almost in coming across Rogers' "transparency." The world to me is not full of transparent people…. I think things would grind to a halt in 24 hours if too many people practised this kind of approach.

Ros: You mean we daren't be ourselves?

Dave: I don't think there was ever any presumption it ever could be like that.

Most group members had taken part in another kind of session the previous evening, listening to Rogers at work in recorded demonstration

interviews with volunteer clients. This triggered extended discussion in the group related to Rogerian ideas and practice, including:

Janet: …surely, just a reflection is a very sterile thing like a mirror…. There's so much more of the therapist in it as well… It isn't just a technique or a way of finding a paraphrase to answer a client with.

 Roger: …in a sense, the therapist does become another self in the counselling situation. Not just one who is acting a part… but a person who brings himself as a real person into the counselling relationship.

As another person put it, a non-directive *techniqu*e is hazardous. It can imply:

Ros: 'Here it is an open gate. Come through this with me' … If you [the helper] are not prepared to go as far as this person needs to, then you make the greatest betrayal of all.

 Dave: The striking thing to me about this is the unselfconsciousness. Now I get from that [tape] none of the feeling that I often give myself, labouring to be right. Rogers seems to me to be so much in that situation that while is plainly thinking of what he's going to say he's still very close to what he wants to say at any one time. There isn't a searching for what would be the right answer… – there's a person who is so close that you feel it wouldn't matter much what he <u>said</u>…

Shortly, Cliff, who was evidently sitting with growing frustration over the trend of the discussion, broke in here to express his feeling and view:

Cliff: I feel most aggressive at this decision we seem to have reached to discuss the tape that we could discuss at other times, and then, occasionally, it seems to be quite relevant to our conversation. I become almost annoyed every time I hear Rogers' name mentioned…. I think the thing we've been talking about here is how can you be yourself, and now so many people are so concerned about this tape – trying to <u>be</u> Rogers. It's started getting under my skin a little bit, too, how the studied use of the word 'feel' and the 'right' sort of terminology is introduced into our conversation. – – –

Will: They haven't [just] been arguing about Rogers and whether you can become emotionally involved with the client… but arguing, in fact, whether we *should become emotionally involved in* this *situation*.

In a little while, another member, also feeling strongly, speaks several times, with brief reactions and queries from others (not all included here):

*Arthur: I like to just register a degree of disappointment in comparison to the yesterday experience that we had….. what I expected this morning… we would start off where we left yesterday afternoon. Now instead of that I'm afraid I was disappointed that you broke the silence and you started to talk (speaking to Lx)… It's only natural that [from there] we started into intellectual things and it would have been happier if somebody pulls out a paper and presents a case and we all contribute and are fully using our jargons… And I hope we won't reach that, and [I think] that we are going in a circle in the last half hour…. I didn't come for intellectual ping-pong I can have that in_____ … (*Tess*: What did you come for?*) I came for the experience – to experience my own growth because I live a type of life straitjacketed, an authority figure in uniform… I wanted to share this experience… and as long as I'm physically alive I want to grow (*Ros*: You want a strongly emotional experience?*) Yes, I like this emotional experience, yes, definitely – I want to be involved in the whole thing.*

Ros: Don't you feel that by expecting a certain sort of emotional experience you are limiting it again… I feel that there are a lot of emotions among us that we were discussing that weren't intellectual at all. Like "involve."

Dave: It's still true though, the butterfly ['in the tummy'] level seems to me to have been different (speaking to Arthur) from what was yesterday, a lot more 'comfortable' – – –

Arthur: I like to see myself, you and everybody, more aggressive. I think aggressiveness is a very healthy thing. And less tendency to intellectualise and have more courage to be and to accept ourselves. If I'm not able to accept myself in all dimensions how can I accept anybody else. [Shortly, Ralph bursts in:]

Ralph: I think you're going crazy on blacks and whites here somehow. This intellectual-emotional bit is driving me up the wall…. What I've been doing today is not intellectual. I'm very concerned about therapy… and I feel about it… I want to grow as you do. But there are a lot of different ways to grow… [Shortly, Cliff enters in again:]

Cliff: The point that got to me was that …we set out to compare ourselves with a model, the model being Rogers …. not a question of whether we were more detached than we were yesterday. (Anne interjects that she referred to the tape of Rogers out of concern with *"the amount of involvement that seems to be demanded of therapists generally and whether I'm able to give this."* Cliff continues:) *But this was a trend, you know, that was bandied about from one to another, and this sort of word Rogers, Rogers, Rogers kept blazing forward, what Rogers did on the tape. And it becomes a bit offensive to me. And particularly when the undercurrent of this was that people were saying 'I want to be myself' and 'how do I be myself as a therapist?' Well, the obvious way to do that is not to be Rogers.*

Barry: Too much Rogers as a model. Goff is another model we could use, and so on, but the end result should be… there'd be some part of our model which is ourselves…. Something [else] has me worried when I hear Arthur and Ralph talk about growing… it worries me because I have mixed feelings of cynicism and scepticism and also a conditional feeling of envy…. How are you thinking of growing and what does it mean to you? I'm just worried that you may be about to benefit in some way that I'm not (laughter).

Dave: I've been sitting opposite you, James, and I've seen you make about three attempts at different times to get your second point in. I don't know whether it's dead now or –

James: I think this business of being like Rogers has really worried me for years. I think when I first embraced Rogers … it rather suited my then personality of having my intellectualisations removed somewhat from my emotions… and then I began to realise that I was quite dissatisfied with this, that something wasn't getting through to my patient and I was quite dissatisfied with myself and then some horrible revelations came to me about myself, which did facilitate me coming a lot closer…. which was easier because I had a greater awareness of myself'…. I feel now I can still be somewhat Rogerian, non-directive but in a much different way to what I was years ago…. I've still got a long way to go to really be satisfied with myself so that I can let myself go reasonably and not be detached. (Will: *But do you find this dangerous…. this getting closer… Is it more dangerous to the patient?*) *I think years ago I felt it would be terribly dangerous to get close to the patient, now I'm beginning to enjoy it* (Tess: *And do you think it is better for the patient?*). *I do indeed – but there's still this question of how therapeutic one is being.* (Roger: *And in this*

getting closer to the patient, does this …constitute giving of yourself? Are you aware of this?) *I am aware of much more giving of myself… But it's a more difficult experience for me, in a way, instead of remaining aloof and detached.*

Tess: I found that when I gave up the detachment which I had acquired as a junior [professional in her field] my work improved. It didn't improve until I started allowing myself to be involved. But I couldn't do that until I had a sufficient confidence and sufficient ability to handle situations. Then I could allow myself to be involved.

Dave: That's one of the things we haven't talked about that is very important to me; this lack of opportunity for finding your feet…. Possibly one oughtn't make early judgements about something like this until there's been a reasonable opportunity to sort this thing out, putting up with the fact that perhaps clients have to suffer while therapists learn …. So part of my concern is this feeling of playing around and learning at somebody else's expense…

Anne: The other thing that bothers me – this might be a personal thing – is I wonder how many of us when we start off will use this detachment simply as part of our technique, and how much we use it as a personal defence? I think that probably I used it as a personal defence.

Ralph: A question that bothers me in terms of involvement….. I began to wonder what in the hell I was talking about and, similarly, what other people are talking about when they say these words like getting close, getting involved?…. And one of the things that concerns me here is, as you get closer and closer and more and more involved where does the differentiation come between therapy and the rest of life?… I get paid for doing therapy, I suppose most of you do, and I have no right to be getting paid for doing something that is as much for me as the other person or more for me than the other person…. [Tess responds, and Ralph resumes] *…And I think, as I perceive it, there maybe is a real danger in getting too involved. A danger to the other person, I'm thinking of… and what I'm really looking for is what's best, what really will help most?*

The issue of therapists needing therapy but being reluctant to seek it or, on the other hand, being in therapy while they continue to practise, was taken up by several members—though not for long. The discussion then turned to the question of whether, how much or in what ways therapists satisfy personal needs of their own in doing therapy. Will remarks, *Of course he*

[the therapist] must be getting something out of it. Again, Ralph leads further into the topic, mentioning first that initially he was trained towards being detached. He continues:

Ralph: And as I began to get out of this [detachment], I remember talking to another therapist who had a similar training … about what is the relationship between your emotional needs satisfaction elsewhere and emotional need satisfaction in therapy. And it looks to me that the crucial thing is, "what do you get out of therapy, why do you do it? Not just for the money, there are other jobs … to what extent does what we get out of it promote or at least not inhibit the progress of the client…. If somebody is starved for a relationship – this is using an extreme example – [and] have no relationships, so they establish relationships in therapy… and if they get very involved, would this be good for the client? I would at least question it.

Members mostly have not been at ease, but their strong engagement and the energy in the group is palpable. Following Ralph's last comment, some further exploration of therapist motives and personality related to the doing of therapy occurs. By then, there is not much time to continue the discussion, but the group is now more relaxed and Session 2 winds down to conclude easily. The next chapter samples from a number of sessions and carries the discourse of the group forward to new phases and qualities. It ends by posing and offering answers to questions that have relevance for the composition and whole course of this challenging group.

3

Mid-Journey Advance and the Late Stages of Group X

This chapter continues the transcribed story of Group X, fast-forwarding to a meeting near the end of the eventful first week of the workshop and then on to the late and ending sessions. The residential situation and late-night informal conversations meant that some people were weary at times, but the flow of expression and exchange in the group hardly ever flagged. This flow, as experienced, had qualitative ups and downs, as seen also in the end-of-session member rating records, which Chap. 5 is devoted to tracking and analysing. The combined transcript of all 17 regular meetings of this highly verbal group is impractical to fully review and check and would fill a large volume by itself. The five further sessions this chapter draws on, provide manageable and significant illustration of the content and movement of the process.

The cognitive resources and fluency of members of this group meant that their exchange of ideas and viewpoints or ways of making sense of their experience were more freely conveyed than direct expressions of interpersonal and self feelings were. However, as the workshop went on, the balance shifted towards increased sharing of immediately felt experience. The involved reader will feel, I believe, that she/he is getting to know people in the group, though perhaps with varying reaction to their

individual styles, by the end of this chapter. To me, it is evident (and unsurprising) that what happened in and between the members of the group mattered to them increasingly as time went on. My added notes condense passages and draw attention to some of the themes, and the reader no doubt will have hunches and hypotheses of his/her own.

Process Illustration from Session 6, as a Corner is Turned

This session came on the Friday before the middle weekend of the workshop. There were foreshadowed practical matters that needed decision by the whole workshop membership—such as confirming arrangements for the next day (Saturday) and whether to make any change in the composition and timing of the groups for the second week (no change was made). The first 8–10 minutes of group time was occupied with planning discussion, initiated by Lx. Sufficient closure on these issues led to a clearcut switch that members were quite ready for. Arthur probably had been ready and waiting to start the shift in focus, and Anne had a carry-over of pressing personal concern:

Arthur: I just thought that because certain reflections I received yesterday from the group and as I was thinking about that and because this sort of experience, which became very meaningful to me and … came from this group, I thought maybe I'm duty-bound to reflect it back…. I'm referring particularly to yesterday's session when I experienced a very pleasant, vibrating sensation of growth, and I'd like to attribute this feeling, particularly to people, and that would be Ralph and Barry. … What they ventilated [resonated] with me. In many ways I was walking with them and struggling and responding and occasionally feeling hostile and guilty and happy… It was a wide range of feelings while they went on with their encounter and I felt completely involved in it. Also, yesterday afternoon, on certain points I felt a deep sense of irritation, I felt that a sort of foggy pseudo-religious feeling was welling up and I was compelled to accept the Gospel according to St Carl and preached to us by Archbishop Goff (laughter). … I don't think that I came here to be a Rogerian as such but as I said from the beginning I came to experience a particular type of growth, and when I looked at the circular I thought perhaps

this is a type of situation in which I might grow. And yesterday afternoon I experienced this pleasant sensation of a start of growth …. it is a novel feeling to share with the group all these things, and because it is not only me but something happened to all of us … and it wouldn't happen only through reading or lecturing or any other detached intellectual encounter…

Lx: Arthur, I'd like to… see if I'm getting the main part of your message there … you're telling us you were, you felt yesterday, pretty deeply involved, perhaps more so than you had done before with us. (Arthur: Yes, a sense of integration.) And as to the final feelings you had, the direction of them, they included appreciation… of some of the people in the group – at some points in our discussion, and irritation at other times.

Arthur: Yes, a great deal of irritation as well and a sense that I was able to accept my whole irritation without any apology and I didn't feel any need to escape from my irritation, like many times I did, and rationalise it…

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There is not much direct response to Arthur here, but after
further exchanges, and mention of her by Ros, Anne is able to
share distressing reactions and feelings carried over from the
previous meeting and her reflection and encounters afterwards.
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Anne: I want to say something here and now. I've had a lot of feelings since yesterday morning of various kinds about this group. I think it's an ambivalent group…. with one part you feel that you can do certain things in this group and then discover … that you can't, and I hold the whole group responsible for this…. If there are limits to be set on what we talk about then I think they should be set before anyone gets themselves emotionally involved. I can see ethical reasons for setting these and I couldn't before – I can see that there are certain things that could happen in this group if it were to go its own way, which couldn't be resolved in a fortnight…. And I feel very strongly about it, that if somebody wants limits… to impose after people have perhaps pushed or jumped, I'm not sure which, into revealing too much of themselves, then I think they should be sorted out here and now. So I feel responsible for the rest of this group… .

Ellen: In view perhaps you feel, Anne, that you reveal too much of yourself, or Dave has revealed to much of himself, now, before we've set these limits.

Anne: I don't know what Dave feels, but I did [reveal personally] and then the group said to me, perhaps not in very open terms, we think this shouldn't

be done here – and I'm inclined to agree. I didn't intend to do it… I didn't intend to start discussing my personality, I intended to discuss rather what I thought Barry was trying to discuss, but I was in a position where I started discussing my personality – and I don't think it's a good idea, and if this is so should you set these limits? I don't know whether anyone else feels this or whether I'm just unnecessarily upset about it, perhaps I am.

Ellen: Well, I didn't attend the afternoon session but I thought that was exactly the right sort of thing to do within the group, to start with counselling problems and then bring in personality problems as they arise – you can't divorce the one from the other.

Anne: Now, I don't think the whole of this group would agree with you about that at all. I wish they'd say if they don't…. and the other thing I don't want right now is for everyone to frantically start reassuring me. (I've been reassuring people for 10 years….) So I just want to know whether you want to set limits or whether we are to take responsibility for the other people in the group who might do even more than I have done, or be pushed to do more than I have done….

Lx: Anne I pick up in what you're saying that you are quite – at this moment you're quite genuinely afraid that you or others may go too far in revealing themselves (Anne: That's right), you're afraid that they may go so far that it hurts, that it does some harm to them rather than being helpful, and you're asking us very earnestly don't we agree with you on this. Surely, don't we want to decide among ourselves in some way that we don't want to go beyond a certain point….[Contributions by Tess and two or three others omitted here.]

Ralph: I feel a solid sense of threat here, but I would be very furious if the group tried to set limits on what I could do which would increase my sense of threat. I would be equally if not more irritated if Goff tried to do this. I mean… that I know it's dangerous for me, it's dangerous to others, but I feel adult enough that… I'm going to have control of myself… I think I feel the same way about therapy – somebody has said something and someone has said something in response, which has taken it quite a bit further…. But I don't want to limit anybody's freedom in here and I don't want mine limited in this way. I want to feel free to withdraw if I want to and not talk but on the other hand to talk if I want to. – – –

Cliff: Well, I feel I ought to apologise before I say this… because quite frankly I just haven't felt involved in this sort of way that Anne and M___ have been referring to. My perception of Anne yesterday was as a person who is fairly comfortable, and it seemed that [it was] what happened… <u>after the group</u> that caused discomfort. It seems to me… that what you are really asking for is protection from the group but, paradoxically, the more you feel in the group, the more you trust it …and the more you are likely to reveal yourself and I think this is what's happened. But it is true, I think… that the group is inconsistent, and if it were (consistent) the degree of trust or protection that you got from the group mightn't be betrayed.

Anne responded to Cliff acknowledging that she had seen him, and some others, as *observers who* judged her as disturbed or neurotic, and which left her feeling extremely vulnerable as well as angry. Dave then responds:

Dave: Anne I'm not – I'd be the last one to want to reassure you on this, but you leave out the very important possibility that a lot of us just didn't see what you were saying. It wasn't that we saw and labelled it, we didn't see it. Now I certainly didn't have the impression that you were as upset as this at all.

Anne: No, well I wasn't <u>then</u>. Dave, perhaps I would say that you were reasonably involved and therefore weren't [judging] --- Maybe I'm kicking up a fuss about nothing

James: Anne at some stage after yesterday afternoon's group it suddenly dawned on me the feeling of guilt, really, that I realised that right at the beginning of the session that I'd taken over, that I started to say something that I felt strongly and couldn't keep back what I said, and it came to me that I'd not allowed the discussion from the morning to continue in its own way… And I feel guilty that I've been so insensitive not to—

Anne: Well now… This, from you is where I got most of this feeling. I have the feeling that you are one of the people who are… apprehensive of how far to go. It was from you I think that I first had this feeling of discomfort about what happened. But thinking about it afterwards… I wasn't very clear what you were saying and I wondered (doubted) whether what you are trying to do was right for everybody. I'm thinking you raised this question in my mind.

Will: Can I come in on this and say how I felt about what happened yesterday because it might be completely different to what did happen. I felt that Anne gave something from her own personal experience to illustrate something and, instead of taking up what she was illustrating, the group or certain people in the group took up the personal reference rather than the things she was illustrating —

Cliff: Anne has already perceived James as perhaps standing out of the group. I don't see him this way and I'm wondering also if we've forgotten what happens outside the group. I see a fair bit of James outside and I know that he feels closely what's going on in here and I'm pretty sure he is a part of it. I don't think that Anne sees much of J. at all and I don't see lots of other people much outside here and I think this is an important part of this fortnight.

Dave: I want to agree strongly with Cliff… Now if I remember rightly James said that he had a strong feeling, which he felt he should express. If we deny this, if we censor that kind of feeling, then we're cutting across some very significant [sharing] … I can only see a solution extending to other people the right to exercise their therapeutic intuition and, this being rebuffed, …they guessed wrongly and no harm done. {Brief supporting comment omitted.} I don't feel I would be doing harm if I said "I wonder whether _____ isn't feeling a bit pushed on this" and if she says "no keep your beak out, I'm getting on with this one" then I'd be very happy. But if on the other hand this might have been helpful to you then that would be a degree of protection.

Will: I think Dave's saying more than that and I agree with him. I think he's saying that in a sort of unconscious way the point has now been made, we are aware of the situation, with no need to write it out in so many words or anything like that, [we] will merely accept the situation and do something about it if anything arises. We don't need to write out the A B C of this. (Dave: "We don't need to draw up rules and regulations, and don't stick by them.")

Anne is now much more at ease, and her felt mutual connection with others is further established. The painful strong concerns she shared are sufficiently resolved that a transition occurs here. Ralph begins the shift in focus to the group leader. Members share views about what Lx does and doesn't (or won't) do, agreeing and disagreeing with each other, often without addressing Lx directly.

Ralph: …When Anne was talking this morning and Goff came in a number of times I felt very resentful of Goff in this sense that there are so many people in here and so much to say I feel everyone is constantly straining [to get their say]… I thought, hell, he is wasting her time, I don't want him reflecting people's feelings – I want other people to come in with their feelings… Then I began to wonder if I had been in Anne's shoes at that particular moment would I have been grateful to Goff for doing this… And I felt guilty because I wanted Goff to shut up so we could talk to Anne. I don't know … (Laughter)

After an initially light response and a few more exchanges Dave
follows up with his sense of what is being expressed:

Dave: [Members have said] with a lot of unclarity what we hope to get from being here; what are your purposes, your intentions?

Lx: Before I respond to your question [Dave] I'm thinking of the fact that several of you feel, or have felt and possibly still do, some irritation with me for the way I've responded, that has seemed to get in the way … although, Ralph, you went on to say that you also could see it in another light so that your feeling was not completely in one direction. … I find myself responding in the group to the meanings of other persons… and this is definitely one factor. Another factor is that of opportunity to say something …. Another aspect is when I sense there's a movement in our whole group discussion, or our whole experience in some particular direction, that we haven't identified and which I think or imagine I can see…. I guess I feel there's some value in being conscious of what's going on – this is of value to me personally and I feel it may be of value to others.

Dave said at once that he felt reassured. Tess saw in Lx's
response "some kind of information which [she was] very much
looking forward to and which I really thought I'd never get" and
went on to reiterate her frustration with "reflections." She
wishes Lx would participate as another group member (but at the
same time respond with his ideas and theory) rather than applying
Rogerian technique—which she sees as defensive in the approach.
Dave did not respond to Tess directly but said he thought the
time was about up for the session (in fact there was about half
an hour more to go). Others were more positive and shortly Janet
spoke up:

Janet: I don't say I object to what Goff does up to the limit that he does it; I want him to do more. I like that support. If I'm saying something I like to feel that he will come in and understand me and my ideas exactly – then I want him to say "well I think this and that" (to Lx) You don't go that step further. I think we all of us like that support of having someone understand us.

Dave: But you want to accord him full membership rights with an additional opportunity to take up as he sees fit to help another individual ---

Janet: I think he sees with clarity some of the things that we don't see because we get confused with our own feelings.

Anne: Well then if he ceased to be what he is doing, ceased to be what he's doing now, would he then be able to see with clarity?

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The exchanges between group members, reacting in various ways
and sharing different ideas and feelings about Lx's way in the
group, continued and stirred Lx into responding from his own
feeling.
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Lx: I feel as though…. some of you who have been speaking in the last few minutes are sufficiently well prepared with hypotheses at the moment about what I'm feeling and what I'm trying to do that I have to be feeling a little bit of resentment that whatever my response at the moment it might seem to fit your hypotheses –

Tess: May I just interrupt there, Goff, to say that I had no hypothesis, I haven't got a clue to what you are like as a person or what you think or even what you feel.

Lx: Well, I misunderstood you evidently, because I thought from your last remark that you felt that I must have felt resentful or threatened by what you said earlier, but I guess I was wrong.

Tess: That was a bit of bait to get you to answer.

Lx: I see, well, I think it probably helped to achieve your purpose. And I guess….my feeling at the moment is certainly one of quite a lot of personal involvement and part of this feeling is that some of you are wanting me to act and be a certain kind of way, quite strongly, a way that I'm not being at all consistently… And yet there are some others of you Dave, for instance, Ros I think, and maybe others who've been feeling perhaps that other members of the group have been putting too much pressure on me or are or are at the moment asking something that you don't feel comfortable with them asking of me.

Two or three others respond and then Chris who has been silent breaks in:

Chris: Well, I don't know, I just can't remember any other period in this group where I've been as interested – I've never been more interested that I am at this moment (laughter, brief interruption, and words omitted)… my feelings about Goff go up and down like a yo-yo. But at this moment I feel we've got no more right to ask this of Goff than we've got to ask it of any other member of the group. I feel now that this perhaps was meant to be, it's my first glimmering of insight, that this was meant to be a therapeutic group, a workshop in therapeutic counselling, and I think that we are now trying to force Goff into showing his hand at this stage.

Although people continue to focus on Lx, the tone and energy is changing in the group. Shortly, Ralph mentions that last evening he finally found opportunity to read from Lx's papers, some of which "have deep personal meaning to me as a therapist," for example, the concept of "availability" that seems related to what he is struggling with. He has been debating about whether to ask Lx about this, and whether it would be appropriate to do this in the group. He then asked directly and Lx begins by acknowledging that he is "feeling pretty self-conscious at the moment about our process [in the group]" and suspects that many others are too. One or two others comment and then Anne responds:

Anne: But I think what these people are asking for is not emotional availability but intellectual availability, they want to know what he [Goff] thinks, not what he feels. They want to know what he thinks about a lot of things and I still don't know this, don't know what his opinions are about anything, is this right?
Ellen: I want to know what he feels as well.

Tess then claims that she wants a relationship, which she doesn't have or feel with Lx. She says that she is not proud of the aggressive self she portrays but is willing to show and reveal to the group. Someone then reflects that she does not feel respected – which Tess agrees with (though it seems she cannot ask for it). Dave then asks Lx a direct question:

Dave: Do you see it as open to you to accept or reject – is open to you to adopt the proposal of coming into the group? There may be 50 reasons why you don't and you might not want to go into it. Do you see it is open to you to be different from what you are being?

Lx: I'm not sure that I can satisfy you, Dave.... I feel I want very much to be part of the group and I guess, I suspect like many others, my feelings go up and down. I feel as though I go in and out in terms of the degree to which I'm part of the group. I suppose I feel that being part of it for me doesn't mean being the same as anybody else or the same as what anyone at a particular time would want me to be.

Barry: May I ask another direct question there to Goff? Would you prefer to remain as you have been?

Goff–Lx: No, I wouldn't be happy to remain as I have been. I feel as though for me, as well as for others, my anticipation is something, the sort of involvement is something that changes and I want [it] to go on changing.

Janet: And would you be prepared to give A) your thoughts on different subjects and B) your feelings about things to us?

Goff–Lx: I guess the only, the nearest answer that I can give to that at the moment Janet is that I wouldn't be willing to commit myself in advance.

Ralph: Goff, can I ask one more question then? Do you and, more particularly, did you before the group even met, see this as group therapy in a broad sense. I don't mean that we are patients that are mentally ill but that we will be people engaging in a group therapy process?

Goff–Lx: Well, I was not conscious of putting a label or a classification on it. Now that's only part of an answer, I guess, but I still feel as though I wouldn't be willing to put a label on what I hope or am trying to help to take place. I definitely felt that what I wanted to help happen would involve an increasing degree of personal communication and an increasing developing of relationship among us.

Ralph: Among the rest of us mostly though?

Goff–Lx: No, I guess I very much hoped that would include me to.

Mary: I can't see how he can possibly do what you are all asking him to do, I'm protecting him. (Laughter and comments) I've got the feeling that some people have expressed dependency needs and that they are asking him to be a father and to love them. Other people see him as a paternal figure or an authority figure in the way that he has greater knowledge and they want

to pick his brains and to know what ideas he's got. Now he comes down on this and answers specifically somebody's requests, all the rest are going to feel threatened or challenged in some way…. I don't see that he can commit him-self, I think he's going to completely step outside of the role as a leader.

Shortly, Ellen asserts "I think that a very good leader is also a good member." Mary disagrees, saying "I think that the members of the group automatically put the leader—you can see it—this comes up over and over again in this group, that everybody focuses on him and demands something from him something they never did from me and from many of the rest of us." The conversation goes on, Ellen sharing strong concern about a discrepancy she sees between precept and action. Finally, a lately silent member, evidently frustrated by the trend of the discussion directed to Lx, speaks up:

James: I think I must say what I feel. I've been in similar shoes to what Goff has been as a group leader, but not doing it so well I think, but I feel [something of] what Goff would feel…. I cannot but help feel that we are being a lot of bastards in just being the way we are towards Goff…. perhaps now I'm going to intellectualise this and say I'm displacing some of the feelings I felt when I was in Goff's shoes…

Ellen: Do you [not] think it does good to air these feelings, because I feel that for the first time I've got more relationship with Goff than I've had all the time because I'm saying to him straight what I think and I feel better about it somehow.

Dave speaks at some length, but Goff is still thinking about Ellen and asks first about her name. She tells him the nickname that she goes by.

Goff–Lx: ——— (nickname) I'm glad to know that. I was wanting to know what to call you. I'm still thinking about what you were saying and I guess you were really seeing me as not a genuine person in this situation.

Ellen: I think I see you as a somewhat studied person but this doesn't bother me as long as, to be fair, you haven't said anything about being genuine and so on – all this is in the papers… In what I've read of Rogers it bothers me that the language is so much the same and I begin to feel it's almost like a cult and you

bother me to the extent that even the way you say "uhm" is rather like Rogers…. It bothers me too because in Rogers' last book there so much on becoming free and so on and this doesn't add up, because I see you as being sort of very conditioned, not only you but in some of the other papers it all seems to be written like Rogers to me and this seems a terrific conditioning process and, boy, does this frighten me. It wouldn't frighten me if it weren't that there was all this talk of being free in Roger's book On Becoming a Person….This again is the incongruence you see?… I wouldn't expect people to be quite so much the same…

Goff–Lx: But at the moment it does seem very strongly to you as though everybody associated with Rogers has been, seems to have been, modelling themselves after him….

Ellen: I'm a bit of an eclectic and I never go the whole way with any kind of theory, but I said I was fairly sold on Rogers but I'm becoming less so…. I'm beginning to wonder whether my irritation has some real basis in that I have felt a little suspicious of someone who makes so much of being – of respect for persons and not evaluating – whether this doesn't really disguise a person who's got a very strong dominating personality and I always felt that through his book you feel perpetually pulled this way. In spite of his fairness and scientific approach, there's always something that's left out as far as I'm concerned – and I thought perhaps this is me resisting, you see. But I'm beginning to more and more feel that there are things left out…. He does mention failures…. but he doesn't go any further than this and for a man who's done so much study and so on I would have expected more from him. In his last book he does for the first time begin to examine or show that he is aware of some people who can't cope with this technique [theme continues, with mention of empathy]. I know this thing works, I've seen it work, it's like magic with the people it's suitable for…. Is the counsellor able to be empathic when the client puts him on the spot? Why are some counsellors unable to do this?…. And when I see that people are talking in Rogers' voice I begin to think well this is a very expert salesman, he's certainly done a lot for therapy--- I still feel that… There is a passage in Rogers that I found myself getting very hostile about and I thought 'now why am I hostile' because I believe in this, really, and then I saw that I felt that he had started with a moral principle and ended up with a technique. … I get hot under the collar about this because respect for a person is about the only ethical principle I have any confidence in at all!

Goff–Lx: Well just for that I'm so glad---
Ellen: I seem to have shattered everybody.
Goff–Lx: Just for myself I'm so glad you said what you did.
Mary: I'm glad she said it too. I thought it was terribly interesting.
Janet: So did I.
Unidentified member: Matter of fact I nearly clapped.
Arthur: We can say, you know, three cheers. It was wonderful. [Now] a cup of tea would be very nice to cool us off (laughter and comments).
Goff–Lx: I had no idea until you mentioned a cup of tea that it was 11 o'clock.
James: I suggested to Goff yesterday that I'd asked the group today if they feel any objections at all to my listening, in camera, to the tapes of the next two sessions which I will miss – sometime over the weekend.

This request was readily agreed to, and the group session ended on this easy and unified ambience of feeling. Probably, most people would have seen that Ellen's passionate sharing was very freeing for her – and even freeing for some others – and that this contributed to their very positive response. The group did not stay on the high they reached towards the end this time (see session ratings in Chap. 5) but picked up in later sessions, as implied in the further transcript excerpts that are feasible to outline.

Highs and Lows of the Connected Searching in Sessions 14 and 15

Session 14

After a few light exchanges Ralph was the first to speak. He experienced the previous (i.e., morning) session "as very useful, we really talked about therapy." He wondered whether this could have happened earlier or if it needed the process the group had gone through. The next speaker "initially wanted to chop this conversation off" but then after a time "I perceived that I was getting quite a bit out of it." He saw the previous day as a kind of regression yet agreed that the upswing today probably depended on the prior meetings. Janet follows:

Janet: I think we could have got on [to it] towards the end of last week. We all seemed to be fairly comfortable within the group and I was trying hard in my own small way to get to that sort of thing, not knowing quite how to do it…. Well this morning it seemed to come quite naturally.

Ralph: In a way I think we were all expressing our personal experiences in therapy. All the focus was on this… I guess I wouldn't be too terribly surprised to see it go in another direction for a while.

Ellen: … I was feeling very determined about discussing therapy this morning and I think there were three or four other people involved who were feeling very determined too.

Barry: But when I suggested last week that we discuss problems of therapy Tess made a remark something like "It wouldn't be long before we were talking clap-trap." It was some such remark anyway, she dismissed the idea.

Tess denied that Barry's observation was true, but it isn't a big issue, and she acknowledged that she "sometimes says things just to get a reaction." After two or three related comments, more personal issues start coming to the fore:

Chris: I came in this morning prepared to make myself something of a guinea pig in the group, to enquire into something….I realised that I had brought hostilities in with me from the outside. I was thinking about it, because yesterday when I had a bit of an outburst, I found that I didn't like myself very much in all of this. I was being rude really in my opinion and I was a bit staggered at this…. I was actually 'pounding' in the group and I couldn't understand this when I liked everybody individually but was prepared to be very hostile… When a person exhibits hostility in a group of this nature does the leader sort of notice and wonder what its source is? And, if the hostility disappears is it the group that helps the person to resolve it? Or, does he do it himself spontaneously in the group by letting this hostility out? Does it disappear as a part of his interaction? Is there something that the person showing the hostility wakes up to himself; or does the group get stuck into him for this hostility and cure him that way?

Goff–Lx: Are you saying, Chris, can the group really help the person effectively resolve hostilities such as you experienced for a while yesterday? Or does the leader have some special responsibility? I guess my immediate reaction is that in this group – and this is certainly not true of all groups I've been

involved in – I thought … that I was by no means solely responsible in each instance for any movement that we facilitated in anyone in the group at a particular time. To put it more positively I felt increasingly that we've all been contributing to this, or different ones of us at different times. I suppose I felt my own particular responsibility more keenly to start with….

Tess: I think this must be so, surely, because at the beginning of a group after all, nobody knows what it's all about…. (Tess expands on this theme and the influence of the leader.)

Janet: I thought I heard something more that you did this morning, Goff… I felt that you wanted to respond to something in Chris that was worrying him, And that you came in… partly responding to something he said the other day, not anything to do with his hostility. It was more, kind of, he was asking for some sympathy and some assurance that he'd be understood and listened to and I thought that you consciously tried to give him that this morning. I remember thinking 'good old Goff', sort of thing, that you came in [that way].

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Ellen then asks Goff directly whether he's noticed and thinks
that groups like this tend to have a particular pattern, and
also tells a little of her own experience in training groups
that she leads. Goff agrees, as he thinks about it, that there
is a pattern in this sort of group, but that he feels "too much
immersed in the process of this group to feel just at the moment
like trying to discern or abstract this pattern." A previously
silent member of the group has been harbouring some strongly
felt concerns and evidently feels there is sufficient opening or
receptivity in the group for him to begin to share.
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Keith: I wanted just to say that I been trying very hard to see why it is that when I'm out of the group I've got very definite opinions about a lot of things … and I've been thinking for a long while why it is that I'm not say-ing anything [mentions some are unclear possible reasons, and goes on to a further issue]. I was a bit perplexed this morning when somebody came back and said, 'Oh, we sort of discussed you in the other group', so I thought, well, when the other group starts to wonder what it is that's wrong with me perhaps it would be a fairer sort of thing to say 'look here you fellows you might know me a fraction better than they do' and if I'm going to be bandied around perhaps it would be much better to be bandied around in here at least where I can hear (laughter)…. I was just wondering if you could help me sort this

out. It is rather confused sort of impression that I seem to be left in some sort of amorphous state between two groups of people. I don't know whether I want to say more or not, at this stage.

Goff–Lx: Keith, is this part of what you're getting at – that you would value anything any of us might like to share in terms of our reactions to you … and you're also saying you would be a lot more comfortable with it than you are being talked about behind your back in the other group.

Keith: Yes, indeed, this is probably the most shattering thing that's happened to me in the last couple of weeks. I felt that I must have given [information] in a loose sort of way conversing with folks. Perhaps I've done this group some – not damage in any sense, but perhaps I've said things which they've interpreted, not really knowing the situation. I felt last night very definitely that people were saying things that perhaps I'd sort of started that I wouldn't want to agree with now, but somewhere along the line I'd sort of said those things, and I was wondering whether I've taken enough part in this group to be really clear that I was a good spokesman for them… I can't get any clearer than that.

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Others respond supportively or (Ros) with some concern or (Tess)
about the issue itself. Shortly, Keith speaks again, saying in
part that he has no evidence that he was referred to at length
in the other group, and his concern is not only about being
talked about himself, but that he has talked to some extent
informally about people and events in this group. He then raises
another issue: Although he has said very little here, he may
have created impressions that he could learn from, and he
awkwardly invites personal feedback:
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Keith: I'd like to say to this group – to see if they have some impressions which perhaps it would help me see something about myself… that I hadn't before…

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There is no direct response to Keith's request, but to the
context of communication to people in the other group and then
on to the issue of confidentiality.
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Dave: I don't want to reassure you, Keith, I can see one thread that you … when I think back to the number of times we've been alongside the [tea/coffee] urn in our block, and [we] have taken part in conversations, the general

tenor of which has been the level of activity in this group – to the point where I think a number of people in the other group had suggested an envy of this almost…

Barry: Oh surely not – are you the only one who's done that? – As a matter of fact I hardly ever get past the waiting room, in the tea room, before I'm asked by somebody "what went on in your group this morning" (another voice -"that's right." I (may) tell them. I'm not under any obligation, I think, not to tell them…

Ralph is at a different position than others in the group in that
he is not in residence with them. He asks whether the information
is about the general process of the group or if it refers to an
identified person discussing personal problems.

Barry: I can't remember offhand but I know that it's been in detail rather than in generality – I can't say that it was in the kind of detail that you mentioned…I'm not sure.

Others enter energetically into the discussion. Confidentiality
is the main issue for some, especially if this is seen as a
therapy group. Roger and one or two others speak on the issue of
where "the group" begins and ends, one of them seeing the
workshop membership (both in and out of their separate meetings)
as one broader group "broken in two." Janet suggests another
angle:

Janet: I get the impression the other group just want to know about us and what we're doing because that's the only way they can sort of get into our group. They can't –we can't swap over now and they can't come and listen to us. But if they get impressions from individuals during tea and that sort of thing at least they get to know us a little bit.

Member voice (Barry?): It's become quite obvious just from discussion that the two groups started differently, progressed differently. And there's been a certain amount of academic interest on each of our parts to see how this has evolved, in what way it's evolving. I've no compunction about talking about this group, how it behaves, and listening to what happens in the other group – I perceive this as a total seminar. I've no objection to them hearing the tapes if they want to…. If they talk about me in their group well that's

their business…. Let them speculate all they want to. I would very much value comments of people in this group about myself because I think you're in a position to make them, whereas other comments outside I feel could only be speculations – unless they are based on observations of me on what goes on outside the group.

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A few people imply that whether or not members feel that the
whole workshop is their personal sharing community, there are
nuanced sensitivities to such sharing. When two members from
this group were listening to a taped session that one of them
had been absent for, and then a person from the other group
wandered into the same space, they felt he shouldn't be there
and were glad that he soon left. One person (Ellen) at least
returns to the issue of lack of early clarification regarding the
process nature of the groups, and the issue-centred discussion
continues for some time. Lx has been listening intently without
speaking and, after a long statement by Tess, finally breaks
silence.
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   Goff–Lx: I find myself feeling at the moment – if I'm quite honest about it – I'm impatient. I'm not quite sure why, some impatience with Ralph and Tess … maybe I felt you were being didactic and we <u>should</u> do this or that…. I'm just wondering whether, behind my feeling, I sense I'm being unjustly accused or something – I'm not sure about that one … I guess another part of my feeling is that in spite of the fact that this bothers me at the moment it seems perfectly legitimate for anyone in the group to have such a feeling and to express it though I don't agree with it.
   Women's voice: I'm sorry. I'd like to go along with this feeling of impatience too, and I felt the same way through all of this…. the reason why I felt this is that underlying all this talk about the other group and the confidences and so on there seems to me to be a fear of oneself being exposed and in some way people taking an advantage of it…. I think that Keith has said "Well, help me, I'd like to look at myself, I'd like to know something more about myself," and nobody's taken him up on it at all, because this has sort of triggered off a fear of personal disclosures.

Shortly, Ros follows to express something that "*has been burning a hole in me since we've been expressing resentment about coming under false pretenses*" and indicating "*that when we received your (Goff's) first circular it was never interpreted in any other way than an experiential workshop in therapeutic counselling.*" Another member follows with "*It's funny, I (too) came with no other expectations than this.*" Ralph then says that his frustration is not just directed at Lx but comes partly from the context of paper he is planning to present on new developments in group therapy and that if everyone knew this was an approach to group therapy {then} failing to be explicit is our mutual responsibility. The stronger awareness of Keith, in the group, remained and came into the foreground again via Chris, who shared his strong regard and support for Keith, based on knowing him outside the group and knowing others who knew him well.

The note just above refers to events in the middle part of Session 14. Much more happened, especially to and around Ralph, that can be sketched only in brief summary.[1] One topic concerned ways of communicating, especially by and with children, with sensitivity to non-verbal expression a component aspect. Fear as a factor in sharing or hiding vulnerability was raised, with some broader discussion of the influence of fears of different kinds. Ralph had been unusually silent, as especially noticed by Cliff who asked if he had felt "kicked in the guts" a bit earlier. Ralph verified this, the "injury" partly from Tess, and leaving him confused and disconnected, not having any clear sense of the group any more. Tess confessed that she's been feeling guilty ever since "because I hit him pretty hard." For Ralph, "It's partly that the group seemed so good, to me, up until now." Tess tries to catch his feeling, but another member gets closer, saying "Did you feel we had betrayed you?" He replied "The betrayal I think was when it seemed to me people were saying this is no part of the therapy group and all this time up until now I've felt it was as much of the therapy group as anyone wanted to make it and what I said earlier [critical of therapy in the group] I didn't feel deeply."

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[1] The transcript of Session 14 runs to 48+ foolscap pages of double-space typing. It was a considerable challenge to produce this compression, bending every effort to retain a selection inclusive of nearly all voices and brief summaries of the many other reactions expressed and issues explored.

Roger mentions that just today he's been feeling extremely insecure within the group and not able to be trusting. Arthur confesses to feeling in danger of breaking down through feeling more than empathy but a deep compassion. There were some expressions of guilt within the group; others were clear in *not* feeling guilty. Ralph went on to say that he had been feeling "an opening for some real personal learning …. and then, when I was almost there, I wasn't sure the opening was still there. I didn't know whether I wanted people to notice me or not… In one way I wanted people to notice me and say something." Chris said he had been conscious of a difference in Ralph and maybe that he been quite hurt, but he didn't follow the path of wanting to reassure him because he has a tremendous admiration for his brain and ability and felt "Ralph can look after himself." Similarly, others who felt for him or wanted to understand did not leap to reassurance, as they might have earlier in the life of the group. In a word, a very active and at times dominant member had exposed and felt his need and vulnerability far more than he had before – though he is recovering, with gain, as the next session brings out. Dave especially felt disturbed afterwards. In overall impression, there had been deeply involving significant happenings and points of crisis in the group, evidently reflecting or heralding further advance.

Session 15 (Morning of Second to Last Day)

Dave: I want to get in first. I've thought about this so much since 4 o'clock yesterday that I don't know what I think any more. I wanted the group to know the extreme degree of apprehension, disturbance, uneasiness, that yesterday's session created for me – of having ventured onto quicksands without knowing they were there… Until about 11 last night I had no peace… I wanted to know whether other people are in the same boat and I'm concerned at the short time left, and want to get home in one piece.

After reflection by Goff, Dave resumes: "What the group does today may well show its capacity to cope but at the moment I have a fear of lack of control"-- a breakdown he feels Goff is partly responsible for, though the whole group pushed the direction. There is no other quick response, but another member (a local colleague able to join the group only for the second week) is

ready to share and now makes a long speech for the first time. Part of what he had to say follows:

Mark: Well, of course, I've been thinking too about last night, and I felt that I would like to tell you a bit of what the situation meant to me…. that it built up into something symbolically very important to me. Why this was so means that I'll have to tell you a bit about my experiences as a therapist over the years. In this therapy I've always been very alone… I've (also) always been in a situation where I've been exposed to considerable pressures to reveal what goes on in therapy from the authorities under whom I worked….[described these contexts]. So, over the years the problem most difficult for me to cope with… is "how much of what the person working with you says should be treated as confidential"…. Yesterday morning I was very happy because what we discussed was precisely this problem of how much one can reveal, how far professional confidence should go…. so really I was very interested in yesterday morning and got a lot from it….

Mark turned then to the afternoon session (#14) going over at length what individuals had said and done and its impact, especially ways this had played negatively into his sense of himself as a therapist. He implied that we, including himself, were failing each other, yet it also seemed that he was stirred into inward motion. He said he had learned that a great deal can happen in a group under the surface—symbolically and needing to be deciphered. Ellen spoke next, a bit shaken by Mark's implication that the group had collapsed, which she had thought earlier but not last time, and acknowledging that she has a tendency to dramatise things (probably mentioning this because of Mark's vivid language). Mark added his view of the group being seductive, and why. Ralph then spoke up, first mentioning that for him confidentiality was not the central issue, and moving to what he implied was central to him – *and expressing himself passionately*:

Ralph: Thinking of experiences, I experienced more in that whatever it was than I've experienced in any other group before certainly and not in my life – I don't know whether any other time in my life but certainly (not like) that…. and I had one further feeling that I'd learned an awful lot, I think… I learned pretty well what this content of yesterday's discussion was all about.

It was right there in front of all of us I think, all the time – depth. It was awfully deep, not comfortably but awfully deep.

After some further exchange, a member summed up, with concise perception:

    Barry: In fact, you felt that the group had abandoned you?
    Ralph: And I think in doing so that it abandoned what I had sort of felt was the whole purpose of the thing… And that's why I felt sort of desolate – not just alone in the group – it was going on in a very useful way but somehow the whole meaning it has for me had disappeared….
    Barry: It seemed to me that Mary was the kind of spokesman for this idea you had…. And that her saying that you talked too much was just the final straw but not the most important thing that happened.
    Ros: Ralph, you felt the group was unconcerned but I know from talking to various members and from my own reactions that, in fact, there were a great many others intensely concerned as to what had happened to you…. I'm aware that there are .. other people in this group who are intensely suffering with you.
    Ralph: Well, I wonder.. why in the hell didn't anyone communicate? Why didn't anyone be congruent transparent or whatever (and say so)… If this was happening, I didn't at the time know it at all!

Barry spoke again, not in full agreement with Ros but saying to Ralph, "I did have some things that I wanted to say to you that I felt I couldn't say in the group, and still feel that I can't say here." He added that he feels "uncertain about just what my rights are in the group to say things about other members of the group."

    Goff–Lx: This is turning around a bit what you were saying [Barry], but I wonder if it's true, that you felt very deeply involved – very deeply involved with us in what was going on yesterday and particularly in contact emotionally somehow with Ralph. And there are things that you feel in the group, that you feel free to communicate with the group. And there are some other things that you feel in response to individuals that you don't feel free to communicate. – – –

Barry: And … I don't know to what extent some of these things are loaded and, frankly, it was a complete inability to make a decision about it that kept me quiet. I believe that Mark's remarks about the effect of Tess' statements are significant but I don't believe that this was what had us all on the razor's edge yesterday afternoon…. Mary was the final catalyst and we went pretty close to being destroyed as a group…

Mary: I don't feel that about being destroyed as a group, or the previous thought of yours. I'm a bit inclined to go along with Ralph that in fact the whole subject matter underlying yesterday's session was this one of depth…. And I think this is what frightened everybody because they knew Ralph had gone looking at himself in depth… And if we're ever going to be any good as therapists with our clients I think we have to do it. – – –

Goff–Lx: I wonder – what's running through my mind [given that] we were coming in contact with one another in depth, in a greater and more significant way that we had before, and for some of us this was very threatening and to some of us it was full of promise. And I feel as I say this the reason it was threatening to some was not just because of their personality and it wasn't full of promise for others not just because of their personalities, but because of the particular theme, somehow – the themes we were involved in at this stage when we did approach this depth that we hadn't experienced before. If it had been different themes there would have been different people who were disturbed or shaken and different people who felt the promise of it.

James: I must say that I felt, perhaps more than a little exhilarated about what was happening in the group and -- by what I was feeling in myself. Following on from the discussion we had about depth and broadening the range of emotions it seemed to almost naturally follow (some) of us were feeling considerable intensity of emotion, which was perhaps opening new vistas…

Chris: … A lot of us did notice Ralph was upset. I felt myself that it would have been the wrong thing to comment on it – for Ralph's sake. I thought that Cliff was particularly insensitive in using the words that he did… When a person is upset and then you describe his condition in sort of exaggerated terms where they change what he is feeling to one of feeling a little more sorry for himself. I'm just wondering if wouldn't it have been better if Ralph had been let just to sit that out and then to go home and think about it…. – – –

Ralph: I think all I wanted from people was to express what they were feeling….. I agree with James, it wasn't comfortable yesterday but looking

back today I'm glad it happened in a crazy sort of sense – I mean I learned something I couldn't learn any other way. – – –

    Mary: ….. My feeling about it was that Ralph was saying exactly the same things he said right from the very first session and he was going on and on and I felt he was babbling on and losing his sensitivity by too much of this kind of talk and that's why I exploded into a most unusual aggressive attack for me.

As the discussion goes on here, it veers increasingly into sharing feelings and ideas about control or taking charge, especially by the group leader and in moments of intense or "overwhelming" reactions by some member(s)—one or two people (Mary, at least) favouring leader intervention. Other speakers, including Ralph, are against it, yet a couple of instances are mentioned of how much difference it has made at times when there simply has been clear recognition and acknowledgement of the other's experience. There is again discussion of leadership, but the context is different than earlier in the life of the group and the discussion has a quality of taking stock—welcomed, for example, by Cliff, Barry and Dave.

Dave speaks of the present process as "the first time we've really in some sense allowed ourselves to stop the momentum and have a look, and I realised all the time I've been crying out for chance to stop and take stock… Today the fact that we've been able to do this is a very, very reassuring feeling." Ellen however feels that there is still "a destructive element in us in the group," and says that she finds it easier to talk to certain individuals outside; in the group "I feel a tendency to withdraw unless it's talking about therapy or something." There are *many further exchanges* in "stocktaking" and clarifying vein. Ros, for example, acknowledges that she has sometimes felt afraid but doesn't see it as a function of the group, but perhaps of several people at the time, combined with insecurity in herself. Shortly she speaks of something she rejected at first, but which now seems true to her.

    Ros: …I feel that there are a lot of us -- a lot in me that needs love and affection and this I get [but] there is a lot in me doesn't see itself until I get a kick in the tail and a pretty swift one…. I feel that this is as real, just as Tess

said, just as real as affection and I would have felt like Ralph – and I have felt it, Ralph, in the group – an instant of terrible pain and then the need of the caring afterwards, you know.

Goff expresses his understanding of Ros' message that "there is part of your experience, part of yourself, which you don't become aware of until it is struck by somebody else." Barry refers to his own experience in the group as "sitting back and listening and I would say learning, certainly learning in a derived fashion," and along with seeing the struggle and differences between people he is wanting to express "a general faith in you as individuals, and I really mean it – I mean that I think you ought to try to go further too." Shortly the issue of so much going on between people in residence together is raised and contrasted with the situation of people not in residence – Ralph, Janet and Goff – who must engage with less information. There is considerable thoughtful discussion of this issue. Those who spoke, with the possible exception of Ralph, felt it would be best if *everyone* were in residence. One person (Dave) is more specific: "There's a lot of help given outside the group, it makes what happens inside more tolerable" – and mentions a personal instance of this. Afterwards, Janet expresses concern about discovering the people are talking about her on issues no one had mentioned to her. Broader discussion continues until Cliff comes back to this:

Cliff: The important thing to me is that apparently Janet has had some allegations levelled that she irritates people, and wants to know why, and nobody is prepared to take this up.

Janet: That's what I like about Cliff because he always sort of pinpoints what's going on.

Two or three people, including Mark, acknowledge irritation or offer other feedback to Janet. Barry follows Dave (below), ending the feedback with reflections on another level.

Dave: I think the way this happens has changed, and I'm not at all sure that you really do irritate us now – but in as much as it's happened it's because of the feeling that you are standing, you're not letting [things] happen to you

and you are not bending, not being bent by the process and compelled to modify your views as much as I feel under pressure to modify mine. I think, in a sense, that I'm resenting your position on what appears like safety or security – I've got the feeling that's no longer nearly so relevant.

Barry: Yesterday… I came into this group feeling way out on the far end of a limb – I'd been told twice in the day outside the group that I was a fence-sitter, not really a member of the group so I came in feeling oh, what a bugger of a group this is… And then when Keith raised his stuff and it started to go along the line [that] you shouldn't talk about things outside the group I was hanging on by the last leg for a while… And then as the trouble shifted in your direction, Ralph, a great calm and peace settled on me and I felt that I was, you know, back in the family group again in some way. On the other hand, the reverse may have happened with you, so I finished up feeling possibly the way you did when you came into the group, you left feeling like I felt, and worse, at the beginning of the group… I would like what I've said explored about me… and I think you need to examine why did you go out of here with a jet under your tail the way you did?

Ralph: I can answer that quite simply. I just wasn't in a state of control or feeling that I wanted to talk with anyone…. I wasn't going to go out into the tea-room and talk trivialities at that point, that's all… I didn't want to see anyone to talk about anything else that was going on.

Barry: What I'm really saying is, well, I felt rejected and alone when I came into the group, you just say "I felt irritated and not able to talk…" but I want to know what it was that made you so irritated?

Goff–Lx: Barry, I'd like to respond to what you're saying … because I sensed both yesterday and again this morning that you were feeling more one with us than you had before or, at least than you had most of the time, and I'm very interested to hear you say how great the shift was from the beginning of yesterday's afternoon's session to the end, and how much you did feel alone and away from us to begin with, and how much with us at the end.. I guess your question… to Ray just strikes me – it may not be true at all – but it strikes me as asking him something that you want to understand better in yourself not exactly the same thing (but similar). Am I not being clear there or---

Barry: Yes, you are on the beam.

At this point, a quietly observing member shifts the focus, out of his concern for another member:

Will: I'm sorry if I change this but I realise the late hour and I think Tess expressed quite definite ideas of wanting to get out of the group yesterday and I can't help but wonder whether she still experiencing these feelings at all? [Tess responds briefly, with surprise.]

Goff–Lx: Will, are you saying you can't help wondering what she's feeling now? [Will confirms his concern]

Mark: Tess said – this is the problem that I was worried about right from the start – can this group contain me. Did we respond to that at all? [Ellen: Not at all.]

Goff–Lx: I find myself drawn in very quickly here because I felt that I, among others, didn't respond to Tess yesterday on this and that she was really saying to me "you see, this is what I warned you about from the beginning and now it's happening." – – –

Tess (evidently upset): I don't think I can answer you. I think two things perhaps I can say: One, that it doesn't seem to have been verbalised by anybody here that the best thing for defence is to attack, and when we are attacking Goff, or attacking me or anybody, it may be the pack of jackals that need protection. I don't think I can say anything else, or I shall go to attack.

Mark: … Previously, we've been dealing with this question of hostility and we've said, or perhaps some of us have felt, that it would be so nice if this group were not hostile…. if we could get rid of these hostile attacks, but here again we are asking to go into an unreal world. If we exclude hostility, exclude this part of personality, we limit ourselves by that much, in this group, of understanding one another. I think our problem is not to exclude hostility but to learn to accept it, really.

Arthur is put off by Mark's perceived attitude and he responds, saying in part, "If that is your frame of reference I don't think that you are qualified to push anybody into that depth you never experienced." Shortly, Goff expresses his sense that Tess and Mary are not liking him for the "way I just responded to Tess… I certainly didn't realise how deeply Tess was feeling, and what she said about the jackals [e.g., herself] needing protection too, perhaps are the ones who really need it, struck home [in me] quite deeply ---."

Ellen: I think I should say here that I think Tess and I know each other well enough that she knows that probably I'm talking to her underneath all the time, and I think she knows what I mean, and that it's probably me rather than you (Goff) that's responsible.... To me, it seems [unclear] whether Tess wants to be contained in this group or not – if she does want to be contained, then it can contain her. And I think I also want to say but I feel that we have done some harm to Tess, I've never seen her like this before as she's been in this group.

Goff–Lx: you're feeling pretty deeply concerned about Tess, Ellen? (Pause) I suspect most of us are feeling concerned about both of you right now.

Arthur: I think the real thing is that deep down we all just want to love each other and it is embarrassing, isn't it, sometimes?....

At this point Tess says "Excuse me, Goff" and at once leaves the session, which was due to end. Arthur's expression is in character for him, but may have lacked any reality or relevance at the time for Tess, and contributed to her departure. The examined crisis for Ralph was over, with fruitful outcome. The ending appears abrupt and, on the face of it, the session leaves unresolved issues. Tess did not fill in a rating form, but for the rest, this was one of the most highly rated sessions in the series by *most* group members (see Chap. 5, Table 5.2). Members felt strongly engaged, spoke their minds to each other and generally felt invested in and responsible together for what happened. The next session helps to further illuminate this one.

The Process in Ending-Sessions 16 and 17

Session 16 (Afternoon of Next to Last Day)

Lx opened Session 16, first conveying a message from Janet, explaining her absence "for family reasons." He acknowledged that the workshop was nearing its end and expressed his own interest in the felt perspectives of other members on the workshop experience. In case that topic wasn't a priority just now for anyone else, he could come back to it. Others who then spoke responded negatively to this suggestion. There was concern with significant "unfinished business," especially around Tess and perhaps

Ellen, from the morning session – accepted by Goff as the greater immediate need. Very soon, Tess spoke up at length:

Tess: … I think we skate around a good deal and one of the things we skate around is that this fortnight and our role as therapists, and all the things that we bring in here, are only part of what for each of us is a whole life experience, with all its insecurities and its difficulties and its satisfactions…. Now I don't think anybody here has not had an educational experience and I think we all know one hell of a lot more about groups then we did before and that is a profit for all of us…. My own difficulty here … is rooted in personal experience…. 40 years of it and you can't put 40 years into a fortnight…. The other thing … is what we ought to know, we are all therapists … that aggression is defensive and yet I think this group has been consistently blind to this and I'm not only talking about myself. From the first point when I realised that to some people this was wished for as a therapeutic experience, I think I have consistently said, to me this is a threat. Maybe this is my fault, my personality defect – I know it is and have said that I know I have personality defects. But I think that to sit in a threatening situation for 10 days is intolerable for practically anybody…. I don't think this should be done unless there is group selection in the first place. And I think, my other strong feeling about this, Goff, is that you've taken a hell of beating out of running this group. In a sense I'm sorry about that because I think you wished for a good deal of professional support, among other things from it and I don't know how much of that you had.

Ellen: I don't think it is possible to explain because a good deal of this comes from the past and I don't understand it myself fully… But I think that… I agree with most of what Tess says that there was something in here and we couldn't deal with it… I couldn't deal with that either, I didn't know how to. I also feel that Goff has had a pretty rough time too.

Goff–Lx: I feel two things at the moment. One is a pretty positive feeling…. I really appreciate the concern for me that I picked up, particularly, in what you said, Tess. At the same time, I want as I said to gain from this experience myself. I don't wish that we hadn't had it, I value very much the fact that we had it, myself, and that we're still having it. That's just for me.

Barry: I found what Tess said very clear and it satisfies me. It satisfies me quite well, I don't feel that I want to know anything more – – –

Tess: I think there's just something else that crosses my mind about control, Barry. I think it was you who was talking about it. It seems to me that somewhere there is a difference between control and holding. (Barry and Ellen respond briefly.)

Tess: … It seems to me that there is a fundamental difference between authority as perhaps personified by the Army and Navy and things like that… and holding which is a kind of thing a mother does before a child can walk. (Ellen responds briefly.)

Goff–Lx: I have quite a vivid feeling at the moment that what Louis Cholden was doing in "Out of Darkness" was holding, that it wasn't control. And I also had the feeling that that's going on outside in our own relationships with one another.

Ralph: … I was interested in people's reactions to what Cliff did yesterday and what Will did this morning. Cliff brought it back to me, and some people thought this was very insensitive of him, he shouldn't have done it, and to me it was-- it couldn't have been more to the point.… When this happened, as soon as Will spoke up, I felt guilty that… I had been doing just exactly what I'd been resentful about the day before … I was glad Will had done it [drawn attention to Tess] and felt I should have done, I should have been aware and wasn't.… I want to learn about myself here.

Tess: … I may be quite out of line on this, but I see you [Ralph] as fundamentally a very loving sociable person who is very much integrated always with other persons you are with… Now for this reason your distress yesterday I found terribly distressing because I felt that I had contributed to it, and I was ashamed to do this because it seemed to me that the group to you was a warm comforting place and that even in your distress you said you were wondering if people would notice, remember? I have not felt this group to be a warm, loving place… [though] I think you are very nice bunch of people. I just don't feel this way about communities and groups of people, I feel that they are likely to be hostile at the drop of a hat.

Ralph: … I think one of the things I learned out of it is that it wasn't so much affection, warmth and all this kind of thing… I've found I like everybody to like me which is an impossibility and a problem in itself … But what really counted most is that people responded to me. I was real to them.… I can tell a client he makes me angry without too much trouble. I've a lot more trouble telling a client he bores me, or he's boring me at the time. And I dis-

covered that this sort of reflects me, I would not want to be told I'm boring. I wouldn't mind as much being told I'm irritating or something.

At this point Dave bought the focus back to Tess, inviting her to say more about her feelings yesterday. Tess then acknowledges she's feeling her way in trying to express it and goes on as follows:

   Tess: I think the difference somehow between Ralph and myself… [is that] Ralph felt himself to be excluded. I think that you (Ralph) in a sense were saying to the group "give me back my faith, you have the power to do this." In other words I think that you are always involved, you are part of the group. What I feel more than anything else is that I have no right to do this [undermine this sense] and I'm sorry and ashamed. I think this is because fundamentally Ralph feels that his experience here is constructive in the group setting and I feel that I'm destructive. I don't think I can put it more clearly than that.

   Ralph: Tess, you are wrong about one thing, I don't feel easily integrated into a group at all, ever… I think this is one problem I'm very aware of…. and my behaviour is a struggle with this very feeling….. It never comes naturally, it's always a struggle.

Ellen mentions that she feels she helped to bring Tess upset "because I had reached a state of anxiety as to what was happening." Tess answers, in part, that she is afraid of having a damaging effect on Ellen, who she is fond of, and each feels partly responsible for the other in their complex relationship. However, Tess' main concern at the moment is with another member:

   Tess: … But I think the thing I really found intolerable this morning was when James said he found the experience exhilarating – I couldn't bear that.

   Mary: I hope James' not going to think I'm protecting him. I feel, Tess, you misinterpreted what he said because I would go along with it and I don't think it's any personal sense of exhilaration or satisfaction but a tremendous – I don't know what kind of word to use – the kind of thing when you see someone take a colossal step forward, something that requires a great deal of moral courage….

James: Yes, I possibly meant that, in part. I think too I may have meant – and this is a pretty personal thing – in recent months I have felt very strongly some emotions to depths which I've never felt before. And while I get very upset in the mentioning of them, I also get exhilarated about it all – never having had the experience of… inner emotions in this depth before…. In feeling [deep] emotion yesterday myself, and feeling that other people in the group were feeling emotions intensely.

Ralph: ….. I had a very strong feeling – I don't know whether exhilarating describes it or not – it's the discovery of the feeling, it isn't so much feeling good… but just sort of well, this is part of me I didn't know about. It's me whether I like it or not I'm going to have to deal with that in some way, but here it is…. that's part of what I felt yesterday when I learned something that I'd maybe experienced a little before but not as much.

The conversation continues a little longer along similar lines until someone else asks what another member (Anne) whom he knows and feels for, is getting out of the group, and the emphasis begins to shift to experienced effects more broadly.

Anne: First of all I would like to say something about Tess… For me, a couple of personal problems came up while I was here, they were outside this group, and of all the people that I knew here Tess was the one that I felt I could go and talk to her about this…. I've never been able to understand since why Tess insists that she is rather cold person – this doesn't figure for me. I don't think she is, I think she's an approachable person. I've never felt that her aggression … was a real threat to me because I felt that there was quite warm person underneath it… But I think that's enough about that part of it.

What have I got out of this? Since yesterday afternoon I've been trying to sort this out to myself… yesterday I felt depressed and what I felt I got out of it was entirely negative. Now, I don't know that it is…. I've had this underlined for me more than ever… the difficulties of real communication between people. I don't think I'll ever forget this. I don't know whether I'll ever believe again … that I'm really communicating with the client or a patient. I don't think I'll ever believe again that my perception of another person is anywhere near … accurate because I realise the different perceptions that people have of me… and have of each other in this group…. When I came here I knew

that…. one of my chief defences was projection … I now know how obvious it is to other people…. At least I've become more aware of my interaction with other people that I was before…. I feel that, at the moment, I'm a bit shattered by all this. …. The other thing, of course I've always considered myself a sensitive person… and I realised that… getting involved in your own emotions in a situation like this isn't necessarily being perceptive…. It's just reacting…. I feel I am still in the process of sorting out and [will be] sorting out for some time…. and by the time I've sorted it all out, I expect a lot of it will be integrated into my personality.

Barry: I was thinking that was pretty good to get out of this anyway.

Goff: I was just thinking – at least how it sounds to me – that you've got things sorted out as much or more than most of us.

Anne: So far as the direction of this group is concerned I feel I don't know anything about it…. this is what I mean when I say, you know, I feel as if I'm reacting to lot of stimuli all muddled up together coming from all over the place and I don't know which one I'm reacting to more strongly, or why…. I've got no way of checking it with other people because I know… that other people would perceive it all differently, so … I don't know whether I can work it out here -

Goff–Lx: That you really feel quite in the dark about the specific influences coming from other people in this emotional involvement …

Anne: No, not quite in the dark. I think Tess had quite a good deal to do with it …. sometimes the impact of what she said was shattering, but I don't feel it was necessarily destructive --- it was strong but not always destructive for me, although at the time I might have been annoyed or upset by what she'd said…. I've been thinking more about Tess in the last couple of hours than at any other time. I've always felt that the group was ambivalent… there had been two streams in the group, two strands of feeling and they've never ever truly got together. This, I'm sure, is about you (Goff) that … the attack on you bothered me…. you were another person in this group to me and because of this that attack at the time came as more of a shock. That's about it – perhaps I'd better stop.

Mark: I think part of the frightening thing in this group is that other people perceive in so many different ways they do begin to wonder what you are yourself, really, your identity is destroyed to some extent.

James: I doubt if it'd be destroyed; perhaps opened up to possible new visions in wondering about oneself, what we are ourselves, maybe opening new visions rather than destroying.

Ralph: I'm going to say one more thing to Tess…. the feeling I have about you, Tess, is not… one of coldness, I don't know whether this is me wanting to project this on to you, I don't feel I've got to know you that well but still this isn't a feeling that comes across, it doesn't to me ---

Tess: I would go along with you there, I don't think I'm cold. One of the things that I was thinking yesterday… we were talking about feelings, breadth of feeling and resonance, I think, and I felt then that people were saying it's a good thing to have great capacity to feel great breadth of feeling, but there again there wasn't very much awareness of the negative. I'm not a cold person, I'm a person capable of very strong emotion indeed, but an awful lot of it is negative. It's very nice if you can feel yourself a sensitive, warm, deeply feeling person and this is positive – when your warmth can flower (words missed) – – –

Dave: I think what struck me, Tess, was an almost ruthless drive to honesty is what I get much more than any other impression from what you say. And this could easily have looked like an attack. I think you are in many ways much more concerned with precision in thinking, and clarity of thinking … you are not content to muddle …

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The focus turns back to Anne, in a spirit of enquiry here to
understand her feelings and meaning. Then Dave mentions his
personal desire to better understand "what it means to respond
sensitively to somebody," and Anne responds to this in context:
"A few times I've felt there was just a little curiosity… I did
occasionally feel there was just the peeping-through-the-keyhole
therapist here… I did sometimes feel there was just a cold --
clinical interest in me, and not a warm one. Yes, that's true,
sometimes I did feel that."
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Dave: So, the attempt to understand you without the feeling of emotional concern with you does [not accord with] your notion of what it demands of somebody else to be sensitive?

Anne: That's right. And it ties in with my concept of a therapist now, that you just can't… get the best out of therapy, and you can't do the best in therapy, if you are [responded to] with a cold clinical interest.

Cliff: I've got the feeling now – I don't know whether this is projection – that the level of sensitivity in the whole group has heightened considerably. The sort of experience I've come through myself is that the more one is capable of looking at oneself the more sensitive one is to other people's feelings.

Cliff then expresses disappointment that Janet is not present this time, feeling that she would relate to this issue and might have engaged in self-reflection. Barry *is* present, and Mary and Dave (acknowledged by Goff) encourage him towards self-sharing. Ralph is still somewhat puzzled that Barry "found it better to approach me privately" about questions and feedback rather than doing so in the group and effectively invites Barry to explain why.

Barry: … It has to do with a genuine ignorance of what was the right thing to do. I believe last week I would have said something outright in the group, but… I became sharper, I wouldn't say more sensitive, but a little sharper to the possible impact of some of these things that I may feel urged to say … and yesterday I had to try to make a decision… and the heavier feeling I had was that I doubted that this was something I had a right to bring up before the group, in view of the way I had interpreted the group's reactions …. – –

Ralph: … I'm speaking just for myself here, but I don't think I've been hurt or can be hurt nearly as much by what people say to me directly and person-to-person and as they are feeling it, as I can be hurt by people not responding to things that they do feel…. I think when somebody comes to me with an "I feel something towards you" it can upset me, but it doesn't really seem like it can potentially hurt me as much as any of the vagueness that comes with other kinds of things where you don't even know who, or what, or which, or how much…

Barry: … For my own part I think that I'm happy if people just say what they like to me anyway, I can't be sure of this but I think this is so -- but now there are three of us have stated that we'd appreciate this rather more than vagueness, but is this general, you see, I still don't know if the group is concerned.

Several people respond, generally preferring plain speaking, and then someone offers feedback to Barry.

Cliff: Well, I'd just like to say that my feeling about Barry is that while he presents an exterior that, perhaps, belies this, I've had the feeling that beneath this [he] is probably one of the most sensitive of all of us in this group… makes you wonder why this exterior should seem to belie what you feel is behind it.

Barry: I can respond to that, I'm distinctly not… I've made some objective assessment of this and I'm not anywhere near being a sensitive person in this room.

Some others are puzzled by Barry's response or feel that sensitivity has more than one meaning. Ellen acknowledges that "it is only afterwards that I realise that I've done this [been non-perceptive/insensitive], it's completely blocked out and I know that this is one of the things I do, that I've been told before about this, that at certain times I'm cut off…" – – –

Dave: I don't want to join into any contest for the assessment of relative sensitivities, but I'd like to feel reassured that we have reached a position of relative tolerability for all people present, and I'd like to be assured about Ros who I thought had been quite concerned and who for some reason seems less concerned – it would be enough to know "I'm okay," [and then] my question lapses.

Ros is a little surprised and Dave explains that she has sometimes used words like "upset," "anxious" or "threatened" and would like to know whether we have to some reasonable extent tied up some of the wounds that have been created. Ros acknowledges that there is truth in what he is saying, but she has a more basic offsetting reaction:

Ros: That's right, Dave, it's part of it. But I feel… it would have been much worse for nothing to have started.… [or] left untouched than for something to be started and not finished – but it's okay, thank you.

Ralph: It can't really be finished, can it? I feel like, in a sense, it loses its meaning if we would consider we got it all tied up in a neat bundle.

There are further exchanges in which Ros expresses her meaning more plainly, for example, "I think it would have been dreadful if it had never started." Then Mary offers observations about whether there are people gaining insight into themselves or wishing they had and suggesting that this can come to some people rather slowly and "some of us can't have it."

Cliff: Mary this annoys me a bit – seems almost, sort of, too clinical and analytical. Sure, we'd all, probably, would liked to have got more out of it. I sort of see your role… as sitting around saying "all right, now, is there anybody else who wants to contribute… anybody else who wants to share in this? Whose turn is it?" – – –

Additional exchanges continue to focus on Mary, not with annoyance from others but with puzzlement. She tries to explain more and also shares her sense of contradictions in the group – of some people portraying themselves in a different way than others see them. Ralph is feeling deep self-engagement in the group, which he resisted at first but got drawn in more and more deeply. He implies an inevitability to this, in the circumstance of such long and continuous exposure to each other in which people are finding their way. As the process develops, "it gets harder and harder for somebody not to go along with it even if they're doubtful." He implies that at first he wasn't sure If everybody belonged, but now would find it "very difficult to even consider a split, I wouldn't know who to split off, at this point I couldn't pick out a single person." Arthur has not spoken for some time and again is on his own very distinctive track. He first addresses Mary:

Arthur: … I wonder whether you realise that… this group including myself, we would like to know you not out of curiosity, we passed this stage, but just out of love. It would appear to me that something within you is restricting you, you are afraid of love, of being loved and because of that – I'm not saying that you are a hypocrite … Your defence mechanism prompted you in a very subtle and skilful way, [not by intention] but that's how it appeared, to tell Dave and Mary and Barry and a few others "I am so damn 'goody-goody', why can't you be."… I feel myself interpreting other people's feeling when I say that I really hurt, and I want to share with you this hurt. I think this afternoon we are very near to this window.
Mary: Your window?
Arthur: … We all have a window, Mary… we are so near that we can look down… but how about those people who do not think this way, who just can't believe that they are struggling… I'm asking myself, and that's why I reacted here in a very overt and aggressive way to you, Goff and – don't mind

the word – out of love and concern personally to you. To you as a symbol of academic achievement and of young lives in our communities …[but] behind you there is only an empty blackboard … I'm not a hero worshipper…

Ciff: I got a sense of challenge out of this not just to Mary but to everybody here … behind this, perhaps, is this suggestion "just be your plain self and reveal your plain self and not sort of reserve yourself in the group"… the glove has been tossed down to every one of us.

Ralph: I'd be happier if I felt Arthur had really put himself in this total thing. --- what Barry approached me about is my feeling about authority and I have to admit it's right … right now I perceive Arthur as an authority of some kind and my back get's up immediately…

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Athur's language of metaphor and allusion, clearly with much
meaning to him, is a challenge to some others of us. His "window"
seems to imply a state of precarious balance and danger of
falling through. I was left guessing as at what he meant by the
"empty blackboard behind you." Later he said that I was on the
edge of "playing God" and that others could be wanting to see "a
fraction of God in you" which "would be dangerous .. bad therapy
.. and dishonest intellectually."² Cliff is on a different
wavelength and his main focus remains on Mary, and her "benevolent"
attitude as he put it, mentioning Ralph by way of contrast:
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Cliff: … Ralph… was quite open in saying that he had never been through an experience like this before. So, I kind of had the feeling that you (Mary) have not really been with us as much as I would like to be, and that other members were. I'd just like to pass on the feeling of this benevolence idea.

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Ros follows, mentioning Mary's response to her outside the
group when she recently felt upset and Mary asked how she was
feeling. At first mistrustful, Ros then sensed concern from
Mary. Barry is still with Arthur's comments and follows after
one or two others.
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² Each member's language reflects in some measure their professional and cultural background and experience. Arthur is no exception. Notably, however, nearly all members are speaking plainly, and with little metaphor or specialised expression, at this stage in the development of their felt connection and communication in the group.

Barry: Arthur, I'm content not to understand everything anymore and I didn't understand some of… [what] went on between you and Goff …. but I'm content if Goff is happy… so long as it wasn't partly intended for me. I didn't get it all – – –

Ralph: Just to pick up something Mary said… [about] doing good for those people or doing good for us. …I find myself increasingly in working in therapy seeing the person I'm working with as very much related to me, not another kind of person … because I could be in his chair, but I take the role of helping him and in that way he is part of me…. what I sort of feel is that in some sense you're saying "if you want to help those people" but that you are not – whoever "those" is, your client or somebody in here, but you're not with them…

Mary: I think this probably arises out of the feeling that my confusions, my disturbances, any of my neurotic difficulties, I have to be prepared to keep them out of the way because I can't expect my client to be helping me – this isn't part of our bargain… I think I'm there to see what I can do to act as a kind of catalyst for him or her and therefore I must abstract my own problems from the situation.

In further exchanges, Mary asks Ralph "I'm sort of setting myself up here as a therapist who is cured, is that what you're saying?" Ralph sees her, more exactly, as implying that "there are ill people and there are well people and I'm one of the well people and my client is one of the ill people." Mary replies that she doesn't believe she is conveying that impression or that she is a goody-goody. She feels (unhappily): "I might as well have a clerical collar on here because I'm so well labeled as to what I am and what my philosophy is." Cliff follows, saying this is *not* his reaction, but offering a feedback suggestion.

Cliff: … When you say to the client… "I'm a sounding board," it almost suggests that you are not involved. If on the other hand the sort of statement were made… that "if we work on this together then maybe we can arrive at some happy solution," this puts you in a quite different light.

Roger acknowledges the distinction that he understands Ralph is making, and shortly goes on to say:

*Roger: … While I had always felt I had a sense of caring and concern, and to this extent was involved with the client in therapy situation, I nevertheless perceived myself as the counsellor or therapist, as someone working from an objective position. I have I think come to realise over this past couple of weeks that in so doing I probably haven't been right **in** the therapy situation … as a real person…. [I saw the] relationship as between a therapist and a person, the person being the client rather than, as I see it now, a relationship between two persons and this is in fact a very real relationship and one of these persons happening to be the therapist… I had felt that concomitant with my objective approach… that I would need to keep my values, my standards and so on right out of the therapy situation but again I have come to realise that this is further evidence of not being completely in [there]… as a real living person.*

Rogers's summing up of his new understanding ends the session, except for a closing comment by Goff–Lx foreshadowing the final research task (with his Relationship Inventory) the next afternoon, after the last group session. Excerpts from that session, next, are in turn followed by some observations on the whole saga of meetings of Group X.

Session 17

Unsurprisingly, Mary was stirred into a lot of reflection after the last session and she takes the initiative in beginning this one, saying "I thought I'd like to put this up to the group because it's worrying me a bit and the kind of thinking I've been doing is in relation to the atmosphere in this group." She gives some personal history, especially about the impact, when she began university, of living with her methodist grandparents, where she was "dragged off to various revivalist meetings and I used to hate those things." She came to feel, however, that she needed a personal philosophy and turned to another religious faith. Her account continued:

Mary: Now, since I've been in this group, the very first day I came I was looking at people and trying to think what they were like … I can best illustrate this with Cliff because the first time I looked at him, and this applies to a number of other people too, but I'm just going to use Cliff as an illustration—when I looked at him I thought this man is not going to do what Goff says, which is resonate in this group, at all. Will looked as if he'd be rather cynical

and that he would never let down his defences and that he'd be a closed book to me right throughout the session. … During the course of this series, I've been staggered—absolutely staggered because, just taking Cliff as an illustration, it seemed as if all this kind of front that he had, had disappeared somewhere and I saw a completely different kind of individual from what I'd got at first … and it was as if he trusted the group, as if he had in a way let us know more about himself so that if anyone wanted to they could hurt him … and he seemed to me to be beaming at us in a way that was far different from what I saw there at the very beginning. Now, I look around the group and I see this to varying degrees in various people… I think I see in Goff, too, this same kind of -- in a way, a willingness to be defenceless to people …. The thing that's in my mind [though] is …. have I been sitting in on some kind of revivalist session - - where we've been letting our hair down and that as soon as we go away up will come these barriers again and we'll be closed off from one another in the way that we were to a certain extent when we came into the group? Now, this upsets me very much to think, well, I've been sucked in by a kind of communal emoting, I don't want to be in a communal emoting. But if in fact [there is] some kind of real change in individuals … that something has gone on within the individual – all of us – which makes us slightly different people, [then] I would feel a very much better therapist.

Goff: Right now it's a very ambiguous process we've been through to you, Mary. You feel that it may be just like these revivalist meetings that seemed so unreal to you somehow, or it may mean something more than that. I guess you're kind of wishing that it does mean something more.

Mary: Yes, Oh yes, very definitely yes, that it does, but I've been conditioned--- against this kind of emoting, you know in the group, that I do not like.

Goff: You're really not sure… you've been conditioned for a long, long time to distrust it.

Mary: Yes, yes -- has anybody else got any thoughts on it?

Ralph: I must confess I can enjoy this kind of experience even if I didn't think it would change me as a person or a therapist. I kind of think it will, and it does, but there's something I like about the experience apart from what I can be sure comes afterwards.

Chris: My reaction has been that it will gradually wear off over a period of time after the experience is finished. I don't think that any of us can fail

to be influenced by it, I don't think anybody can fail to have achieved a certain amount of self-knowledge – … at the least, as Ellen put it to me yesterday… that she has confirmed the things that she knew about herself when she came….. It seems to me that this sort of experience is very good for us in our personal lives, and should happen every now and again as a sort of refresher course in human relations….. I think that people, and in particular people who are acting as therapists, should have this experience at intervals throughout their professional life … as a sort of refresher course in human relations – which I think is very much neglected subject in our education… is not something with which we are born, we have to learn this process…

Dave: One question Mary… Is part of your concern not the reality of this experience alone, but the difficulty of implementing whatever it is that we might have gained here, the problems of being open outside as we had been in here?

Mary: No, I don't think so. It's the reality of the experience, whether this is a real experience to others, and yes, perhaps it is partly [about] implementing it, because I have the feeling that a lot of us may go back – and I've got this feeling strongly with you – that you may go back into, among a group of individuals who would be, if you try to describe what had gone on, they'd be a bit cynical about it … – – –

The conversation continues for some time to be directed to Mary, who responds freely but may not fully understand. At some point, Ralph offers specific examples of communication differing in its effects.

Ralph: I thought you were probably saying to Janet "you irritate me" but that isn't the word you said. You said "don't you know that some people are irritated by you," which I think… I felt leaves you kind of helpless to know where to go – nothing real to react to. – –

Janet: Yes, that is the point that Ralph picked up. If somebody says "you irritate me because you're so and so, [but] it might be you it might be me" I can accept that. But if it's a cold statement of fact… "you are an irritating person" to the world in general, well, that's where it hurts. It's so different with Dave because there was still the warmth emanating from Dave, there was still the sparkle in the eye that I could sort of take anything he'd like to say … it was just sort of [one person's] reaction to somebody else….

I'd like to have a little say this morning and sort of outline the reason I was in this group in an entirely different sort of capacity to everybody else…I had done a bit of training, enough to sort of talk and understand what other people are talking about, but I was here primarily to learn about therapy through … gaining the second hand experience of other therapists… I was a bit amazed when people read this as my trying to manipulate the group, or impose myself in the group, because I never consider I've got enough self-confidence for that anyway. …. I did learn a lot, I learned a lot from Tess, and I learned a lot from Ellen, Chris and a lot of people…. And also I was here in a different way, too, from other people… I had to go home and be a sort of an emotional sounding board to all the family… and to comfort them and to sympathise and to enjoy life with them and do things like that. That's where I felt I must remain detached because there to me was the real life and I couldn't … expend a lot of emotion during the day and then go home and [do it] in the evenings… And so I deliberately held myself back from this, knowing that I had to give to the family at night, and I thought this was perfectly obvious to everybody in the group….. And also I felt that I didn't want this tremendous personality change, perhaps I didn't need it in the same way as some other people need it, and if I do want to grow and I do want to mature … I want to do it outside in real-life situations… It's from the outside experiences that I gain, from the quiet moments of contemplation, from the grief stricken moments, from all the other things that happen to one in life. Yesterday I was feeling that didn't leave me open to be sensitive to other people in the same way as Cliff was, and that's bad I consider…. [However] I think some people should remain detached and some people should give of themselves, and we should all have a freedom of choice in a group like this.

Mark: I feel very much… that there are a number of legitimate roles that people can assume in a group like this and I felt myself often thinking well, now, in this group I decided to … involve myself in a particular way, but I would very much like to go through other groups of this kind and try out other types of involvement. Now, one of those would be a detachment such as you have shown here…. I'd like to ask Mary who has also been a bit detached whether she feels that in the same way she's got something from this… that you have been able to observe the people that were involved rather more objectively…. Do you feel that what you've seen of them is real, that it will help you understand them more. Or do you feel that it was … a revivalist situation, that they won't be like this in real life?

Mary: No, I think they were real here -- I think although I put up that discussion about the revivalist that isn't what I really believe. I wanted to hear what other people thought about it, and this was a possibility. I really believe that the people who have genuinely experienced something in the group, that this is a real thing. But how much… it stays with them… I think I agree with Chris, perhaps we all need a kind of revival course in human relations…I feel that what I have seen here will help me tremendously as a therapist.

Mark: I'm not asking about what other people take away, I'm asking what you would take away from this group?…

Mary: I feel that what I have seen here will help me tremendously as a therapist.

James: I don't think Mary has been all that detached.

Roger: …My feelings are that while the experience may to some extent diminish in its intensity… if we have, in a sense, brought ourselves or allowed ourselves to come to the point where we are open to our experiences, then the fact of our having experienced this will very certainly build this in in some permanent sort of way.

Ralph: that's my feeling too. I'm afraid I'm going back to the kind of atmosphere that Mary predicts Dave is in, but I damn well hope I don't go back the way I left…. The group's over, we won't be seeing each other, but we'll see people like you and I hope I can deal a little differently both --- certainly I hope I continue to know my feelings and reactions of people as I have here… and hope I can be a bit more expressive of them.

Will speaks at some length here, trying to say something of what he has gained from the workshop. However, he has been withdrawing as the end approaches and feels that he needs to reflect more to have a clear sense. He has enjoyed the group and learned from it, but when he sees people who are not participating, "this worries me and I don't know what to do about it, I can't handle the situation, but I realise now that he may be well and truly involved in the group." He is asked a question and shortly adds "I'm feeling butterflies now …and I'm starting to feel annoyed because I think this … would hurt people if I come in and I don't want to do this …." Conversation ensues about pushing people – a client or each other – and in the midst of this, Cliff speaks more broadly of the group:

Cliff: What's impressed me in the change of the group in the last few days is that it's become less what I would call technique-oriented, much more focused upon feelings or personal involvement, if you like, or inter-personal relationships, without concerning itself as much as it had set out to do with specific techniques. Yet in the process it seems that we learned more about "technique" … [implies that he means "how to do things"].

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The discussion around "pushing and pulling" resumes and, in a
little while, Goff-Lx expresses his sense of issues mentioned
and implied.
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Goff: I find what Mark said about making it easier for the client to go on – as something quite distinct from pushing or pulling – very meaningful…. I think if one really does make it easier for the client to go on I have a number of ideas about what sorts of things would be involved in this – such as the sensitivity of your understanding, of your real understanding of what he's experiencing… then it would also make it easier for him <u>not to go on</u> if that's the way he really felt. It would make it easier for him to choose and, whatever his choice, he would be more fully himself at that moment ---

Arthur: Pushing and pulling is somehow alien to me and the very word, the word irritates me. I think on an optimal level I would like to walk with the client.

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Will speaks up again to make the point that a client has inside
personal knowledge of facts and feelings that the therapist
doesn't (yet) have and is thus in the best position to lead the
direction. Mary has a different view:
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Mary: Well, I don't agree with this at all because I think right from the minute the client sits down in front of you, you begin to try and get on his wavelength, to relate to him [and] build up this relationship, you're subtly moving him along a direct way – a vague direction in which the goal is generalised, like knowing himself, understanding himself or being prepared to express his emotions something like that…. so that, in fact, you're seducing him, if you like, to go along a certain path. – – –

Although this sounds over-directive to some speakers, Ellen has a broadly similar view. She doesn't dispute the language of "walking with the client" but considers it a myth that clients can just go their own way:

> Ellen: … Actually I think one's facilitation or availability is an influence itself. I just feel more comfortable if one can be quite clear that this is so.
>
> Cliff: An example comes to my mind … It relates to something that Goff's done often enough here – fairly recently to Mary – he put forward what he saw in her words and the feeling behind it, and then finished up by saying "no, I guess I've gone a little bit beyond what you said in that last statement." Mary said "yes, but that's right." If one in fact deliberately goes beyond for the purpose of wanting the client to accept this… This can be done as a deliberate influence…. But on the other hand if one is… genuinely searching, in the therapist himself, for an understanding [or whether] he has, in fact, gone beyond what the client said … [is] subtle in my mind.
>
> Goff–Lx: … I find myself that I really often feel I want to go a bit further than the other person… [but not] beyond what he's experiencing – I might want to go beyond what he's put into words but not what he's experiencing… – – –
>
> Mark: I feel a richer person because I've been in this group, because members of the group have expressed feelings which are completely foreign to me. If I sat here with one therapist… I could never have gained the insight that I've gained being in this group and hearing people express things that are utterly foreign to me. I've gone outside myself for the first time by hearing these things. – – –
>
> Ralph: … I've gotten things out of groups, this group and other groups, that I couldn't have got out of 10 years of individual therapy…. But does this [difference] call for real change in approach to individual therapy or does it have a function of its own… it has its function… and all the rest of life, of course has a much greater function in terms of total growth and development of a person. – – –

Interesting further discussion involving a number of people is omitted here in order to save space in this long chapter. Later "winding-up" dialogue follows:

Cliff: … Harking back to when we first came and we all went round and said why we came and I remember saying… I hoped that other people would put up different ideas… that I was sympathetic to this kind of approach and I came here really I think wanting to be convinced and to learn more about it – be convinced that this was for me. Now I don't think this group has done this…. but it's helped me I think to a greater understanding of the situation, and more importantly of myself, and it's this I think that really matters…. and a better understanding of the therapeutic relationship that has arisen out of this group. And I just gave up thinking about it as Rogerian or client-centred or nondirective or anything else.

Woman speaker: I don't think I've ever seen so many people listening intently to so many other people. This has been an experience in itself to me.

Barry: I think we've had to deal with relationships… that are established on the basis of sensitive humanism rather than any of these other labels that we've used. – – –

Janet: Why is the group so permissive and understanding in everything this morning? What's happened? (Laughter and voices. Then Janet adds, "I would be happy to say anything now.")

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Group members agree that this will be the final session, except
for filling in questionnaires and the like. However, Keith, the
most silent member of the group has something to add that is
important to him to acknowledge and set straight.
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Keith: I've got to say this because I want to agree [on not having] another session and yet at about 12 o'clock last night Chris told me something which bothered me… so I'm going to say it very briefly and having said it, feel much better in myself. The little business that I brought up about intergroup discussion – the other group … happening to discuss me was put into perspective last night when Chris had done a little bit of research on this and found out that in fact they hadn't in any way been discussing me at all, it was just a comment on the group, of their being concerned that this group had… unresolved problems and somebody said "I have a friend in the group and I would like to see them resolve their problems so that there isn't any carryover"….. Then when I came in here without any additional evidence – I didn't ask what was said – I sort of immediately saw a whole lot of things come flashing

through at a terrific rate in my own mind. I thought I wouldn't say anything about it … [but] I couldn't hold it…. I wanted very much to know about … what happened. I don't know whether I was really responsible or not for what finally did go on, but I needed to say this to you now for my own benefit, for my own peace of mind…

Chris: I feel now that I came here far below you people in the capacity to look at myself…. I realise from talking to you people and hearing you talk, that I'm much like the fellow that Mark mentioned here, the extrovert who is not really aware of his feelings very much, you just go along, and I think my type of therapy must be pretty well exemplified in what I had to do for Keith somehow. I'd felt that he had been hurt in a way by the knowledge that he might have been discussed in the other group and I'd just don't seem able to leave fellows in suspense… I like to clear things up.

However, I must say that I have enjoyed this experience tremendously. Perhaps, I don't like myself quite as much as when I came … I realise that I knew all my imperfections before, but I had to come to terms with them, had to acknowledge them to myself… I don't think that I was very aware of my real feelings at any time – I think I understand Goff very well… I felt that he was a strong man and I still feel exactly that and… without going into a story as to how I understand what he has done in this, I think I can [convey] it very quickly by saying at one stage of my life when I was a young teacher I was what I now call an "information dispenser." After a while I began to realise this was just instructing children and not educating them and I decided to change entirely my way of teaching so that from then on the children found out information for themselves. Now, this was tremendously difficult to do for me. … I feel that Goff in many ways has been in this position, but I'm sure if I had been sitting in his chair I would have, many times, have felt like coming in and offering information on a point, but he has schooled and disciplined himself to this point that I admire him quite a lot for it. …. I'm very pleased that I came. Even though I didn't get at all what I came for; I got something that is infinitely more valuable. And … I've got to go back and read like mad so that I can really now find out what I [originally] came here to find out, from books, and use what I can for the improvement of _____ (mentions service he heads).

Roger: As I won't be here… this afternoon I would just like to seize this opportunity of expressing my own deep appreciation to the group – I say to the

group because I feel that this has been a function of the group. Firstly, for the question of the relationship with the group that I think has been primary – if I had learned nothing in the way of deeper insights into myself, nor anything in the way of clearer concepts of therapy, the very fact of the relationships which I …have built with the group's individual members has been a very real enrichment. And to me while this seminar may close today, it's tremendous value for me goes on … in the deeper insights and clearer concepts in relationships which I have formed here…. And in some ways I feel like Alfred Tennyson who you may recall on one occasion said "I'm part of all that I have met."

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The session came to a natural close at this point. Some would
have liked more group time together, and Goff mentioned that he
would be in the same place again at 2 PM, armed both with forms
and with a tape recorder and prepared to use either or both.
Nearly all group members were again present, but it was not
another regular session and the main activity was completion of
the research forms. Goff was presented with a Patrick White
novel "in appreciative memory of our 'experience' together"
signed by all members of the group. Goodbyes were exchanged, at
least with those about to leave.
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Concluding Observations

I suggest that readers who will engage in the Chapter 3 exercise offered in Appendix 2 do that first, so that your own active thought is further in play when you see my observations.

   This extensive (though partial still) transcript record no doubt will give rise to many impressions on the part of readers. It is a record that has its own voice. The inserted summary additions by me do not, of course, preempt the reader's view. They help to fill some gaps and are also retrospective reflections from coming close to the experience and process again, although with a consciousness that has evolved. I see several basic aspects and implications of the recorded process to reflect on, and to present

in question and (partial) answer vein. These working observations are framed by four simple-appearing questions:

Was the group well chosen for the kind of experience the workshop made possible and that the participants embarked on?

> The range of professions represented and levels of experience of members contributed positively to the energy and engagement of the group and the interest of its content. Occasional comments by members, subsequent leader judgement and later theoretical analysis (Chap. 10) all imply that *the group was considerably bigger then desirable.* A particular disadvantage of this size, especially given the marked diversity of personalities and attitudes represented, restricted the opportunity for everyone to distinctively experience and connect, or respond to, each other person and their engagements in the group. Notwithstanding this, strong group feeling developed and the wide range of thought, attitude, feelings and evolving relationships expressed in robust exchanges amounted to a unique, sometimes quite difficult but distinctly potent experiential learning environment.[3]

What features evidently hampered or slowed down the unfolding flow and development?

> These are partly implied in comments regarding the size and diversity of the group. That the aims and anticipated process were not spelled out more fully, in advance, contributed to the elements of frustration and acrimony in the early sessions. The transcript implies that personal needs and very different styles of members also played into this. The group leader was on the spot and finding his way too, and these and other factors helped to slow down the developmental process at the beginning (reflected in Chap. 2) and at some later points. On the other hand, the fact that fruitful development depended on everyone was a positive factor in the learning potential. It increased the range of process and the challenge of the experience for the sizeable group of diverse members.

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[3] Frequency of overt contribution, and forceful or articulate expression, were significant but not the only factors in the visible presence and influence of people in the live group encounter itself.

What changes and development in significant features of the process occurred over the course of the workshop?

This group maintained its characteristic high tempo and energy. The reactions of participants to each other *mattered more* to people as time went on and relationships developed than they had earlier. The more negative "temperature" of feeling – angry frustration, criticism or argument – of the group fell markedly. Active attention and listening among participants clearly increased. Members came to want to hear from each other much more, and questions and offered openings to others increased. Instances of difficult communication, expressed disagreement and disappointment continued but with a quite different sharing quality than at the start. Hurt when it occurred was increasingly sensed by others and came into open view. Although a tendency persisted for issues to resurface there were shifts in the manner and quality of their return, as the group's history and inner linkages evolved. There was a more receptive awareness of the official leader and less preoccupation generally with the leadership of the group. As the ending approached, there naturally was more focus on what members were taking away from their experience together – and would continue to reflect on afterwards.

What does the transcript imply about participant change over the course of the workshop?

It is difficult to separate indications of individual change from the more obvious shifts in process and development of relationship within the group. The in-group communication by most members showed many times of intense involvement and occasions of people being shaken, hurt or deeply challenged. These and other features implied that the workshop was a potent experience on various levels and in somewhat differing ways according to the individual. This potency suggests resulting movement, and a number of members referred directly to shifts in their thinking, attitudes and intentions or priorities, and growth in awareness of self and of how context can affect one's behaviour. These indications of change, however, do not suffice to stand alone. There is much more evidence relating to outcomes in several later chapters.

4

Tracing the More Relaxed Journey of Group Y and Glimpses of Further Groups

What follows draws in its main part from the transcript of Group Y in the first Armidale workshop. This group came from the same pool of participants as Group X (Chaps. 2 and 3). The X and Y groups had official leaders sharing the same basic orientation and were conducted over the same period in the same residential setting. Yet, they appear strikingly different in some broad qualities of atmosphere and process, and the two are interesting to compare. The excerpts here are less extensive than for Group X, and their presentation moves relatively more quickly through the progression of the group's dialogue. The excerpts from the Y group are "lifted" as before from the long group meetings, and the inserted narration and comment between excerpts carries the unfolding process story forward. At some points, omissions from what others have said are signposted, as before, by a sequence of three long dashes – – – inserted at the end of the previous excerpt. As before, the sequence of dots implies that words or sentences are left out, and square or curly brackets enclose words that are substituted or added for clarity of meaning. The inserted narrations are in a contrasting font, as before.[1]

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[1] The original tape recordings for Group Y are no longer available. The transcriptions, although carefully done when the tapes were fresh, were not all so painstakingly rechecked as for Group X, to name unidentified speakers and try to fill in gaps where the transcriber had to note "words lost" or could only give the gender of the speaker.

The Course of Group Y, Via Sessions 1, 2, 3, 7 and 14

Session 1

Pat, the official leader of this group, opened the session simply by saying "I'm not sure if everybody is waiting for me to say something. But I guess my feeling is that what happens from here on is in the hands of the group." Dan was the first to briefly respond and Pat added "It's rather difficult to know what sort of topic to raise to sort of start things rolling," which helped to prompt others. Pat was also in residence, shared the same mealtimes as others, and thus tended to be more accessible between sessions than the leader of Group X.

Dan: Yes. We were discussing at lunchtime something that might be of interest to the group – the pink form [for the session ratings]. When it's all boiled down, we felt that it would have been so much easier … just to say "we have a pink form and we'd like you to fill it in," and left it at that – we spent more time [on this] than necessary – – –

Gerald: … I got the feeling… that they are trying to demonstrate to us how, even in a situation like planning a programme, you can still operate in a consistent way – [the way] you want to operate say in group therapy… And so we had a genuine attempt to say "this is the way we are going to operate with you." – – –

Gerald: It's already opened up an area of thought for me – one of the questions I wanted to raise – how do you structure your relationship with the person you're going to work with as a potential client, say, so that you can enter the counselling relationship from, perhaps the first contact… And after this morning's effort I feel a little bit happier that this can be managed even in something unlike an ideal counselling relationship, as in setting up a programme or arranging a set of interviews. – – –

Elaine: My reaction was rather one of irritation. I felt like saying, well do you want us to fill them in to fit in with your plan or not … if we thought it was part of your plan of your work it's taken for granted we'd fill it .. why not say straight out "please do it." – – –

Pat–Lx: Sort of feeling from some members of the group "gee, you weren't very efficient about the way you are going about doing a bit of research with us."

Gerald: I want to absolve myself from that sort of comment …. I firmly believe that you two operated the way you did, over the whole programme this morning, quite deliberately, and that you were trying to demonstrate how you are going to operate during all the remaining sessions – that this was consistent with your approach to working with people generally, and with clients specifically.

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This conversation continues and another member, Lee, is feeling
that they are still "parking," "instead of getting on with what
we are here for." However, he is reluctant to inject material,
he says, which could determine the course of the discussion,
because his interests may differ from everyone else's. He is
hoping "that somebody else will throw in something which will
let us get down and start working in a direction which I'd like
to see us work." The next speakers do not respond directly to
this challenge though shortly someone else (Rick) speaks with
concern about the issue of when a therapeutic relationship
begins. He suggests that it may start as soon as you have "some
sort of contact, whether it's by way of voice, by physical
contact or actual presence." His exploration continues:
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Rick: …I believe doing a test is a relationship. How do you shift from there to some other sort of relationship? Can you? Does it interfere? It's a problem I am aware of and yet I don't know in my own mind what I feel about it. I don't know whether others face this sort of problem. I've had it.

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Others, including Gerald, take up the related issue of needing
to choose selectively who they accept into therapy. One member
then approaches the problem from the point of view of the client.
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Lee: I was hoping [the matter] would be raised… from the point of view of the client, what his expectancies are…. The clients I'm thinking of that come off the street, they've never heard of any form of counselling… they come for help with very severe emotional problems. They want help pretty quickly and they want to feel… that they've come to the right place to get it…. The impression in my mind is how appropriate is this non-directive approach to problems we have to deal with?

Dan: On that one, I'd like to explore it a little bit because it seems to me that there are external forces operating on therapists or counsellors which

they have got to come to terms with… I suppose one is the imposition by the government of money, insufficient, so that they cannot do their jobs [gives examples].… I think it's very relevant to ask this question in this situation, how far is client-centred therapy effective, because it's extremely hard even to start when you know that external forces are so great that you can't do it. – – –

Gerald: I'm quite happy when the client is in the room with a good counsellor that something worthwhile is happening, but I'm interested in getting into that situation, getting the person into the situation for whom I and my colleagues feel there's the most need…

Discussion then returns to and continues for some time on the issue of screening—accepting some "comers" and not others—and how this may effect development of the therapeutic relationship.

Woman speaker: Surely the same person shouldn't be doing these two things. Perhaps the intake interviews should be done by somebody other than the person who is going to be the therapist…

As the group continues, the leader, Pat, who is moving between acknowledging his sense of someone else's meaning *and* contributing to the debate on a substantive level, gives a rather full account of how he proceeds when somebody approaches him for possible help. (His therapy interest is known in his university, though he is not working in a counselling agency.) When someone approaches him for possible help, his first response is a form of intake or decision-making interview, one that might be short or long. At the end, he may say, "I'll be available to see you … and I explain to him I could see him once or twice a week and I'm quite prepared to do this if he feels it would be a worthwhile sort of thing …. But supposing I had somebody who I don't want to take on then I would … tell him more or less why I don't want to take him and I would like to give him any assistance I can to make other arrangements". Pat's statement helps to trigger a series of other comments and a period of exploration around the issue of referring people on. If a relationship has begun to develop with the interviewer, this can be hard for the client, as one member brings into sharp focus:

Lee: [Assuming] you have made some effort to [connect] in the intake interview…, because of the intensity of the way the person presents their problems,

something that isn't expressed to anybody else, it's pretty hard to shift them. They told you this and it's been a great strain and it would be very difficult for them to tell anybody else, and this happens. But I think… there are certain controls you can build in to the interviewing situation – until the point that you decided to take this case… you can refer the person without having to develop this catastrophic break in relationship.

The next speaker suggests that intake workers can develop a special skill in their role so that they perceptively receive and draw the client out yet do not engage in the same way as their therapist. After a brief digression focusing on the immediate tape recording and its implications, the discussion returns to the issue of client selection. One person opposes having a different attitude to prospective clients because of their estimated pathology. Lee makes the point that some prospective clients "want their problems solved for them" and when "in the initial interview it becomes apparent that you are not going to solve their problems for them, that you are prepared to help them go through the pain and discoveries of solving their own problems" – then "you just don't hear from them anymore". It follows to him that this unproductive counselling time could have been saved by effective selection beforehand.

The problems of selection, institutional attitudes and related issues occupy the rest of the group session. No one became heated or delved directly into personal issues invoked by the practical problems and pressures they discussed. A few members seem to have occupied most of the "air time" in the group and this was not challenged or referred to. This relaxed practice-issue focus and minimal direct attention to goals or purposes of the group is strikingly different from the way that Group X began. Given this contrast, and the kind and limits of the discussion so far, the reader may wonder whether the group will continue in a "safely" issue-centred way?

Session 2

Eve at once comes forward to begin the session with a practice issue that concerns her:

Eve: Something has been bothering me: I'd been wondering about Rogers' technique – how this applies to people who are very depressed to the point of suicide – whether this is a case where you should help people to get into medical [hands]… or whether it's fair to go on…. Would Rogers hospitalise these people for medical treatment, or would he go on with his type of therapy?———

Eve: … I was thinking of a particular person when I asked the question…. she began as my client and I referred her to a psychiatrist. She kept a link with me on a personal basis {because she also} knew me through our neighbourhood community. But… she would ring me up and so on. Then came the suicide issue… I didn't feel that I was involved particularly except I was wondering how far one can go with these sort of people without feeling that perhaps medical help (is called for).

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Pat-Lx responds with brief reflective acknowledgement two or
three times and then asks the group, "I wonder if anyone else
has any reactions to this?"
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Hal: … We seem to rely on the psychiatrist as a magician who has the ultimate formula and he [a psychiatric colleague] assured me that he is a no more or less able human being than we are and is [just] as anxious. I think… that we feel terribly threatened in a situation such as this when we get a potential suicide. And the problem arises should we pass him on to somebody who is more expert or can deal with their problem better?

Cal: I agree (on the need for) a suitable person, but I don't agree that it must be of any particular professional training. Any person who feels confident enough can deal with persons like that…

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Les and others bring in the issue of legal responsibility and the
potential for non-medical counsellors to be very vulnerable if
they do not refer on, and there is related discussion, pro and con,
on the issue of collaborating with a formally more qualified person
who may or may not be as helpful. Conversation continues for a
considerable time around various circumstances and issues in
referring clients or consulting back and forth about seriously
distressed clients, between non-medical counsellor-therapists and
psychiatrists. After a period of quietly listening for quite a
long time, the group leader offers both summary and suggestion:
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Pat–Ly: …The essential thing, presumably, … is how to help the patient to utilise the various resources that may be available – psychiatric treatment, counselling and so on. It's really a matter of cooperation with which we are concerned, and this can be obtained if you recognise that we are all persons. In other words, instead of seeing the psychiatrist… as standing for some particular discipline or something rather abstract [but instead] seeing him as a person you can get in touch with and deal with. – – –

Rick: I feel the need for consultations is one of the things that we don't use enough in this country. Just not referring a case but discussing a case…. if you refer a case, too often we forget it once we've referred it. But in consultation you sharpen up your own skills and [see things] in a different light.

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One member, especially, objects to the repeated language of
"technique," which some are comfortable with. Rick, for example,
speaks of being prepared to "examine his techniques." After a
short time, Cal joins in, for example, as follows:
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Cal: I think technique is really only relationship with you… [Is it] a technique you can use and, by the same token, if you can "use" it, it is effective. If you can't use it, well you don't because it is not you. [Shortly, he resumes] I think if you are yourself and you are genuine in what you're doing – I mean I don't think of using any technique; I never am conscious of using a particular technique other than my own… it's a combination of all sorts of things that has come about through my training, background, influences here and there.

Rob: And of your own personality.

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The discussion shifts to explore silences during therapy and the
added awareness and deeper contacts or attunement that silences
might lead into. However, the previous topic is still in Dan's
mind. He speaks again of some struggle around needing to refer
some people, partly from "discipline dependence" on psychiatry.
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Rob: *You have been saying we should be the counsellors because of ourselves, our personalities, our background and training, but things around us won't let us.*

Dan: *That's right, that's what I thought very strongly….. _ _ _*

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The focus turns shortly to the value, for increased awareness
and learning, of recording and listening back (individually or
with others) to one's interviews, and also to writing some of
them up. Eve notes, for example, that "Sometimes the interview
is going at such a pace back and forth it is only later that it
quite hits you what's happened." In a change of focus, Elaine (a
senior school teacher with broad responsibility and counselling
interest) becomes active in the last third of the session,
initially around pupil record-keeping and the limitations, use
and abuse of such records. Others are responsive to her concerns,
and she delves increasingly into issues, including staff
relations, that matter to her. At the very end the session
rather tails off.
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Through most of this strongly *professional issue–centred session*, members followed each other in speaking to and around the same topics, generally addressing the group rather than particular others. The next meeting develops rather differently.

Session 3

The group leader starts this meeting with a direct follow-up from the previous session. It soon becomes more personally expressive and interactive.

Pat–Lx: I had a feeling this morning that – something I wanted to express, really, myself. The most significant thing I felt occurred just toward the end of our meeting and I wanted to respond to it at the time but I think other people were responding…. we only had 10 minutes to go. The thing that I'm referring to is when Elaine in a very simple and very direct way, but I thought it was in a very sensitive way, indicated some sense of discovery of new perceptions … and the significance which this might have for her. I wanted to respond to this sense of freedom or something… I guess what I really am saying is that I would like to go along with you in exploring this if you wish to – to give you {Elaine} the opportunity this morning.

Elaine: Yes, well I'm quite happy… to go along because I think I was discovering a connection between sort of the outward situation and something that maybe I don't think I'm clear on at all…. After all the school is his [the

principal's] responsibility more than mine. And also I feel that…. the way I would like things to be done doesn't necessarily mean it's the right way or the best way…. Except that sometimes it has been more than a little too much strain on me, trying to cope with this difference. …

Woman speaker: Would you find it easier to deal with if the head was a woman? (Elaine answers "no", but other words are lost.)

Elaine: … I often can hear him [headmaster] teaching my class when I'm in my office next door to the classroom, and I'm conscious of things he is saying to them. I sort of feel now I'll have to fit into that idea otherwise we're going to arouse conflict in the children. – – –

Elaine: … One of the troubles… is about a third person coming in. I had, I think, a bit of insight of this when the school counsellor comes in (words missed) … and will comment on the child or something to the child about himself, not knowing what we are trying to do, and at once that will really disturb them – I wonder why on earth has she done that when she doesn't know anything about the child at all. …That's just another thing I have to deal with… – – –

Elaine: Yes, and I found that instead of now feeling overwhelmed by work, and by all the responsibilities, that I have to have patience. … I think "I must feel nice."

Gerald: Did this culminate in you're coming here? This is a new interest in some ways?

Elaine: In some ways it's a new interest but the opportunity has arisen. In the new setup of the school I think I'm going to – instead of having the administrative responsibility that the deputy officer is supposed to have, that will be taken by the principal – I'm going to be allowed to make more suggestions about what we can do about the children themselves. – – –

Elaine: [In the present school, however] I feel I've been picked up and shaken but then it has been a most interesting experience. – – –

Speaker: I get the impression sort of that you have a very deep feeling and very sort of deep need inside yourself in terms of wanting to help children. This is very much part of you, it's not a 9 to 3 business but something that apparently has been there for many years, or always. But you've seen, often, other people as an obstacle to your achieving this. I wonder whether you see this man as an obstacle to your continuing what you used to do?

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Elaine says "Yes but" to the last question. It is not the whole
picture, for she thinks highly of the principal in some ways.
However, she finishes saying "But it does make it much more
difficult because in everything, I think, I do have to reckon on
his reaction." She hates talking about him and mostly has avoided
doing so, yet this group has been different.- - -
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Dan: I suppose you feel free to talk about this man in this group perhaps because you do feel that the group feels sympathetic towards you. Is that why?

Elaine: Not just towards me but towards people. And I've remarked to someone… that I had never been with men before who admitted that they cared about people. They might care underneath but would never take it that it was an alright thing and a manly thing to let on…. That's one of the things that I think caused difficulty and the feeling of withdrawing from them … . until over the years I got to know them and found that they did care. – – –

Elaine: Another thing that was very hard to me to take was that I had had quite a close relationship with the parents … . But coming there {to a new setting} is going to give me a kind of status, not for myself but if I want to make suggestions, which I probably might do about our approach to the children and the parents, from the point of view of mental health, that I'm likely to know a bit more of what I'm talking about. – – –

Dan: It must have been really a wonderful thing to find out that… with many people you found that those people did care about the children. (Elaine: I was absolutely – yes…) Now you sort of come into a group and you feel we care about people too and I suppose you feel well if they care and you care, I care, and these people care, as time goes by I'll find other people who care too, and so you are not entirely alone on this one. I find your experience extremely moving actually…. I think a lot of us share this problem. I do share this problem, the things I care about are different and sometimes I feel sort of lonely or sad. The things I care about, I can't find many other people to share my caring about them. – – –

Rick: What interests me is that … something happened, there was some sort of change in you. And it seems to me that this change affected how you get on with and relate to other people, your principal… and the other school-children, the parents, the other teachers – there has been a change, something has taken place in you…. I think it's got importance for all of us… I was able to reflect back on something I was thinking of myself. It's this greater experi-

ence of yourself or greater accessibility to your own feelings. It's not something that happens one day or two days, that happens in our relationships with other people…. we see something more of ourselves…. I'm interested to know whether this is how you feel about it, that something happened inside you that in some way makes you more able to be the person you want to be in terms of helping relationships and so on…. I think I could illustrate what happened to me under similar circumstances…. I got back an amount of peace of mind when I came to realise that my loving care for these people was not altruism but was a result of my own needs [very brief, unclear response here from someone else. Rick continues].

I had the reputation of being the ruthless objective person, which I still tend to be. I could be very objective, this was the way I was seen in a sort of legal social work setting, this was before I functioned as a psychologist… looking back at myself what I was doing was holding people as far away from myself as I could. Bit by bit I think I can see it, probably over the last couple of years I've been more aware of it. … I have come to recognise that I don't need to hold people so very far apart… that I can get close to them… I was able to acknowledge there was a need in me for a closeness with other people. I'm probably still inclined to keep them at a certain distance but I think I've learned ways of communicating my care and my affection for them. … something becomes available to you about yourself out of your own work and I feel I'm working better when I'm more available to these feelings about what's in me, just as much as what's in the other person.

Woman speaker: Doesn't this availability come through losing fear? … You've lost a fear – the need to be seen as an authority – and you can partake and give of yourself..

Elaine: It's losing the fear…. I have demonstrated to myself that I'm prepared to go almost to any length not to hide behind my position….I've done everything I can to strip myself, as far as I can see it, of anywhere where I was resting on the position … [words missed from someone else] I felt my position demanded certain things and certain ways of action for me, you know, that I should be thinking of the school, watching the whole school to see what we were building up to, things like that…

Lee: Relating back to our discussion earlier this morning about the "livingness" of your relationships that you are developing. And I think that this is probably one of the dangers of training in things like psychologists and social

workers … teaching probably too…. some part of your development is held back because you are now faced with being scientific and objective and so on…. After you sort of, incorporate this into your personality you're able to live with it in an unselfconscious sort of way.

A little further along in the discussion Gerald joins in actively again, first mentioning his awareness of a similar change in a member of another group he was working with.

Gerald: We had been taught to be objective and critical and that you had to analyse everything, find fault with it, and here he was starting to believe in something. It was a traumatic experience, if you like, for him and he was in and out of it. The interesting thing was that he was the youngest in the particular group and at the end of the programme he was the most committed… I got a great kick out of this in seeing how this person had sort of flowered as it were, blossomed… (brief question by someone else about meaning of "committed"). Well, it's tied up with words like believing in what you're doing, being sincere in it and whilst you're doing it, focus completely on it, all your energies enthusiasm, motivations are directed toward this activity… it is when you move past the conscious {intention} and it is {being} what you are doing…

Related exchanges (not included here) continued on, but the idea or language of "commitment" did not work for everyone (see next). Then, as the conversation went on, another person took issue with the idea of and term "adjustment":

Rick: … Commitment to me is a bad term…. It suggests it's a once-and-for-all business. I can't accept this view that it is something that happens {a switch} when you have reached a certain stage of accessibility to your own feelings, to your own experience. Ten years from now you'll be, I hope, even more accessible to your feelings and I will be and some of the others.---
Woman: Perhaps this is a problem of semantics but this word "adjustment" always bothers me… the word "blossoming" meant far more to me – it doesn't mean adjustment. It brings out the feeling that potentialities are there and they only need the climate or something and the blooming takes place… whereas adjustment to me sounds like something that fits something… – – –

Another member: … I have been struggling for a long time to find my own freedom…. I've been struggling with this existential sort of problem, with myself. What am I? Am I free? What does freedom mean to me? And this has led to many repercussions in my life. I've been trying in the light of this – to illustrate – to find out why I did take psychology, For example I've come to a very sad conclusion that… I found I didn't do it out of love of people but perhaps because I – it was a way of gaining power over them. Now this was very painful to accept, of course… I don't know if my interpretation was right, but here I was in a position where I could give them "love" and perhaps vicariously get what I wanted without having to depend on them in an obvious fashion [brief recording break]… I wouldn't have thought of talking about this before I came here, but here it is.

Someone else refers shortly to "systems" which triggers mention of another aversion, by the same unidentified person as above:

Member: I had a very strong aversion to systems. I still go all for the person not for the system. I'm very aggressive at systems because I feel this restricts me personally and I think it is a restricting condition on human beings. Now this is again a struggle with my freedom that I feel is involved here.

Dan: I have this hatred of systems and authoritarian bodies and quite an irritation at all authoritarian people. But my -- the reason for me I think is the fact that I had a slightly inadequate father, inadequate as a man and inadequate in his role and that I sort of generalised all over the place madly…. and the way in which I finally came into psychology was only when I had the shocking realisation that I was doing the same thing – no not the same *thing, I was punishing my children, my first son for the faults of my father, and I saw this thing going on from generation to generation and just thought God Almighty, no, it's got to stop somewhere…. actually reading psychology didn't do me much good because it also was tremendously authoritarian and I rejected it. It wasn't until I first read about client-centred therapy which helped me a little bit and finally when I heard Rogers actually talking with this schizophrenic patient that this breakthrough came. It was almost like a religious experience because as I realise it was suddenly this tremendous awareness of what I lacked. … – – –*

*S*hortly, Elaine becomes more active in the discussion again and
speaks, for example, of her relationship with her mother, and
the formative influence of her family. Expressing and dealing
with anger becomes a short-lasting theme in the group. At the
end of the session, the possibility of listening across groups
to a tape-recording of a session of the other group is briefly
considered but without closure. Elaine remarks "Well I wouldn't
like the other group to hear what I said but I wouldn't mind
hearing what they said". (Through the beginning of the next
session (#4), it was discussed and agreed that listening to a
tape of the other group would be out of context and not profitable.
Some members felt that they learn all they want to know or share
informally, from talking to members of the other group.)

As these excerpts illustrate, the members of the group moved gradually
from a fairly impersonal focus on professional issues to much personal
sharing and exploration in this session. One or two people remained largely
silent—Rob, for example—and a few tended to express themselves much
more than others did. Most people, however, were responsively tuning in
to each other and tending to actively connect from their own experience to
what another member had shared. They listened and responded gently and
perceptively, especially to Elaine. In their post-session ratings (Chap. 5),
this meeting stood out as an early high point. Among the most active
members, Gerald may have evoked a little impatience in some others, but
basically the group members were attentive and receptive with each other,
no sparks flew and overall they appeared relaxed with each other and get-
ting along well. The contrast with the relational climate in Group X at that
still early stage is striking.

Session 7

This meeting took place near the end of week 1 of the workshop. (A session
next morning [Saturday] was not transcribed.) After relaxed discussion of
an invited free-time visit to a farm nearby, and of a meeting and special
dinner arrangements in the residence, the group leader initiated the main
discussion process:

*Pat–Lx: I was wondering about throwing my hat in again to start things.
I would like to say something… about my own feelings about my position in*

the group… it's related to the way I feel I function in the counselling situation… if I sense being looked up to as an authority I feel a great need to be very client-centred. [When this is not the case] I always feel very much freer to express myself – what I feel. I think I have this feeling now… I don't feel any restriction about saying what I feel… as something about the way I think.

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Gerald follows, citing an instance that morning where Pat
responded personally as a member of the group. Some other members
feel that now they take his contribution as a matter of course:
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Sean: But supposing that Pat were to start to say something very definitely on the client centred -- gospel.. – then we wouldn't be inclined to look on him as one of the group so much (Others speak briefly and Sean continues) I'm speculating as to what would happen. Pat has very obviously become very equal with us {yet} I feel…. that this dichotomy still exists…. If he's in the field of the difficult sort of thing we were discussing this morning, then we'll take him as one of the group. But if he were very clearly in the field of the non-directive gospel then immediately we elevate him. – – –

Jane: Well perhaps to speak for myself… I have not had all that [much] experience in groups to know… but I usually felt in groups I have dealt with that there was a pretty heavy responsibility on me, somehow, to promote group interaction and not to have directions, questions directed to me all the time, and answering them…. and I suppose I'm being particularly free in this group because there seem to be an awful lot of other people who are quite adequate [in helping the group along].

Lin: I feel that you have done what we all must do before the group acts as a whole group. One of the questions here is 'Do you more or less understand each other?'… one person being able to say anything that is fully comprehended by the group in the way the person was trying to communicate this. And it seems to me that various people have taken this step in this group…. and I feel the ones that have done this have begun to form the nucleus of the group and others still stand outside it (member query) I feel some communicate more easily in this group together than others do (further query). I feel someone like Jim who hasn't during the meeting said anything – I wouldn't feel that he wasn't receiving from the group but I don't feel he contributes to the growth of the group. – – –

Rick: I think probably one of the things I feel about what's happened in this group…. there was a feeling I thought in the group… a fear that there

was going to be a loss of control. The group would go too far and people would say too much, and be left high and dry and stranded. Today what I did notice was this is sort of damped down. I think this fear was still there, but there was a very definite understanding within the group… and an acceptance of one another whether one participated much or not. I think this is a very healthy, very positive sign of growth I suppose – even in a therapeutic way…. I can't help wondering whether that isn't what's starting, there is an actual growth, a real change taking place. This fear of things getting out of control… is gradually dissipating, we're not so fearful. People are really being more themselves now, not the fearful selves that they were.

After further discussion, during which Lin explains a bit more what she means, and nearly everyone else contributes briefly, for example, on the issue of participation, Rob and then Sally (who has mostly been silent) acknowledge difficulties:

Rob: This relates to my so-called confession yesterday – because I have some difficulty in taking part in the group…. I was saying things from time to time, but I was aware of the effort necessary and this wasn't terribly smooth. But I wasn't comfortable about this but – Jim, he stays silent. You know if you do something about it like I did, because I can speak much more freely now, you see.

Sally: Well, as one who has not contributed very much to the group I think I should now give my reasons…. Several times, particularly in the early parts of the sessions, I was very tempted to say 'Look, what are we all trying to do. We've got here a situation with 16 people all who are concerned with themselves as counsellors and therapists… Right. This is our common meeting ground. Let's start talking about it.' But I felt if I said this, this would be too directive and I would then have to justify myself and go to great pains to convince the group that this was the right thing to do which would not be non-directive.

No one expressed difficulty with Sally's explanation and attitude. It led on to some discussion of certain people evidently getting more out of a guided or structured group and others who flourish from finding their way in an unguided or leaderless group. Gerald mentioned how his own attitude shifted as this group went on.

Gerald: … Somehow or other having thought of about it a little bit, being slightly exasperated, irritated earlier on with what we're doing, I feel that we are probably getting nearer to what we want by this kind of permissive leaderless unstructured situation.

Cal: I can't help feeling that we seem to have reverted to this "we" field… we're getting away from the "I think" [mode].

Lee: You're just trying to use the group too bash us into something… is this really necessary… is such talking in general terms such a bad thing… when you are considering problems and we've perhaps reached a stage where we are considering problems – things that happen where you want to generalise a bit…

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Other members respond to Cal's intervention about using "I
language" and their comfort about saying "we" when they feel the
group is together on an idea or feeling about something. Rob
sums up his view:
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Rob: I see two reasons for generalising in this way. One perhaps… we're lonely on our own and [want to] draw other people into the same field, which gives a feeling of security. The other is – as the week goes on the further we are getting to be more identifying with other group members… So we feel that "we" understand each other completely so that we are more justified in using this "we."

Rick: There's a point to that. But I do think that if …. as a result of this "we-ness"… if we stayed in the "we" level, on the group level, then I don't know that you get anywhere… In an unstructured situation like this… the greatest feature is that you in yourself have come to know more about yourself. — —

Pat: There's something I got from Lee that I want to respond to a bit. Lee wants to talk, I think, of problems; to deal with problems… I had the impression that "problems" are something out there and we can do something with them. I just don't think like that, I think of problems in terms of being within us, our problems different for every one of us… about something working within ourselves… The problem doesn't exist … as an entity, as something independent of me as a person having to grapple with. And it's the way I'm grappling with it. — — —

Brad: I don't think … you grow one way and the client grows another. We were talking very much of awareness yesterday, awareness of ourselves. I feel this can't be divorced from the growth that takes place in the client.

Lee: Well this is just the thing I find a bit difficult, the emphasis on the self-awareness of yourself. This is very important, but surely you've got to be aware of the client. To what extent are you using this awareness and how do you use this awareness [in being] aware of the client?…

Pat: If I could try to give some impression to what Lee, I think, is coming at. I had something of this feeling about yesterday afternoon…. Now I missed something pretty badly and felt pretty bad when I thought about it… Because I wasn't really as sensitive to what I was experiencing as I ought to have been. I was experiencing some irritation because Des was talking about this [outside] experience. If I'd really been sensitive enough, aware of myself, I'd have known this and I'd have known how to respond to it. … We seemed to have slackened down in the discussion at the end. I agreed with Rick, but I was really working out a certain amount of irritation…. And I didn't know I was doing it. – – –

Pat's disclosures here and earlier triggered responding and indirectly related sharing by several others, who then went on to talk about how or what they are learning. Following are examples:

Rick: … We're not starting de novo… but I've learned quite a bit about actual therapeutic process and dynamics out of what's been going on here. Just Pat's comment… that he felt in therapy a certain way when a certain sort of thing was being demanded of him, and tended to respond in a particular way. When this wasn't demanded of him he felt free to respond in another way…. I don't know where I will fit it in. I'm certainly not going to stick that away as a piece of information in there at the appropriate time to use. It's going to become a process in me, and my way of doing things, and it would probably be processed quite a bit more before I've finished up here… About this expression of feelings I still haven't worked this one through, but now I certainly know how little I do know about it, and how inconsistent and how inadequate I was in certain areas. I've read enough books… but I reckon you can't read a book and get it spelled out on the board in the same way that you can see a thing and feel a thing – – –

Eve: Isn't it when you felt it and when you then read it, it sort of comes up and hits you and there… you know "I've experienced that and now that's sort of falling into place." It's a personal experience. (Shortly she adds) … after you've had a related experience or seen it happening to somebody else, then it all just sort of comes out in neon lights for you. – – –

Dan: Could I say this now…. The fact that Pat did reject… the contents of what I was saying yesterday actually helped me, helped my growth towards understanding myself. Because it hurt so much it made me realise really how very insecure I actually am, and find out my problem more. Before I came to the group, I knew I had a problem, but I had no idea how deep it was and I certainly didn't realise how insecure I was. I'd always thought of myself as a fairly secure person, with problems, and when this morning Pat said what he did say, I felt tremendously relieved that I hadn't been rejected. And I was able to say… if I'm so relieved being taken back into the fold well, by God, I am insecure…. The self that is really there that will one day blossom is all budded – like a bud at the moment, you see… So I grew in response to his rejection …

A period of related discussion followed that included the issue of how a situation of pressing need could work in actual one-on-one therapy—especially if it arose at the end of an interview—with a bit more explanation from Pat. This led on to sharing of experience and ideas that went on for some time, about responding to clients who express great need at the end of an interview and seek to prolong it. Eve was one of those who described their experience and difficulty:

Eve: I thought this one through a bit … you do get clients who try to sort of dominate you by keeping you there, or trying to keep you there when you are trying to terminate the interview…. And I've had to deal with this from one woman in particular and say "well, you know, you have had all this time to tell me this and I'd like to talk about it with you next time, but really we must close now because someone else is waiting." She did this every time… as soon as I get to my feet out she'd come. – – –

Rob: I rather think you've got to be pretty flexible about this sort of thing, because it's not uncommon for clients to talk all sorts of superficialities for most of the time when, in fact, just beneath the surface there is something really

significant which they're not quite prepared to face – and as you approach the end of the interview when there's not much time left, this will commonly come out. It can be quite strong emotional material. In the time available… I feel you've got to go on…. I know I've got a good relationship with the other person waiting quarter of an hour, half an hour, the wait won't matter because they've done the same thing themselves. – – –

Cal: I feel it depends on how anxious the person makes me feel, really. That I have to go on because I can't help it – because of my anxiety from his problem – I feel anxious about it and I can't let him go. – – –

Rick: This doesn't happen very often. When it does I think you've got to be sufficiently flexible to go and say "all right I'll continue seeing the client"…. Last time when he'd been terribly upset I'd let him run on for about an hour. He'd been so disturbed I had to let him stay…. Next time he said to me "last time you let me stay an hour and such." I said " well that's because I was so concerned about you." – – –

Pat: There may be a whole lot of things that make you feel differently about the situation. The feeling that somebody is waiting outside the door… you may feel that you want to go home, you're hungry, it's late, your wife's waiting for you. A thousand and one other things may make you feel uncomfortable about prolonging… And I guess it's a matter that comes back for me – listening to the way Rick handles this – is in terms of sensitivity to what you're really feeling about the situation. – – –

Considerable discussion followed on a further topic: the interplay of training (and kinds of training) and selection—especially selection that may go on in the course of training and growth of potential counsellors. Dan has just completed a formal training programme that, when followed by his engagement in this workshop, has made for a powerful developmental learning experience:

Dan: What I was trying to say was that the formal training as dealt in books, the actual therapy within the group and individually with Goff[2] has meant more to me in a very short time I've been here… I don't think [in

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[2] Who was leading the other group and met with Dan, at his request, outside the group meeting time.

another context] that I would have learned so much about myself in so short a time. I could wonder about the patients that I might have [otherwise] really hurt. I somehow feel this has been tremendously essential to me. – – –

Gerald: Picking up the threads of the way people have been talking, I've been wondering about the best kind of training for a therapist, and I see a sort of pattern, I think this is what I'd like myself, a pattern of group instruction… with group work like this following or probably parallel with the opportunity for individual therapy…. but there comes a point in time when you're on your own, you go solo.

The session continued *for some time longer*, mostly related to issues already explored, including the whole aspect of counselling people about whom one has to also make selection or other judgements. Near the end, Pat is asked about and describes how the selection and training worked around Rogers, to the extent he was able to observe it in Wisconsin {and/or Chicago?}. He explained that besides describing their experience each person had to present one (or preferably more than one) tape recording of their own actual interviewing—listened to by a selection panel as part of the selection assessment. Once admitted to the programme, there was a theoretical course followed by a practicum and, evidently, group as well as individual supervision.

This session ended following brief querying discussion and (reassuring) response by Pat on the topic of any plans for use of the recordings being made of this group.

With limited exception in the case of Dan and one or two others, the process of the group in this session was not directly self-exploratory but involved a close texture of exchange of experience and meaning by therapist-practitioner members who also had varied degrees and kinds of responsibility in programme development, training and related areas. Differing views were voiced at times but without expressed conflict or argument. Members were seriously pondering their shared thinking and experience and evidently learning a good deal from each other. The group leader (Pat) freely shared concerns and ideas about his own response and the broader issues raised by others. His contributions – as a group facilitator – were not frequent but were influential, both directly at the start and

in the context of issues discussed by members further on in the session. Post-session ratings by members were positive, although not up to the overall levels of Sessions 3 and 6. The post-session rating question about understanding one another was the one answered most positively.

Session 14

This group meeting took place in the middle of the second week of the workshop. It is the latest available and adequately transcribed session of Group Y, which continued for three meetings after this one. Post-session ratings place it a little below the generally high means for this group (Table 5.3). There was discussion at first of a "film night" the previous evening, to which potentially interested local professionals also were invited and came. After that, the main session began, with Jane launching in to candidly tell more of the way she sees herself than she had shared before.

Jane: I'm aware that – when I'm thinking or working – I do this in a sharp boring-in sort of way. Someone used the term "sharp bastard" and I think this is appropriate… sharp in a sense of getting into the heart of the matter and picking it up quite acutely and quickly, and bastard in the sense of sinking the boot in… and leaving people bleeding probably…. I was getting the message that I was doing this before I came here… but couldn't quite believe it until I saw you (Rick) do something like this… This is what I want to learn, to do better [than that]… I think this would have quite a bearing on my noninvolvement and intellectualization [in the group].

Rob: But if you did buy in you might do so rather sharply and you might hurt [others].

Jane: …I'd probably present as a generous warm person, and I am that too, but another side of me is quite ruthless and cold. In this case, I think I was more working in a self-centred way on myself, you see. This would be my method of going about this problem of managing better myself. – –

Eve: Do you feel that to really expose yourself is quite a threat?

Jane: Possibly…. I suppose I've operated in several settings where to expose myself would be a threat, and I wouldn't think of exposing myself… In the counselling situation I'm not this ruthless person… But I do other things in

my life: I sit on the board of directors of the company and I don't pull punches or pussyfoot around and I don't expose my thinking…

Rick: This is almost to say… that you were conscious of something about yourself. I didn't feel it was defensiveness on your part not to communicate…. but that possibly in your own way to the degree of noninvolvement… as you've said working it out within yourself…

Jane: On my own, within myself. This is the way, I guess, I do most of my working out. It's triggered off by somebody else, it's not done in a vacuum… but I hope that I can work on it and sort of move forward that way. – – –

Jane: And incidentally this is the second thing that I think is operating too: I consider that I have been a very fluent speaker… and over a period of time [with] whatever growth changes or ups and downs have been going on in me, I'm aware that I've been presenting myself in a fumbling fashion in words. I think this too forces me (in the group) to be a little slow to speak… – – –

Gerald: I saw you as a very warm person in an individual situation. I think this has been the relationship between you and I, write from the jump…. When we are working in the group here your contributions at the intellectual level interested me very much. You always had something sound to say, and in another kind of group first-class. But for our purposes I just had this feeling well someday you will come in when you feel ready for it.

Jane: … I've heard said about me: "Jane _____thinks like a man and feels and looks like a woman". this is the way I think I am and this suits me… I daren't buy woolly thinking and I tend to operate in situations where you have to do the thinking and bring it out done, and not thinking aloud… – – –

Rick: … You came into the group with this sort of need to be self deter-mined and critical and look at yourself. One of the areas of this self-criticism was just your very fluency or your quickness… And it was very clear to me that when you'd started instead of being the person who so quick and fluent with words that you weren't. You were looking for words and even looking very, say, carefully, you were fumbling.

Jane: Yes, well, not even looking for words, I mean – sort of the whole thing blanked out.

Rick: And yet as though having said it you are not going to be so much of a different person, but you might be a bit more aware of your own feelings about this thing. And possibly a little bit more sensitive to how other people feel towards you…

Jane: I think not quite so defensive and looking at the fact that I do this thing because, I mean, I was quite blind to the fact that I did this. − − −

Dan: (Regarding self-change) When I said I feel different, I feel that the new self has emerged, I didn't mean to imply that therefore in my behaviour I would immediately be different, but merely that although my behaviour may be the same I feel differently about me and would expect to see the change in the behaviour as time went by.

Jane remains at the centre of the discussion for a while longer. She explains that basically she sees herself as a person who reveals herself to another person, but has found there are situations where this is inappropriate to do:

Jane: So I possibly overtrained myself and over-controlled myself to meet these other demands. In my thinking so far, this is the way I see it as having happened. If I have any problem my normal way of going about it is to talk it out with someone. And I drive them up the wall. They don't want to hear the process of the thinking I propound, you see, so I had to use that when I could, when it would be tolerated …. I think this is basic to my personality but I've been battered down a bit.

Dan and others continue to respond to Jane in interested, perceptive and/or sharing ways and the conversation goes on. Sally, a quieter member, refers to qualified permissiveness, of having more than one aspect or "personality" and the need in practice to be able to switch one's stance. Rob, listening to the various sharing exchanges, speaks of having to be "administrative." This touches sensitive issues for Gerald, as seen shortly.

Rob: .. In many areas of our life we must be fairly administrative and definite otherwise we just don't go. Life has too many pressures. The problem is though that you, many of us, tend to defend ourselves against this, the more anxiety-provoking self, by remaining on the administrative and intellectual plane. The person in any sort of group situation is threatened. − − −

Gerald: I've had staff troubles, we all do I think…. When I get the let down feeling that… I'm being taken advantage of, I gradually work up to a

state… where I perhaps overdo it… and when I do go for him I feel ashamed afterwards. It has to be done, but it really hurts. Now there have been a few incidents like that in my life that have hurt me very, very deeply. I've withdrawn from all sorts of contacts with other people…. Trying to do the right thing in all of this has sort of built up in a situation where, you know, the real ulcer-producing situation. You hate yourself, you've got responsibilities to go on and do certain things that you feel are right, pressures are there and so you get hurt. I have had something of this feeling way behind me and it's only just come out now.

The "putting the boots in" metaphor is mentioned again by someone and Jane speaks again, first saying that when she does this without realising that she is doing it is where the trouble starts. Elaine asks her is this (still) about putting the boots in until it hurts.

Jane: Well, not till it hurts, but leaving people bleeding and not knowing it, you see, because naturally if I find that I've left anyone bleeding I don't leave them – I repair it if I can repair it.. – – –

Eve: Another way of putting the boot in, it seems to me, is being on a seesaw and pushing the other person down and getting a bit of a lift herself, you know – while he's down then you're up higher.

Jane: I'd like to qualify that. I don't think I like to push people down. [It's] more liking to be …, and probably being, reasonably sharp and quick to pick things up first.

Rick: I think it's not the thing that's only true of you and it's probably true of me. George and Sean I think may come in here too. That in our work we meet very definitely some of our needs. It's as though you're more your true self often in counselling, or that you're more the person you want to be. I guess this is true of me too. I'm pretty sure of this, I don't hurt people I counsel.. people I'm very close to I don't hurt, but I've hurt lots of other people. It looks as though I'm more myself when I'm doing counselling – [ike] Sean [who] finds it difficult to communicate with people on a social level but is more able to be the person he would want to be in a counselling sort of relationship. – – –

Rob: All this says something interesting about the reasons why we become counsellors. Perhaps not only do we provide a safe threat-free situation for … the client, but the client provides a similar kind of thing for us.

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Some others agree with Rob and, shortly, Sean responds and
others come into the conversation more. Then Gerald makes a long
statement triggered more by a prior lunch conversation with Pat
than by what others have been saying in the group.
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Gerald: … I came to the conclusion after this discussion – I felt pretty miserable about it – that… I've got a counselling unit in a university operating to do the things that I think are important for people, the soft sort of things I call it, and that I've got to link this up with some hard kind of activity that'll feed to the qualities and attitudes that seem to go along with success. I've got a study skill centre and these kinds of things, but here I am working in a conflict situation. I'm trying to do something that I oughtn't to be doing according to the system that we have. Now, I'm not as hopeless as all this, I feel I've got a responsibility to change attitudes about what it is a university ought to be doing, and this is why the word "research" comes into the name of the unit I happened to be associated with… But it is a worrying sort of business …

Rob: This is what the counselling is doing, seems to be aiming at moving people in the direction that won't produce the most efficient sort of students?

Gerald: That's right. This sort of student might produce a person who knows himself better and knows where he wants to go better, and so on. But this doesn't necessarily say he is going to pass the exams. – – –

Gerald: Getting back to something you said, Jane, you said "cold and ruthless." My own feelings are when I'm being ruthless I'm not cold. I'm really heated up or as frightened as hell.

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Jane adds further to her meaning and others respond and comment
briefly. Finally, silent Jim is directly encouraged to join the
conversation.
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Dan: I'd be very interested at this stage to see what Jim feels about what he's been in [here], I say feels if you can [Jim] rather than think because this is what we're -- the level we're operating on.

Jim: I'd rather not express a view at the moment about my feelings.

Des and others further encourage Jim who is not ready to speak
of his feelings but says "I'm willing to express some thoughts
… but I don't know whether they would be particularly valuable."
Someone affirms that thoughts are also valuable, and Jim goes
ahead:

*Jim: Originally I talked over with Goff the business of undirected groups
and my own feeling about this… I was rather sceptical about it because I
think that groups, to get anywhere, they have to consider issues preferably
critically…. Groups that are meeting for a fairly prolonged period, if we're
not going to waste their time … you need the sort of leadership that would
keep issues coming forward that were not [before] properly thrashed out and
considered. I couldn't really imagine this happening with a group where there
was no clear direction… some people in the group are going to lead whether
you like it or not – the sort of people who are going to enter into the direc-
tion… (Other members respond and Jim continues.) … what I've been most
interested in the discussion---you seem to be getting down to what I think,
what I would imagine are pretty basic issues and that is "why you do counsel
and what are your feelings and [what are] you gaining from counselling situ-
ation"… . (brief omissions)*

*Gerald: Put it this way, Jim. I came into the situation and started to struc-
ture it and I can assure you I was slaughtered. The people didn't want to hurt
me – I had this feeling at any rate. The very things that I was saying… and
these are questions that I want answered in a systematic way [and] have come
up sometimes two or three times, nearly all of them … They've come up in a
natural way out of the situation, and the situation has been an interpersonal
relationship. This is the very situation in which we work and must work
adequately. We must be adequate people, persons in ourselves, know ourselves
if we are to know the other person …. – – –*

*Gerald: …I feel that I've made a contribution. If I had gone on the origi-
nal --- I can't follow that thought through, but what I want to say is that
every member of the group here… has made a contribution and feels involved
in the development of our understanding, knowledge, content or whatever it
is… that's so vital to our work… – – –*

Member: This relation to the experience gives us a better and better insight into ourselves in relation to our work. This is the thing that's most valuable to me at any rate.

Jim: Is this why you're putting Jane on the rack, you were going to help her to be a better counsellor?

Member: You might have got the impression that we are all sort of in the witness box or something, we were cross-examining… Some members of the group have become more quickly involved, others had stayed more on the periphery and the feeling was this morning that Jane hadn't quite stepped into the group … This was expressed by Eve and Jane had been thinking about it since… Jane said the word, we didn't say a word.

Dan: But before lunch, Jim, she was reassured in a sense by the group because we were able to say that we accepted her just as she was. She didn't have to say anything that she didn't want to and I didn't expect her to say any-thing. I was quite surprised when she suddenly launched into it. She wasn't on the rack, that sort of crucified situation. – – –

Lee: Sometimes the group doesn't feel equally as comfortable for that particular person, and you pass it over until sometime when they do [feel comfortable] ---

Member: What's been happening is we've been sort of entering into this thing in layers, haven't we. We let ourselves go a bit, and a bit later a bit fur-ther, as we feel more comfortable with what happened last time.

Pat: I have a feeling though that we are all trying to tell you (Jim) some-thing, not sort of responding to Jim's feelings of puzzlement. Well he's sort of saying if I hear him right "see I didn't think this thing would work…. if I'd really followed my natural inclination -- I was interested to see if it really would work and I'm surprised that it does seem to be working, I don't know why." Something of this sort?

Jim: Yes … that's about it, I think you've hit the nail on the head. Could I add something there, and it arises from what Gerald and others have said. Gerald was wanting to structure the discussion… which I can understand--- and he said this whole thing has worked the other way. .. Now it has worked with this group – it may have – but it may not work with a lot of other groups of counsellors. Do you think this?…

Pat: Well, I'd like to respond again to Jim… Firstly I want to express my own feeling that this would work in any groups providing that the appropri-ate atmosphere can be created for the people. But I also sense very much your

feelings--- a real doubt about this that, "well, you may have struck a lucky group, or maybe you've got a particular group… of counsellors who have particular orientation and this seems to have worked with this group." But I also feel that you are saying to yourself "could we do anything more with this than you're doing with this particular group? Are there possibilities in this approach?"

Jim: Yes, I am saying that. What I'm suggesting is that people with -- common backgrounds instead of … having the usual sort of lecture and rather unsatisfactory questions afterwards, this kind of technique might work in other fields? This is the question I'm raising… – – –

Member: … Gerald, for instance, as he said came along and wanted to ask a lot of questions… We didn't answer them. When we did there was a fair bit of disagreement and conflict… we were playing with words often and trying to win a point. I think what has happened as time's gone by is that the very process of getting to know people in a less structured situation, and they don't have to be revealing themselves in the sort of way that possibly is appropriate for us, in this deeply feeling and searching way. I feel that in this knowingness that comes out of a less structured situation is far more willingness and capacity to understand what the other person is saying, that instead of this imparting of information there is an actual communication going on… When we're focused on a specific area there's not been necessarily agreement at the end but there's been more understanding than if we just tried to debate it, argue it out, that in a sense this is educational, there is more appreciation. We're probably more able to see the person's whole point of view and take out of it what we want rather than fighting the whole thing out…

Another member: Well, that's what I felt about the atmosphere this afternoon, this was the feeling I had that people had been trying to find out, really trying to find out what the other person has been saying. – – –

Dan: There are some funny things that happened in this process. I found that there were certain people in the group that I didn't respond to, that I found rather spiky and I felt hostile towards them… (brief interruptions, and Dan resumes) And as I began to understand myself this quite extraordinary thing happened, that although they were just the same, still spiky, I had begun to like them so much that I didn't care about them being spiky. And once I didn't care I could listen to them and they could tell me what they were trying to say…

A good deal of discussion followed on the question of how broadly applicable this kind of group process was. It was argued that unhelpful or even damaging outcomes would result from attempted application in some contexts. In this group it was productive and individually helpful. Most agreed, however, that it wasn't a panacea: its effectiveness would depend on the context and people involved and that in some circumstances the results of attempted application could be negative. How it worked was explored in some depth, though it was not in the province of the group to settle the exact nature of the phenomenon. Eventually, Lin's view was expressed more simply than some others:

Lin: I feel much happier going back to_____(city) to the group that I meet with each Thursday night – a group of 30 trainee counsellors. I don't run this group other than I'm just present, I introduce the speaker and they come to me…. Often these resource people say to me I just like to talk and we'll have a few questions and get it all over that way, and in my insecurity I've always said "let's have about an hour's lecture-discussion from you and then we'll have the discussion"… I'm sure now that this is because I didn't feel safe in the situation. I wanted the lecturer to get across his point and then they'd be free to give theirs. There wouldn't be much of an exchange. And now I feel quite differently about this. I think I'd be brave enough to say "well let's sit around and talk" rather than a lecture situation. – – –

Conversation continues relating to how broadly applicable the low structure personally facilitating approach and process is. Pat expresses a note of caution, saying he likes to know clearly what he's doing and doesn't want people to get hurt. He does see "possibilities and potentialities" in this situation but wants "to have a very strong conviction that it is safe." By implication, he had doubts about safety in the other group, for in the next session he brought up and spoke with concern about their apparent conflict. Jane expresses some disagreement with the emphasis on safety, saying "I don't feel you should try something only when you know that it's safe," that one can be aware that there is some risk and "still go ahead and do things knowing about the danger." Another woman speaker follows up:

Member: For me the thing that stops the situation at first is the fear in me, not the danger… "This situation is dangerous?" It's because I thought it was, and I don't think I feel this anymore – and I would have felt it was because I would want people… to come to the conclusion that the lecturer presents to them. I wouldn't feel that they were able to reach the decision… if left to themselves. But now I feel perfectly sure that they can. – – –

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After further comments by Cal and others, Pat mentions an
external long-term (counselling?) group he has been working
with, and his difficulty in getting into a role he was comfortable
with, though lately he has come to "feel very much freer." It's
only this year that he has "learned to trust the clients" and
not be afraid they would go backwards. Now he concentrates "on
just being there for the client, and going along with the client.
In this sense I trust them to know where they are going." In
response to queries about responding to very disturbed people,
Pat acknowledges a recent experience of meeting with one
prospective client: "After 10 minutes with him I felt completely
uncomfortable, 20 minutes with him when I knew I was talking to
a psychotic person and didn't want to be in it."
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This session is now close to winding-up; Pat's participation at this point seems to be less to facilitate and more to encourage a question-and-answer and answer-comment mode—unlike the effect of his sharing earlier. At the end, another member speaks of his own interest and work with a form of hypnosis and invites everyone interested to listen to a tape recording of this work with a client who has "multiple personalities that talk to each other" in a recorded interview. After "afternoon tea," this tape-listening interlude would occupy the late afternoon.

Conclusion: Group Y and Other Groups

Significant further developments occurred in the last session reviewed above. The conversation flowed more freely and on levels from personal exploratory sharing to discussion of ideas and issues that mattered to people. Two more members of Group Y came into active connection with the other members – namely, Jane and Jim. Jane came forth on her own

initiative and others drew Jim into verbal engagement. Pat's activity in his multiple roles as leader-facilitator and that of a member increased. His initiatives contributed to some of the topics taken up thoughtfully and with feeling, by other members. Generally, his visible participation across sessions continued to include reflective understandings and clarifications, but went significantly beyond this. He contributed directly to the topics for exploration, and came to share readily from his own views and experience.

Altogether, meeting #14 brought another significant step in the group's evolution and identity. Among the remaining three regular group sessions, #16 ranked most highly in the post-session ratings. However, it is not transcribed and this completes my documentation from the live process of Group Y. As in the case of Group X, this is complemented by the session-by-session member ratings (Chap. 5) and the post-workshop feedback letters (Chap. 6).

In contrast with Group X, with its greater diversity of assertive personalities, and the differing response to the leader in the Y group, there was no overt turmoil. The process seemed to move at a generally easy and less energetic pace and remained contained and in a comparatively steady state throughout.[3] Although Group X did not integrate fully as a flowing whole, strong group feeling developed. Arguably, its members, in their confrontation of personal issues and relations with each other, were more deeply involved, tended to be more shaken up, and may have moved further or left the workshop still processing their experience relatively more actively. Most Y members also showed gains in awareness of self-qualities, especially in relationships. Valued development of their work-related ideas and understandings occurred, their communication with each other became more perceptive and fluent, and they bonded increasingly.

I have listened, though without the aid of transcripts, to some of the slightly faded big reel-to-reel recordings from Workshops 2 and 3. As in the case of the two groups in Workshop 1 other groups in the full

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[3] Was this relative calmness all positive? Group member Rick questioned it later, for example, as quoted in Chap. 9: "[The group] seemed to settle into a very comfortable level…. We thought we were better off, but looking back maybe it might have been better if we'd been more *un*comfortable."

series appear to have been quite distinctive in their specific process and development, along with broad commonalities. The post-session rating data has bearing on the process in six groups altogether, and parts of the follow-up material in later chapters provide further indication. Although not within the plan of this book, full transcriptions would also allow a focus on individual members, whose whole verbal contribution could be taken out and investigated in an intensive case study mode.

The member crisis that occurred, not this time but in Workshop 2, and temporarily stopped his group in its tracks (see Chap. 11) warrants a further note here. The person at the centre of this crisis ("Ned") became, in the middle of the second week, acutely anxious and temporarily unable to continue bearable contact within the group. Ned was in the early stages of his career in a social helping profession, still studying but with a job in his field. During his emergency absence from the group, we did not advise him to leave us altogether (see Chap. 6 under the "Ned" entry). Assisting him for a time outside the group was an experienced priority and, although a difficult situation to be in, contributed to helping him through the crisis.[4] His mentioned follow-up report implies that his workshop experience in total was a crucial factor in a turning point for the better in his personal and inner life. The next chapter is a considerable change of pace from this one in its systematic focus on the structured end-of-session rating data.

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[4] I later observed a very different sequence of events involving a member in crisis in an intensive residential group overseas. The group leaders in that case contacted the member's family and arranged his exit from the workshop and passage home. He was a somewhat older helping professional and was in touch with me some time later, mainly to share his still distressed and bitter feelings about being excluded and sent home.

5

Session-by-Session Member Ratings of Process and Effects

My colleagues and I were eager to go beyond our first-hand experience as participant-leaders, important though that was to the further development of our awareness and understandings. The transcripts in Chaps. 2, 3 and 4 shed major light on what people thought, felt and communicated during the group encounter sessions. We also wanted to learn all we could about how the Armidale workshops were appraised by participants and we collected data to investigate the process and its immediate impact and longer-range outcomes in several additional ways. The method taken up in this chapter focuses on information gathered from each participant *at the end of every group meeting.* How members felt as they turned from direct engagement in the group encounter, and stood back a little to appraise a constant range of elements, right after each session, yields one vital tracing of the course of the workshop experience. Further evidence, reported in Chap. 6, stems from an invitation to members to write to us reflectively after they had returned home, about how they perceived and felt about the process that had engaged them, and with what effects afterwards. Later chapters report on follow-up data gathered more formally after six or seven months and, in different forms of search, a decade later.

Our session-by-session rating scheme for the *first workshop* – necessarily planned in advance – reflected what we thought would be relevant to ask and straightforward to answer. In *Workshop 2*, we retained multiple-choice items equivalent to those used the first time. For the *third workshop*, Pat Pentony and I worked out the content of a more developed end-of-meeting questionnaire attuned to self and interpersonal process qualities for appraisal by each member. This chapter account extends far beyond any earlier publication in its focus in detail on the after-session rating data from three workshops.

The Rating Form and Data from *Workshop 1*

The forms used in Workshops 1 and 2 shared almost the same multiple-choice items designed to yield a "barometric reading" of the experienced productivity and valuing of the session, how involved members felt and their mutual understanding and felt responsibility for what happened in the session. In Workshop 1, the full content was as follows, except for reversal here in the order of Questions 6 and 7. For Workshop 2, Questions 3 and 4 were reversed in order, and the wording of Question 5 was amended as later noted.

Reaction Check Sheet

Please answer the following questions with reference to the workshop group session that has just finished. For each question, check the alternative answer that best describes your reaction.

1. Was this a productive session for you?
   ____ Very much so (3)
   ____ To a moderate degree (2)
   ____ Only slightly (1)
   ____ No (0)
2. Did you feel there was opportunity for you to express your views?
   ____ Yes and I used it (3)
   ____ Yes, but I did not make full use of it (2)

_____ No, but there was nothing I particularly wanted to say (1)

_____ No, and I wish there had been (0)

3. Did you feel really involved in what went on?

_____ Definitely so (3)

_____ To a moderate degree (2)

_____ Only slightly (1)

_____ No (0)

4. Did you feel that group members were understanding one another?

_____ Yes, very much so (3)

_____ To a moderate degree (2)

_____ Only in a very limited way (1)

_____ No (0)

5. Did you have a sense of discovering new meanings during this session?

_____ Yes, very strongly (3)

_____ Yes but they are not very clear yet (2)

_____ Only in a minor way (1) / ___No (0)

6. How much did you feel that what happened or did not happen in the group was partly your doing?

_____ In some instances I felt my responsibility very keenly (3)

_____ In a general way I felt responsible (2)

_____ I felt only a very limited responsibility (1)

_____ I really felt that what happened was out of my hands (0)

7. Do you feel more in contact with any other member as a person, as a result of this session?

_____ Very definitely (3)

_____ Considerably (2)

_____ Somewhat (1)

_____ No change (0)

_____ Less contact (−1)

8. What other reactions did you have from this session that you would like to record?. . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

***

For the analysis of the data, the alternative answers to each item were assigned score numbers as shown above in brackets after the wording of each alternative answer. (These numbers did not appear on the forms used in the workshop.) A "No" answer was scored zero and the different strengths of "Yes" were assigned values of 1, 2 and 3. This made it possible to deduce a mean value for each item for each group session, thus permitting a session-by-session tracking of member appraisals over the course of the workshop. Differences between members in their overall levels of appraisal and satisfaction also could be calculated.

Focus on Group X

Up to 16 members contributed returns for the tabulated summaries that follow. The actual number of returns (Ns) varies a little due to missed rating forms or occasional absences, such as in the Saturday meeting #8. One member of this group was only present for the second week, and none of his ratings or those of the group leader are included in this presentation. Table 5.1 shows the answer choices for the first question.

The answers to Question 1 provide an indication of how valuable for the respondent a particular session was perceived as being, with some sessions estimated as substantially more or less productive by participants than other sessions (see last line of table). Group high points were for the sixth meeting near the end of the first week and for sessions during the later part of the second week. In these sessions, a majority of ratings clustered at the uppermost level (scored 3), with its implication of a distinctly fruitful outcome. However, one or two people might still record "no" (0) implying that it was not felt to be at all productive for them. As also implied in Chaps. 2 and 3, perceived productivity was hard-won in this diverse group, rising gradually to Session 6 and then falling steeply, especially in Sessions 8 (with Saturday absences) and 10, before rallying quite strongly from the middle of the second week.

Table 5.1 has illustrated the steps in arriving at session means, and the same method was used in calculating session-by-session means for the remaining questions, summarised in Table 5.2 (repeating the means

Table 5.1 *Was this session productive for you? Rating levels in Group X*

Session numbers —>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Value 3 entries	2	3	2	5	5	10	9	2	6	2	5	7	10	11	8	9	9
Value 2 entries	9	6	6	11	6	5	2	4	3	4	7	2	3	2	4	5	4
Value 1 entries	3	6	6	–	2	1	1	6	7	4	2	4	3	1	2	2	2
Value 0 entries	1	1	2	–	1	–	2	1	–	6	2	3	–	2	1	–	1
Sum	27	27	24	37	29	41	32	20	31	18	31	29	39	38	34	39	38
N	15	15	15	16	14	15	14	13	16	16	16	16	16	16	15	15	16
Mean	*1.8*	*1.8*	*1.6*	*2.3*	*2.1*	*2.7*	*2.3*	*1.4*	*1.9*	*1.1*	*1.9*	*1.8*	*2.4*	*2.4*	*2.3*	*2.6*	*2.4*

Table 5.2 *Rating means: by session (1–17) and by question – Group X*

Sessions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Mean of mean ratings
Question 1: Was the session productive for you?																		
Mean of ratings	1.8	1.8	1.6	2.3	2.1	2.7	2.3	1.4	1.9	1.1	1.9	1.8	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.4	*2.05*
Question 2: Was there opportunity to express your views?																		
Mean of ratings	2.7	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.7	2.5	2.2	1.9	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.6	2.4	*2.4*
Question 3: Did you feel really involved in what went on?																		
Mean of ratings	2.7	2.4	1.8	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.3	1.9	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.5	2.7	*2.35*
Question 4: Were group members understanding one another?																		
Mean of ratings	1.8	1.6	1.3	2.1	1.7	2.3	2.4	2.4	1.6	.94	1.7	1.9	2.5	1.4	2.0	2.3	2.7	*1.95*
Question 5: Do you feel you discovered new meanings?																		
Mean of ratings	1.1	1.1	.9	1.8	1.5	2.2	2.1	.9	1.5	.9	1.3	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.1	1.7	1.8	*1.6*
Question 6: Do you feel that what happened/didn't happen was partly your doing?																		
Mean of ratings	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.7	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.5	*1.70*
Mean of 6 means	**1.8**	**2.0**	**1.7**	**2.2**	**1.9**	**2.0**	**2.2**	**1.7**	**1.7**	**1.5**	**1.9**	**1.9**	**2.2**	**2.2**	**2.3**	**2.2**	**2.2**	
[*Question 7: Do you feel more in contact with any other member as a person, as a result of this session?*																		
Mean of ratings	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.6	1.5	1.9	2.1	.8	1.6	.5	1.6	1.1	1.6	1.4	2.2	1.7	1.3]	*1.3]*

for Question 1). However, the formulation of Question 7 was thought unfortunate due to the *two* qualifiers: "as a person" and "as a result of this session," and it is not included in mean of means results also shown (following each question) in Table 5.2. The questions and alternative answers are not ideally suited to the linear metric analysis applied here, yet the results tracked over the course of the workshop contribute meaningful discrimination of sessions.

Chapters 2 and 3 imply that Group X was made up of energetic people, usually fast moving in their communication and with a diversity of attitudes and reactions to each other and the process they were engaged in. Even in disagreement they tended to spark each other off, and to find the experience strongly engaging even when dissatisfied. In the session-by-session ratings, Question 1(Q1) drew an overall mean response of 2.05. The large majority had given either a top (3) rating *or* felt that the session was "moderately" productive (2 rating) for them. Nearly everyone felt clear opportunity to express their views (Q2) in virtually every session. Also, nearly everyone felt involved (Q3) – "definitely" or at least "moderately" – in 15 of the 17 sessions.

As seen in the transcript illustrations, participants tended not (except towards the end) to directly focus on understanding each other's emotional feelings and were more prone to address each other's varied ideas – ideas often strongly felt but not often evoking distinct empathic awareness and acknowledgement. Their ratings of mutual understanding (Q4) were quite uneven, with session means below 1.8 in 7 of 17 sessions and modes ranging from 1 (in Session 3) to 3 (in Sessions 6, 13 and 17). Somewhat surprisingly, the lowest mean ratings were given in response to Q5, concerned with discovering new meanings. This probably was taken as referring more to new thought than to subjective insight. Nearly everyone gave average ratings below 2 with the highest scoring person including six 2s and six 3s (mean 2.25).

To the open-ended Question 8 a few people entered short responses fairly regularly and the majority added comments occasionally. Notwithstanding the uneven usage, they were an expressive complement to the structured ratings – as in the following examples (the names are the same as those given elsewhere). After Session 1, where the purpose of the

workshop was a main theme (e.g., personal exploration and development *versus* talking about therapy cases, methods or theory), the comment by Dave was: "Getting into something. Don't know where it's going to go but am more certain I want to find out – a lot of reservations but this sort of opening means more to me than ***talking about*** therapy." Ellen found it "interesting" that "the group had to spend so much time discussing what it was going to do… and talking as if there ***had*** to be choices." She/he was somewhat encouraged that "there seemed to be a move towards accepting that we might go where the spirit moved us, but we are still a long way from feeling ready to give ourselves up to this." Mary noted feeling "frustrated because of the diversity of needs of group members." In contrary vein, Anne recorded "Since I find that there are basic attitudes as much as knowledge and technique involved, I find the trend, at present, reasonably satisfying."

Session 6 – represented by generous excerpts in Chap. 3 – evoked a number of write-in comments, several relating to the leader. Ellen, for example, wrote: "I found this session useful in its attack on the leader, showing how these things arise, and also to clarify some things and reveal aspects of people I was not aware of." Roger noted, "Greater freedom in the group to express opinions and feelings even though divergent." Barry saw a peak of "aggression" and wrote in formal style, "I would expect more constructive sessions now to follow." Anne said, "I feel that the group leader has now been accepted." Ros glowed, saying she felt a "stillness" and a "happiness and groupness and pride and fondness for the leader, and this quietness was a very good feeling." Chris simply added, "Much better than I felt yesterday," and Janet wrote, "Sorry for the leader but cross with _____ as well." On a different tack, Arthur noted, "a definite feeling of self-discovery." Dave wrote after Session 7, "I have found a capacity for emotional empathy, which surprises me." The turn was evident, though unevenly distributed among the diverse participants.

Both the transcript dialogue and ratings suggest a further quality of reflective feeling in the last few meetings. At the end of Session 13,

Mary – whose ratings overall were among the lowest in the group but with several 3s this time – wrote, `Although the emotional content was very much less, I felt that it was a very productive and `<u>`positive`</u>` session.` James had noted after the 14th meeting that it was `a very profitable session.` After Session 15, Chris wrote in self-admonishing vein but following top ratings on *all* the structured items – `I still cannot blunder into discussion where there is the chance of hurting someone's feelings – personal feelings I mean.` Dave noted: `A painful situation has been resolved, but new possibilities of pain are being offered up. I'm less vulnerable than others because I'm less sensitive … – but the group has resources that I had come to doubt.` Then, after Session 16, he wrote in `I felt a lot more at peace.`

Ellen rated a strong sense of discovering new meanings (Q5) but also was `puzzled by this session` [#15]. She saw `more readiness to be constructive [yet] it seemed several people felt out of it and angry about something.` Of the next session, also very positively rated, she wrote `I have a feeling of many things explored and a great deal unresolved. I felt we got fairly deep at times.` After the final meeting she felt `very definitely` more personal contact and warmed to the discussion – yet felt `that there might well be some negative aspects underneath.` Keith rated more personal contact in Session 15, adding one phrase only: `Just the deepest sense of fear I have ever experienced` but, after #16, wrote `I felt a very strong feeling of trust in the group.` After #16, Roger recorded feeling `a very close relationship with the group.` After #17 he wrote, `This I felt was a very valuable session from the point of summarizing and clarification, and displayed considerable evidence of group cohesion.` Cliff found in #16 that a `return to a cohesive structure [was] most noticeable` and, after #17, summed up: `a very pronounced sensitivity of feeling within the group very much akin to love.` Together, these and other comments imply a depth varied experiences, often "roller-coaster" on the way, leaving much to be further reflected on afterwards.

Focus on Group Y

This second group of diverse personalities had its own distinctive character. It was soon evident that their resulting collective was qualitatively different from Group X – notably, more relaxed together (Chap. 4). They used the same rating form after each of their 17 regular sessions, with summary results in Table 5.3:

The Group Y leader had only a secondary part in organising the workshop, and participants made little fuss about being misled although most did not expect the kind of process that took place. Also, although members were conscious of their differences, this did not have the hard edge often expressed by members in the other group. Already, Session 3 was rated as highly productive and as equally or more positive in other ways than the later sessions. Overall, the session ratings were a little more positive than for the other group, *although not so on the question of how much people felt that the process was their own doing*. There also was less variability across sessions in the way the process was seen than in Group X. Group Y evidently was more easy-going and less high energy than X, yet no less fruitful on this evidence. Transcripts (Chap. 4) and other feedback indicate that members of Group Y did not have to struggle and work as hard to make progress as in the case of Group X. There were distinct differences in the way participants looked back on the *process* of their groups, after 6–8 months, as will become evident in Chap. 7.

As mentioned, Group Y made a running start on rated productivity (Q1), and high points also were reached in Session 6 (as in Group X) and in the next to session (also as in Group X). From the start, members felt strong opportunity to express their views and generally felt very involved from Session 3 on. The Session 3 high point also held strongly for the experience of mutual understanding, which after a brief decline picked again and was maintained except for some relapse in Session 14. As in Group X, a relatively modest level of discovery of new meanings was reported, and members also felt limited personal influence on what happened in the group. The original rating forms for Group Y were not preserved and, unfortunately, no write-in information is available.

Table 5.3 *Rating means: by session and by question – Group Y*

Sessions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Mean of mean ratings
Question 1: Was the session productive for you?																		
Mean of ratings	1.9	2.0	2.7	1.7	2.2	2.6	2.0	2.3	2.3	1.9	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.24
Question 2: Was there opportunity to express your views?																		
Mean of ratings	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.6
Question 3: Did you feel really involved in what went on?																		
Mean of ratings	2.1	2.3	2.9	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.1	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.5
Question 4: Were group members understanding one another?																		
Mean of ratings	2.1	2.3	2.9	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.2	2.4	1.6	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.4
Question 5: Do you feel you discovered new meanings? (Check)																		
Mean of ratings	1.7	1.3	2.2	1.4	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.4	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.8
Question 6: Do you feel that what happened/didn't happen was partly your doing?																		
Mean of ratings	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.6
Mean of 6 means	**1.9**	**2.0**	**2.5**	**1.9**	**2.2**	**2.3**	**2.1**	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.0**	**2.3**	**2.2**	**2.2**	**2.1**	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.2**	**2.2**
[Question 7: Do you feel more in contact with any other member as a person, as a result of this session?																		
Mean	1.7	1.2	2.2	1.1	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.8	1.1	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.8	.94	1.7	1.8	2.1]	

Besides the session-by-session focus, person-by-person means (over all sessions) were calculated for both groups. These are illustrated in Table 5.4 for three salient items, showing member rating levels and differences in each group and enabling comparison of the groups. The members are listed down the page by the same substitute names used in the transcripts and elsewhere. Rather than listing people in random order, the means for Question 1 begin a descending order, which makes for easier comparisons.

Figures down the columns of Table 5.4 illustrate the wide range of person-by-person session appraisals, in both groups. Since these figures are means across all sessions, they show that members differed from each other systematically in their ratings. Especially in Group X, members differed very widely in how personally productive the sessions were rated as having been (Q1) and in their perceptions of the level of mutual understanding (Q4). The transcripts imply that big variation often occurred within sessions in how people were interacting and feeling. Thus, ratings at any one point are at best a fairly rough approximation of the whole

Table 5.4 *Mean rating levels, person by person, for Groups X and Y*

Group X				Group Y			
		Questions				Questions	
Members	Q1	Q4	Q6	Members	Q1	Q4	Q6
Ros	2.5	2.6	1.9	Dan	2.7	2.7	2.4
Ellen	2.5	1.7	1.8	Eve	2.7	2.7	2.1
Dave	2.3	2.5	2.1	Cal	2.6	2.5	1.9
Arthur	2.3	2.5	2.3	Lin	2.6	2.2	1.9
Chris	2.3	1.8	1.5	Rob	2.5	2.5	1.9
Mary	2.3	2.1	1.5	Brad	2.5	2.7	0.7
Cliff	2.1	2.1	1.2	Rick	2.4	2.5	2.1
Ralph	2.0	2.2	2.1	Jane	2.3	2.5	2.6
Roger	2.0	1.7	1.1	Lee	2.2	2.7	2.1
Keith	2.0	1.4	1.6	Elaine	2.2	2.0	0.65
Tess	1.9	1.3	1.9	Gerald	2.1	2.4	1.2
Janet	1.8	1.8	1.9	Hal	2.1	2.3	1.9
James	1.8	2.2	2.1	Sally	2.0	2.0	1.3
Anne	1.6	1.7	1.3	Jim	2.0	2.8	0.6
Barry	1.4	1.9	1.9	Sean	1.8	2.6	1.1
Will	1.4	1.9	1.3	Patrick	1.6	2.0	1.7
Mean of means	2.01	1.97	1.72	*Mean of means*	2.27	2.44	1.63

two-hour experience – and also were given against a backdrop of differing wants and expectations of members. On the face of it, people in Group Y had an experience that they felt a good deal more evenly and positively about than the Xs tended to feel. Question 6 ratings shine another light on the response of Group Y members, who varied widely in their sense of responsibility for and potency in the working of their group. Several of their group mean ratings were quite low in this area – lower in some cases and then any in Group X.

Thus, although Y people were a more contented and evidently more integrated group, it seemed that the X members tended to experience equal or greater personal impact on what happened. As for the results on other rated aspects (not in the table), both groups felt a very substantial opportunity to express their own views (Q2) and high levels of involvement (Q3). In retrospect, Q5, on "sense of discovering new meanings," was too abstract and open to interpretation to yield results with clear meaning.[1] The ratings from Workshop 2 participants shed additional light on post-session appraisals.

The Session Rating Patterns from *Workshop 2*

As mentioned, the groups in the first workshop were overlarge for the intensive process entailed. Size alone limits the average "air time" available to each member for their communication and the working out of relationships. In Workshop 2, each group was limited to 13 members plus the leader (still larger than optimal – see Chap. 10). There were three groups, two with different leaders than the first time. These two new leaders were selected from among the most experienced and qualified members of the first workshop and thus brought that experience as part of their "preparation."

The circulated announcement for Workshop 2 acknowledged that the first workshop had "developed as an experiential learning process" and noted that "members explored together aspects of their experience and

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[1] Q5 drew a broad spread but low overall mean (1.6±) of ratings that were almost identical in both groups.

functioning as therapists, considered in relation to their own qualities as persons. Formal concepts of therapy were discussed but increasingly related to hear-and-now processes in the group." This and related language, and the informal accounts from former participants, foreshadowed the expected process more clearly than was the case the first time. However, it did not suggest a precise or narrow boundary on the way that the process should or would unfold. I will turn now to selected rating information:

Except in the right-hand column (mean of the 13 member means), all of *the figures in* Table 5.5 *are means for individual members across sessions.* (The third group, where there were a good many missing returns, is not included in this analysis.) The overall spread and average of these mean ratings in the two groups are very similar. The more striking feature is the wide variation in rating levels among the members, in both groups. A couple of high raters in each group (R5, R13, S3 and S13) nearly always checked the most positive alternative on at least three of the four question items. By contrast, at least one person in each group (R6 and S5) mostly gave low ratings (e.g., "slightly" [1] or "no" [0]). Inspection of the ratings *in each session* by each person revealed, however, that nearly everyone had over the various sessions used the full spread of possible answers. Seen from other angles, further results were interesting too.

The fact that people varied markedly in their mean rating levels accommodates certain consistencies. Q1 "Was this a productive session for you?" drew *relatively consistent* answers across the group, using as a criterion 10 or more of the 13 people rating a given session within one point of each other. This held in 10 of 15 sessions in Group R (all before the crisis episode) and in 9 of the 17 sessions in Group S. In absolute terms, there were more "3" ratings than 2s in Group R, and a "sprinkling" of 1s and 0s. Arguably, the ideal would be for all members to find the group sessions consistently valuable. It also occurs to me, however, that in a fruitful dialectic honestly appraised, not everyone will see value all the time. Furthermore, a low mean rating can mask occasional high ratings by the same person. For example, the member (S8) who gave the lowest ratings overall on Item 5 (concerned with new understanding) also entered top (three-point) ratings in three sessions. Discriminating choice of answers

Table 5.5 Mean rating levels, person by person, for groups R and S

Members Group R -->	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	Mean of means
Means Q1 Session productive	1.9	1.6	2.6	1.9	2.8	1.4	2.4	2.1	2.6	2.2	2.3	1.8	2.5	*2.1*
Q3 Mutual understanding	2.2	1.7	1.9	1.9	2.8	1.3	2.2	1.8	2.2	1.8	2.1	1.4	2.6	*2.0*
Q5 New awareness	1.3	1.5	2.6	1.6	2.7	1.2	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.1	1.5	2.7	*1.9*
Q7 Felt responsibility in group	1.1	1.8	2.0	1.0	2.5	0.6	1.6	2.1	1.9	0.5	1.6	1.2	2.8	*1.7*

Members Group S -->	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S 10	S 11	S12	S13	Mean of means
Means Q1 Session productive	2.4	2.3	2.5	1.2	1.6	1.9	2.2	1.4	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.6	*2.0*
Q3 Mutual understanding	2.2	2.1	2.3	1.8	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.5	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.5	*2.0*
Q5 New awareness	2.5	1.8	2.6	1.8	1.4	1.5	2.0	1.1	1.5	1.7	2.0	1.5	2.2	*1.8*
Q7 Felt responsibility in group	2.0	1.4	0.9	1.6	0.9	1.8	2.4	1.3	2.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6	*1.7*

is also implied in the fact that the whole range was used in different sessions by a majority of people (e.g., 8 in the S group).

On the aspect of perceived understanding between members (Question 3), there were few very high or very low mean ratings by the members. Put another way, *when called on to generalise about the group, there was more commonality in member judgements than when they were rating their individual experience, for example, as in Q1*. From inspection of the figures, members varied most widely of all in their felt responsibility or potency in the group (item 7 here). Two people in Group R implied that what happened was "out of their hands" at least half the time, and two others gave the highest rating (3) of felt responsibility most often. As also seen in Table 5.5, the lowest ratings of felt responsibility occurred in Group R, though the maximum and average ratings were the same in both groups. Overall, members seemed to feel less potency, in terms of felt responsibility, than one might expect in well-functioning groups when conducted within a person-centred ambience (see related result and note for Workshop 1).

When Group R resumed after the particular member crisis, the session ratings were distinctly lower than for the last pre-crisis session but not radically different from the pattern overall. Always somewhat volatile, but very positive in his session ratings, the member in crisis (pseudonym Ned) had become highly anxious and temporarily unable to be in effective contact and communication in the group. While out of the group, he mostly stayed in his room for a day and a half – though often companioned by one or other therapist members or group leaders – before being gently received back into the group for the last couple of meetings. It turned out that only days before he came to the workshop he had seen a psychiatrist and had LSD treatment. This intervention evidently had brought to vivid awareness very deeply conflicting earlier experiences in his original family, with a strong guilt dimension. One possible option in these acute circumstances would have been to advise this member to leave the workshop altogether and to assist him in returning home. However, we did not encourage him to go and the course we followed was in keeping with the climate and values informing the workshop. The process is also described in the second part of Chap. 6, and there is further information on the outcomes in Chap. 7.

Analysis of Session Questionnaire Ratings from Workshop 3

The two groups in Workshop 3 met in the same setting with the same official leaders as Workshop 1 and over an equivalent period. The post-session questionnaire, devised by the two leaders, took a new form. It included 20 descriptive items, each answered on an easy-to-check (fairly coarse) rating scale ranging from "Not at all" through a midpoint of "Somewhat" to "Definitely Yes" (see the Appendix to this chapter). The 22 workshop members, meeting in two groups, responded immediately after each of the 16 (subgroup A) or 17 (subgroup B) twice-daily group sessions. These data were tabulated on a five-step scale, in this case given a numerical designation of 1 for "Not at all," 2 (implying "a little"), 3 ("Somewhat"), 4 (mild "yes") and 5 for "Definitely Yes."

The tabulated data *for each session* were intercorrelated across items for the full obtained sample of 22 respondents. Principal use was made of the means across sessions of the inter-item correlations thus obtained. The main aim of this step was to single out groups of items related *both* on a face-value content basis *and* in terms of measured covariation The first two content-meaningful clusters to emerge from the procedure used are presented in Table 5.6. As the figures are means of the coefficients from the 16 session samples, they are much more reliable and representative of the population of samples than any single-sample coefficient would be.

Table 5.6 *Mean item correlations from session questionnaire data for Workshop 3: first two clusters of meaningfully interrelated items*

Item numbers	1	3	4	6	10	16	20
1		**.47**	.34	.56	**.43**	**.41**	.53
3	.47		.20	.39	**.50**	**.39**	.44
4	.34	.20		.45	.12	.14	.42
6	.56	.36	***.45***		.44	.31	.57
10	.43	.50	.12	.44		**.46**	.39
16	.41	.39	.14	.31	.46		.34
20	.53	.44	***.42***	***.57***	.39	.34	

In order to identify items as clustering together, student assistants at the time and I adopted the criterion that the mean correlations imply a common variance of at least 15% (r =.39), to support the subcluster groupings.

The first cluster consists of four items (following) concerned with individual effects and deemed reflective of "personal gain" by those working on the data:

1. Did you find this session a valuable experience?
3. Did you have a sense of gaining a new or keener awareness of yourself in some way, during this session?
10. Did you have the feeling of being able to communicate more of yourself in the group, as a result of this session?
16. Do you feel that what you were doing was making a difference in the group, during this session?

The second cluster consisted of three items concerned with observations of others and the group. These were identified as forming a subscale of observed "group gain."

4. Do you think this was a valuable session for some other members?
6. Do you feel the group moved to a more genuine level of interaction during this session?
20. Do you feel that the members of the group moved towards a more sensitive awareness of each other, during this session?

A third "cluster" consisted of just two items, 2 and 12 below, that formed a correlated pair (r =.49) concerned with degree of self stress. A fourth meaningful (though less cohesive) cluster of three items concerned with stress in others (or perceived "group stress") was discriminated, for which the previous minimum level of common variance was relaxed (mean r between these 3 items = .33).

2. *Did you feel under pressure from others during this session?*
12. *Did you feel under strain during the session?*
9. *Did you feel some members were putting pressure on other members in this session?*
17. *Did you feel any member of the group was being induced to go further than she/he wanted to go?*
19. *Did you feel this was a stressful session for some other member?*

Item 14: "*Do you feel anxious about what might happen before the workshop ends?*" on the face of it is also concerned with potential self stress, but correlations did not support grouping it with items 2 and 12. Most answers to this item were below the "somewhat" level, and session means tended to be in the bottom fourth of the scale – implying that members generally were not feeling anxious about what the rest of the sessions might bring. Answers to item 18 (see chapter appendix) implied that in most sessions members did *not* feel that someone else in their group was being stopped from going as far as she/he wanted to in expressing or exploring issues of personal concern. Although some people continued to struggle in their searching, in later sessions they were never seen as being seriously blocked by others.

Item #13 yielded a unique pattern. It asks members about the possible development of subtle but compelling norms or "rules" in the group. Inspection of the tabulated original ratings for this question revealed extreme fluctuation and difference between participant observers. In both groups, their ratings mostly ranged all the way from 1 (No) to 5 (Yes) in the *same sessions* or, in the remaining cases, from 1 to 4 or 2 to 5. Mean correlations of Item #13 with other items in the questionnaire were low or negligible. Thus, member perceptions were highly idiosyncratic around this issue, very much reflecting each rater's individual attitudes or sensibilities rather than any generally sensed quality in the group. (This item was dropped from later forms of the questionnaire, including the reworked current version – in Barrett-Lennard, 2015, pp. 172–73.)

Session-by-session mean scores were calculated for each subscale distinguished above. Table 5.7 provides the subscale scores for Group A and Group B separately, reduced to *daily* means. Means across all days are given in the last row, which shows that the two groups are very similar in terms of overall *averages for the workshop.* As implied, means had been first obtained for individual items; these then averaged appropriately to produce the figures given in Table 5.7. The mean level of rated personal gain is around or above the midpoint (coded 3) in nearly all days, in both groups. Strikingly, however, *every day in both* groups members felt there was greater gain in the group qualities than in their personal gain features. With similar regularity, more stress in others than in self was observed.

Table 5.7 *Daily means from grouped session questionnaire items in Workshop 3*

Days (sessions)	Group A Figures adjusted to single-item ranges				Group B Figures adjusted to single-item ranges				Groups A and B
	Pers. gain	Group gain	Pers. stress	Other stress	Pers. gain	Group gain	Pers. stress	Other stress	Means P+G
1 (1)	2.35	2.7	1.55	2.3	2.8	3.2	1.55	2.6	5.5
2 (2 and 3)	3.0	3.7	2.3	2.65	3.15	3.9	2.4	3.4	6.9
3 (4 and 5)	3.3	4.5	2.1	3.9	2.9	3.75	2.25	3.75	7.2
4 (6 and 7)	3.35	4.0	2.3	3.2	3.2	4.0	2.1	3.4	7.3
5 (8 and 9)	3.4	4.1	1.8	2.4	3.3	4.2	2.35	2.75	7.5
6 (10 and 11)	2.9	3.45	2.1	2.7	2.7	3.25	1.6	2.85	6.65
7 (12 and 13)	3.35	4.0	2.3	3.0	2.55	2.8	1.9	2.7	6.35
8 (14 and 15)	2.75	2.7	2.3	3.7	2.9	3.7	2.2	3.25	6.0
9 (A: 16 and 17) (B: 16 only)	3.3	4.0	1.8	2.5	3.65	4.3	2.7	3.4	7.4
Mean of means	3.01	3.68	2.06	2.93	3.02`	3.68	2.21	3.03	6.7

Pg = Items 1+3+10+16. Gg = Items 4+6+20. Ps = Items 2+12. Os = Items 9+17+19
The line after Day 5 represents a mid-workshop Sunday break from group meetings

For the final column of Table 5.7, the (intercorrelated) mean gain scores of both kinds *were added* to form a single index of group session quality, which was then averaged for the two groups. It is a favourable indication of group development that the groups gained ground in rated quality throughout the first week. After the weekend, they resumed less positively and, after some fluctuation, both groups reached a comparatively strong rated finish in Day 9 (especially in Group B, but qualified by the stress ratings). A summary of main features interpreted from Workshop 3 ratings are as follows:

1. Personal and group ratings track and imply a pattern of quite strong experienced developmental gains through the first week of the workshop. There was some falling off in Week 2, but with quite strong rated gain at the end.
2. The general pattern of perceived gain in functioning is higher or more generous in rated views of the member *group* than in views of one's own personal gain. The result is intriguing, though without clear implication.
3. Ps (personal stress) scores are consistently low in absolute terms in nearly all sessions and show no distinct pattern of variation over time. Os (sense of stress in others) scores, however, rise rather steeply to a peak on the third day. There is some lesser elevation as the workshop approaches its ending (evident in the last or next to last day).
4. Personal and group gain scores combined are largely a magnification of the Pg scores alone. Both groups ended the first week with about the same relatively high mean gain score. After the Week 2 drop-off, the groups' combined gain score was fully restored by the last meeting period.

Summary and Conclusion

This study of immediate post-meeting appraisals by participants has involved results from six groups in three spaced, intensive residential workshops. The two kinds of rating instrument devised for this practice context were freshly invented. They are relatively simple devices subject

to refinement and change with experience, intended more as an after-session "grounding" and personal alerting aid for participants (and also to help leaders with after-workshop evaluation) than as data-gathering instruments for research. Nevertheless, this chapter has shown that they contributed valuable light on member experience and perspectives during the workshops and, more broadly, on how the groups unfolded. While the information is not sufficient to stand by itself in delineating the process or outcomes, it makes a distinctive contribution in partnership with the other evidence called on in this book.

The results are in supportive accord with the view from other evidence that the workshops were deeply engaging and potent experiences of a kind to contribute to the experience-based consciousness and outlook of participants in their lives and work with people. The data from Workshop 3 suggests more particular kinds of influence felt during the workshop and invites related method in the study of other intensive groups. Close examination of all of the session-by-session data has contributed also to elements of the thought in the final chapters of this book. A triggered observation to end with here, not a firm generalisation, is that a "doldrums effect" tends to occur in experiential groups of this nature. A period of intense and evidently fruitful interactive exploration can be followed by a relapse or crisis of uncertainty, which precedes a likely recovery and advance in the process of the group. In any case, the dynamics are complex in such close finding-the-way and discovery-oriented engagement, as the next chapter further illustrates from members' back-home letter reports.

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Chapter Appendix

Group Session Questionnaire (Workshop #3)

Code:_____ Date: _____ A.M or P.M (circle)

	Definitely Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
1. Did you find this session a valuable experience?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
2. Did you feel under pressure from others during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
3. Did you have a sense of gaining new or keener awareness of yourself in some way, during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
4. Do you think this was a valuable session for some other member?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
5. Did you feel you were putting pressure on anyone else in this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
6. Do you feel that the group moved toward a more genuine level of interaction during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
7. Did your feelings about any member of the group change in a negative direction during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
8. Did your feelings about any member of the group change in a positive direction during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
9. Did you feel some members were putting pressure on other members during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
10. Do you have the feeling of being able to communicate more of yourself in the group, as a result of this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
11. Did you feel, in this session, that the designated leader was serving some special function different from other members of the group?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
12. Did you feel under strain during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
13. Do you think, after this session, that some subtle but compelling "rules" develop as to how one should participate in these groups?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
14. Do you feel anxious about what might happen before the end of the workshop?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
15. Did you have a sense of acquiring information or theoretical understanding during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
16. Do you feel that what you were doing was making a difference in the group, during this session?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
17. Did you feel that any member of the group was being induced to go further than s/he wanted to go?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
18. Did you feel that any member of the group was being blocked from going as far as s/he wanted to go?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
19. Did you feel this was a stressful session for some other member?	I_____._____	I_____._____	I
20. Do you feel that the members of the group moved toward a more sensitive awareness of each other,	I_____._____	I_____._____	I

Part II

Outcome Reports and Estimations

6

After-the-Workshop Reflections
by Letter Report

Most of the participants from Workshop 1 responded to our invitation to write to us with feedback observations on the process and their experience as they perceived and thought about it soon afterwards. The styles and scope of their observations varied widely, but the members' own words are informative and often eloquent – as quoted and paraphrased within the extensive examples given in summary below. My encapsulations are carefully in keeping with the individual and subjective views conveyed to us – and no doubt readers will vary in their response to the differing communications of experience and meaning. I invite you as reader to consider which of the accounts most resemble what you can imagine feeling, thinking or taking from a similar situation (also see transcript chapters) or, simply, which ones you resonate to the most if you have had a similar experience. This chapter is devoted to the content of member voices, one by one, with occasional mentions of context or linkages by me. A few overall observations end the chapter. Interested readers could further track and connect information for the same people, in other chapters.

These records are quite distinct from the post-session ratings or transcripts, not only in their structure but in the fact that they were prepared when members were out of the workshop environment and at

home in their usual milieus, and communicating their feedback to me (mostly) or another group leader. The topical scope and style were up to the individual, and each one's reflected-upon experience, even in overlapping features, has its own distinctive character. Some reports were framed almost as soon as the participant got home. Most were written some weeks later. In the case of Workshop 2, we did not have quite the same understandings, and early returns by letter were more sporadic – though deemed important to consider later in this chapter. The context of Workshop 3 was different in that I was moving overseas two months or so later and we did not press members at all for after-workshop reflections. Thus, what follows gives generous attention to the informal feedback from the most closely studied Workshop 1 group and goes on to include significant information from selected participants in Workshop 2. Workshop 3 does not feature in chapter.

The Follow-Up Letter Reports From X and Y Group Members of Workshop 1

The code names that distinguish the author-participants conform to those used in the transcriptions (Chaps. 2, 3 and 4) and elsewhere, except that I have added a letter after the names (x or y) designating their Workshop 1 group. The summary accounts are presented here in essentially arbitrary order.

Dan-y returned a closely handwritten 14-page record. He began by saying that the workshop "experience in living," as he put it, was more significant than any personal happening since a much earlier major crisis in his life. He described arriving at the workshop feeling disturbed in himself but without knowing why. Somehow he gradually relaxed and eased inside and was able to listen to quite deep sharing by others. The change was not immediate or straightforward as he often felt different, lonely and isolated in the group, and irritated with some members who seemed "blind to themselves." He was also troubled by the perceived unresponsiveness of the group leader to him. At one stage, he vividly remembered strong conflict as an adolescent with his parents and then came to feel he also was culpable in a pattern of mutual contempt. He turned to the

leader of the other group for one or more individual therapy sessions out of the group meeting times, which he found lifted the burden he had been experiencing. He felt it also reduced his self-perceived tendency to manipulate situations. The process of movement in awareness continued "in jumps" after the workshop. As he recognised some very negative reactions (even hatred) and saw himself as part-architect of these feelings, the burden of them dissipated. He felt both more liking and more likeable. In a word, and somewhat to his surprise, he experienced growth.

As for the group's process, after some milling around, a "client-centred" ambience was evident to Dan. He saw some members as distinctly empathic and caring, which was helpful to others who were more closed but had the potential to become more secure and open. A third subgroup comprising of demanding "intellectualisers" were affected by the process, although still resistant to change. Nonetheless, a shared sense of group identity became very strong. He also saw subgroup formation outside the regular sessions as being of vital complementary importance. He imagined himself as initially "in a gloom" linked with faint lines to just a few others. Gradually, these lines multiplied and became more distinct and reciprocal in linkage influence. The distinct feeling of connection did not end with conclusion of the workshop for he felt in a sense that the group was still in being. A month or so later, about four people in the same location he said, drawn from both workshop groups, met to share their reflections and feelings at that stage, in ways felt to be revealing and valuable – even though one member became angry and upset in the cross-group interchange. Dan noted also that one of the workshop outcomes was a distinct shift in emphasis in the training contexts where ex-workshop members had responsibility. (Dan's perspective 11 years later is presented in Chap. 9).

Ros-x said she felt more vulnerable after the workshop than before, less shielded but somehow stronger and more available and in touch with others. The process involved "a gradual and painful removal of masks" in her presenting self. This change applied in her personal life but, more particularly, in relationships with fellow counsellors and clients. She observed that some group members felt they could be more helpful by remaining detached, others that they needed or wanted to be more self-expressive and responsive on an emotional plane. She wrote that "a struggle for

deeper self-awareness did take place." At the same time, there were many attempts in the group, she felt, "to blanket emotion," both protective and hostile. Yet, once people were experiencing their feelings, nothing it seemed could shut this off, and a "closeness and fondness existed between members." Even the traumatic moments – which still occurred – contributed to fresh awareness and led on to recovered gentleness. It was on that note and, for her, a feeling "of the immense value of the experience of the seminar" that the workshop finally ended. In another letter, she said, *"it has felt as though I was born [again] in 1963 at Armidale."* Although Ros emphasised the personal impact and meaning for her of the workshop experience, she implied that this was inextricably linked to and relevant for effectiveness in her work, by that time, as manager-director of her counselling organisation.

Jane-y delayed her personal report (written over two months after the workshop). She emphasised the still-continuing processing and inner motion she was experiencing, for example, "..the picture of myself seemed to be continually altering and enlarging, tentative feelings being confirmed sometimes and unconfirmed … at other times." She felt herself becoming more open to her experience and freer in communicating this felt experience in a helping role. More open inner awareness, she said, "is something with its own momentum that, like yeast in a dough, goes on working …. For me, so far anyway, it is enough to quietly 'be' and then I 'am'." However, communicating directly from her experience with people generally remains an issue, though she sees advance of "a notch or two." In counselling situations, "the improvement is of a higher order." She became keenly aware in the workshop of how experiential sharing "was a facilitating, forward moving, security enhancing factor – not damaging, threatening or extraneous as I had originally envisioned it."

Jane said she went to Armidale to learn more *about* counselling (and did achieve this) and not for the therapeutic experience through which she actually changed. As she put it, "what I'm trying to indicate is that sometimes hesitantly and with anxiety, and sometimes quite comfortably, I'm coming closer to 'me', and this is deeply satisfying … I can feel its ramifications in all areas of my life, both personal and counselling." Already, before she worked to spell out this personal impact by letter, Jane had contributed a broadly descriptive account of the workshop to

a local professional newsletter in her field. She continues to experience a "kinship" feeling towards members of her Armidale group, and several of them in her local area have been getting together with a different quality of interchange than these colleagues had experienced in their pre-workshop meetings.

Barry-x, a university lecturer, said he arrived expecting a literal seminar on developments in theory, technique and therapy-related research. He had thought that it would examine mental health issues and "the socio-personal problems of our community" and that he would take away content also of value to his students. Instead what he participated in was an intensive, often conflictual and at times alarmingly precarious "sensitivity training" experience, as he put it. He felt that there was too little guidance and control and other effective input by the strained leader of the group, and that often "the emotional atmosphere was charged with adrenaline and cold sweat." Yet, somehow we came through it, he felt, if shocked and battered, "having had the chance to observe therapists relating in the most sensitive manner to the pain and tribulation of others and in themselves" – a lesson in sensitivity "which even if I cannot practice it, I can preach." He expressed admiration for the capacity of some members "to move in delicate appreciation of the feelings of others." Some post-workshop reading had also helped him gain a clearer sense of how to understand the process and to see the leader's response and participation somewhat differently than he did at the time. He came to feel that "individual amity" was worth seeking even in the face of "ideological incongruencies." Although sensitivity could be a hindrance in some contexts, he wound up feeling that "in the world of the counsellor I have a conviction that it is an indispensable characteristic." He even thought that a sensitivity training experience could be valuable for university administrators, though doubting that it would be possible to form such a group.

Rob-y, also university based (as a few others were), came to the workshop expecting "to evaluate my own theories and techniques against those of others … . but the seminar meant much more than that to me." He was anxious facing the group at the first meeting, feeling lonely, isolated and without status. Soon he saw that others were in the same boat. The atmosphere changed, greatly helped by the expressively transparent shar-

ing of a particular member whom the group responded to with "kindness and gentleness" – and helped also by another member functioning as a group catalyst. As he began to express himself Rob relaxed and was able to contribute spontaneously such that "the whole experience became increasingly enjoyable and profitable to me." He could listen and also see the "tentative approaches and withdrawals of some of the more defensive and rigid members." Group participants tended to be alternately client and counsellor in a rich dynamic which gave "more realistic meaning" to him of familiar concepts, including anxiety, defensive behaviour, empathy, reflection of feeling and the therapy relationship. He became more aware of "the superficiality and emotional shallowness" of everyday relationships where "very many people live their lives shrouded in their defences …. [and] not able to let the world see their potential for deeper … and more satisfying personal relationships." As for the permanency of the influences and shifts in his case, Rob was uncertain. He felt, however, "more confident socially and professionally than before Armidale … [and with] a clearer picture of the possibilities of personal emotional freedom, increased confidence, efficiency and satisfaction" and hopes to find ways to extend this process of growth. He mentioned fresh initiatives in his work and plans for an at-his-home reunion of available members during a forthcoming conference in his city. (Rob returned for the 1964 workshop, and I interviewed him ten years later about the sequels in his life and work – described in Chap. 9.)

Cliff-x noted that he is distinctly aware of "how much more successful I've been in establishing a close counselling relationship since I've returned from the seminar." This he felt applied particularly to his "capacity to communicate better an understanding of the students' [i.e. clients'] feelings with the result that responses flow more freely from them." At the same time, he feels more acutely aware now of the difficulties of communication – for example, "How can we be sure we understand what the client is trying to communicate?" The workshop experience "rammed home" for him the vital importance of perceiving the other's feelings behind their verbal expression. His workshop group, he felt, was over-large as well as being oddly diverse (as personalities) in ways that worked against progressing in an orderly or smooth fashion. He did not equate this with being unproductive. "The seminar hasn't finished … it has

started a number of things – a heightened spirit of intellectual enquiry among them" judging from his follow-up contact with other members. He noted that the differing professional identities virtually disappeared during the workshop: "Somehow we had no labels attached but were just people." He felt that the workshop was very relevant to needs among professional people in the field entailed and was likely to start developments elsewhere (as it did, and which he helped to further – these and other sequels described in Chaps. 8 and 9).

Roger-x wrote that he came expecting "to pick up new techniques, to clarify.. my concepts of therapy and examine new concepts, and to gain from.. a mutual exchange of ideas and experiences." He had expected an emphasis on further learning about the work of therapy in keeping with clearly defined aims and procedures. Given the lack of such structure, he stayed in a backseat during the first week and then suggested that the group divide into two subgroups, one of these along lines in keeping with his expectation and the other more of a therapy group. After this was rejected by the whole group, he entered much more fully in the process as it was and came to see himself as a core member. In retrospect, he feels that the seminar was very valuable in enabling him "to share feelings and experiences in a way that was somewhat new to me." Expression of feelings by *clients* in therapy had seemed relevant enough to him but until his experience in Armidale he had adopted a therapist role that avoided expression of his own attitudes, ideas or feelings. He felt that the workshop had brought home to him that he had been "standing outside the counselling relationship and in essence denying the client contact with myself as a real person; a contact which he or she desperately needed." He did, however, wonder whether he might have come to this insight more quickly had the seminar proceeded as he first expected.

Patrick-y noted first that he had had a real experience that influenced him as a person and a therapist. The effects, although not easy to define, seemed to have several main components. Stimulation of thought was singled out first. He went expecting formal lectures and teaching. In the absence of this, he felt he learned a great deal from the group process and from documentary tapes, films and discussions outside the group. One noticed outcome was "a different atmosphere developing between the client and myself." A second aspect for him was an increased awareness of

self that came about through the group. However, he also felt that some participants were left disturbed and anxious through their self-exposure and lack of "time for therapeutic reorganisation." The group may have been seductive, and he considered it was a moral problem to be drawn in against one's will. He became more aware of feelings – in others and himself – "and what a powerful thing feeling can be," and he saw vividly people in distress turning for help to others seen as "strong and understanding." It fascinated him to see "the intellectual capacity of many of the group," while he also saw disturbance among members that amazed him. Yet, he was conscious of judging them, and "the point was driven home to me that the therapist in counselling must reflect what his client feels and not what the therapist feels he sees himself." He found that it was his tendency to think and feel "in charitable terms of another," but he now sees "that to express one's negative feelings to another, with aim of dissipating that feeling and producing a positive relationship and growth, can be consistent with charity." He valued the friendships he made and felt overall that the workshop innovation was a "wonderful success." Patrick wrote to me again, a year later, after the separate workshop with Carl Rogers at Armidale that I had organised, saying, "They were both very rich experiences," and that "I feel more oneness about myself than I would have imagined a few years ago. I have a lot more self-awareness and feel much more secure in facing up to problems, people and decisions." (He saw me as responsible for these change-inducing experiences and wanted me to know that he was "tremendously grateful.")

James-x felt that the workshop was valuable beyond any previous group or therapy experience – for him personally and as a group leader. In respect to running groups, he "became more acutely aware of the need for the leader to participate as a person." He noticed that generally now he is feeling more satisfied with his own participation in groups he works with, and mentioned that "there has been a considerable expansion of patient and staff group therapy at … [his setting] as a direct result of the workshop." Personally he has "felt more aware of my emotions, more empathic and more accepting," but also implied that changes in his behaviour had drawn a mixed response from others, some responding positively, others questioning his genuineness. He suggested that the workshop-intensive groups could benefit from being a bit smaller and perhaps more selective

and might extend to include similar evening meetings – replacing some of the influential non-group experience. (He included an overlapping report to the head of his service, recommending the inclusion of similar experiential work with trainees in his field.)

Dave-x began his articulate letter report by implying an immediate decompression from the intense workshop experience as he returned home and back into his "normal" life, with some initial relief. He at once noticed, however, some shift in himself in an area where he had "always been acutely vulnerable": He now more easily stands by his own assessment of things in the face of differing views confidently advanced by others. His "old self" included a reactive tendency to try to beat down opposition, and he sees "more clearly than before how un-empathic some of my typical behaviours really were." However, "the notion of knowing one's feelings in an immediate intimate sense remains largely an enigma to me (although) the group did show me people who are more open to themselves, and at times the warmth and acceptance of the group helped me to know with a little more sharpness what I genuinely did feel." He felt sure that he will now be a generally better counsellor – "more free to listen to the students whom I see, and readier to accept the concept of the student's capacity and his need to resolve his own difficulties." He would now prefer to offer a helping relationship "rather than assume responsibility for finding a solution for the client or pushing him towards my view of his situation." He feels that he has learned how truly difficult is to really understand another person's full meaning "and it was a dramatic piece of learning to recognise the discipline to which the Rogerian counsellor subjects himself."

As for the process of the group, Dave saw attempted support but little empathy in the early part. The situation was described as seductive and risky, with the expectation "of continued movement deeper into the area of personal exploration and revelation." Felt threat and hostile reactions emerged, yet with a certain accompanying exhilaration. And although the group seemed unable to formulate an agreed direction, "it fairly consistently rejected intellectualisation and concern about techniques." It eschewed control by the leader in favour of his full participation. "Seldom after the start date did a session pass which was not a butterflies-in-the-belly experience for a number of the members."

Notwithstanding the turmoil, "everyone seemed to experience something derisively, sceptically but convincingly labelled 'growth'." Increased sensitivity came in part from "failing completely to sense anything of another's distress until someone else phrased it with the ring of utter conviction – [e.g.] 'X feels as if he has just been kicked in the guts'." Finally, he felt that he could be more relaxed, open, accepting of his shortcomings and able to like his clients more. He had learned something of a more mature way of coping with interpersonal conflict, taking initiative in acknowledging it, establishing areas of strong disagreement and facilitating aspects of agreement without sacrificing individual views. Although the group drove itself into deep waters, it took steps to manage this situation in a way that seemed to him to imply a self-regulating principle. All this was seen as placing special and great demands on the participant-leader, in helping to provide such "opportunity to really live with a group in action."

Rick-y felt the workshop was an experience that he will "value permanently." He is conscious of difficulty in separating his feelings about the daily groups from the impact of particular relationships as experienced outside the group. In the area of self-change, he sees modest but important movement, for example, in recognising his capacity to hurt others both with and without intention. He felt that his detachment and "impartiality" in many relationships had precluded the depth of experience he felt at times in and outside the workshop group. He "came to realise the great difficulty of appreciating another person's feelings and needs" and, even when he understood, communicating this to the person concerned. He feels now that in therapy relations "I am in some ways the more real 'me' or at least the 'me' I would like to be." His present view is that the best way of responding to another person's feelings is in terms of one's own feelings and felt perceptions not in telling the other about his appraisal. The workshop amounted to a sensitisation experience which he can now acknowledge as therapeutic. Though it's hard to judge change in his work, he feels more confidence about what he does and more sensitivity to his own feelings and willingness to express these feelings. He feels easier in knowing that "my own professional difficulties and uncertainties are not unique." In all, he feels personal and knowledge gains and increased insight into the therapeutic process. Recently he is conscious

of incorporating his Armidale experience into his position on counselling and, especially, in developing a *more systematic viewpoint* (broadly client centred) that is very rewarding to him. (The sequels over the next 11 years in Rick's life and course of work are presented in Chap. 9.)

Anne-x vividly experienced how difficult communication of feelings is and, perhaps, even more so in such a bright, educated and sophisticated group as the workshop members were. Intellectualising was acknowledged as negative, though "in actual fact 'emotional' was a 'dirty word' in the group," which members "approached and retired from much as children round the fire." She said, "I can never again really believe that I completely understand what a person is saying about feelings immediately" – illustrating this with reference to several members. She observed that different qualities of personality "appeal to, or repel, different people." She noted how non-verbal signs of hostility by a particular member always made her uncomfortable. She saw a broader "attack" on the leader as an expression of frustration by of the group of "its inability to solve its own problems." She was struck also by the "seductiveness" of such a group; even people who consciously or subconsciously decided to "stay out" were eventually committed to active engagement.

Anne experienced insights into her own personality, especially in respect to self-protection by "projective thinking," and some unresolved conflict "between aggressive drives and dependency needs," which would affect her counselling. She experienced a self-capacity to be destructive and also to withdraw from difficult involvement and be out of touch. Yet, she found an "ego strength" in herself such that she could get over quite quickly and completely what was at times a painful experience for her in the group. On another plane she became more interested in existential thinking and more accepting of Rogerian theory, especially in respect to the emphasised basic attitudes. Another outcome was a closer liaison with and understanding of her fellow professionals where she lived and works. She was conscious that the group – larger and more diverse than optimal – "never did really integrate completely." She noted that the members tended to socialise until the small hours of the morning nearly every night, and also felt that intellectual arguments outside the group were at times of great interest.

Tess-x expressed some strong criticism of the group's process, and she did not like the rating forms and research aspect at all. Early in her feedback letter (before expressing her most critical reactions and reservations), she said that "I enjoyed the experience of meeting so many people and sharing ideas with them – and the opportunity to do this was, from my point of view, well worthwhile." (She was very appreciative of the accommodation and related amenities and believed it would be best for all members to be in residence, including the group leader – which he wasn't, in her group.) On the "con" side, she saw a "pack instinct" at work, a liability yet one of great interest to her. She felt that this tends to happen when "an unidentified cynic" is present though not usually in the case of open disbelievers. She recalled mention of "the gospel according to St Carl" and wondered whether a particular member who interested her was the "unidentified cynic."

Tess saw "unresolved hostility" as present in the group, which sometimes frightened her, and she felt guilty at having expressed such hostility herself towards particular members (including Ros). Her self-perception included "insufficient confidence in my personal stability – or congruence if you like – to be my whole self" and said that outside the professional relationship most clients would "drive me up the wall." She theorised (perhaps also thinking of herself) that often "the patient resists change because he needs his misperception." She emphasised a distinction between being "too sick to function" and "merely discontent" having, she said, "experienced both states." "I did learn a lot," she said, notwithstanding the stress. She would like to have been able to listen critically to the tape recordings of the group, and hoped that the leaders will respond to her feedback on the level of further thinking about the process and not treat it just as her subjective feeling. During the group meetings (see transcripts), her contributions though often critical or "aggressive" in style, as she put it herself, were strikingly articulate and distinctive. (Not long afterwards, she was appointed to a university lectureship.)

Gerald-y came to the workshop from a context of heavy engagement in counselling, having questions about his techniques and outcomes, searching into student needs and counsellor training and having responsibility for developing a counselling service unit. In the initial planning meeting of the workshop, he was impatient with the "woolly" lack of

structure and uneasy about the direction, although then vaguely sensing a certain "adherence to a consistent approach to group problem solving." In the first session of his group, he wondered if he was wasting his time but decided he wanted to sharpen his sensitivity partly through participant observation of the self-expression of others. He could see that caring responsiveness "does induce self revelation flowing from feelings of being 'safe'," while at the same time it surprised him that experienced counsellors could so easily misperceive (hesitant/exploratory) communication of feeling, and that "loneliness is so possible in a group." He experienced both a growing readiness to express his own feelings and a wariness about the safety of doing so.

By mid-workshop Gerald saw his group as cohesive and developing strong feelings of group belonging. The ending, he felt, was also a beginning. He wanted to keep in touch with others and follow up. During the workshop, he had felt some pressure to become involved but also that nobody was that interested in him as much as wanting the spotlight to be off themselves. As time went on he felt growing personal interest and even enthusiasm for the process: "It works!" Afterwards in the context of his work, he felt that group counselling is a very powerful method and also with some advantage of economy, but that participants must be volunteers who were briefed as to some common aims and demands. He felt that people do become more sensitive to themselves and to others through group counselling – that inner and outer growth is distinctly possible – although some reflective vigilance and one-on-one opportunity for help is necessary in case someone gets out of their depth. As a counsellor trainer, he experienced the group process at work and is now trying it out on his professional home ground.

Ralph-x noted that his group began with discussion of its aims and process, though without any clear consensus. A focus on therapy theory and technique, on being a therapist, on the dynamics of the group and on engagement in group therapy were among remembered alternatives, and in the end "all of these played a significant part in the group activity." Particularly, the workshop was seen as "a really valuable experience contributing to the understanding of therapy, of self and of the self as therapist, that would probably be obtained in no other way." This member felt that his own participation primarily amounted to engagement in group

therapy – a field already of interest to him. In more critical vein, he considered it important that potential members know in advance that this highly experiential quality is expected, so as to take this into account in to their choice of whether to take part.[1] Among other effects, feelings of loyalty towards and of favouring their "own" group became very strong. This participant expected to have some "time out" to explore the surroundings but "found it quite impossible to miss any of the sessions." Within the group "questions and issues concerning psychotherapy were formulated, often vividly dramatised and usually considerably clarified." A distinct post-workshop impression was of members finding it important to continue their engagement and exploration with some other members and to consider establishing further experiential workshops and developmental opportunities.

Lee-y said that he came in two roles: one as an informed observer seeking to establish the significance and value of the experience to others and at the same time "as an ordinary participant" wanting outcomes for himself. As a professional development/training experience, the documentary tapes, films and personal associations were all valuable. Knowledge derived from the group meetings depended on the individual: A few gained therapeutic help and everyone "learned something about ourselves which will make us more mature individuals and effective counsellors." One issue of debate in the group was the lack of compatibility "between the 'the-objective-at-all-costs' psychologist and the counsellor needing to closely engage and empathise with people." Lee felt "that the most effective counsellors are those whose training [process] develops into psychotherapy," and he

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[1] As seen in transcripts for the first days of Group X (Chap. 2), Ralph repeatedly expressed concern that the workshop announcements had not indicated that a group therapy-type process was expected. In a later letter (Barrett-Lennard, 1963 – personal communication), I acknowledged that our advance communication to applicants was not ideal, and explained the situation to him: "There were two problems that did make this more difficult than it would be again. Firstly, to hold the workshop at all it was necessary to gain sponsorship of the heads of the Psychology and Adult Education departments. We needed to produce a statement that the sponsors would accept and support – that would go out under (their) names to a great many people, e.g., other department heads in universities and elsewhere …. The general conception was no easy matter to communicate …and I rewrote the announcement several times to get a form we all were comfortable with …. The second problem was that we really did not know just how members would use the experience … Even when the workshop actually started, I honestly did not anticipate the depth of involvement and personal impact that occurred in our group."

went on to advocate the development of a postgraduate diploma in coun-
selling, open especially to life-experienced and mature people. He won-
dered whether the workshops could evolve into such a training course. As
for the workshop itself, he felt that the (intensive) groups desirably would
be smaller – perhaps 8 participants instead of 16 – and that there be a
more even or similar cross-section of members in each group.

Ellen-x said she felt little self-learning from the workshop, though her
confidence increased in holding and expressing a critical view of Rogerian
theory. She did acquire "some useful information about groups, such as
how easily they go wrong." Her scepticism, she said, is no longer "merely
the vagueness of the eclectic who dislikes being committed to anything
for long" but has deepened into a more informed distrust of theories and
therapists. She was disappointed that the group functioned poorly "con-
sidering that many of us were experienced therapists and several had han-
dled or taken part in groups before." She felt that "tension rose so high
that we were unable to be perceptive of the needs of other people," some
of whom were "unusually threatened." Contrary to the view of others, she
felt "we were all too passive and gave in to anyone's objections …. [and]
we couldn't make use of the useful things that some people produced."
She would like to have seen more structured definition of purpose at the
start, since without clear direction or agreements the group floundered.
She felt leadership was wanting, although the leader was "very unlucky
in having just this selection of people" who in light of their professional
credentials should, she implied, have known and managed better.

Chris-x wrote that he had been deeply involved with administrative-
financial matters in his work, and his feedback letter was briefer than
most. He said he had enjoyed the workshop, "gained a good deal of self
knowledge and clarified what now appears to me were very hazy notions
of what constitutes therapeutic counselling." He also sees in himself both
room and need for considerably more self-improvement. He acknowl-
edged an aspect of hostility in the group which he saw as chiefly due to
one member. He admires the leader's "handling of the group" (evidently
in response to this hostility) and said that he hoped to be as strong when
he found himself in a comparable situation. He mentioned long good
talks later with two named members of his group, and said that he would
be glad to take part in another such workshop (and did so the next year).

Mary-x had a difficult time in the group, contributed to its tensions and may have been the person Chris was thinking of, above. Self-control was evidently a high personal priority, accompanying a volatile inner process. She wrote the first part of her reflections as soon as she returned home, saying that "I found myself in a curious state of continued emotional excitation – a kind of reliving of the whole experience. It feels as if I had been looking into an emotional maelstrom – a kind of vortex which sucked in unfortunate swimmers …. against their will, although I do think they valued the experience afterwards." She was left with burning questions: (1) "What am I like as a therapist? I tried hard to be constructive and helpful in the group (once I accepted … that it was going to be psychotherapy) …. but I do not know how I appeared to the others … – not actually destructive … but possibly hindering and unhelpful." She feels upset in doubting her value as a therapist and her right to set herself up as a helper. (2) "How clear was my perception of the others?" Such great differences in the way an individual's response was perceived seemed "devastating and destructive" to her. The "ferocity of the attack" on the leader hit her at the time as being "like a pack of jackals blind to anything but their own hunger," yet, on reflection, she realised that only a few were involved in this "attack." (3) "What is the true meaning of sensitivity – Does this have to be under the control of the will and the intellect to be really effective as a tool?" After much thought it seemed to her that the essence of therapy involved "the power to 'vibrate' to or feel empathy with another's emotions," a relevant "theoretical knowledge of psychology," the ability to respond adequately and communicate one's empathy and "the capacity … to remain separate from the other and not become neurotically entangled."

Mary reviewed all the other group members by name, finding differing inadequacies and ways in which she could not trust them as therapists, leaving only three members she saw as able both to "vibrate" accurately and remain separate. She saw the leader as sensitive but slow in response and needing to learn to be a "holder." She judges that "the more non-directive the leader the greater the anxiety" and that there were a lot of problems with authority in the group which placed the leader in a kind (she implied) of double bind. She gave more detail, and clearly was deeply stirred up by the workshop experience, yet valued it consider-

ably, as expressed in the rest of her statement, coming "much later in the colder light of reason" – saying now that the workshop was very stimulating and the non-directive counselling approach most thought provoking. She suggested defining the goal from the start as group psychotherapy with an emphasis on a "feeling" level ("Too many of us got away with all sorts of things without being challenged"). She advocated firm leadership with fast response as well as a readiness to express own feelings. She believes that the non-directive leader will be invested with particular qualities because of everyone's experience with authority figures, and will never become simply another member. She found "the tapes and films tremendously interesting" and saw prospective improvement in her own therapeutic techniques and significant gain by others. At minimum, the workshop evidently had a "loosening" impact and evoked some reorientation in a person not easily expressive and generally needing or wanting clear constructs.

Will-x expressed strong appreciation of having taken part and believed that he "learned a great deal more about Rogerian theory and practice." He wasn't conscious of gain in personal insight and felt responsible for this. However, he saw the group itself as "neurotic" because "after much argument it repressed the problem of therapy versus intellectualisation without solving it." This also allowed some members to see the situation as disruptive to *others.* He felt that the group leader would have found more intellectual discussion with therapists of varied orientation personally interesting and that the "stress towards therapy" came essentially from the group. While the leader was seen as accepting what the group wanted and chose to do, Will felt that he was strongly challenged on this but stood by his open position: "In this regard, in his own personal strength, I believed he proved his point." Will also felt regret at maybe hurting some others by things he said and wished there had been more time than two weeks for further resolution and personal gain – ideally through an ongoing group. He definitely would want to take part in a further similar workshop, though in a smaller group (and did so in 1964 and 1965 – his long-term perspective is presented in Chap. 9).

Jim-y spoke first of his general lack of confidence and low self-regard reflected, for example, in his staying in the background in the group. He noted having become aware earlier "of a serious impoverishment in

my verbal skills" and that he had struggled academically – but persisted nonetheless. He was afraid to say much in the group meetings "without appearing less intelligent, less informed, etc, then I felt I actually was." Comparing himself "with the more sophisticated members … I was found wanting." He listened attentively, engaged in inner self-examination, sometimes felt a superficiality in a couple of others and experienced a "warm climate of acceptance" in the facilitating leadership of the group. He does now feel "an increased openness on my part to the interpersonal dynamics in my interviews," and an apparent "improvement in my attitudes to all clients – noticeably with one or two lads whose attitudes, behaviour, etc, had previously worried me." He has been thinking a lot about his future and finds himself "with a strong desire to function at a level I would previously have shrugged my shoulders at," and is investigating the possibility of more advanced studies. He is conscious of missing out in not being more active in the group and said that he would be "most keen to participate again" if possible, especially in a smaller group next time.

Lin-y wrote a short letter, first to say that she found it very difficult to put into words her strong feelings about the group experience. She does feel freer than before to show "my feelings at the moment to the person I am counselling." Before, she was afraid of doing this but now, "having expressed my fears in this area, and felt closely with other group members … aware of similar difficulties" she feels freer to be open in this way. Through her interaction with others in and outside the group sessions, she also feels "more able to be aware of some of my strengths and weaknesses" and thus to go beyond the more superficial patterns that hurt her relationships before. She now feels "sure of the paramount value of human relationships … and of feelings at the moment as opposed to attempting to tell the other person what you think they are feeling." More broadly, she considers that a main "value of the workshop was the recognition of the lay counsellor (e.g., herself) as an equal in the group situation to professional counsellors." This, she sees, as validating and strengthening to the marriage counselling movement (dependent in that era on in-house-trained counsellors).

Eve-y wrote back more than once, first a highly appreciative note to her group leader and indicating increased self-awareness, for example, of

her "dominance and talkativeness," this expressed with great relief and without troubling others. Valuable discussion of her marital concerns outside the group was extremely helpful. In a further note and letter she spoke of her greater ease, confidence and other gains in her counselling, the discovery "of how much I need close relationships with people" and the active possibility of becoming part of a mooted therapeutic group. A little later, in a main feedback letter, she focused on personal sequels to the workshop, especially in her relation with her husband. She said "I've been in some strife sorting out the new me," especially with a partner "who has resisted any changes taking place at all." Becoming more adult is "a threat to the relationship of leader and dependent, which we have had." However, by becoming very honest in sharing our feelings with and about one another "we have achieved further understanding and a deeper relationship." She feels he now accepts "the fact that part of my life is outside the home and away from the family, and that this is an enriching thing for us all" – instead of him feeling rejected by my lack of satisfaction with the life we used to have. She was in motion even prior to the workshop experience, which supported and fed into this change, but the change had not been happening with her husband. She married young to a man considerably older: "He is what he is, and I have been becoming." More broadly, since the workshop she has found herself "better able to cope with emotional stress and things which would at one time had worried or upset me." She feels very grateful for the experience in Armidale "where I had to get to know myself better and into a very valuable 'shakeup and sort out' period in my life."

Brad-y provided a more formal statement prepared for colleagues as well as to provide feedback. He noted the absence of an agenda as a positive feature. Looking back, he realised that he started out thinking he did not have much to learn and "tended to treat the whole thing as an interesting intellectual lesson." He thus excluded himself "from experiencing the early direction of the group," and it was two or three days before he entered fully into its activity and everything became much more meaningful. His group was described as "very permissive and accepting of each other" and "keen to deal with the personal problems expressed," seen as life issues relevant in counselling. Members also became able to express hostility as the workshop went on "in an open way that … allowed

the group to remove blocks from its path of development and growth." In seeking to understand hostility being directed to Rogers, Brad surmised that it arose from member needs for efficiency resulting from time pressures at work and that "seeing or hearing Rogers operating as if time was an element to be ignored they were irritated at his somewhat unrealistic method." However, being "efficient," Brad thought, reduced the quality of communication with clients. He noted there were times "when the group seemed to have come to a standstill," and then the silence might emerge as a topic and movement would pick up on a more intellectual level than the pre-silence process. While doubting the value of his contribution to the group, Brad came away with much to think about and "the feeling that I had experienced something of tremendous value to me." He found the interchange outside the main group valuable in ways that were different from and complemented his Group Y experience.

Sean-y particularly considered that the workshop "has influenced me in the direction of greater permissiveness to my clients. I *am* more willing and able to go along with them, and more convinced that I cannot save time by exerting pressure upon them." His carefully laid-out statement listed several factors as helping to bring about this change: (1) The experience happened "when I was already tending to be more tolerant" – with age and maturity (at 60 he was the elder in his group). (2) "The reiteration of client centred principles by the articles, films and tapes renewed the emphasis on this approach to counselling … (and) did much more than the informal discussions to account for my increased devotion to these principles." (3) The example given by the group leader and informal talks with him had similar effect. (4) The self-revelations had an influence in that he saw the permissive climate "producing some sort of results" – this however not a big factor. (5) "The *total* effect of people working fairly strenuously, and with a lot of orientation, but without much receiving of knowledge by lectures … this seems to me what I would least like to have missed." Sean judged that the workshop should be repeated "as often as possible." He thinks, perhaps, it worked so well because "the participants were all fairly mature people." He would like to see it tried also with younger people, although he is inclined to think it "would be much more explosive" with such a group.

These outlines encapsulate most of the post-workshop letters and their themes received from Workshop 1 members. With discernible overlap, each person clearly had their own "take" on what happened. Members generally had felt substantially or deeply involved and reported shifts in awareness or views of self, others, ideas and/or relationships. For many this movement was of a self-developmental or broadly therapeutic kind. A few pointed to significant changes in social/interpersonal outlook. Others emphasised deeper listening and acceptance of their clients. A number acknowledged tensions and anger or hostility in their group, and for two or three people, the process remained troubling or was seen as working against beneficial effects. One or two were disappointed that they had not taken full advantage of the experience. Most people noted "back home" outcomes that were welcomed or striking, varying in mentioned kind according to each person's situation and priorities. Several pointed to valued further contact with some workshop colleagues and/or the desire for relationships with them to continue. Some members gave talks or newsletter-published reports afterward, based on their workshop experience and its structure. A few of these fed into the summaries for them, above.

Feedback Letters From Selected Participants in Workshop 2

Most of the feedback letters to me came from two of the three groups in this workshop and they varied more than those above in their timing and scope. Possibly, there were added communications to other leaders. In one instance, I was sent the transcript of an interesting follow-up meeting conversation in which several recent participants discussed and reviewed their workshop experience. In a few cases, a person who also attended the first workshop compares the experience of taking part the second time. What follows is a somewhat different treatment of the varied feedback from fewer people than for Workshop 1 and with more observations of my own in some cases. It includes particular attention to information from participants overwhelmed at the time by their workshop experience. As before, substitute names are used. This time, which of the three groups each person was in, is not linked with their names in this case.

Rob was one of the returnees from Workshop 1 – his feedback therein encapsulated above under Rob-y. The two groups were very different in his experience, and he started "with a much greater confidence than in 1963," partly as a result of his gains and an expected familiarity stemming from that previous experience. He felt "safe" this time, at the start, not realising that he "had marshalled a nice set of defences that worked to inhibit my group participation … and temporarily retarded the continuation of the process of self understanding begun in 1963." He participated freely for a time until another member said to him that he "was sick of people playing therapist or talking theory to keep themselves out of the group." This stopped him in his tracks, and he became aware that he was being seen as an academic intellectual, contrary to his self-perception. From the beginning, the 1964 group "functioned at a deeper level and in a more penetrating and revealing fashion," he said, than did his group the year before. One of the other considerably experienced older members (none of the group was very young) "was to plunge deeply into his personal problems from the start." This seemed to set the pattern for "penetrating self examination," and the members soon became a "cohesive therapeutic group characterised by increasing mutual trust, empathy and affection, that easily stood the strain of the numerous outbursts of hostility and attacks by individual members." Rob implied that he had never before experienced the level "of kindness, warmth and understanding shown to a person struggling with deep personal emotions; the almost shattering impact of insight and self-revelation on individuals and on the group as a whole … and the degree of personal understanding, warm friendship and trust that sprung up among group members in the short time we were together."

In this context, Rob came to feel an urgency to explore his "own personal problems," concerned especially with family relationships in his childhood and youth through to the later death of his father and "the continuing effect of these influences on my personal and professional life since then." He had been aware of the need for such exploration, but it was not "until the middle of the second week that I was sufficiently comfortable … to do anything about it" in the group – he had spoken privately to some group members. Finally, he took the plunge: "The more I talked, especially about my father … [who died long before] the more I was flooded with the emotions that threatened many times

to overwhelm me. This is … an unfinished episode since, like many of our clients, I waited until it was too late to explore it fully. " In his carefully typed return, Rob said that he now feels freer in himself, "much less constricted and narrow in my outlook, much more confident in all manner of interpersonal relationships, much more confident in my professional work and more able to employ the participant-learning methods in my work." He included illustration of diploma course developments that he is responsible for, in his university, and that he attributes largely to his learnings and confidence through the workshops. He also noted the importance of the setting and whole context to the potency of the workshops. (Rob's decade-later perspective is presented near the start of Chap. 9.)

Fred, not a returnee, was in the same group as Rob, but with ambivalent reactions to it. He met with other colleagues for a "post-mortem" discussion of the workshop a few weeks afterwards and sent me the typed-out reflections he had shared. On the positive side, he wrote:

> I think the richness and depth of the relationship with a number of the workshop members had a very profound effect on me … For the first time I learned in a very personal way the real meaning of empathy. I don't think that I have assimilated this into my everyday existence, but this would not seem to be impossible [although] it may require situations like the Armidale one to maintain it. I also experienced for the first time the tremendous care and support which such a group can provide. It seems to me a pity that our emotional heights seem to require contrasting depths. But if they do, I wouldn't have foregone the heights in order to avoid them. I think that the overwhelming positive feelings generated in the group were more than adequate compensation for the destructiveness of the depths.. [but] I'm not convinced that this was true for everyone … A very valuable aspect for me personally was that I was brought face-to-face with … myself as perceived by others. Perhaps I should say 'my several selves' for this is what these perceptions amounted to …. Another source of astonishment … is the diversity of perception and meaning do which an ostensibly simple event can give rise.

Fred then turned to negative meanings, saying first "I am appalled by the destructiveness which a group can manifest and that this somehow [can

take] the group over and get out of control." At times, he "thought that the group was handling the psyches of other members with cavalier contempt. I was both a party to and a victim of this, and I don't feel happy about either." Related negatives he saw were that "in some instances the group was tardy and even neglectful in picking up the pieces … and that some people left Armidale considerably disturbed." He wondered whether this was an almost inevitable consequence of such groups, yet "unnecessary in the sense that it negates the positive activities of the group." He was particularly concerned about the impact on a member he knew from a parallel group (Lily, who speaks for herself above and in Chap. 9). He acknowledged that he was quite ambivalent about groups "long before I went to Armidale" and "unable to judge their worth by attempting to balance the positive and negative aspects." A striking aspect of the experience that intrigued him was that each group became socially self-contained and relatively isolated from the other two groups. When he made overtures and tried to step outside this constraint, he was "frozen out." He described the group leader positively as a "skilful summariser and drawer-together of threads, adept at making meaningful patterns out of things." He said "I think we were all grateful for his calm presence, especially in our own bad moments."

Marjorie was in the same group as Rob, but subjectively it was very different. To her the in-group experience was "disappointing" and quite contrary to what she had expected. Rather than sharing experiences, issues and "theoretical leanings" in counselling, the group sessions "consisted almost entirely of personal confession" as she characterised them. She found activities and dialogue outside the group "both valuable and enjoyable" although limited by the need to help some members pick up the pieces from that day's group sessions. Although perhaps "valuable for some," generally she felt that in-depth sharing of "personal histories" was inappropriate and potentially dangerous in that time-limited group context. Those who "felt compelled to reveal themselves" could be reawakening old wounds or conflicts without opportunity "to renew themselves in self-acceptance on a different level." She felt therefore that there should be some structuring of the scope of discussion such that an emphasis on personal-historical exploration would not arise. I wrote back a close acknowledgement of her candidly expressed concerns and thoughtful critique, drawing attention also to some practical constraints,

for example, on trying to tell in advance the specific motives or emotional fitness of professional colleague applicants. Marjorie wrote again, saying that, although not personally threatened, she had "certainly felt troubled that I could not contribute as much to the group in session as I would like to have done." This to her was mainly because "I felt no need to talk about my personal life" and was unwilling "to add to the flow of advice and comforting words which were added when someone in the group was upset" – although she may have felt their pain. Her lack of sharing from herself "annoyed or distressed a few people at first" but as time went on she felt "accepted warmly by the group and … that individuals felt as comfortable with me as I did with them in the one-to-one situation." She felt, in total, that she had "learned a great deal from Armidale."

Rachel's feedback came in a letter-like report to her colleagues in a marriage counselling practice group. She said that when her workshop group assembled, no one expected to be lectured to, but this left other structured alternatives, such as case discussions, that were quickly turned down. The leader offered no guidance as to focus but soon people were talking about themselves and had "plunged into a group therapy situation." There was exploratory sharing, protective reactions and confrontations. One person said: "I feel quite irritated with you, you just didn't sound sincere," and then became aware that the speaker's voice reminded her of her father, which had triggered this misplaced first reaction. Others became aware of family relationship impressions of their own, positive and negative, and of the group being like siblings in a family. Sharing of general or abstract ideas was challenged: Predominantly, "we wanted to explore our own feelings and attitudes with regard to each other, and to ourselves as counsellors and persons in real life and in this group." The personal sharing intensified, sometimes with helping responses from the whole group, the bonding developed and outside the sessions members largely sought out others from their own group. (Some mentioned the relative insulation of the groups from each other, with little sense or engagement with the whole.) Rachel concluded her participant-observer account, by saying that she "found anxiety and tension, then great relief and joy; criticism and aggression followed by warmth and acceptance …; problems and fears that loomed large, but led to clarification [and] insight." She did not detail her subjective individual outcomes.

Ester afterwards gave a talk about the workshop to the local branch off her professional association who, she wrote, had responded with gratifying "interest and enthusiasm" – leading to further talks. All this had led to further processing and clarification in her own mind. She said that she had returned home "feeling much refreshed" and that her general feeling remained positive. She said, "I was, of course, threatened at times and sometimes glad that group sessions had come to an end, 'safely' for me." She had "enjoyed the social activities" and "the warmth and friendliness of [her group] members extending beyond the actual sessions" had been a very positive factor. In the actual sessions, "I experienced enhanced understanding of myself and the other members of the group and, in this way, glimpsed possibilities of extending myself in relations with others," which she felt was valuable personally and professionally. She had applied for the workshop on the basis of a leaflet from her professional association, which did not really convey (as much as desirable of) the process and personal demands she experienced nor, evidently, mentioned the recording and research aspects. The limited duration of the workshop and its potential for leaving some people in a vulnerable state implied to her that "the organisers have some responsibility for after-care." She suggested that one way of meeting this would be through "prior participants from various centres [forming] the nucleus of a group which could absorb recent participants on their return to their home centres." (Her main point to me is well taken, with more than one solution possible, as discussed elsewhere.)

Will was another returnee from Workshop 1, led this time by a fellow member of that earlier group. His typed letter mainly compared his experience in the two workshops. He "experienced much less emotional tension than the first time" in a situation that he did not feel threatened by. He was more at ease with the leader, who also seemed comfortable in his role and unworried about making mistakes – and seemed "more akin to myself with more human frailties, and consequently I felt I could get closer to him." Unlike his earlier experience, "intense antagonism toward the process" did not arise, and the smaller size of the group helped to allow more closeness. He also felt "that there was a greater tendency this time to focus on an individual and to give that individual complete attention." Yet, "little was happening to me," less

perhaps than before – until he got home. He then "felt strong excitement that something new was coming into my life – that I was free to act and be myself," instead of being more like a "robot." Unfortunately, this sense did not last long, and he regrets being back into accommodating a façade, perhaps in himself, at least in others. His group was very absorbed within itself and Will felt distinctly less involvement with the total workshop membership than he did the first time. He returned again for the third workshop, and my interview with him a decade later (in Chap. 9) gives an interesting developed perspective on his whole workshop experience.

Ned was mentioned in the last chapter as a temporary "casualty" in his (different) group, the group itself losing a day of regular meetings. His special case is important for understanding the range of impact and sequels of workshop groups. I had checked, soon after the workshop, do not remember the specifics but did at the least receive messages that he was "okay." It was over five months before he wrote to me in any detail. He said that he'd planned to do this much sooner but somehow "all sorts of damn inhibitions have been at work." His "acting out" as he put it, both within and outside the group sessions, had seemed to him more shameful as the weeks passed. The pressures of his formal studies as well as his employment work didn't help. He wrote of his guilt and sorrow that he "put such stress on our group sessions" and had been "a dangerous sort of member" who then "bolted away emotionally" leaving "other members a bit cheated by my performance." Although he had heard something indirectly about the previous workshop, he had come to Armidale carefully prepared with materials to contribute to a seminar and wasn't expecting intense experiential involvement. He said he had been receiving good supervision from another mental health worker as part of his practical training and work. Partly through her, but also on his own initiative, he decided to see a specialist "and have a shot at narcotherapy." The first session of LSD, shortly before he came up to Armidale, "was literally a soul-shaking experience" and probably "predisposed me to rather uninhibited behaviour." Then, he feels, "it was the intensity of the group sessions which caused [suppressed] childhood problems to burst out." In all, he wrote to me at least three times, and carefully returned all the follow-up materials.

Notwithstanding Ned's break in the group, a treasured immediate consequence on returning home to his wife was their exploration together of experiences and feelings never before shared, marvellous he indicated for their relationship and with positive effect for their children as well. Her "conversion to client-centred methods" was another result, and she gave him one of Rogers' books later as a birthday gift. Although there had been some erosion since then of the immediate "organismic high" he came home with, the exams and associated evaluations he had to face were now over and he had started to feel a lift again. Ned said he had been due for further LSD with the same psychiatrist, but refused to go through with it for a time, but then did seek another treatment. Unlike the first time, he found this had no effect, and, when he demanded information, it turned out to have been a "half dose" – evidently influenced by someone from the workshop who knew his doctor and suggested that he "go light" on the treatment. Ned was angry and confused by such messages and steps "behind his back." He also felt resentment that some workshop colleagues had "over-reacted" to his disturbance in Armidale and kept him away overlong from his group.

Ned's workshop experience had included intense attraction to and close contact with a woman member, expressed in intimate communication between them, but leaving some sorrow and guilt afterwards. In overall response he said "I would not have missed the experience for worlds." Partly from the group leader's response and that of several named others, he felt supported and safe outside his group and that there were close relationships that grew to a level of "undemanding love and concern." He wrote that "between times of feeling torn in the last days of the workshop I had feelings of gentle bubbling happiness and of concern for other people there." The main skeleton in Ned's psychic cupboard was that of very deep-lying conflict about adolescent intimacy with a sister. "I can't remember how it was that my feelings suddenly poured out in the group. I cried there, felt foolish." It was next day in the group "after a pretty sleepless night" that things fully came to a head for him. He experienced rejection, deep disgust and isolation "and had to get out of the room for a while." Another group member went out with him and "begged him not to go back." He said he certainly had "overdone things [but resented] any implication" that he was "coming down into some schizophrenic hell." "I

felt damned annoyed at how my explosion in the morning had a group solicitously keeping me from going round the bend."

Free from the damping pressures of every everyday life and in the workshop context of intense stimulation and engagement opportunity, it seems that Ned became extremely reactive and perhaps "situationally manic" in his immediate functioning. His experiencing was in a kind of unrestrained turbulent flow to the point that some rest and gently nurturing "quiet time" became called for – and this occurred with strong concerned support outside the group during the later stages of the workshop. Part of his complex remembering self had been, as I would put it, "chambered" or suppressed and out of sight to his everyday self or selves. Its surfacing was both freeing to him and painfully anxiety provoking and stressful, especially in the context of his strong attraction and reaction to particular other members of his group. He appears to have arrived home in a glowing accessibility to his wife, somewhat troubled by what he had been through and exposed, but not damaged by it, and that he resumed his inherently demanding job. Basically a resourceful person, in some vital ways his consciousness had expanded and he was moving on.

Lily, in the same group as Ned, was a bright, inquiring but vulnerable young woman, not yet established in the counselling/clinical field though heading through her studies in that direction. She was mostly quiet though inwardly reacting strongly in the group sessions and needing additional support. I recall that we sat together and talked between some of the sessions. She wrote to me three or four weeks after the workshop saying that she was "a screaming nervous wreck" and "I feel ghastly, behave atrociously and everything is getting out of hand." She had "raved about this to some suitable people … but this only aggravated things." She went on to consult a psychiatrist, but nothing seemed to help, and she asked me if I "have any suggestions." I wrote responsively back with one or two ideas, even offering to see her for counselling in Armidale during vacation time, but without recommending this step. She wrote again saying "I've done to you exactly what I have done to almost everyone else I could think of – screaming for help when it was 'safe'" (i.e., not really feasible). She hasn't seen any suitable therapist locally but is also conscious of "evidence which points to the fact that however much I consciously feel the strain is intolerable most of me doesn't want to work

things out." Her mood had lifted somewhat but she remained "anxious and scared."

I replied, acknowledging her expressed feelings and concerns, and shortly she got back to me again – no longer feeling panic or highly anxious – partly to tell me more about herself, especially her tendency to keep people at arm's length to avoid mutual hurt. She explained that she knew the experience in Armidale "would upset me and I was very surprised and thankful to leave as much in one piece as I was." She went "determined to find out what would happen to me" and also from "curiosity about the sort of people" who indulge in such experiences and "about you." To someone in similar circumstances she might well say "she should never have gone," but that is not her own feeling. "One aspect I just wasn't prepared for was the amount of positive feeling floating to and fro." Although this "was upsetting to me it was about time that I was forced to experience it [having] spent the rest of my life avoiding it." She implied that she is now getting some therapy help (ambivalently) and is working on a thesis which turns out to be related to her own problems.

There was more to her sharing communication, and my responding message said in part "What I have sensed strongly is that you don't want deception (including self-deception) in relation to me. I guess this desire to be honest or open is something that's pretty important to both of us. Certainly trying to achieve this with myself and others has been a battleground for me – and is I think part of my reason for liking you." Lily wrote again, highly appreciative of my recognition of her honest motivation, saying that she was indeed "trying rather desperately to be honest" with me "partly because there is no one else with whom I can be honest, and because it is a little easier to be honest at a distance." She gave up on the therapy relationship she mentioned earlier, doesn't believe herself a lot of the time, is anxious in talking about herself and writing to me partly (I gather) in light of my interest and understanding. The last written message from her came after a long summer holiday and completion of the follow-up research questionnaires. The timing of my most recent message to her happened to fit the point she had come to, and she said she felt within herself "how right he is" and "charged on with flags flying" – which she now intends continuing to do.

The workshop clearly threatened and was disturbing to Lily, at least in stirring up wounds that she came with. It also suggested and helped to open up a path to further healing. I felt strongly drawn to encourage and assist her along this path as a follow-up to the workshop itself. It was, in effect, a continuation of features of that experience through to achieving more of its and her own positive potential. More broadly, it became clear to me that our responsibility as organisers and leaders of intensive groups does not end at the conclusion of such a workshop, especially when someone leaves strongly affected by the experience but unsteady on their feet – as Ned also was in this particular group. Follow-up research inquiry also has the potential to contribute to fruitful reflection and gain from the experience – as was evidently the case with Lily (discussed in Chap 9).

Percy wrote after four months, a little puzzled that he had not done so before or been in touch with other members, since the workshop had been hugely important for his own personal growth, and growth needs had been his motivation in coming. Now he had just met up with two others and no longer feels cut off from the workshop community and their experience. He said he did not write earlier "because I didn't want to feel the pain of realising that all … the experiences of belonging and acceptance in the [Armidale] group that I valued so much were over." He went on to say that "somewhere in our group life I came to know that I do not have to strive for acceptance because if I could accept myself then I could allow other people to accept me." He spoke of a particular woman he had been close to in the group and included a hand drawn chart with himself at the centre connected in varied qualitative ways with other members of the group. Initially, he had felt afraid or "blocked" by some of them, but then they came to life as, for example, soft-"fatherly," "wifely" and a "frail girl" whom he had been afraid of hurting. He responded deeply to the Rogers's interview with "Gloria" and to the Cholden sessions (with a mute client who started to speak again during the filmed therapy). He had felt hostile towards Ned until late in the group when other relationships had helped him come to a different feeling of acceptance. He had tended to see me as an authority figure but lost this sense at the end, more so when we shook hands (distinctively with our left hands he recalled) in a warm goodbye. It isn't his view that everything will be plain sailing in

relationships, since he accepts that ups and downs are basic to the process of living. He and others locally are now planning "a 3-day workshop in therapeutics" in the coming months. With his letter he sent a printed article on marriage guidance councils (for which he is one of the resource people) viewed as a therapeutic community.

Chris, also a returnee, sent me a formally typed letter from his civil service office, saying that he had "discovered … more clearly that one can reveal one's imperfect self to others in an intimate environment and find that others warm to you in consequence, rather than the contrary." Having discovered what it means, he said, "to be aware of what one is really feeling has assumed in my mind the stature of a privilege." As he had also implied after the first workshop: "I believe also this has to be rediscovered from time to time, since one easily loses the art without 'periodic conscious practice', in the pressures of ordinary social inter-course and the conduct of administrative duties." He added that "to make oneself also sensitive to the real feelings of others is another privileged discovery and rewarding beyond words. After the experience of Armidale, one is aghast at all the previous years of lack of real communication with people, including one's own family." He would have had a personal secretarial assistant who typed out his feedback, and I infer that this helped to account for the impersonal form of his language. Knowing him, and also hearing from others in his intensive group, his words carry feeling to me.

Bonnie's feedback contrasted with Chris's in her informality of style. Her letter came in free-flowing handwriting, the content unfolding as she went along. She chose to begin what she found a daunting task with an account off her motives in coming to the workshop, which were essentially personal around her perceived growth needs. She was at an early point in her career, working in a large hospital setting, and "wanted to be able to make relationships with people in which I am able to be myself and, equally, able to make it possible for other people to be themselves without the usual reserve and constraint that nearly always surrounds me." She has been "unsure of other peoples' acceptance" and conscious of her "difficulty in expressing feelings." Another aspect, she said, "is a sense … of wanting more from some people that I'm able to give in return, and of being afraid to show this." She felt quite threatened at first seeing me in the therapist/leader role and "and [I] found it hard to imagine revealing

as much as I did of myself in the group. Since Armidale this particular fear has receded very considerably." She does not feel that she's changed much but that she has "more to build on than I had before, and I feel more hopeful about the future. I am still timid and shy, but I find some things easier than before." She mentioned people at work "who put forward their views in a rather authoritarian and forthright way" with whom she now finds it "easier than I did before to explain my own point of view when I disagree, and also to tell of my difficulty in getting this across."

Bonnie said that before the workshop she was "even more of a hostile, distrustful and self centred person than I [had seen] myself as being. It was quite a relief that the strongest feelings I experienced at Armidale were positive ones toward other people." She is now hopeful "about being able to enjoy things more as a result of being less preoccupied with myself." With her own needs being so much at the forefront of her concerns, she feels that she did not "have much to contribute that would be of use to others who were able to use the group in a more mature way." Given her state of need the workshop "had a great deal of significance for me" and she has felt "a sense of responsibility to try and find some help in [with] the problems that were handicapping me in my work and, although I thought a lot about it, I didn't do anything until the opportunity of Armidale came along." She also knows that other beginners in her place of work "feel a sense of inadequacy that is quite paralysing at times." Bonnie's "problems" seem, partly at least, to be a matter of context and clearly were not all resolved by her Armidale experience (e.g., her self-esteem remained somewhat shaky). Her feedback suggests, however, that she no longer feels stuck and "contained" by the inner-outer obstacles that had plagued her, but now sees past them to the beginning or real possibility of movement in her life.

Other people who wrote post-workshop letters that reached me did not elaborate as fully. One rather dominant member ("Joel") of the same group as Rob, Fred and Chris, and whom Rob mentioned (above) as plunging at once into his personal problems, both came to and left the workshop with emotional difficulties (and sought further help not long afterwards). He was in touch with me several times and felt, notwithstanding the personal upheaval he had been through, that the Armidale experience and its underlying philosophy had been particularly valuable

to him. Another person from the same group, very busy in his regular work since he got home, wrote briefly to say (a little enigmatically) that: "For me the workshop was a wonderful if quite costly experience personally. I do not begrudge the cost because I think this is always necessary if real learning is to follow." With his own form of words, I think he was implying that he found the experience (in my words) demanding, stressful and illuminating. One respondent listed modest learning in three areas: regarding Rogerian therapy, about himself and about relationships. He felt he became less distressed by criticism, more tolerant of silences and possibly more empathic, judging from client feedback. Another member ("Rolfe"), who wrote more than once, implied that he had locked on to the Rogerian approach and values with enthusiasm, was actively engaging with the other ex-members and now was heavily involved in running and overseeing learning groups with novice trainees in his own influential sphere.

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter has been to give a faithfully unvarnished account of each included person's feedback from their workshop and after experience, while these were fresh in their minds. The particular elements of feedback already noted at the end of the first section, on Workshop 1 returns, complement this conclusion. Summary comments cannot have the vividness of many of the given individual accounts, which the reader may prefer to rely on. In all, a broad sample of participants is represented, who were continuing to actively reflect on their experience and sort out its meanings. Their follow-up accounts extend, enrich and sometimes shift the balance of what people could have said at this early point. Their feedback here already shows that respondents generally were left with acute memories from "Armidale," which seemed most likely to unfold further in their meaning and implications – and indeed did so, judging from later accounts given in Chaps. 7, 8 and 9.

Most people pointed to experienced qualities and/or change effects they valued or even cherished. Others (and in some cases the same people) spoke of stresses, frustrations or significant shortcomings (such as

advance information perceived as misleading). The process features, effects and issues that different members "attended to" varied widely. And, even those who were critical implied strong impact. (Knowing more clearly how they *did not* want to work, or did not believe or not feel confident about, seemed to be an important outcome for a few.) Most implied that the experience had been demanding, certainly not "easy," and some were very conscious of how challenging or difficult (even where revealing and fruitful) it had been. The instances of "Lily" and "Ned" being overwhelmed by feelings aroused during the workshop were spelled out rather fully. Personal crises can work as gateways to further development, as they appear to have done in these two cases.

Some members warmed especially to the meaning and effects of the experience in their personal lives, although possibly struggling a bit in familiar relationships "at home" where their reactions or wants were not quite the same as before. Most mentioned shifts in thinking or clarification of their purposes. There were a number of references to actual or expected changes in their work with clients and groups and, for some, implications for practice loomed large in their feedback. Some said, in effect, they were distinctly dislodged from a settled pattern in their personal relationships or their work. Several respondents spoke of wanting more related experience, such as through a further workshop – and came again to Armidale. The *next chapter* draws systematically on structured follow-up information gathered after a 6–8-month time lapse. In the data treatment there, the workshop participant voices mostly are heard collectively rather than one by one.

7

Workshop Outcomes from Formal Six-Month Follow-Up Data

This chapter is concerned, in its main part, with a systematic follow-up study of outcomes of the Armidale workshops. It uses data received from 62 members of Workshops 1 and 2 after the time lapse of at least six and up to eight months from their workshop experience. First reports of the main data included here appeared in the former journal *Interpersonal Development* (Barrett-Lennard, Kwasnik, & Wilkinson, 1973/74; Barrett-Lennard, 1974/75). These data are included with permission of the original publisher: S. Karger AG, Basel. Tables 7.1 to 7.4, in particular, reproduce the content of corresponding Tables I, II, III and IV in Barrett-Lenard, 1974/75. (Table 7.5 is entirely original to this book.)

The mailed follow-up request itself came to participants in two distinct parts, Part A in a large envelope that also enclosed a separate envelope containing Part B. Respondents were asked to leave aside the Part B envelope until they had completed their answers to the low-structure inquiry of Part A. It was thought that answers to the more specific multiple-choice questions in the second part might otherwise influence some responses to Part A. The research context and nature of the ex-workshop

respondent sample lent confidence that the participants would proceed as we asked—and would understand the "why" of this request afterwards if not before.

The Low-Structure Inquiry (Part A) and Results

Part A included three inquiry questions, each one left quite open as to specific possible effects within that area. The first region was possible personal change, the second centred on functioning as a counsellor or therapist and the third on possible shifts in ways of being in a group. Replies to these three questions averaged about 500 words, with outer extremes of approximately 200–1000 words. As framed for respondents (Barrett-Lennard, Kwasnik, & Wilkinson, 1973/74, p. 36), the three area questions were:

(1) Looking back over the past months what changes, if any, can you see in yourself as a person — changes that you attribute directly or indirectly to the Workshop experience? Where possible, please cite briefly a specific incident where you responded differently than you believe you would have before the Workshop, to show how thse changes affect your behaviour in practice.

(2) In what ways, if any, do you consider that the Workshop experience has influenced your functioning as a counsellor or therapist? Again, it would be most helpful if you can cite any specific incidents that illustrate these effects in practice. (If you are not at present doing therapy or counseling please answer the question in respect to the type of activity that you are principally engaged in.)

(3) Have you noticed any changes that you consider to be a consequence of the Workshop experience, in the way you function as a group leader or as a member of a group or team? If so, please identify the changes you judge significant and, if you are able to, illustrate their effects in a particular situation.

Approximately 90% of the Workshops 1 and 2 members (62 persons, as mentioned) contributed the follow-up questionnaire returns. As might be expected, inspection of the wealth of answers to the low-structure questions revealed a considerable range of reported effects. Close examination

of these data by assistants Kwasnik and Wilkinson, in consultation with me, led progressively to the development of a system for classifying and recording the changes noted or or distinctly implied by respondents. The resulting Content Classification System (CCS) distinguished ten categories.[1] To maximise the reliability of identifying instances of each category, a set of guidelines was worked out and used. Ten categories were specified as follows (italics are added here to the more frequent categories):

The participant:
1. Notes a *change in his/her ability to be open and accepting* (non-judging) in relationships with people in general.
2. Notes a *change in appreciation* (warm interest, regard and respect) *for the rights, freedom and inherent dignity of his/her client(s).*
3. Indicates a change in ability to be honest in expressing his/her own feelings or thoughts about some idea or trait to another person, without feeling that she/he has thereby jeopardised their relationship.
4. Notes a change in perception of the implications of client-centred therapy and is motivated to act on his/her new perception.
5. Expresses a *change in how counselling is seen, viewing it more as an "I -Thou" relationship* to be explored than as a role in which she/he gives advice, diagnoses or employs interview techniques.
6. Notes a *change in his/her level of self-regard* (self-worth, basic self-trust, positive self-concept, self-esteem).
7. Indicates a *change in reaction to the demands or expectancies placed upon him/her by others*.
8. Is in the process of developing a new aspect or dimension of self-awareness. She/he is allowing the impact of this to be more fully experienced and is adjusting his/her self-image to incorporate this new awareness.
9. Is *motivated to risk acting on the basis of new self-awareness*.
10. Has received feedback from others which reflects on new self-awareness.

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[1] My collaborators (doctoral student assistants) made a primary contribution to the discrimination and language of these ten categories. As reproduced here with slight rearrangement, the categories follow the content of the original list (Barrett-Lennard et al., 1973/74, pp. 36–7).

Two judges independently classified the responses of the 30 Workshop 1 respondents, using the CCS. The two broad classes of A (Absent) and P (Present) finally were used with all categories. The two judges had reached 80% agreement using training data before they classified the data from Workshop 1. On the Workshop 1 follow-up protocols, the judges gave the same classifications (as Present or Absent) 77% of the time, which was taken as adequate for full usage of the results of their analysis. One of the same judges went on to also classify the 32 follow-up protocols received from the members of Workshop 2.

Comparison of results for the Workshop 1 and Workshop 2 samples, using chi-square analysis, reflected substantial consistency in outcome on seven of the content categories and significant differences between workshops on three of them, namely, numbers 3, 6 and 9 as listed. In Workshop 2, there were many more Present ratings in category 3 and less Present judgements for categories 6 and 9. On this evidence, there was both substantial concordance and appreciable differences in outcome as between the two workshops. In view of the information and thought conveyed in previous chapters, the pattern both of similarity and differences is unsurprising.

All of the classification items tapped effects judged to be Present for more than one-third of the total sample of workshop members. Six of these effects, listed here by category number and summary content, accord with *more than two-thirds* of the workshop member's reports:

(1) Increased ability to be open and accepting in relationships.
(2) Increased appreciation and warmth of feeling by respondents for the basic rights, freedom and inherent dignity of their clients or patients.
(5) Counselling and therapy seen more as an 'I–Thou' relationship than as a role requiring diagnostic expertise and interview techniques.
(6) Increased self-regard, -liking or -trust.
(7) Change in response to demands or expectancies of others.
(9) In process of developing some new self-awareness and prepared to risk expressing and acting on this.

Four of these effect items (1, 6, 7 and 9) refer to aspects of experienced relational and personal change, and items 2 and 5 point to changes in attitude and viewpoint as a professional helper. The results encompass a

spectrum of professionally important and personally empowering effects, in the indication of members after at least half a year of intervening experience and separation from the workshop context.

In responding to the open-ended Part A questions, each respondent would have been distilling the features from their pool of relevant remembered experience (and previous reflection on it) that stood out in their self-observation and sense of change. A given person might not have mentioned an effect discriminated and highlighted by someone else, not because no such effect occurred (at least weakly) but because differing outcomes were experienced as distinctive and prepotent. Thus, it is possible that the outlined effects are conservative estimates in their scope. In fact, additional as well as similar reported effects were evident in responses to the highly structured B data from the same respondents.

Multiple-Choice Questionnaire (Part B) and Results

Six multiple-choice items presented to all respondents, plus two added items answered by people from the second workshop, generated the Part B data. The longer item sample is presented in the Appendix to this chapter, with items numbered 1 through 6 identical for the respondents from both workshops.

Item 1 of Part B asks directly whether and to what degree the respondents judged that the workshop was a personally growthful or therapeutic experience. Item 2 is closely related in that the respondents are asked whether the growthful process (if it occurred) is continuing (strongly or mildly), whether it has stopped *or* whether the respondent now feels that she/he is reversing or losing ground in this respect. Table 7.1 displays the results for these two items.

As seen in the table, the reported outcomes of the two workshops were quite similar in these first two areas. Three-quarters of the respondents said it had been an important or very significant growthful experience for themselves, and the same proportion considered that a personal growth process was continuing strongly or moderately. Only one person felt that on balance the workshop experience had been negative or neutral in its

personal effects. One respondent in four reported absence of change (or in the one case a currently "backward" change).

The next two items are so related that it was thought possible that there would be no differences between them in the answers elicited. We were most interested in whether workshop members saw (after the significant time lapse) changes in their effectiveness as helping persons. However, this is a difficult discrimination, and item 3 was included partly to draw the respondent's attention to the aspect of confidence and to focus on this before the aspect of effectiveness—thus by clear implication an axis potentially or partially distinct from confidence. The actual results for these two items are summarised in Table 7.2.

As in Table 7.1, the data for the two workshop subsamples are very similar. Overall, there is a little wider *spread* in respect to rated change in confidence than change in effectiveness. The confidence question of course is about the way respondents feel and the effectiveness item is about their self-judged performance as helpers. When the upper ratings (+2 and +1) are combined, Table 7.2 also shows that a big majority

Table 7.1 *Results for follow-up items 1 and 2*

Item # and alternative answer weightings	Work-shop 1 *n* (%)	Work-shop 2 *n* (%)	Total sample *n* (%)	Total sample with categories collapsed *n* (%)	Change category
Item 1: Workshop a growthful experience					
+3 Very significantly	9 (30)	13 (41)	22 (36)	} 47 (76)	"Strongly"
+2 Moderately important	14 (47)	11 (34)	25 (40)		
+1 To a small extent	6 (20)	8 (24)	14 (22)	14 (22)	"Mildly"
0 Not at all	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	} 1 (2)	No or reverse
−1 Reverse of growth	1 (3)	0 (0)	1 (2)		
Item 2: Growth continuing					
+2 "Strongly"	7 (24)	11 (34)	18 (30)	} 46 (76)	Yes
+1 "Some"	13 (45)	15 (47)	28 (46)		
0 "No"	9 (31)	5 (16)	14 (23)	} 15 (24)	No (or reverse)
−1 Reversal	0	1 (3)	1 (1.5)		

Table 7.2 *Results for follow-up items 3 and 4*

Item # and alternative answer weightings	Work-shop 1	Work-shop 2	Total sample	Total sample: categories collapsed		Change category
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)		
Item 3: Greater confidence as helper						
+2 Considerably more confid.	14 (47)	12 (34)	26 (42)	}	49 (79)	More confident
+1 Somewhat more confid.	8 (27)	15 (47)	23 (37)			
0 No change in confidence	5 (16)	4 (12)	9 (14)	}	13 (21)	No change or less confident
−1 Less confident	3 (10)	1 (3)	4 (7)			
Item 4: Greater effectiveness as helper						
+2 Considerably more effective	12 (40)	9 (38)	21 (34)	}	52 (84)	More effective
+1 Somewhat more effective	14 (47)	17 (52)	31 (50)			
0 No change due to workshop	4 (13)	5 (17)	9 (14)	}	10 (16)	No change or 1 less effective
−1 Less effective	0	1 (3)	1 (2)			

(about five out of six) of respondents reported much or some increase in their effectiveness as a direct or indirect result of the workshop experience. Four out of five felt more confident. The remaining minorities mostly identified "no change," and a few (17, 22, or) saw themselves as *less* confident but not less effective. Looking at the whole framing of these items and the sophisticated nature of the respondent sample, these results provide strong evidence of enduring change attributed to the workshop experience.

Items 5 and 6 also form a "pair," in a lesser and more subtle sense than those already considered. Item 5 is concerned with the respondent's sensitivity or capacity to responsively tune into and "receive" the feelings and personal meanings of others. Item 6 focuses on the capacity to be self-expressive or open with one's own feelings and personal meanings. One could expect the workshops to have important effects on both of these complementary axes. Table 7.3 displays the actual self-reported results. About 90% of respondents reported positive change, in varied degree. One person felt that they had become less open, but not less sensitive.

Table 7.3 *Results for follow-up items 5 and 6*

Item # and alternative answer weightings	Workshop 1 n (%)	Workshop 2 n (%)	Total sample n (%)	Some categories collapsed n (%)	Change category
Item 5: Increased sensitivity to others					
+3 Far more sensitive	7 (23)	5.5 (17)	12 (19)	29 (47)	Marked increase
+2 Considerably more	7 (23)	9.5 (30)	27 (44)		
+1 A little more sensitive	13 (44)	14 (44)	27 (44)	27 (44)	Small increase
0 No change	3 (10)	3 (9)	6 (9)	6 (9)	No change
−1 Less sensitive	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)		
Item 6: More expressive/sharing/open with groups of others					
+3 Much more direct and open	8 (27)	4 (12)	12 (19)	31 (50)	Large or important increase
+2 Quite a lot more open	7 (23)	12 (38)	19 (31)		
+1 Somewhat more open	8 (27)	10 (31)	18 (29)	18 (29)	Some increase
0 No change	6 (20)	6 (19)	12 (19)	13 (21)	No or negative change
−1 Reversal	1 (3)	0 (0)	1 (2)		

The results point to significant self-observed impact of the workshop experience in this region also.

Item 7 was conceived and added to the questionnaire for Workshop 2 members, on the basis of observation and informal feedback that the workshop experience was having considerable impact on the thinking and concepts of participants. Our enquiry in this area focused in breadth on this issue, and the reader's attention is drawn to the whole formulation of Item 7 in the Appendix to this chapter. Item 8 is broadly related but different in its focus. It asks whether participants found that other people who knew them well had indicated particularly noticing that they had changed in their outlook and response to other people. Table 7.4 summarises the results of these two items.

On the evidence from Item 7 results, most respondents (over four-fifths) experienced substantial, enduring change or learning on a cognitive level, and only a small percentage checked the categories "minor change" and "no detectable change." On the other hand, results from Item 8 suggest that respondents did not receive feedback from others acknowledging the change that they themselves experienced. The wording of the item confines the focus to others having "noticed and commented that" they saw change in the participant's "outlook or response to people since the workshop." It thus presents a very a high bar for unqualified Yes answers. A little more than half said that others had *indicated* or shown that they did see a substantial or modest change in them: A large minority had not detected such feedback (Table 7.4).

The overall picture derived from the Part B outcome data implies that most workshop members discriminated substantial and valued effects in their functioning as helping persons and in their general level or quality of sensitivity and openness with others. They were also conscious of shifts or development in their conceptual thinking in these and related areas. A little more than half had received and noticed feedback acknowledgement of such changes from others. The results are in reinforcing accord with those stemming from the low-structure "part A" data, especially in the areas of personal and interpersonal development. Coupled with data presented earlier, the indications are that qualities and processes occurring in the residential workshops were salutary in their nature and

Table 7.4 *Results for follow-up items 7 and 8*

Item # and alternative answer weightings	Workshop 2 n (%)	Categories collapsed n (%)	Change category
Item 7: Cognitive/conceptual changes			
+3 Much change/development	13 (41)	} 26 (82)	Substantial change
+2 Moderate/significant change	13 (41)		
+1 minor change	3 (9)	} 6 (18)	Minor or no change
0 No change	3 (9)		
Item 8: Attitude/behaviour change seen/noted by others			
+2 Others note significant change	7 (22)	} 18 (56)	Others directly note change
+1 Others note some change	11 (34)		
0 No change noted by others	14 (44)		

valuable in tangible continuing ways, as judged by *most* of the participants. Naturally, for some members the beneficial perceived impact was greater or wider ranging than it was for others, and for one or two people in the reporting sample of 62, the residual effect appeared to be negative in valence.

The final part of this chapter turns aside from a direct focus on outcome effects of the workshops, drawing on quite different data gathered, however, at the same follow-up point. This provides a window on the process "climate" of the workshop groups, not as reported during the experience but viewed after a significant time lapse.

The Process Climate of the Workshop Groups, Looking Back

The Group Atmosphere Form used distinctively here in one-time follow-up application also lends itself to application after each meeting session (revised version in Barrett-Lennard, 2015, p. 174). In Workshop 2, a shorter form was used, as implied in the table below. Specifically, results are given for 11 items used in common and 5 more items taken just from the Workshop 1 follow-up data. The form as shown in the chapter appendix is true to the general original layout but with the slightly reduced item sample arranged in the same order

Table 7.5 *Frequencies of rating choices on bipolar scales of group qualities*

Groups	Extremely (x7)	Quite (x6)	A little (x5)	Equal (x4)	A little (x3)	Quite (x2)	Extremely (x1)	Group means
Turbulent <-----------> Calm								
X	7	8						6.5
Y		1	3	1	3	6	1	3.1
R	1	8	1	1	1			5.6
S	2	2	4	1	2			5.1
Searching <-----------> Superficial								
X	5	4	3	1	2			5.6
Y	1	5	7	2				4.7
R	1	5	3	1	2			5.2
S	5	3	1	1	1			5.9
Tense <-----------> Relaxed								
X	8	3	4					6.3
Y		1	5	1	3	5		3.6
R	1	4	3	4				5.2
S	1	3	4	3				5.2
Harmonious <-----------> Conflicting								
X			3	3	2	5	2	3.0
Y	3	12						6.2
R		5	1	2	1	3		4.8
S		6	1	3	1			5.1
Gentle <-----------> Harsh								
X	1	2		4	3	4	1	3.5
Y	9	4	2					6.4
R		5	2	1	1	3		4.4
S		7	1	2	1			5.3
Caring <-----------> Hostile								
X	1	7	1	3	1	1	1	4.9
Y	9	5	1					6.5
R	3	5	2	1				5.9
S	3	6	1	1				6.0
Accepting <-----------> Rejecting								
X		10	1	1			3	4.9
Y	11	3			1			6.5
R	3	6	3					6.0
S	4	5	1	1				6.1
Warm <-----------> Cool								
X	3	7	2	2	1			5.6
Y	8	5	2					6.4
R	3	7	2					6.1
S	2	6	2	1				5.8

Table 7.5 (continued)

Groups	Extremely (x7)	Quite (x6)	A little (x5)	Equal (x4)	A little (x3)	Quite (x2)	Extremely (x1)	Group means
	Genuine <-----------> False							
X	1	9		3	1			5.1
Y	5	8	1	1				6.1
R	3	5	1		3			5.4
S	1	7		3				5.5
	Understanding <-----------> Insensitive							
X	1	8		3	2	1		5.0
Y	6	7	1	1				6.2
R	1	8	3					5.8
S	1	8		2				5.5
	Flowing <-----------> Static							
X	5	5		2	2	1		5.4
Y	1	8	1	3	2			5.2
R	3	5	2	1	1			5.7
S		5	2	4				5.1
	Active <-----------> Passive							
X	10	4	1					6.6
Y	1	12		2				5.7
	Fast <-----------> Slow							
X	4	5	2	2		2		5.3
Y		1	7	6	1			3.5
	Varied <-----------> Uniform							
X	11	3				1		6.5
Y	2	4	5	1	2			4.8
	Open <-----------> Closed							
X	1	4	2	4	3			4.5
Y		8	5	2				5.4
	Intimate <-----------> Impersonal							
X	2	8	3		1			5.7
Y	3	7	2	3				5.7

as in the results table. Table 7.5 shows the actual number of ratings in each of the seven answer categories, in each group. These were assigned values of 1 to 7 (see table), and the resulting totals were divided by the number of ratings in each case, to obtain the group averages—

shown in the right-hand column of Table 7.5).[2] Fifteen returns were received from the X and Y groups, and 12 and 11, respectively, from Groups R and S. (On some items there were occasional gaps within these numbers.)

A striking feature of these results is the substantial level of consistency on many items in the way that respondents characterise their group's process climate as they look back at least half a year later. *Virtually all members, for example, remembered Group Y as harmonious, gentle, caring (*vs. *hostile), warm and accepting. Everyone recalled Group X as turbulent, tense, active and varied (*vs. *uniform).* This said, the rating frequencies overlapped considerably on most features—as next considered, again with particular reference to groups X and Y.

On the caring-hostile polarity, although X's ratings covered the whole spectrum, the majority remembered it as caring and just three people put it in the hostile range. Ten (of 15) X members also rated their group as quite accepting and considered that it was extremely or quite warm. Y people saw their group communication as fairly open, X people leaned in this direction though a few saw a more closed quality. X members tended to see their process as faster and as more searching than in the case of Y's. The two groups were seen, overall, as equally intimate (vs. impersonal) in this rating identification.[3]

These process-oriented results, coupled with other evidence, suggest that the groups reached member-valued outcomes partly through differing process qualities. Sharply challenging and turbulent encounter, open diversity or conflict of attitudes, tense struggle yet with listening happening too, vigorous engagement in variable up-and-down movement and, finally, a quite strong bonding quality could be major features. Alternatively, a supportive, more accepting, gentler and even quality of communication could predominate (as in Group Y), thus also with less direct or confronting expression of feeling and a generally quieter flow.

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[2] In the one further group, only 9 of the 13 participant members provided ratings. These were considered too unrepresentative to include here, in contrast to the other four groups.

[3] The configuration of ratings received from the R and S groups is not a focus of discussion here, partly because they are noticeably similar to each other and with configurations resembling the Y group. Also there is less scope than for the X and Y groups to relate the rating patterns to other evidence.

In both cases, an ambience of strong engagement can be generally experienced, which presumably needs to be the case for fruitful outcomes of the kinds reviewed earlier in this chapter. In a word, the methodology of simple retrospective appraisal of process has yielded distinct patterns that also carry meaning for ways that valued movement and change can happen.

Chapter Appendix

Part B Follow-Up Research Questionnaire Items

Please check the alternative answer that *best* represents your own feeling or judgement.

1. Do you consider that the workshop was a therapeutic or growth-promoting experience for you personally?

    ___Yes, very significantly.
    ___To a moderate but important degree.
    ___To a small extent.
    ___Not at all.
    ___It has set me back in the quality of my own personal functioning.

2. If you moved forward within yourself in some way, through the workshop experience, has this movement now ceased or do you experience continuing change?

    ___I continue to feel strongly involved in a process of becoming more whole or adequate as a person.
    ___I notice some measure of continuing change in myself.
    ___1 am not 'in process' within myself in any detectable way now.
    ___I seem to be slipping back now towards the way I used to function.

3. Do you feel any change in your *confidence* in yourself as a helping person, resulting from the workshop experience?

   ___Considerably more confidence.
   ___Somewhat more confidence.
   ___No change in this respect.
   ___Less confidence.

4. As a separate question, do you consider that you are any more or less *effective* in your helping function, as a direct or indirect result of the workshop?

   ___Considerably more effective.
   ___Somewhat more effective.
   ___No change in effectiveness.
   ___Less effective.

5. Do you feel any more sensitive to the inner experience or feelings of other persons as a result of the workshop?

   ___Yes, far more sensitive.
   ___Considerably more sensitive.
   ___A little more sensitive.
   ___No change.
   ___I seem less sensitive.

6. Do you feel that, as a result of the workshop, you have expressed or shared yourself more directly and openly in group situations connected with your work?

   ___I have been much more direct and open.
   ___I have been quite a lot more open.
   ___I think I have been somewhat more open.
   ___No change in this respect.
   ___I feel *less* willing than before to express myself openly.

7. Has your *thinking* changed or developed, as a direct or indirect result of the workshop, about group processes, objectives or qualities of a therapeutic situation, effects on the person of various kinds of relationship or social influence? (This question differs from previous ones in focusing specifically on the level of concepts or ideas. It is concerned with possible modifications in the way you formulate or interpret processes that occur in and between people.)

___ Much change or development in this respect.
___ Moderate but significant change
___ Minor change.
___ No detectable change.

8. Have other persons who know you well noticed and commented that you have changed in your outlook or response to people since the workshop?

___ Yes, other people in close touch with me have shown that they see me as having changed quite significantly.
___ Other people have indicated that they see some change in me.
___ There has been no evidence made known to me of any change being apparent to others.

The Additional Group Climate Questionnaire from Part B, with the Order of Items Adjusted to Match Their Sequence in Table 7.5

Please check the scale between each of the following pairs of opposite words at the point that best describes your perception now of the most typical atmosphere and process in your workshop group. Let your present personal impressions guide the answers that you give.

	Extremely	Quite	Little	Neither or both equally	Little	Quite	Extremely	
Turbulent …..	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Calm
Searching …..	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Superficial
Tense……….	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Relaxed
Harmonious ...	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Conflicting
Gentle ………	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Harsh
Caring ……..	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Hostile
Accepting ….	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Rejecting
Warm ………	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Cool
Genuine…….	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	False
Understanding	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Insensitive
Flowing…….	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Static
Active ……..	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Passive
Fast ………..	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Slow
Varied ……..	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Uniform
Open ………	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Closed
Intimate ……	+++	++	+	•	+	++	+++	Impersonal

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8

Ten Years Later: Long-Term Follow-Up Via Life Events Study

One way of viewing the workshops is that they were a particular kind of eventful episode in the likely context of other professionally influential and broadly formative life experiences. Aside from directly discernible effects, they might well have triggered other developmental experiences in a chain or network of influences. Viewing an intense experience and what followed, over a significant span of years, provides the context to see whether it appears literally to have been a turning point feeding into further life steps. This and later chapters develop a fuller perspective on the understanding of change, whether through intensive groups or other kinds of developmental or formative experience. The circumstances and method used in the present case need further introduction.

While on leave back in Australia just ten years after the midpoint of the original workshop series, I worked on some new writing that helped to trigger fresh research that my leave location also facilitated. The writing

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This chapter, though freshly shaped for this book, draws with publisher permission on an earlier report (Barrett-Lennard, 2005, pp. 17–31) that utilised the same (still available) research data. Table 8.1 in this chapter is, in particular, similar to and largely derived from Table 2.1 in that 2005 report (p. 24).

was a more broad-based and systematic view of "process, effects and structure in intensive groups" than I had attempted before (Barrett-Lennard, 1976). It struck me that we could enquire into the whole scope of "formative life events" of former members without even drawing attention to the workshops. This would be an indirect way of assessing their impact, with its own force of implication.

Although the sample for this research would be members of the past workshops, the data-gathering net would be inclusive of any especially eventful experience in adult life perceived by respondents as vitally important personally or a significant (developmental) step professionally. With the help of my colleague Pat Pentony, at the Australian National University, we approached all the past members we could find addresses for, asking for their help in the research without any mention of the workshops. At that ten-year later time, my colleague could well be doing an unrelated study, and the research questionnaire was sent out with a covering letter from Pat only. We exposed this slight subterfuge via an enclosed sealed note from me that participants were invited to read for fuller information, *after preparing their returns*.

The Life Events Questionnaire: Form and Application

Our rather quickly developed but ambitiously named Formative Life Episodes Questionnaire (FLEQ) (reproduced in full in Barrett-Lennard, 2005, pp. 30–31) asked respondents to review the previous dozen years (in this instance) in their adult lives and to list the episodes that stood out in perceived importance and impact in the two broad regions already mentioned. Question 1 asked respondents to focus on their personal lives and *"identify the essential nature and … context of directly experienced events and episodes that affected you deeply, for example, in your outlook and values; your personal development or resources; the kind or quality of relationships you have with others; the meaning of your life to you."* Question 2 called on participants to *"please reflect deeply over the last dozen years or so … in the context of your occupational or professional life. … What experiences of an exceptionally eventful nature stand out, for example, in their effects on your*

work with, or on behalf of, other people, your awareness of communication and other processes between people that deeply affect their living and working together, or your capacities and/or priorities in your vocation?" Most respondents arranged their answers to these two questions, as was suggested, in a single numbered list.

A third main question enquired into a series of possible ways any of the numbered FLEs (in response to questions 1 and 2) had affected them in their interpersonal lives, sense of self, personal development, resourcefulness in their work and in their subsequent provision of new opportunities for others and other specified areas. A further question, not numbered and somewhat submerged at the end, asked about possible connections between a respondent's listed events, especially whether particular events were critical in triggering or leading on to others that followed. Although the full questionnaire grew out of considerable prior thought, there was no opportunity for a trial-run application before its main use. Notwithstanding, it yielded a generous measure of interesting and pertinent information from those who answered it.

We could not track down all of the former members, but were able to reach the majority – perhaps 45 in all. Returns from the first 30 persons who provided complete responses to the new questionnaire comprise the sample formally coded in this study (see later section with table). At the time, the respondents tended to be in the middle span of their adult lives, ranging in age from their early 30s to around 70. Over half were psychologists, four were social workers, several others focused on marriage and lay counselling, two or three were from sociology or psychiatry, and two recorded themselves simply as "university lecturers." The task of responding fully to our request was fairly daunting, and it's very possible that some recipients *chose* not to undertake it, or else put it off too long to be part of the sample we classified. As might be expected, they came up with a wide range of events and episodes.

Change effects of a significant developmental learning experience can take place on many levels. There may be direct and immediate adjustments in the person's sense of self, priorities and awareness or sensitivity to others. It may work as a doorway through which new meanings and tangible possibilities in personal or working life come into view. The person may be prepared for and effectively open to further movement

that awaits new circumstances – perhaps a future choice point – for clear expression. Stated *more* broadly, the change-enabling episode itself may simultaneously be an outcome of prior experiences, a result of immediate circumstance or need, an important step which has discernible present effects, and a crucial contributory influence on later movement in which its working is not yet evident. These considerations are a backdrop to the meaning of the analysis and distillation of FLE data, and to the extended interview data in the next chapter. They are also in keeping with the systematic development of theory in Chapter 10.

Examples From the Life Events Records

Systematic analysis of the lists of events and episodes from questions 1 and 2 of the FLEQ required the development of a framework within which to code them. Before going on to the coding system, examples taken from the raw data as returned by the participants will better capture their flavour and quality. For one respondent, major events included the loss of his parents some years earlier, leaving him with inner conflict and guilt over (he felt) his neglect of them. His mother died under medical treatment and his father later took his own life. Another crucial event was his marriage breakup and resulting distance from his children. However, there were points of light as well as troubling happenings in his family sphere, for example, a treasured experience with his young son who said to him on an outing together, "We are just like brothers, Dad." There had been positive episodes professionally, including in particular his "experience, on leave, of comradeship and acceptance" (at a unique overseas centre). Overall, though, he believed that for him adversity and suffering had been the greatest stimulus to growth.

Another participant, from a religious vocation, said that a key change coming from the Armidale workshops was "in my readiness to be honest with myself; previously I would have been unaware that I was being highly defensive… [and wanting] to project another self onto what was the real self." This shift as he put it was "a springboard for growth." One basic effect was to "experience 'feeling' for the first time." At a certain point he became "aware of myself no longer being self-sufficient"

(contrary to what he had always taken for granted) and an important step was reaching out for help. He said he now feels "much more sensitive and empathetic toward others who are distressed, and certainly less judgmental." He clearly did see the workshops as a turning point in his life: "I would say had it not been for Armidale I would today be a rigid, unfeeling judgmental _____ [vocation]." He feels more competent as a counsellor and noted that he sought to influence others in his sphere towards actual training in counselling "and to have self-awareness experiences." Along with more satisfaction and security in relationships generally, he is no longer afraid to say "no" even to superiors.

Another illustration (taken as also reported in my 2005 book, pp. 22–23) is that of Eve. For her, starting a new kind of work – after being a "full-time wife and mother" – was one vitally important event, leading to others. In emphasising the crucial importance of her workshop experience, she referred to the development of deep personal relationships, an evolving new quality of self-examination and, in particular, "more awareness of effect of self on others." The workshop was complemented by an eventful two-year experience in a therapy group as part of her counselling training. A very important decision around possible further university study was also singled out, involving "conflict between needs of family and personal needs for fulfillment." Later, a promotion for her husband led to "increased pressure on me to fulfill a special sort of role as wife. This I held out against and reached a reasonable compromise." The death of her parents after long illnesses was easier to bear because of a "previously learned ability to live with emotional pain during personal therapy and group experience." Later, she alludes to the relevance of these life experiences in her work with others suffering grief and loss. With her children growing up, she took part in a conference and travel experience – the "first long period of time with my husband for over 20 years." She experienced being part of a couple again but also "a strong sense of identity now as myself… – although still happy that I am a wife and mother."

Several former members listed the impact of family events and relationships first, and 26 out of 30 included them in varied form (see table below). One respondent (Cliff) wrote that the arrival of his "four children had profound effects on the quality of relationships – especially with my

wife" and increased his "concern for meaningful existence," with effect on his broader "attitudes to society." He next referred to his workshop experience as having "helped toward greater self understanding [and reduced] some of the ghosts of childhood experiences." It "enhanced the quality of [my] marital relationship" and affected the "quality of [my] relationships with clients," especially towards "greater openness." He also mentioned the importance of travelling and living overseas and attending further workshops there. Significant change came from a new and different employment context. Other influential events were his first experience of a leadership role and the subsequent further experience of leadership in a developing human relations programme.

Participants varied widely in how many influential events they distinguished and in the breadth and described penetration of these events in their lives. Two respondents (Anne and James) distinguished and numbered 25 events! Dave listed 23 over the previous dozen years and included an "appendix" giving an amplified account of a good many of those events. He had attended numerous intensive human relations and/or counselling workshops, beginning with the 1963 Armidale workshop and others that followed there and elsewhere, which he said "brought an increased understanding of interpersonal relationships, deeper understanding of myself and which slowly modified my feelings and behaviour at work and in my personal life, and [brought] a strong commitment to the human relations encounter group movement." He also mentioned as high points his involvement in international education summer schools, including one in creative arts, where he experienced "the joy of creative work, good fellowship and interpersonal cooperation, trust in the other, the capacity to care for others, and the acceptance of the right of others to differing points of view." A family event distinct from others he listed and disturbing to him in its impact was the breakup of his younger son's marriage, which also affected and challenged his relationship with his wife and implied further adjustments in their partnership.

One former member emphasised that he found it "difficult to single out events, as such, since the past seems a continuous process or flow." He mentioned that his three children are now grown up and independent, a grandchild has arrived, and that all this brought new learning and development. Close friends and then his parents have died, requiring

him "to grapple with my own feelings about dying and death" which, unlike his wartime experience, is "different in middle age when, having experienced life more fully, I become aware how much living there is to do." He feels that he is "continually learning about myself and my own ideas" through the experiential learning and encounter-type groups he conducts around the country. He endured separation from his wife and a deep depression, "which in itself proved a valuable learning experience" as he worked it through in an intensive therapeutic workshop he took part in. Coping with health issues has also been a challenging area to him and, in all, he feels he is "becoming slowly more self-confident, less concerned about pleasing others, more able to let people be without feeling responsible." He wrote, "I have come to value personal relationships rather than 'success'… which [however] puts me lower in the pecking order then many people who I regard as less able than myself." A further page of his response was devoted to the mixed picture of his work experience and its impact.

The returns were not all as full or eloquent as in the examples given here. In all, they ranged from eloquent and moving episodically organised human stories to terse tabulations of a sequence of critical life events. Each was distinctive, but with a big overlap in content and the interaction of events. The distinctiveness of the varied presentations – one included poems[1] – made their coding in a common framework a challenge, which we worked hard to achieve through several iterations.

Life Episodes Data and Coding

Most of the detailed work on the life episodes data was done with the help of collaborating students, within a few years of receiving the returns. We began without a prior framework and allowed a classification system to emerge from the discovered content of the event narratives. Two student associates contributed to this. Doug, working in close consultation

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[1]A sample verse read (with forward slashes here for line breaks): "How does the little catalyst/ Improve her shining hour/When change is all about her/And she is charged with power?/Inflation holds her in its jaws/And threatens black depression/And every conversation is/An analytic session."

with me, built up a list of 32 ungrouped categories. In a second step, Esther, also working with me but not in contact with Doug, began with his categories and all of the original data and worked to further refine the classification system. I later re-examined the results of our joint work and the original data and made limited further adjustments. Further close review, for this chapter, led to occasional amendments in the naming and grouping of the (36) categories distinguished. The accompanying table reflects their arrangement in ten clusters under three broad headings.

The first episode region, now labelled "Life Crises and Shifts," includes 12 categories in three clusters; ones that lend themselves to objective discrimination and counting (see Table 8.1, below). The count was 113 instances in all, in this region and sample. The second broad area distinguished – Interpersonal Relationship Episodes – includes 15 categories in its three logically distinct clusters. Not all of these categories are such discretely visible events as in the first region but mostly were described as coming to a head in a particular circumstance or event. The third qualitatively distinct sphere, named "Self-initiated Developmental Activities," again grouped the kinds of activity into three clusters. The activity episodes were generally linked to external events, but their significance tended to pivot on growthful shifts in inner consciousness and meaning, and connecting valued action.

In the total work of the study – typing and proofing handwritten replies, developing the category system and rechecking codings as the categories were refined – all of the data came under repeated scrutiny, leading to rigorous final coding of the episode data. In a final step after the original analysis, to further check the reliability of that coding, Esther used a new judge to independently classify the data from a random sample of 12 of the completed returns (Szeto, 1977, p. 14) The outcome was 92% agreement with the main classification of these returns – accepted as an adequate level of reliability.

In Table 8.1, the left-hand column of figures includes all instances of each categorised event. Some individuals listed more than one occurrence of the same class of event (such as taking part in an intensive group: Category 29). Also, occasionally the same described episode distinctly implied more than one category of event. Thus, the numbers of people (second column) reporting events (totalled in the first column) are quite often fewer than the number of event instances.

Table 8.1 *The system and frequency of classes of formative event*

I. *Life Crises and Shifts*	**113**	
A. Life-and-Death Crises	**34**	**22**
1. Bereavement	(15	(8
2. Illness – self or significant other	(15	(10
3. Suicide (or attempt) – of significant other or self	(4	(4
B. Uprooting experiences	**35**	**30**
4. Relocation of household	(8	(6
5. Travel and/or staying abroad	(17	(14
6. Returning to homeland	(6	(6
7. Change in financial/material status	(4	(4
C. Career and job changes	**44**	**29**
8. New appointment, responsibility or promotion	(35	(20
9. Consideration or rejection of job	(4	(4
10. Career setback	(2	(2
11. Resignation or termination of job	(2	(2
12. Retirement	(1	(1
II. *Interpersonal Relationship Episodes*	**100**	
D. Family relationship sphere	**41**	**36**
13. Entry into marriage	(13	(11
14. Birth of children/grandchildren	(6	(6
15. Development/adjustment of marital relationship	(10	(7
16. Intense involvement with whole family	(4	(4
17. Heightened involvement with child/children	(2	(2
18. Children leaving home	(2	(2
19. Marital difficulty or breakdown	(4	(4
E. Significant other relationships (non-family)	**38**	**25**
20. Entry to important or intense relationship	(26	(13
21. Contact with people holding different values	(3	(3
22. Disillusionment/termination of relationships	(6	(6
23. Marital breakdown of significant other person	(3	(3
F. Work *relationships* area	**21**	**17**
24. New/heightened engagement with colleagues	(4	(3
25. Positive feedback from colleagues	(6	(6
26. Conflicts with colleagues or supervisors	(8	(6
27. Disenchantment with colleagues/occupational politics	(3	(2
III. *Self-initiated Developmental Activities*	**145**	
G. Personally developmental experiences	**70**	**39**
28. Entering counselling/therapy as a client	(6	(4
29. *Participation in intensive or therapeutic group/workshop*	(43	(23
30. Impact of course, book, film, art, drama or music	(21	(12
H. Educational-professional development	**52**	**35**
31. Acquiring a degree or other professional qualification	(11	(10
32. Interim professional training or study period	(9	(8

Table 8.1 (continued)

I. *Life Crises and Shifts*	113	
33. Undertaking creative project: research and/or writing, new programme, or a special skill	(32	(23
I. Social development/discovery of meaning	23	22
34. Religious awakening or affiliation	(4	(4
35. Undertaking a hobby or avocational interest/skill	(12	(11
36. Involvement in social or political movement/issues	(7	(7

The Pattern of Coded Results

Returns from the 30 participants generated an average of 12 classified responses per person (thus also about one per year over the period considered). The class of event highest in frequency of mention was in fact that of participation in intensive groups and workshops (#29 in Table 8.1), with main but not exclusive reference to the Armidale events that all sample members had taken part in. Taken in context of the long time delay and broad life events reference of the questionnaire (and the nomination of discriminated events in answer to Question 3), the evidence speaks strongly to the enduring and triggering impact of the workshops. The category "New appointment, responsibility or promotion" (#8) (in the "career and job change" cluster) was next in frequency of mention – by over two-thirds of these respondents. The episode type "Undertaking creative project" (category #33), concerned with original work and fresh initiatives, also drew entries from over half of the respondents.

The participants in this research were in general mobile, energetic and fairly ambitious professional individuals. Some of the relatively high-frequency categories, also including "Travel and/or staying abroad" (#5), the "Impact of course, book, film, art…" (#30) and "Acquiring a degree or other professional qualification" (#31), plausibly would be more prominent among these former workshop members than in the population generally. This greater prominence might well apply across the whole domain of Self-initiated Developmental Activities, which in total accounted for 40% of all classified episodes. There were on the other hand a range of other episode categories likely to be of similar application in the general population, including most of those in the domain of "Interpersonal relationship episodes" and in the "Life and death crises" cluster (see Table 8.1).

As previously framed: "An overall impression is that the more fully described episodes, of many kinds, gave a distinct sense of something having happened, or been done or entered into, such that past and future for that person *could not be* the same. In some cases, differences in life choice, circumstance and expressed attitude stood out and, in others, there were more subtle changes in inner meaning and valuing. New awareness in relationships was quite often implied. *Acutely remembered experiences could, it seemed, work like lookout points in the terrain of inner life, with potential to keep on contributing as the local scene changed*" (Barrett-Lennard, 2005, p. 26).

FLEQ Question 3 specifically asked respondents to link relevant episodes with particular kinds of effect, such as its possible *impact on the quality of personal relationships*, positive or negative. Entry into important or intense new relationships, travelling or staying abroad, and taking part in further intensive group workshops all were seen as making the greatest positive difference (short and/or long term) to these respondents' interpersonal lives. Important new relationships were sometimes seen as having had short-term negative effects (and this was noted by one person in specific reference to a relationship formed in a workshop). These episodes plus two others – undertaking creative projects and advancement to a new position or responsibility – also stood out in terms of perceived importance for the further *aspect of personal development.*

Respondents varied considerably in how much attention they gave to the somewhat-complicated task of relating nine possible kinds of effect to their numbered life episodes. The more abstract framing of some possible effects (such as #3 on self-reliance) probably reduced attention to them. Other possibilities, for example, #4, "episodes perceived as particularly important for your personal unfolding and development," were easier to relate to. Eighteen of 30 people in the sample considered an Armidale workshop episode as either directly or indirectly important in this respect.

Interestingly, events in 30 of the 36 categories were viewed by at least one participant as strongly contributing to self-knowledge (aspect 6). Also, every category of episode was seen by some respondent(s) "as a source of basic learning either about the human person, people in groups or organisations, or the workings of society in some wider sense" (aspect

8). On the question of whether any particular episode(s) led on to the creation of similar qualities or opportunities for others (aspect 9), at least one-third of the sample said "yes" in reference to their intensive group workshop experience. This ties in with other evidence that many of the participants experienced shifts in their counselling and/or became significantly involved in group work themselves (see Chapter 9). Broadly viewed, these and related results imply that the chosen FLEQ categories embodied experiences that were indeed "formative."

An item directly asking about causal connections among the person's listed episodes appears in a small space at the end of the questionnaire and drew an uneven response, a few people saying that the interconnections were too extensive or too difficult to identify. The majority tackled the question directly, and among these, episodes in the human relations workshop/encounter-group category were in fact often identified as causal, for example, by leading to other growthful or therapeutic personal-professional experiences, in prompting further professional training or study leave or being the stimulus or launch point for an important new relationship. Episodes classed in the a "New appointment, responsibility or promotion" category also were quite often singled out as leading to varied further professional, educational and personal life steps. "Travel and/or staying abroad," "Birth of children/grandchildren," "Bereavement" and "Relocation of household" were each identified as precipitating shifts in lifestyle or personal outlook and choices. Sometimes an episode seemed to trigger a chain reaction or, as Szeto (1977: 28) put it, to function as the "activating core to further formative life episodes."

The results tend to confirm that the small group residential workshops were, over the long haul, seen as an influential and highly valued experience for most people in this responding sample. Since everyone had the workshop experience in common this, as well as its impact, contributed potential to the frequency of its mention. Plausibly, as well, nearly everyone in the sample would have received, over the span of a dozen years, a "new appointment, responsibility or promotion" and almost all could have "undertaken some creative new project or programme." Many would have either married or entered another important, close or intimate relationship. These episode categories (taking the last two in combination) are all in the top range of frequency of mention. In contrast, life steps such as "returning to homeland," having "marital difficulty or

breakdown," "entering counselling or therapy as a client" and "religious awakening and/or affiliation" received infrequent mention but are likely to have been experienced as highly eventful or influential episodes when they did occur.

Summing Up

This chapter is based on data gathered from former workshop participants a decade after their original Armidale experience and in the context of asking them to outline the especially significant events and episodes over the previous dozen years of their adult lives. The inquiry is of interest jointly as a life events survey and as throwing further light on workshop outcomes over the long term. The emergence of the workshops in the listing of significant life events by over three-quarters of the participants and their frequent mention as helping to bring about other significant episodes suggest that they were landmarks in the unfolding of the personal and/or professional lives of the majority who took part. As a life events survey, the method could be applied with little change in the study of different populations.

Perusal of the whole classification system (outlined in Table 8.1) also implies that activities chosen by participants – including all categories in the Self-initiated Developmental Activities domain plus the implied voluntary choices in some other clusters – played a much larger part in the critical episodes than did unwanted events that happened. People vary crucially in the extent to which they exhibit an active initiating stance as against a relatively passive looking-to-others posture, the former group mostly taking responsibility and agency in their lives for granted.[2] The

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[2] I do not mean to imply that the active-passive distinction is an either/or dichotomy with no middle ground, or that it's wholly a matter of personality without influence of context. J. M. Barrie's play *The Admirable Crichton* has real-life resonance. Crichton is the butler in an upper-class British family whose members, through shipwreck, find themselves marooned on an isolated island. No one in the family, including its aristocratic head, knows what to do or how to survive. Crichton takes charge and proves to be an excellent lateral thinker, practical and confident in his initiatives, and committed to bringing the family and himself through the crisis. He gives instructions, facilitates in his own way, and family members have the salutary experience of being followers of their former servant.

first-mentioned stance evidently prevailed among the workshop participants. It is also the case that, although many of the formative episodes reported were disturbing in the event, very few were seen as harmful in the long run, and it seemed that every category of event was viewed by one or more of those reporting it to have resulted eventually in some beneficial consequence

The influence of one kind of intense episode, in context with the broader interplay of life events over time, is a main concern of the study this chapter is based on. What makes a particular life event or episode "formative"? An answer already implied is that of whether this focused-on event does help to lead on to and effectively interact with other life events. The evidence reported here suggests that the workshops usually were indeed formative in this sense. Although some of us are more open to change than others, arguably development and change are intrinsic features of human life, not just exceptions resulting from exceptional circumstance. Some formative events, however, including the workshops under study, can have an impact that is exceptional in the ways and extent to which they trigger other significant developments. The next chapter also bears on this issue. It complements this one in respect to the more transparent interview method and direct personal sharing of significant connected experience in the long aftermath of the workshops.

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9

Armidale Remembered and Participant After-Journeys: *Interview* Perspectives

Near the end of a leave period in Canberra, a decade after the original Armidale workshops, I was able to arrange interviews with a dozen or so people who had taken part. Their selection was largely a matter of convenience in terms of being able to make contact readily, getting to their location (only one was in Canberra) and our mutual availability at the time. Though far from a random sample of the whole membership, they were a diverse, very responsive and articulate group, with a wealth of further professional and personal experience to draw from. Their accounts are quite distinctive further sources of meaning both in regard to the original workshops and the decade-long courses of action and development that followed.

Interview Aims and Structure

The questionnaire approach of the last chapter yielded unique and valuable data of its kind, but the aim in this case was to focus directly on the workshops and their aftermath in a lightly structured interview situation that allowed a depth of responsively targeted inquiry with each person. In

the professional sphere, interest centred on each person's memories and appraisal, at that much later stage, of their Armidale experience and on the subsequent extent and unfolding of their participation and leadership in experiential groups – all of this fused with elements of personal outlook and relationship.

Each interview began with a brief preamble that included an acknowledgement that our meeting was in the context of gathering data for research. For example, with Dan, I said in part, "you know I'm interested in research but I don't suppose you've had much opportunity to know about my investigative finding out side that is a very real part of me. In talking to you now that part is uppermost in the sense that I'm mainly concerned to know what you think and what you recall and so forth, regardless of whether or not it's all that I might want to hear." In another case (Will), the opening was, "For the purposes of this interview I'd very much like you to try to think of me in terms of … my [investigative] interests, of really wanting to know how it is in respect to your thinking, your recollection and your ideas in the journey of your experience in relation to the questions that I ask … This Me wants to know how it actually is in your view rather than being a Goff who may want confirmation of his own ideas."

Not exactly the same language was used with everyone, but the substance was consistent. Part of the message was, for example, "*I would be interested to know how the workshop experience and process feels as you remember back now in terms of its general quality, flavour and meaning … And, I would like to ask you if you clearly remember particular events from the original workshop group or groups you took part in, and to tell me what you remember as you think back.*" As we went along, my additional questions and prompts were such as follows:

Were there any memorable experiences with any of the other participants outside the small group sessions? Did any such key episodes or incidents stay with you to affect later action choices, attitudes, feelings about yourself or are they just casual memories?

Have you participated in any intensive groups since the original Armidale workshop that you took part in? If yes, A) has your participation included serving as a leader in such groups and B) have you engaged in experiences concerned in an explicit way with small group leadership training or C) taken initiative in instituting or organising human relations workshops or labs?

Is there a discernible pattern over time in terms of change in the kinds of intensive groups you have led or taken part in? How many such groups altogether have you been a member or leader of?

If you have taken part in a number of groups and valued all or most of them, for you personally was it like slowly 'running down' after a group and then coming back for a recharge, or did one experience build from the previous one in a cumulative progression – or, did both happen in some way?

Do you think your development as a person in your life was influenced by the Armidale workshop(s) and, if you think that it was, can you put your finger on any changes that you're conscious of that the workshop experience contributed to?

What wider meanings do you see the small group experience and movement having in contemporary life? Is there anything that has worried you about current applications or variations in this sphere?

The interviews were mostly around an hour in length, each one afterwards taking considerable work – initially by assistants with excellent hearing and typing skills – to transcribe on some 15 to 25 typed pages. As carefully distilled to present here, many short passages and phrases have been retained and quoted to convey nuances of meaning and style from each speaker. As for comment and observations from me, these come mainly and not at length in an overall conclusion to the chapter. The substitute names are the same as those used elsewhere for the same former workshop members. (Group affiliations are shown in brackets after the names.) In the longer term (9 to 11 years), and including indirect effects on later steps, there appears to be considerable congruence as well as individuality in outcomes. The order of presentation is arbitrary, but more or less in the sequence that each account was prepared, from the detailed transcripts backed up by the audio tapes.

The Individual Interview Meetings

Rob (63-y, 64-s)

In asking Rob about his recall of the first group experience in Armidale, I said more specifically that "I'd be interested to know how it feels, when you remember back now, in terms of its general quality and flavour and

meaning," and, secondly, that "I'd like to ask you if you remember particular events from the original group or groups you took part in." At first, he said that "a lot of the details have become hazy," but it turned out that he had strong memories, especially around the development of relationships and self-examination, through the first and second workshops he took part in.

He explained that as a psychotherapist he worked a lot on his own and "welcomed an opportunity to get together with similar people from all around Australia for what I thought was a fairly orthodox type of seminar to discuss the problems we'd come up against as therapists." However, he had read a bit about T-groups and was keen to have an experience of that sort, "but I didn't think there were any of them about in Australia." He went on to speak of himself as having been "a very conservative, fairly rigid, moralistic type person, fairly upper-middle-class with pretty rigid … values and mores, and pretty hard-driven" to be successful. Now in middle age (he was an elder in his group), he felt himself wanting to move from that track, though "not with any sort of clear idea of where I was going … [though] in general, feeling myself wanting to go my own way, do my own thing rather than [being] hammered in by the mores of the middle class society." Thus, he sees the [first] workshop as having come at a time "when I was ready for something to trigger me off, to tip the balance." However, "I don't know whether I'd ever have achieved much real change without experiences of this sort. I doubt if I would have. I'd have gone on I think in a feeling of discontented rebellion against the situation I was in without ever being aware of the fact that I could get myself out of it – but I think I got this kind of commitment from the [Armidale] groups, the first and second."

Although he was not expecting the opportunity that in fact presented itself, it seemed clear that Rob came ready for change, and I prompted him for his recall of "episodes or events that took place that were somehow particularly eventful for you?" Skipping one such episode, he then referred to another member who "was a very aggressive, prickly, bristly fellow that jumped at anyone, and was almost, you know, on his toes all the time, that people were going to have a go at him, and he hit back hard, and was able to do it very effectively. He became a fellow who at the end of two weeks was someone I have a lot of affection for, and felt

very warm towards, and we got very close together, and I saw him then as a person who lost a lot of this aggressive-defensiveness, and he was a much easier person to relate to … I think I have difficulty handling aggression – I am of a different sort … he had too much and I had too little." The outcome was long term: a very significant and valued continuing relationship.

Rob went on to mention significant changes in perception and relationship with people he already "knew." He said ,"This was another thing I was really impressed with: the way I got to know these people who I'd known for years … a quality of knowing that changed very much in that time." More generally, for members of his group in the first workshop: "I think I got to know all of them in a very meaningful way and, for years after, well, even now if I see any of them, I've still got a feeling of warmth for all of them. There's still something special between us that you'd never get from the ordinary contact you have through your job or the superficial contact you have with people."

The second workshop then came specifically into Rob's mind, and again it was relationship development that his recall centred on – with particular reference to another man from distant parts he had not known before and a woman from another state whose husband had died. Of the man he said, "He's an aggressive unpredictable bugger at times, but I really love him." With the woman he became deeply involved in an intimate affair "that was something that had never been in my horizon before …. This was a highly satisfying and wonderful experience, and I've still got a deep affection for her." In contrast, Rob also spoke of his wife's serious difficulties over several years and the ending of her life. Some still-troubling personal elements he talked about are passed over here as being outside the scope of our main interview.

Rob went on to speak of his experience with groups since the original Armidale workshops. Working with groups had in fact become his primary professional interest, leading to very extensive experience as a participant and group leader and to working in a training programme that he had a major role in developing. When I asked him for a quantitative estimate, he said he had personally taken part over 10 years in 40 to 50 groups. I asked him whether he was conscious of change over time in *the kinds* of intensive groups he had led or taken part in.

He described his approach initially as essentially Rogerian client centred, but he also became caught up for a time in considerable use of exercises then in vogue, especially in the United States. But he became quite disenchanted with this emphasis – "more and more feeling that they [the practitioners] are … directing the whole thing for people in ways that the leader chooses very largely … and they also apply pressures on the participants to become involved in a variety of ways" that they may or may not be ready for, though feeling unable "to back out and refuse."

Now, Rob no longer uses "exercises." He explained that "I've become much more aware of the great importance in facilitating the development of personal responsibility in the other person – their own ability to say yes or no, to come in or go out, to move forward or stay put, to leave the thing if they want to." He wants people to have an experience of free choice, discovery and "developing their own ability to run their own lives, and a commitment to developing their own independence." These values, which he had paid lip service to before, now permeate all areas of his life, he feels. However, he implied that he is still searching and to some extent trying things out with different groups, including more structured training around the development of empathy, for example. He also spoke of doing "a fair bit of marriage counselling," in which he sees a couple, in company with his own partner making up a foursome, in a process that draws heavily from his group experience. Sometimes this little group extends to include other couples. Spreading his wings professionally also came through several trips and experiences overseas, especially in the United States.

It was clear, from Rob's account, that the workshops had triggered major new directions that continued to unfold in his professional life, and that it had resulted in important changes in his personal life – changes that in retrospect he could see that he was somehow ready for but might not otherwise have made. To him, a new world was set in motion, centred on shifts in the qualities and scope of relationships in his work and personal life. Chap. 6 includes a summary (under Rob-y) of his feedback shortly after his original workshop experience, interesting to look at again in light of the continuation here of his unfolding story.

Lily (64-x)

In contrast to Rob, Lily was about the youngest member in her (different) workshop group. I began by asking her about her remembered sense of the original group and its impact and also about particular events or episodes she might recall. (Her post-workshop feedback also was given in some detail in Chap. 6.) She remembered the experience well and said at once, "I felt it was very exciting, that is my major memory, but it felt hellishly anxiety-arousing as well, sort of a very strange mixture." She went on to say that "I was damned sure something was going to happen and that it was going to be important, and I think I hung onto that throughout the groups – all through the sessions .... But it was dangerous too." I acknowledged her sense of these qualities and invited comment on particular events or features of the group. She said:

"Well, I don't know where to start because I just still remember quite a lot. I guess the first memory that came back – partly because you just finished showing me a list with names on it – was Elaine, who I couldn't understand and whom I felt by far the most distance from … The incident I remember now, I was feeling – when my anxiety really reached a peak, and everybody else was I'm sure being helpful and supportive in their own ways – but all I remember was Elaine saying that she thought it was lovely that I could feel like that, and I had the feeling that I'd like to break something over her head" (we chuckled). Lily wondered that this incident had stayed with her, though she thought she could "account for it in terms of her own dynamics." In any case, expressing it "was a bit of unfinished business which I think I have finished off a bit now." A wider consequence she wanted to share "about the group was that it did leave me with just so much to do that I spent the next five years getting sorted out."

I acknowledged the dimension of what she was telling me thus far, and she went on: "I learned about some of my -- what do I really want to say -- weaknesses. I certainly learned that my view of the world wasn't the same as other people's, and that there was no reason why I shouldn't change mine if I chose to really work at it. And I also learned a lot about my strengths." In her environment at that time she had begun to feel

"that I didn't have anything to offer, both as a person and a _____ [her profession]. I think the group did a lot to convince me about both those things and then it became worthwhile making the effort." She also found that some members "could be incredibly wound up in themselves in a way that cut off their perception of other people's feelings and, miserable and mixed up as I might be …., there were often times when I felt that I understood what was going on in the group better than other people did …. However, I also found that there is a great gap between understanding and expressing that [awareness] and doing something useful with it." She also saw some other people who could listen and "respond just beautifully, so I learned to appreciate them, too, and to try to look for those sorts of qualities in me."

Lily also recalled that some time in mid-Week 1 I had turned to her and said or acknowledged that she hadn't *wanted* to participate more (which I do not recall). She said, "That was great shock to the system" because "I wasn't used to having someone concerned about me … It felt good but it felt strange and uncomfortable …. It squarely and fairly put the responsibility on my shoulders." It left her feeling, "it's my choice," and made her think, "I did have a choice" and that I "would participate in the group more than I had been" – although this was very difficult for her. She mentioned that there were lots of moments outside the group where she has valued memories of individual exchanges, more with older men in the group – and this "went a long way toward making me feel more acceptable as a person." As we continued, I asked Lily about other groups she might have taken part in. It seems that she had not been in similar groups, except perhaps on a weekend basis, but she has worked with long-term groups, especially with ex-patients and with somewhat revolving membership. She said she made sure in deciding on her PhD-related placement experience that she would have the opportunity to work with groups. She has been very careful about getting into "T-groups" "because they can end up hurting people." She said she learned a lot about kinds of therapy from seeing me conduct the Armidale workshop and implied that she is more adventurous and open to new experience than would otherwise have been the case. However, it seems that she is most confident in one-to-one therapy and her learning transfer is more likely to go from there to small group contexts than the other way round.

She had elected to be in personal therapy along safe client-centred lines for a year, and in more (mutually) confronting psychoanalytic therapy for two years, and said, "I think all of that made a tremendous difference to me," for example, in respect to "enormous complexes" left over from her childhood. Nearly everything she's done she has taken on, she said, because she wanted to do it. At the end she added spontaneously in reference to the workshop "the tremendous feeling of being together with other people … and what I still remember vividly experientially was this feeling of being, of sharing things with people and being able to communicate with those people without the usual sort of hassles and games and so forth … which is certainly something I hadn't experienced before … That would be deep down one of the motivating things that's kept me in groups and wanting to run groups with people." I responded that her face "lit up when you started to really come forth with that and makes me glad that you did."

Rick (63-y)

Rick was in the first Armidale workshop, in Group Y (see Chap. 4). He did not take part in '64 or '65, but later came onto the university staff in Armidale as counsellor (further mentioned) and also became responsible for an extended series of follow-up workshops. We began this long interview by my asking him to cast his mind back to that first group and tell me what he remembered about its qualities and his recall of what happened. This was briefly difficult for him, after so long and with many other groups since then. I suggested he think of names of people who were there, and he at once said that he could "rattle off the names of about 10 of them" – and his response then flowed. In later groups he has mostly been the leader, but for whatever reasons "the relationships there [in 63] were very special and they were a pretty special lot of people."

Rick remembered Elaine (mentioned above) being in the spotlight "where she kept presenting her feelings about the situation and everybody in turn took the chance to tell her what she was really feeling and I don't think any of us fully understood. It was a

very special learning to see this happen and how difficult it is to be in touch with somebody else's feelings." He then recalled reacting "quite strongly and quite thoughtlessly to Dan, about his behaviour I didn't like in a particular episode, and I remember saying [as this unfolded] that it was a very useful lesson to me in terms of seeing how my response is always motivated," reflecting his own make-up. He said he was "pretty blocked off from my own feelings --- still [that way] when I finished that workshop --- pretty defensive and forbidding." Rick was still really young, he said, with a "hey don't push me sort of quality around me … which deterred quite a lot of people from coming at me." He had sharply confronted Gerald later on about the "lot of nonsense he was talking" on a particular theme, which Gerald "reminds me of every time I see him – the time I bounced the daylights out of him." However, some later groups were more intense, with "some highly potent special sort of event occurring … [Armidale] was more of a generalised special event." He recalls that the other group (X) had a "lot more emotion," which his group (Y) "seemed somehow or other to bypass or to avoid, we didn't have many of those sorts of episodes …. It seemed to … settle into a very comfortable level …. We thought we were better off, but looking back maybe it might have been better if we'd been more uncomfortable. I can remember quite clearly those two groups were very different."

Rick went on speak of the 1963 people as "a very caring group, a very accepting group---maybe without coming to grips with some of the negative issues that were there -- so I think we sort of got stuck at the caring, positive regard for one another level without moving through … to the next stage, which is having got there being able to expose some of the more negative things about ourselves or give them back to others and then find that didn't really jeopardise our caring trust [but] probably increased its depth." I enquired then about any "memorable experiences or critical incidents with the other participants outside the group sessions," which he had once said "was probably the more important area for me at that time by a long way." He became "very closely involved with .. one woman in the group," a relationship he tried to hang onto, "but looking back on that we were both bloody stupid to try to keep this sort of caring and closeness that we felt alive," not recognising the time and circumstance dimensions. He said he got in touch with "creative sorts of

feelings and energies in myself that … I really wouldn't have believed I had. I've been a very blocked off person … partly a stoical thing …. it was sort of a magical experience." He spoke of another still active special relationship, "probably the first really free-wheeling [open] relationship I've had with male." But with the woman, looking back, "I wish to hell that our relationship had been brought into the group …. We used to pretend we weren't sort of particularly close outside and this of course was very stupid." He also thinks that "it would have been good in terms of the trust of the group, too, to have been able to share it."

After the workshop, Rick soon became involved in running training and development groups, very much feeling his way. He felt that he slipped "too easily into the leadership role and didn't have enough participatory experience" – besides Armidale there was little opportunity for the latter. He also took on broader programme responsibilities and, after three or four years, he returned as University counsellor at Armidale and soon picked up on and became increasingly involved in running the continuing workshops there. He said that he is also began "stirring things up" in the University in the direction of more person-centred and human relations-oriented learning. When I asked him, he estimated he had conducted 20–30 experiential learning and related groups over recent years.

Rick's approach and style as leader-facilitator was responsively enabling until 1970 when he began to include structured initiatives. He was interested in American writing from sources such as Perls and people at Esalon, ran a trainer development group at an institute in another state and "became more interested in action-oriented things and creative expression," and risked being trapped into an "omnipotent" kind of role. He is now back more into his own style but with a belief that verbal interactions are not always enough and "that there are points in a group where I can offer to people an opportunity to try an 'experiment' with an activity or expressive medium." He said he went through a phase of being "more of a high-powered sort of encounter leader" but has now "moved back to a point of often being very quiet in a group" and feels that he has "built up enough skills and knowledge to probably say to people [for example] 'look there may be a way that the two of you ['if it's a dyad thing'] can find a way through this impasse" and then offer a particular suggestion. On a wider canvas, he wants to help people "become change

agents in their community" and to "help release creative energies towards change within institutions."

I asked Rick about possible wider meanings, if he sees any, of the small group movement in contemporary life. He answered that "I see so many things tying together …. in the sort of broad humanistic area, whether it's family therapy or groups, encounter groups or Gestalt groups. It seems to me a lot of these are really drawing people's attention to creativity and potential in themselves and in relationships … the importance of certain values … the humanistic-ethic values in creating a more rewarding and exciting and personally involving sort of lifestyle … that typically the rest of this world doesn't offer, in fact, I think blocks off. I think most of us have experience of being ground into." I also asked him, "Is there anything that you are worried about in regard to current applications and developments in this field?" In broad terms his answer was no, not in Australia, except for the misperceptions about what goes on, "the things we do, and this can be pretty painful in a small town like _____, pretty painful at times." This also ties in with his view that many people will never be suited to this sort of approach in groups, and even in learning situations, and that it's possible to do more harm than good in rejecting their present ways.

On a personal level, he feels very good about "returning" to Armidale to work and live and that since he's been there he and his wife have "grown very much closer and a large part of that has been is she has come to be involved in groups … and been able to share the experience I had, and then coming to recognize the importance of our marriage relationship and yet the importance of having close relationships with other people." He never before knew the level of relating and commitment he now experiences, and spoke further of his marriage relationship as it was before and then after the commitment he has now grown into. Rick is conscious of wider movement here in the human potential sphere but sees "only two events in Australia that are really big in the pure group field and that's Melbourne and Armidale." Rick has thought of moving on and perhaps establishing an independent institute, but isn't ready to do that, and there are advantages to staying put where he can still do what he values so much and is good at. Clearly, in our interview, he was able to share freely and quite deeply. As we ended he said, it's "the first time I've ever been interviewed like that."

Cliff (63-x)

I opened our interview in the usual way, and Cliff confirmed that 1963 was his only workshop in Armidale, though he had taken part later in a similar one in the United States. He said at once that he could remember "quite a lot," and will start with me, as leader. He arrived "all too eager to go and be with other people interested in counselling and learning [with the] expectation that it would be a fairly typical didactic sort of exercise …. It's complete lack of structure was a surprise to me, a pleasant one." The first thing he remembered was "everybody trying to come to grips with different expectations and ending up working together in some way …. I saw a tremendous amount of hostility being directed toward you as the leader." He saw how difficult this was, said he admired my "personal strength" in face of the hostile demands, which he didn't like but that we got through. He was amazed at the different perceptions people had, "so the obvious thing is that we each bring to the situation, what's in our-selves, colours our perception …. I came away from that place feeling, you know, there was a very fine line between people's capacity to help each other and people's capacity to really destroy each other". -- "What I appreciated was for the first time in my experience the opportunity to learn something about oneself in that very unstructured situation."

To Cliff the impact of being "completely isolated" together, away from their home bases, was a powerful factor in the members' experience and process – a bit like being thrown together in Antarctica he seemed to remember saying. He remembered, "we moved from the destructive to the more positive," and before this there were other people who were "accused of not leveling with people or putting on a false face or what-ever." Cliff mentioned a couple of people who seemed to take this in their stride but referred to a third person, Tess, "being very moved and affected at one stage and telling us a bit about herself, and I can remember it just so happened after that session …. I said [to her] something like 'I don't know whether you want to be by yourself at the moment or whether you would like to come [with me]' … We had lunch together and I was rather pleased about that because it made me realise that if you at least come across to people in the way you're feeling … they can take it or leave it, and I wouldn't have felt rejected if you said she wanted to be alone."

The two different workshop groups came back into Cliff's mind, and he said that another "thing I can remember saying is that we had on 'football jerseys' -- it was 'us and them'…. Obviously we got much more involved with people in our own groups although afterwards we tended in the evening to carry on cross-groups." He said some of the strong friendships he made were with people in the other group. Cliff was remembering "more and more people who were in the [his] group," in particular including the episode (mentioned in Chap. 3) "with Ralph, who had been a focus and then the situation got off him and went on to something else. I felt he looked pretty dumped and ignored, and the session was almost to wind up and … I couldn't help … wondering what was going on with him and how he must be feeling and said so, and what came across was his tremendous thank you for the fact, you know, that you haven't ignored me – because that was how he was feeling, that he had just been dumped." (I recalled the phrase "kicked in the guts" that Cliff had used at the time.) In responding to the question of whether anything outside the group sessions stood out, he spoke of one occasion in particular at the local pub where "we were telling jokes, left right and centre and in such good humour and this was a very pleasant memory." In addition, "there was a woman from the other group with whom I became very fond and we talked about issues which affected her …. She was a very responsive person and it struck a chord in me that I felt I could respond … in fairly intimate discussions about one's life and so forth that I found very rewarding."

I asked Cliff whether any particular episode or event cast the longest shadow or was most striking as something to come back to and draw from. He said it wasn't one event but the totality, including things he has mentioned, and went on to say, "certainly there were learnings about myself that I'm sure have been lasting---which have had their effects on my personal life, my married life – marital relationship, which my wife has noticed and talked about." I have asked him if there were particular personal learnings he would be willing to share. He immediately said yes "one of the things I came to terms with there was my capacity to show emotion because as I look back – my father died when I was about six – indeed one of the things I remember was determining I wasn't going to cry and I sort of bravely said I didn't cry and … this screwed me up for years … I came to terms with the fact that it was okay to be emotional,

to display emotions to people, and I came to understand much more my wife's difficulty in understanding what was going on with me … I became more available … that was a very significant release I think." As we went on, I asked Cliff whether there also was anything that he had "kept wishing would develop or happen but never did." He said "no" but then added, "I've a sneaking suspicion that I might have wished that somehow I would have got on the hot seat … sort of thinking that it might have been very productive for me, but not knowing how I would've handled it … A pretty fuzzy sort of memory … but I think something of that sort of wish was going on."

As for Cliff's experience in intensive groups since Armidale, he said this really began several years later during his doctoral work overseas and recently included an experiential group with his staff "looking at our own staff relationships; and we had a weekend workshop for which we engaged an outside consultant to act as the workshop leader, so in that sense we were all participants, and we carried [this] on within our own staff meetings … and decided that at least once a term to have a day which we devote to this." He mentioned an off-campus weekend-intensive group with students and plans now for a three-day and night residential with a group of academic staff. Altogether he recalled leading or participating in seven intensive groups – with plans now for others. And these have also had an impact on his individual counselling in such ways as being "more prepared to be open about myself, confronting even." His further reading had also helped. The reach and focus of Cliff's memories of Armidale, what he said about its personal effects and his delayed but strongly unfolding work in and with experiential groups all interested me. I remember him as an attentive no-fanfare person who could surprise in coming forth to deftly pick up on what other people were going through. His unembellished picture of recent years seemed to point to big new steps in his professional activity and thought.

Dan (63-y)

We started the interview in the usual way, and Dan shared at once that he could still remember clearly what happened. For example, he recalled Gerald saying, "We've come up here to find out all about this group

work and … [let's] bloody well get on with it!" He liked Gerald, "and I remember him growing in that fortnight, you know, very much, which is pretty interesting." Broadly, Dan remembered that the group "seemed to go very well, it seemed to go very deep, there were lots of antagonisms that came to the surface … [and] personal problems that came to surface, especially mine." And, "there were a couple of incidents that happened, really through the agency of Pat [the leader], which helped to blow me open. I remember having a talk with you [separately, when the groups were not in session] and crying my eyes out." He then went on to speak of two or three others in the group: one who was unresponsive to Dan's need for acceptance, another "glowering" member who evidently was intimidating to him, and the priest member he enjoyed. He said that his group was slow to start but it seemed to sort of deepen and go on fairly well." He added, "I can remember one time when it got sticky, [actually] two times." The group leader became irritated, he said, with the process of the group, "which was very clear because it involved me actually" and left Dan "feeling shattered." He remembers after that session Gerald "coming over and putting his arm around me, my shoulders, and saying 'that wasn't very fair [but] don't worry, you know'." More generally, during the first few days "I can remember feeling afraid of the people. They seem so competent and smooth … It was interesting to find out, of course, later as things developed, that they weren't." He also mentioned "a little old lady" member, and an occasion when he "was able to respond when nobody else could, and everybody cheered and clapped [since I was] right on target for her."

Dan affirmed that the workshop was a quite new kind of experience to him, mentioning that beforehand he had been reading a couple of Rogers' books. Altogether, the workshop episode was "very much the beginning of knowing exactly where I was going, and being very, very determined to go there, and it hasn't changed remarkably. It's still here, still plugging away." As others had done, Dan mentioned evening meetings and contacts, some at the pub, that "were very helpful," and this also reminded him of further members. As for what was the most significant, he said, "being able to look at oneself and for the first time admit that I could be very, very wrong. That was the hardest battle of all …. I was pretty aggressive I think [and am now] … But it doesn't worry me because I'm not as aggressive as I was then. I was aggressive then because I was

afraid." When I asked him if there was anything he kept wishing would happen but never did, he said, "No, I think everything that I would have wanted to happen did happen, or has happened over the 11 years [since]. You see … the interesting thing about this is that it never really stops working …. The Armidale fortnight was undoubtedly the most significant … it was the beginning … other [very] significant things have happened but without the Armidale experience they wouldn't have flowed."

Dan estimated that he'd since been in or conducted seven or eight experiential groups, of feasible shorter duration than the Armidale groups and in varying contexts. Just now he is having a break from groups, but will resume and probably introduce some physical as well as verbal activity. He said also that Armidale "stands out as a learning experience which has affected me more than other learning experiences which [influence how I] interact with people." Nonetheless, he said, as I invited him to elaborate further, "If I had gone to Armidale and nothing else had happened [afterwards] … it would not have been seen by me as a positive step, because I didn't get, there wasn't time, to explore the things I needed to explore and understand about myself, which has resulted in the growth I've experienced over the last years …. However on the other side, I doubt whether many people would have left Armidale and not gone on exploring." He added, "It was the catalyst that blew me apart and set me off……[so] it's much truer to say that Armidale really was -- did have that catalytic force and without it I doubt very much whether I would have ever understood myself – for many many years, really." He said, when I asked directly about any negative effects, that there had been none, "none at all." In all, Dan's very positive picture of the workshop experience did not pivot so much on what it achieved directly, although that was eye-opening and memorable to him, but crucially on what it had set in motion.

Brian (65-a)

As with others, I asked Brian if he would cast his mind back to 1965 and talk a bit about his memory of qualities and events from that workshop (his first). However, he wanted first to provide me with broader feedback: "I'll begin generally, Goff, by saying that I publicly expressed the opinion

that your beginning of the Armidale workshops was a very significant event for Australian Psychology." This view he said was based on first-hand experience. Regarding particular events, the first he thought of concerned the two of us. He recalled telling me that "if I had a problem I wouldn't consult you," balancing this with stressing my helpfulness when he had another kind of problem. (I had forgotten all of this.) He broke his glasses and evidently I helped him, with concern, to patch them up enough to get by with, for example, for the Sunday excursion and picnic he had looked forward to. He remembered observations and interaction with other members, for example, telling B____ he was a cardboard character. Brian makes a distinction between confrontation and affronting people, and he and B remain good friends. He remembered another member saying, "I believe that anger is never helpful" and to pooh-poohing that idea, but "the remark has stayed with me and worked in me."

Another member described Brian as vulnerable, which also surprised him somewhat but also left him thinking that, since he was rather an emotional person, he probably also was vulnerable. Another acute memory is that of ex-serviceman Lee describing in a late-night session about bailing out of a (war) plane and getting some metal, still there, embedded in his leg. He said of Lee: "He's got a front, but there's some deep quality of humanity, humanness in him that I like very much." He shared distinct memories of two or three other people and also his strong awareness of group pressure illustrated in the case of the last member to finally open up: "I was very aware of very strong group pressure which I interpreted as being 'well we've all shown something of ourselves, now it's your turn' ... it was as if it were the sign of group membership." I asked him about any further sense of the whole group, and he recalled "us mucking around for two days or so in which we seemed to be ... making sure it was alright that we had come there and left our responsibilities behind", far away from this different "island" world. To me, Brian's memories were strikingly distinct about people and incidents he referred to, extending to some members of the other parallel group on their differing track. He said, "in some senses I saw myself as the extrovert who was wanting to whip up creativity ... In our group in comparison with J____ in the other group" and said that "I've still got in

my wallet somewhere a bit of doggerel that we made up to the tune of Waltzing Matilda."[1]

Brian noted the "pretty useful" late evening get-togethers with some people, crossing group lines, and also his own lack of any "guinea pig" feeling (unlike the attitude of some others) in providing information for research. When I asked about any long shadow or major influence, he said he had come with "the general belief that I was a pretty competent professional, that my personality was okay" -- and changing it wasn't an issue. But in the workshop he began to look at this assumption: "I think my experience at Armidale confirmed me in wanting to understand more about, particularly, how other people saw me and my effect on them." His experience with developmental and experiential groups had begun to some extent before the workshop but he really "began to run workshops in 1970." He had been one of three people (all with Armidale workshop experience) to develop a human relations institute in Melbourne. Looking ahead, he has "begun to see the need for preventive work and so look to parents and teachers, particularly as the target populations…" When I asked how many experiential groups he had taken part in as member or leader, he said that it would be about 50, Including overseas experience and work with culturally diverse groups. He said, "increasingly I have become aware of the significance of group process as opposed to individual or interpersonal encounter and I particularly listen for recurrent themes these days, or what [has been called] the music behind the words of the group …. When I am really involved in a group then I seem to be able to hear the music much more readily."

On a related theme, Brian said he had "become convinced that a crucial level of learning isn't involved unless you get at group themes and fantasies and such, and so I've become particularly interested in running workshops whereby in some time slots you have a community meeting

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[1] The song-poem in five verses and a chorus—more than "doggerel" to me—was adapted from the Australian ballad "Waltzing Matilda." The *first* and *last* verses were:

Once some young Rogerians stumbled into Armidale/ Up to the University

And they said and they talked, reflecting in the meeting room/ You'll come a-feeling Matilda with me ….

Down came Goff B-L, loaded up which scripts and tapes/ 'I'm off to the USA' said he

Now our ghosts may be heard, as you pass by that meeting room/ Trapped on the tapes for eternity.

and in others you have small groups and you might even break smaller than that and do pair work or whatever." He spoke also of the necessary interweaving of being his personal self and a professional leader at the same time. In a group he feels that it works best if he is "sufficiently involved to do my own thing as appropriate to the particular group, which then serves as a lead to somebody else to do their own thing in that context." He would prefer to work with another joint leader in a group but, with a notable exception he described, mostly it is difficult "to find somebody I work very easily with." He quoted someone else's distinction between being a caring facilitator or guilty manipulator and said he has been trying to work his way more fully into the facilitative caring mode. In teaching he sees his job as the facilitation of learning and has written a paper on his philosophy of teaching. He was "staggered by the impersonality of the academic environment which I came back to, by contrast with my original perception of it as a student and graduate student" and mentioned another of his papers titled "Psychologists being human" and which also ties in with the kinds of research he wants to do.

On a different front, Brian loves cricket: "my kids play cricket and, you know, cricket is a family religion and I think I have been able to coach [cricket] more effectively as a result of group work of the intensive sort." I responded and he added, "By comparison with other coaches that I know I spread the participation around much more … and as a consequence my mob pull together better I think than most other teams." We went on to the issue of how Brian came to move away from what he had been doing into a full-time academic career position. This was not simple for him to answer, and he mentioned first another of his papers on "The ethics of influence." His switch to teaching reflected a sense of having more to contribute than continuing in his counselling role, especially in the education of clinical people in his field. He combined this with voluntary counselling since a service wasn't yet established in his university. In respect to the impact of Armidale and his subsequent group work, in his personal life, he spoke about the "importance of [and] significant influence of relationships outside the so-called nuclear family" and went on to say, "I think it's unreasonable to expect that you will get all your goodies indefinitely from one person or even within the family." His wife

was not an active participant in group work but "we agree that it's in our children's interest to experience a fairly wide variety of people … we can't be expected to provide all that they need…. As a result of my group experience I've got a much broader educational philosophy in terms of social interaction that I might have had." He went on to speak further of the personal–professional nexus and his belief that some professionals are unhelpful because they are not sufficiently personal.

Focusing more directly on his personal self, Brian added that "as a result of my participation in workshops creativity has become a much more meaningful word to me, so I've started to write poetry, I've painted, things like that, that I don't think I would've done … And the freedom to paint and the release of some spontaneous sides of myself, you know, are very dear to me--and I think there's been some carryover into my personal and family life." Turning to ideas again, he said, "I've come to look at the way people relate to each other personally [by adopting] an interpersonal framework ... and to be much more aware of systems thinking, particularly the need for open systems in operation, than I think I would ever have done." I asked him about any possible setbacks coming from his workshop/group experience. Although he was not sure of the link, he sees a limitation with his partner in that although "she shares many of the values that I have in this general area she's reluctant to participate for herself," and "she can be quite critical of my involvement in group work on occasion." He implied that he had stopped trying to push her and things were better between them that way.

On the issue, I raised, of possibly entering a further group to "recharge" Brian said, "There is something of that about it for me …. Probably because I can be extroverted, I've got a sense of the dramatic and I love meeting new people. Now, I can get by without groups but I certainly look forward to the next workshop … or whatever the experience will be that brings me in into contact with new people, particularly where we could look at personal relationships." I asked about anything Brian might want to add. He drew on elements from a lecture he had recently given on encounter groups and what he had learned or relearned through such groups. This in part was reframing what he had already shared – which, as I went over our interview in detail for this account, includes a great deal of interest to me and that offers food for thought to the reader.

Generally, Brian's acuity and scope of memory regarding the 9-year-past workshop implied that it had been something of a milestone event to him. He was still in a counselling position at that time, and had taken major strides in his career since then, but with an accelerating path of involvement in intensive groups and his own active thought within and around this focus.

Cal (63-y)

As of this interview contact (November 1974), Cal had extensive experience in experiential groups following his participation in the first of the original workshops in Armidale. He explained that the 1963 workshop ("the workshop" or "Armidale" in what follows) "came at a critical period in my life, both personally and professionally … and I remember I got quite a kick … when I got the invitation to attend … Because it was a very important issue to me…. I suppose professionally I wasn't growing and I'm a person who likes growing and sort of finding himself. So that I really jumped at the opportunity" though also knowing very little of what it was about. He has "always related me and my professional work" and feels that he is still "closing the gap" – getting away from playing a professional role and towards being more authentically himself in his work. He also said that beforehand he "hated" and "felt most ill at ease in groups of people and, from that point of view, this was a marvelous experience for me…. I was with a group of people, I felt comfortable in it and they also bloody liked me! So you know that was damn good. In my personal life I was going through a crisis … you know, I've been married, I've been divorced and since remarried … We've got two lovely kids now." He said he didn't talk about his (then) marital problems, this wasn't on his agenda in the workshop, but the experience helped to release the spontaneous "child" inside him and leave him with more confidence.

Cal's expression in our meeting was flowing and full of energy. "People {he said} find it's very difficult to think that I can be shy. I can be painfully shy … although when I know where I am, when I'm confident of my ground, I come across pretty strong." Armidale, for him, was "a kick-off board, more or less, and I've travelled a long way since then." Just

before the workshop he had encountered Carl Rogers's writing which, he said, "was quite a revelation to me at the time." However, "I'm not Carl's personality, I'm a more, I suppose, assertive personality and a more active personality. I'm a mover, a doer."[2] As a child he had not been constrained, but at some stage bought the idea that he had "had to be a nice guy. You've got to be liked. You've got to be acceptable to people, and so I had inhibited a great part of me [that] increasingly is coming out." When I asked about his recall of particular salient episodes from the workshop, he went on to speak of different people in the group, and especially the "beauty of self-revelation." When people "are open and reveal themselves, whether they are in pain, whether they're cheerful, whether they're happy or joyous, I can see that as still very beautiful." He gave as example Rob opening up in the group and revealing a side of himself that Cal had never known, and he mentioned others in related vein, who helped to "put me in touch with how I felt about people, being able to share this with people rather than thinking it and not saying anything … that intimacy can be shared and lots of positive tender feelings can be shared." In outward contrast to this, he said, "Gerald and I started the group, more or less, with having a fight …. And I said 'oh stuff that, why don't you relax and enjoy yourself! He proceeded to give me a lecture and this was the start of the interaction of the group .... Gerald and I have been terribly fond of each other ever since."

Cal feels that action beyond words is needed for something to be or have been very worthwhile. He "started at _____ [university] a series of workshops, staff-student relationships, and … sort of it was like treating a family but using small group discussions …. We trained staff, and then the staff trained students. So this was a sort of an extension of what we learned in Armidale" --- "I think it was a Phase 2 of my professional life, I'd call it. Phase 1 was a complete orientation; Phase 2 was … I was trying to find--I saw the implications of the Armidale experience as the prevention of [bad/negative] things from happening [by] facilitating relationship in a community like a university rather than waiting for the

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[2] Rogers, of course, also had these qualities strongly in his own way. This way was markedly different, especially at that early time of his own work in groups, from Cal's style and unfolding approach in groups—as seen here.

breakdown as I saw it," which counselling would struggle to address after a breakdown. He did not recall wishing at the workshop that something would happen that didn't, saying, "In fact, I was quite enthralled at the time … I felt up high, in seventh heaven, this was a marvelous experience … a common reaction for people going to a thing like this. It's as though you are turned on, really you begin to realise possibilities, but there are also, I suppose – freedom is not at no cost …. There are possible repercussions and that's why I believe people are afraid of freedom and people criticise group experiences … There is this fear that perhaps -- alright, it opens up new possibilities, but can you cope with them?"

When I asked, Cal said that his experience in groups had been "mostly as a leader, other than a very intensive period when I went overseas in 1971. [Overseas] I did quite a lot of work, particularly in psychodrama, primal therapy … [and] Rogerian stuff...". His eclectic involvement continued strongly, and when I asked about numbers of experiential groups of one kind and another, he mentioned – counting and estimating – that there had been at least 10 in the past year and perhaps 100 in all over the 11+ years since Armidale. To the question of any change in pattern in the kinds of groups entailed he said, "I'm far more action oriented. I'm far more body oriented … I do a lot of things like bioenergetics, Gestalt, psychodrama …. I concretise in the sense that I want to see that -- 'I don't want you to talk about feelings I want you … to show me.' 'I feel angry [say] … angry to him, Joe, okay pick somebody to be Joe and show me how angry you are. What would you like to do to him?' And we use pillows and things like that to protect people …. I was never satisfied with words because I sort of feel – [here] I part company with Carl – working with the university people who are sophisticated with words, I see that you can easily get entangled with things like that …. I feel there are simple ways of saying, telling the person, showing by doing rather than talking about …. I think I've changed a great deal."

Cal elaborated further on his approach: First, "you've got to learn to hear, to listen, before you can concretize anything, because you know you can move into action, any fool can move into an action, but what you see as a masterful thing is that the person is really listening, not only with his ears and his eyes, but he's picking up all sorts of cues. And this is [also] where the body comes in, I feel that if I listen to my body, to

my own feelings, to my own gut, I can hear lots of things and when I feel something is moving there I take a risk and I move in, and this sort of thing. So I've become far more active. … I get bruises, I get bashed -- all sorts of things." He might wrestle with a person to get them ready to get in touch with their feelings, and provoke their anger, even with accusation and insult, "until I can see you getting really angry and being in touch with your body and feeling angry, feeling like you want to bash me one. Then I feel, right now you're in touch with your anger." Cal also explained that "things I've experimented with in the one-to-one situation also have relevance in groups and vice versa … very much so. If I work in a one-to-one situation I'm still very active … I play roles, I double for people, I try to spur them on, so the method is essentially the same."

I also asked Cal about carry-over from Armidale (direct or indirect) into his personal life, expressed "in whatever terms you feel comfortable with without going into details." He acknowledged that causal connections are difficult to pin down, but said that "what I felt Armidale was doing for me, and for me in particular … it gave me courage about some of the things that I had thought, articulated even but hadn't dared [to act on]. It … helped me crystallise things about my private life" (but without explicit discussion in the group). He mentioned the separation from his former wife the next year, implying that things were coming to a head and might have occurred after a bit longer without Armidale. He added, "I would say it just made me clear in my mind, but also it gave me strength, Goff, in the sense that, at times, I'd felt pretty bloody low about the situation …. I had an image of – I was nice guy and you don't do things like that if you're nice guy, and all that crap. And so at times when I felt lowest, in fact, I felt strength too---the way I used to put it is 'I might fall in the mud, but I'll get up and fight … I won't perish, it hurts … but I won't perish'. And I think essentially this has been borne out." Meeting his second wife was "a momentous event in my life"; they had struggles, and "we had to wait a long time, but it added to my understanding and my strength, and it made me feel real good, and we have a dam good marriage and two beautiful kids. … [I'm] in a much better place then I was 12 years ago." When I asked if there was anything else, Cal talked a bit about to his parents, the very different styles of his father and the mother, their differences a source of conflict to him as a young

person, but now he both sees, and feels he has drawn on, big positives in both of them in his own make-up. In all, an enlightening account from a high-energy adventurous spirit, one who had evolved far in action from his Armidale process while seeming to keep to its spirit, which I was most interested to listen to freshly as well as study in typescript.

Will (63-x, 64-s, 65-b)[3]

Will's and my association went far beyond the original workshop, but I opened with the usual introduction about this interview's purpose and scope, ending with the restatement, "So could you cast your mind back to that time," of the original workshop. Will was briefly silent, "sitting thinking." What came to mind first was his memory of anger in the group over perceived misrepresentation on the part of those who had come expecting "lectures and talks about groups and that sort of thing, but found ourselves thrown into a group situation where we were presumably expected to be personally involved" (see, e.g., Chap. 2). Along with that recollection, a strong feeling had stayed with him of my courage (his word) as he perceived the way I handled this and accepted members, around the protracted criticism. He said he learned from this, but also still felt some concern about where the group left one or two people at the end. "For myself," he said, "I think this was the start of a major reorientation in my own life – the start of this …. I went home tremendously moved. [I was or am] a highly intellectualising type of individual who's over-controlling of emotions and rejecting of emotions and I think that this group didn't change me tremendously in that regard, but was the start of change." He recalls still that when he went home and started to talk about the group, he said to his wife "I feel so strongly about this that I'm likely to cry while I'm telling you, and if I cry I'm leaving home." This was "indicative of the intellectual control which insisted that I do not

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[3] Will's and my relationship continued and deepened after the original Armidale workshop and included periods of intensive association as he pursued a doctorate in his field and we became closer personally. I had scarcely (if at all) seen him, however, in the three years immediately preceding this interview. Then, the opportunity for it arose; he agreed readily and joined me in staying on focus with the distinctive intention and scope of this recorded meeting.

cry, and [also] the emotional and personal release which allowed me to express this … In fact I'd say it was nearly equivalent to crying."

Will went on to speak of "cognitive changes in terms of my understanding of myself, my own philosophy of life, and a philosophy of people. It started me on extensive reading – reading matter that was distributed at the time and reading lists I followed up avidly. It was almost an obsession for a while, where one reference lead to another." He went back for further Armidale workshops (now with "different expectations"), first mentioning one that he said "was a meaningful experience, but I don't [have clear] memories like the first one. It turned out, to his surprise, that he was at first collapsing two workshops in his mind" (1964 and 1965). "For some reason or another," he said, "I have a swirling through my mind visions of lots of interpersonal relationships outside, you know, in the hotel [bar]and that sort of thing … [it's almost] like a screen film rushing by." I acknowledged the kaleidoscopic quality, and he went on, "That's the word I was looking for. All of them unique and different in their own way [and it's hard to] pick out one that is more important … I did form some close relationships." As he reflected, Will mentioned four people, mostly with positive feeling, though one person, he recalled, aroused hostility in the group by making notes for a time, as they went along. Another was a Catholic priest, through whom he "learned about my own continuing prejudices, and was able to change those to the extent that [we] felt very good together."

When I asked Will if anything else stood out, perhaps with an enduring effect, he said not really any one thing, although "I would say that the major impact came from your own acceptance of myself and people in the group and what was going on …. my interactions with other people in the group had a cumulative importance, with you in the background all the while." He mentioned hearing of sudden dramatic insights and changes in a group, but to him effects happened gradually. One such effect "that sticks out with me is that fact that I can feel -- reach out towards other people and feel genuinely warmly and great towards them, even though in some respects I think they are utter bastards [laughing]," and they may feel of me that "I'm an utter bastard, yet they can feel Will is a human being, he's not a bastard because he wants to be … He is trying to be something else and because he's human I love him or like him;

and I think this is part of the major impact on me … and I focus on the group when I think of it."

Was there anything that Will kept wishing would develop or happen, but never did? In response he referred to the first Armidale workshop that took place after I left, which was disappointing to him. The group he was in "was run by two people who were interested in introducing different techniques, which I felt were gimmicks … stopping our relating to each other." Will "tried to enter into the spirit of it" but couldn't really, describing what happened as a series of monologues, whereas he wanted to be actively engaging with the people in the group. Originally, at Armidale, "I wished I was able to express myself more fully and openly and more spontaneously. Frequently … I was aware of holding back, aware of distorting what I was presenting and doing this in the context of wishing the hell I didn't have to … So the major wishing [for difference] was in terms of myself .. apart from wishing the leader would be a bit more active and do something that would change me …. Looking back I realise that the only one who could stop me … would be myself." Since Armidale, Will had taken part in many intensive groups, at least 10 as leader, he said, and maybe 30–40 altogether "as a rough guess." As for change in the way he has worked with groups, "it has been from a fairly stiff facilitator who had a clear-cut role within his own mind … to a much more flexible human way I think, as a participant rather than leader …. Sometimes I'm perceived as a leader, but gradually the people come to see me as a member too and treat me as one." However, "recently I had occasion to stay away from the group and they decided they'd meet without me because I couldn't be there and they found … they spent their time telling jokes and not working … So obviously there was that element of leadership if you like; when I'm there they work."

Will believed that he wouldn't be doing counselling without his group experience and growth in groups. His colleagues have conveyed the perception that they regard him as quite expressive and "changes have been occurring in my relationships with clients." Feedback from clients is, "we form pretty warm friendly relationships, even though there is a vast difference in our ages and status … In fact I have a reputation of forming very close relationships with young people." The change also applies in his personal life. However, in reply to another, final question, he added

"I wouldn't like what I've said to seem to indicate that I'm satisfied with where it [the change] has got me …. If you look back and think, that's amazing how I changed -- but if you compare this with where you need to change it becomes a drop in the ocean, and could even leave one -- at times it's left me pessimistic." As we ended, I acknowledged that "it's been a little awkward for us both to proceed … in a kind of semiformal way like this." He replied, "I didn't feel it was terribly formal … [and] if you been a cold stranger then I mightn't have expressed myself so fully … I think the only 'bias' has probably been that I've felt freer to say what I genuinely felt was true."

Sol (65-a)

Sol took part in the last workshop group I conducted in Armidale. At the end of the interview introduction I invited him to speak broadly of the "meaning or feel of what it was like." He replied that "The general feeling as I remember it now was a good feeling," partly because he was never very stressed in the group. Working at home in a day hospital and, in another context helping to train counsellors experientially, he already had quite extensive experience in fairly intensive groups (at times stressful). At first in the workshop, "there was a tremendous sense of relief for me: I'm not the [person] out there who has to carry the whole thing somehow …. I've always felt the responsibility to the people in the group I'm working with." So he sat back and "abdicated," as he put it, from any leadership behaviour. However this only lasted a few days. He recounted "a very vivid image of walking somewhere near the college [residence] through the trees sparsely set out, walking there by myself and it was very cold and the sun was shining and the trees were bare and there was absolutely nothing in me for anybody." As he continued to wander he came to "the realisation [that] I'd cut off within myself, from myself, any kind of feeling that I had anything to give, because I decided earlier on this is the place 'I don't have to give'."

Giving, for Sol, evidently gave him nourishment and meaning: "In cutting that off, I cut everything off so I could sit as a kind of passive observer, but nothing touched me particularly …. Looking into myself

what I came to see was this great black pit of emptiness, and that some-how I was looking in the wrong direction …. If I was to find myself then it was a matter of looking to other people in interaction with myself … I had to choose to interact [with] all of myself and, damn it, that included, if I felt like it, coming in with leader-type comments or statements or whatever." He then remembered a surprising bit of feedback "that I wasn't weak, I was strong, and I just accepted this … within myself at the time … I found there was a kind of strength in me and that somebody else could see it --- [However I still] came away from the whole thing feeling that I been too much of an observer … with some kind of feeling that I had missed something … But I didn't know how to get it – neither in myself, nor in relation to other people, or in relation to you … so there was a sense of incompleteness." The recording tape faded briefly but I think he said, "I realised I'd have to go to a further workshop, though it took a long time for this to happen."

Did (nevertheless) the group differ significantly from any other group Sol had been in. He replied, "Yes, I think it was the sense of equality among the participants, including yourself. By the time we moved into that second phase for me [after his self-confronting walk] I think you had pretty well been integrated into the group as a member …. still with a leadership role … but very much as yourself, your style had been accepted … and [this fitted] the general feeling of equality that I felt with all the people in the group." This was in sharp contrast with his work experience of the "patient-staff dichotomy which always came up and hit you in the face whenever a new person came into the group and whenever some-body for any number of reasons felt the need to play that [leadership] role." Back to the workshop group, there were fairly dramatic instances of insight changes. As example, he mentioned a woman from overseas who had "developed quite a dislike of things Australian and Australians. Nothing was the way it ought to be and people didn't behave the way they ought to behave … And it was quite a dramatic realisation on her part that she was imposing these perceived behaviours on the Australians she met …. I seem to remember that she been a very cold withdrawn person in relationships in general … And I think I said something about [her actually being] a very passionate woman … This is certainly meant a

lot to her and it was said just at the time when the switchover [to be more active] was occurring in myself."

I asked Sol about any other key episodes and he mentioned being "cornered" at the welcoming party "by a very forceful middle-aged woman who raised my hackles and when afterwards we were to be in the same group, though given the opportunity to change groups … I think I was the only one [to request this change]. I just thought at the time she's going to make me so angry and there'll be all that anger to work through …. I rationalised this very nicely because expression of anger doesn't come easily to me and so rather than face up to that [I switched groups] …. And at another workshop some years later she was there again, put into the same group by chance and we did work it through then." At Armidale, "I took what was me a fairly adventurous step in not conforming and …. that's how I finished up in your group." Another striking episode was that of two "teatotalers" in the group who nevertheless came to an evening where the others were drinking. It very much surprised them "how well-behaved and how un-destructive people could be even though they drank … They were wide-eyed with wonder." Much later, there was a very late-night party with alcohol, and it was decided to defer the clean-up until the next morning. When Sol got up "bleary-eyed" and headed towards the meeting room to work on this, the non-drinkers had preceded him and almost finished the job: "It was a beautiful gesture on their part … More than acceptance, it was a real gift they gave to all of us."

As for anything else that cast a long shadow of influence Sol spoke of something that happened outside the small group. This was seeing the film (borrowed for the workshop) "Three approaches to psychotherapy" for the first time: "It was seeing Fritz Perls working. I remember saying afterwards to you, that's the one for me." He said that he had been "brought up on a strict Rogerian diet – except for the other side of my schizophrenia which was Freudian and Jungian. I'd never seen anything like that, the way the therapist could behave … and some of the things he was doing there with Gloria … were so much developments and a fruition of some things that I been starting to do myself." He also mentioned "the experience of seeing the tremendous degree of concentration that applied to whoever you are listening to, both to them and to what was going on within yourself. And I think it was these two

things really that cast the longest shadow." A little further on, he also mentioned critical feedback from someone who said, "I spoke in a very flat voice … and was over-controlled and nobody knew me -- and I didn't know what to do with that …. I could admit that it was so and then nothing."

Sol mentioned three or four different contexts of group experience since Armidale. Besides numerous groups in___[hospital setting] and an outside training context, he has been in "at least 10" other encounter-type groups. He finds that "I've always come away from intensive group experiences with a sense of 'there's something more in me to call on'," which also carries over into individual counselling. In the burgeoning development of small group experiences, especially in North America, he saw positives and negatives. Positives included perceptive acceptance of "the mores of such groups with the sense that here is something that has value for them [and] the extent to which people once they are in do risk themselves in relationships – not just within the group … but in relationships outside as well … [All this] meets a very real need in the kind of society we live in, which really doesn't allow for that kind of opportunity, for sharing that fully." On the negative side, he had "seen a number of people here who had been referred to me as patients, been involved in some pretty disastrous commercial attempts at conducting groups by people who are not qualified … and who put tremendous pressure on individuals in these groups." He is concerned that the approach can "lend itself to exploitation … and making people terribly dependent."

Factors that can give Sol confidence in a group include "the honesty and intention of the group leader(s) who accept responsibility to the people within their group, not *for* them but certainly to them. The other is that there is a backup service available … [so] that if someone "does get upset, does become disturbed, is left with something that is making their life difficult afterwards … then there should be people they can go to … And this should be known right at the beginning of the group experience." Yet, in seeming contradiction, there could be "less and less need for such a backup service." I asked Sol whether he was conscious of any change after the workshop in relationships in his personal life, or if his growth as a person was furthered directly or indirectly by his workshop

experience. He said of "the Armidale workshop in 65 … I think I came away from that very much more open to my own feelings than I had been before, and to that extent more open to other people's feelings." But then this gain began "slipping away," which "was an effect I regretted very much …. For a while after that workshop I was able to work through some things with my wife. I was a bit more available to the children too." Strange as it may sound (he thought), he also "found less need … to be angry with people, or with myself for that matter."

Sol expanded on the anger theme: "For many years I had been frequently angry and very much afraid of letting that anger show through … [Now] I wasn't as angry as I had been [and thus] more aware of other feelings in me, so there wasn't as much anger to control … [This] opened me up to some degree … with other people [and worked] to stop me from getting depressed." His depression, he believed, was "usually related to some kind feeling of inadequacy and incompetence and emptiness." In a later workshop, there "was a kind of recharging or capturing of the kind of feelings that I'd had at Armidale, but again a dropping away and ending of it." This drop-off partly resulted from an extremely heavy workload: "I almost got swallowed by my job." He did things to try to lift himself out of this "bog," but always, "I'd go back to this terribly flat, stale kind of feeling. And then I went to this [recent] workshop in _____ (city) … [with the new attitude] I'm going to commit myself as totally I can to whatever is going on, and respond to it. As quickly as possible I'm going to make the opportunity." The resulting experience was highly productive. One key outcome, he said, was summed up in the phrase, "Say what [it is] you want." Crucially, to Sol, this new workshop was open to physical activity and expression: in Armidale: "Everybody sat in their seat and nobody thought of moving from their seat." In the last workshop, "much of the time we sat in our seats but there was a willingness on people's part to move across to each other and also to touch, to sit by." And, for example, if two people were seen to be at loggerheads, someone would directly acknowledge this and propose, "Let's really put you face-to-face, and [this done] now go on." Various other kinds of creative positioning and movement initiatives occurred. As with some others, Sol had an acute memory of what had been important to him stored it seems in almost photographic images of events.

Gerald (63-y)

Gerald (like Lee, below) was a senior professional in a leadership role in his work setting. He was responsively articulate and our session started easily. He took part in the first Armidale workshop, and I suggested he begin by talking about his memories from that event. He had many such, including distinct recall of the organisational meeting of the whole membership: "I think there were 30 odd of us there and it was a question of – we were being split into two groups – what we were going to do. After listening to a lot of discussion I felt the need for formalising our objectives. I suppose this is the conditioning of the administrator coming through and, having said my little piece very quietly, I felt a load of bricks fell on me from a number of other people. I remember Cal and Rick being amongst those who fell over me and obviously they were seeking other things … And this was a very important experience to discover that everybody seemed to have a different objective." A closely linked memory was that "there were a few other people whom I would regard as old hands." Gerald named three of these, and then the "younger people [including] Rick and Cal and Dan, and it was this leavening that provided the opportunity for all sorts of different kinds of experiences in human relating and communication." The old hands, he said, "were wary of total involvement." Although he felt personally he could control his own involvement and sharing, "I certainly became very much involved in what happened with other people." And, "by the end of the 10 or 12 days, … everybody, even one person who contributed no words in the group [but did outside and in an ending session], fed back into the togetherness situation that developed."

Gerald continued, saying: "The other feeling that I recall was that my need for knowledge and interchange of ideas was satisfied to some extent by the other activities, films and discussions and so on, that happened largely in the evenings and in the interaction between people outside the group situation. I became enthused about the value of such groups amongst professionals and I wondered a lot about its application in _____ unit, like the one I was responsible for setting up and managing" (discussed below). I asked him whether just now he remembered particular episodes and exchanges in the group, involving himself or between

others. In respect to himself he recalled "very important interchanges with two people … Cal and Rick. Gradually the … hostility that I felt they were directing toward me or what I wanted to do – I felt a bit of that was directed toward me as perhaps an oldie or something like that in the group – disappeared and a real affection that still hangs together years afterwards [replaced it]. Whenever we get together we are back to our good-natured … [even] strongly affectionate feelings toward one another." Gerald also referred to another "oldie" with whom an existing long-standing relationship became closer, and a further age-senior member in a different field, whom he came to respect very much. That member's stereotype image "was very different from what he thought he was, and I think he was very threatened at that time and I was emotionally attracted [in support of him] though I did very little about it then. I felt afterwards I wanted to, you know, put my arm around his shoulder and say 'Well this has happened to me and I feel with you', but I didn't."

Gerald spoke of the workshop 11 years earlier almost as though it was just behind him – "yesterday." He referred next to Dan (see above), "who in many ways was a very open person, exploring, venturesome, naïve in some ways, in the way that he exposed himself to the group – but the group respected this and I think he became a focal person in that we were able to experience a lot of opportunities – to enhance communication and relationships and so to remove what I've come to talk of as the 'emotional static' that operates at the receiving end, and the sending end quite often, that distorts pictures." He went on to speak of two other younger members "I was wary of communicating with because I got negative messages from them, though I don't think they said negative things to me … but I certainly got negative impressions. But as time went on and communication barriers fell down and this static that I talk about disappeared so that I saw two very fine people with whom I've had occasional contact." He referred to a quite affectionate letter from one of them, conveying the message, "I'm sorry I was such a bitch, I really think very highly of you and I want you to think highly of me." This was confusing to Gerald's wife when he shared it, but they evidently sorted this out and another part of his learning was the potential for "side-effects with other people who don't understand what went on in groups."

Gerald thought that his workshop group might appear as "a fairly even experience," but to him, "I was very aware of undercurrents that were very important to various people. I think a number had the beginnings of a kind of 'identity experience', I wouldn't call it an identity crisis … that allowed them to ask questions like 'Who am I'?, 'What do I think of myself?', 'I wonder what others think about me?' It is important what others think about me in ways that are not only 'nice', but they are prepared to say things that might be helpful, that might be important for me to know. And I think this happened though some of the things that we shared were said away from the group meetings and not recorded." He referred when I asked to two episodes outside the group. The first involved "most rewarding interactions with Rick and Cal" in "a very frank and honest interchange, three-way" about things that had been building up, and which "cemented our relationship that will stand the test for a long time, if I understand it." The other instance was with Rob, "where Rob and one of the women in the group and I had long talk together and I was more or less the third party in the discussion … facilitating a bit, I would now say, where it was a very meaningful experience for them that showed they were on the same wavelength and things were being sorted out that I recognised were at a very deep level … [and perhaps entering] a dangerous intimacy for their marriages." Part of this strong experience was Gerald's feeling of being trusted at the birth of a close relationship, both blossoming and risky.

"How did things evolve and change over the course of the workshop," I asked Gerald. He emphasised the development of relationship, of gradually learning and knowing so much about each other and, in the process, about "things that they have found helpful in the sphere of communication and human relations, pertinent to the development of the group. There had been a tremendous input by a lot of different individuals, some of it extraordinarily valuable to me personally [as well as] the tremendous build up in a feeling of belonging that had occurred." It hadn't been an even continuous process, though. He saw it as very positive and helpful at the beginning "and then suddenly as negative things came through and people were threatened or unhappy and started to talk about things that dissatisfied them, etc, and others didn't understand and all the difficulties of communication became obvious and the fumbling around relation-

ships occurred … and we had some pretty low level productivity. … But there were lots of things happening there, lots of changes went on." As the end of the workshop approached, "there was kind of reorientation and planfulness and a sort of wondering about the future … [and finally] a kind of preparation for the next step back into the real world or whatever it was that we were going off to."

Gerald's experience around listening was basic to his own change: "I felt the need so many times to get in there and work and say things when in fact listening was just as hard work and was much more rewarding for the person concerned, which helped me let them be, let them dig deep into their resources and what remarkable resources they had when you allowed them to discover them for themselves." He mentioned an older lady (Elaine), also pivotal in the group, and that some "people were very prickly to begin with [as though they] had nerve endings outside their skin, a good half inch outside their skin they were so touchy and so ready to react. A lot of this disappeared as we went along."

"Was there anything. Gerald kept wishing would develop or happen during the workshop but never did?" "Yes," he said, he "wanted to be a much better counsellor"; he had started counselling before there was any formal practice training here in this field and had hoped that there would be some kind of direct practice focus on counselling during the workshop, perhaps with demonstrations or even supervision. Although this wasn't feasible, in the subsequent training/practicum groups at his home base he always put himself on the line, using his own "bumbling and mistakes as teaching points for others …. I was able to live with things that went wrong and build on things that went right." This is also tied in with his experience in groups since Armidale. And especially "as a leader-participant in counselling practice courses." He conducted a variety of groups also in a counselling-helping context, which he came to call "discovery groups."

Gerald spoke of being very involved in directly encouraging the use of groups in his own agency. He has worked to ensure that all staff had the opportunity to be in an intensive group, for example, at Armidale – where the workshops continued. The pervasive use of groups, he implied, was reflected also in the 1973 formal report of the work of his unit. This noted that groups were conducted with some 250 students and required

200+ staff contact hours. He went to say, "So the little pebble that you threw back in 1963 at Armidale that induced an interest for me in group work … has had many ripples right across, not just a pond but quite a big lake as far as we're concerned." He also mentioned "second generation" people who had trained with original Armidale members. His personal experience included involvement in perhaps 20 intensive groups (not training groups, but mostly with spaced meetings) of 25–100 hours each.

Gerald tends to be more active and leading than he was earlier, in the groups he conducts under the heading of self-discovery, with a "very strong requirement that I lay down now, that there is available support assistance for individuals within an ongoing group." An outside-the-group counsellor should always be available in his view that any member can turn to – without necessarily abandoning their group. Gerald spoke also of self-limitations he is aware of, including "misgivings and some faults I know that I have. I have found myself on occasion when I've been tired and over-extended that I've been ineffective as a counsellor and ineffective in groups and I've perhaps done some harm rather than good." During a period of health difficulties and anxiety he "opted out of working in these kinds of groups for one or two years." His attitude now is that he needs to be feeling up to it: "It's not a technique, it's something that one lives." This fine encapsulation led on to the question of the broader social meaning (and safety) of the human relations/experiential group movement. Gerald feels that much good can and often does come out of it, but it's hazardous when "people get caught up with this as the panacea for all evils … this is what worries me." He said, "I'd like to see school counsellors using these techniques but in perspective with other things that happen to help people grow and develop." Generally, specialist professionals are needed, although "there are some wonderfully competent lay people that can run groups well but, in that situation, there ought still to be a consultant person with professional standing and competence who can pick up the bits."

I asked Gerald about possible effects on his personal life and development. He touched on times of resulting strain or wariness with his wife, "because I had this experience and she didn't, and it was very difficult to convey to her what it was all about … and took a long time." Broadly, in his private life he has "found I was much quieter, much more of the listener, such that people over a few years have said you've got to be shy."

He doesn't think that's the case, it's more that "when I'm home or with friends I am resting as it were, so then I'm not as active." He doesn't see "any remarkable changes" in himself or his relationships, although he does tend to be a "focal person" in informal situations where difficulties arise. When I asked, Gerald said that there were two other things in his mind to add: "The first one is a feeling of disappointment perhaps in myself …. I've tried to adopt what I call a counselling approach to the way I work with staff … and to let people develop their individuality within the framework of things that we do." Members were threatened by various things in staff meetings, "so I tried to keep authority away … We had meetings when we needed them … and we had staff discussions where anything at all could come up. Now, my disappointment is that permissiveness, unstructuredness, listening, has allowed a situation to get a bit out of hand, where I've had to become the more authoritative directing person and I felt hurt that this was necessary … I was slow getting round to it but I mention this as a disappointment … that I feel my inadequacy somehow in [not] sensing how a group-centred approach went haywire a little bit" in a situation where he has management responsibility.

The other thing Gerald added was his strong concern about the dearth of counsellor training opportunities here, saying that "something is happening but all too slowly." He went straight on to speak of his conviction "that one of the key self-selection devices for admission to a counsellor training program … is an intensive experience for people who think they would like to enter [the field] and they thrash through their suitability in a controlled situation." Some might select themselves out, he implied, and others go through some further selection process. If accepted, this should, he felt, mean commitment to them and their development, not continued judgement on a pass/fail basis. In a word, he longed to see growth-oriented counsellor training programmes established. Our interview ended there leaving me with another valued experience and sense of appreciation of the resourcefulness, dedication and unfolding of this colleague. He had used (above) the term "identity experience" in reference to the process in his original workshop group, which seems to me a way of summing up his own response, not merely what he observed. His identity in his lived vocation had included a blending of control and passion while remaining dynamically on the move.

Lee (63-y, 65-a)

After the interview introduction, Lee acknowledged some difficulty in separating out his several experiences at Armidale (including later times as a group leader). Nonetheless, he said that in "the first group we went to what sticks in my mind most is the tremendous cohesion and companionship among members which still exists today." He said that "in retrospect that's an experience that I'm glad I had. However, I've sort of been dabbling with groups, and reading and writing about them so much since then, it's all sort of blurred … what happened when." He then remembered that Pat had led the 1963 group, the 1965 was with me, and that there had been "some dramatic incidents of change in people." Of himself he said, "I feel quite convinced that I did change in many ways." Very recently he was talking with someone who was at Armidale "that first time and he said that I had changed – I was quite a different person to the way he recalled me." "I think all this time I was working on [developing] counselling and thinking about it and [in] these group experiences really integrating a lot of experience …. and gaining a bit more courage and … stimulus to keep on about it." His ongoing experience no doubt played a part, "but I do think that the groups did give me much more confidence to press on in trying to develop aspects in myself … [and] try out these aspects of myself … in the way [of being] more open and honest and less bugged by intellectual elements of my professional training, and I think this gave me more clarity…" The groups, he said, "sort of pool together in [helping] to integrate the intellectual and imaginal aspects of me as a counsellor and a person trying to develop counselling services." He implied though that people *could* go overboard, returning "with an evangelical sort of fervor for the [workshop] experience, and [very] aware of some new and valuable information they'd got about themselves."

As Lee reflected further, he recalled the case of a member getting very excited, up most of the night and extremely active. He said that "a lot of people got very concerned about him, I think I probably was too. This sticks in my mind because its affected my approach to running groups myself." Lee implied that such upset "acting out" can be a bit frightening, but in all related cases he knows of the outcome "has been quite

constructive."[4] The crisis did not occur in the same group Lee was in, which he said was "a tremendous learning experience," and entailed talking openly, "with increased positive feeling and even affection," and in ways that has influenced his subsequent open positive way of working. When I asked him whether there was anything he kept wishing would happen, he remembered "in the first group there was one chap who never spoke directly towards the group over the whole 10 days or so." His presence was felt and Lee kept wishing he would open up and level with what he was experiencing. (This did happen close to the end, when he was drawn in by others – as noted in Chap. 4.) Lee did feel they were all naive and "flying by the seat of their pants" in that first group, yet it was such a valuable experience.

Since the original Armidale workshops, Lee has become highly experienced in diverse experiential learning groups. These, he said, included further residential workshops, groups with trainee counsellors, groups with administrators and educators and people in other fields to introduce them to a person-centred way of engaging and learning with others. He is a strong believer in practical training and believes that "the person must understand himself before he can understand others, he has to come to grips with his own emotionalities and interpersonal behaviours … his own values …. and his philosophy in life and in relating to other people. In other words, he has to accept his own humanity before he can really accept other people's humanity and help them." As for the process, "One of the neat things about groups is that people learn that they've got the skills and common sense to handle the situation [better] than if they turn to the leader all the time … So I would say that the thing is that there are tremendous resources in groups … and part of my role as leader is to communicate that faith to people. I don't really see much difference between our behaviour as a group leader and as a group member."

Lee estimated that he would have taken part in over 100 diverse experiential groups. Had there been shifts in his way of working, through this wide experience? His first response was, "I certainly think there's been a

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[4] The original tape of this interview was damaged and went missing at some stage when in my possession after the draft transcription was completed. A good many words and phrases could not be deciphered by the hard-working typist-transcriber, and I have not been able fill in the gaps. Notwithstanding, I believe the gist, and even the wording given here, is accurate.

change in the sort of people you get coming to these groups … [they] are generally much less closed and more aware of what's going to happen and much more committed to the thing before they get there." However, he also thought "there are maybe two strains of people who come … [one strain] concerned with self development or actualization." These tend to be "already pretty well-rounded people, often people who have been able to resolve problems … Then you get another group of people who come to groups …, [the groups] that we run anyway, who come to deal with a problem. It might be a relationship problem with a spouse, or a decision about career or something like that within a general category that I call 'problems of living'."

Are there changes, I asked, in Lee's way of being a facilitator? He found this difficult to answer because "so much depends on the group, but implied that his repertoire had widened, and that sometimes he takes a backseat, and at other times comes on strongly: "It's not at all uncommon for me to have a group here at the university, in the adult education centre, where the people who come in" have a style of responding "better than mine, so when I get people like that in a group my role is very little." In another context, he would be more active, even "intrusive," for example, "trying to get someone to recognise the discrepancies in a position they were attacking, or in what they're saying about themselves or about another member of the group." He mentioned the case of a person in "a position of authority [who] admitted he made a mistake and heaven hasn't fallen in. A lot of them work in environments where you must never make a mistake." He spoke positively of a model for marriage counselling, borrowing on group work, where the purpose is not to solve the couple's problems for them or save them from a particular crisis – so that they relax but remain vulnerable to further crises. Instead, their sharing exploration is "helping the other person sort of work out what he wants to do and accept responsibility for it."

I wondered with Lee "whether you feel your experience in groups has significantly affected your approach to any other contexts, professionally?" The context he picked up on was his activity around the country, where he shares responsibility for policy advising, training and funding (in community agencies with their own counselling training programmes). There are "tricky decisions you have to make concerning these

organisations that people have a lot of emotional investment in." These require openness and honestly, as a "decision that they have to live with" is worked out. Also in working with managers in groups he said we are helping them "learn about the inter-personal aspects of the job and I think that out of this group experience and any discussion groups this philosophy" is conveyed. "This approach I have is often of more value to help people understand how valuable their own experience is rather than any knowledge you can give them."

I next asked Lee whether "you think your development as a person in your life, outside your vocation, was influenced by the Armidale workshops … and, if you think that it was, can you put your finger on any changes that you're conscious of that were aided and abetted by the workshop experience?" Lee related his answer to an earlier theme of being able to enjoy closer relationships with people, feeling now that he has "handles close personal relationships in ways which have been far more satisfactory to me and to the other people concerned." He was speaking in the context of friendships and of close relationships with women, relationships with his children, and generally being more aware of the other person in a relationship without losing track of himself and what he needed or wanted. With his wife there had been serious problems. He said that she has commented "on a sense of grievance that I have intimate relationships with a number of people, which she feels that she lacks, and I think she feels that in some way she may lose out by this and I don't believe that she does." Evidently, he sees her also as tending to cut herself off from people he works with, although she might gain from association with them. At the same time, he feels that "there are some ways of our relationship which I handle much better now." He feels that the deepening of his "own openness to relationships … [has made his] personal life a great deal more meaningful." He spoke of his children and their sensitivity to others, but cannot say, of course, that all these developments came about through the workshops.

When asked about anything else, Lee spoke of the death of family members and the often-unexpressed grieving of survivors. There had been dramatic instances, in one or more of his groups, of members sharing such losses and their relief in doing so. He said, "Everybody is going to have to deal with the loss of close relatives and I think that this sticks

in my mind because in the [course] of this, of people working through these grief reactions and delayed grief reactions, [I was struck by] the destructiveness of unexpressed grief and resentments." Associated with this, he "perceived a lot of resentment that people feel toward hospitals and medical practitioners … [through feeling unable to] make quite legitimate demands on the hospital staff to make their relatives more comfortable…" He then spoke of his mother, near the end of her life at the time he was leading a group where losses by others were being experienced. He said the fact that he had "lived through that grieving experience with members of the group was of tremendous value to me when I was confronted with the actuality of the death of my mother a few months later." Then, "early this year … my father died … I went to his funeral and was sobbing there … and was comfortable about doing it. If it embarrassed anyone else I realise that it was their problem not mine, and I think this was another thing that I've learned personally that …, you cannot accept responsibility for other people's problems." Near the end of our interview, he commented (in 1974!) "that small groups run by professional leaders are probably going to die out because, more and more, we will reach a situation where … the groups [will be] run by people who have the personal suitability to this work … They may not have the theoretical knowledge or particular professional experience but end up having resources such that they act very competently as facilitators."

In closely reviewing and outlining this interview, I was struck again by the richness, maturity and influence on others of Lee's professional activity and thought. His first experience of an "intensive group" was in a POW camp in World War 2. He touched on this, saying, "Many of the groups I've been in would remind me of that experience … [with] a small group of seven or eight men living very clustered together and very intimately involved with each other," because a lot of the processes in that close POW group were like those he sees in experiential groups. Lee not only survived but grew in relational awareness through this extreme prisoner experience. Sadly, he was killed on a travel holiday in South-East Asia, within a few years of this interview, when the local airline plane he and his (later) wife were in crashed. These events seem a fitting place to end his workshop-linked story. It is also the last vignette feasible to include in this chapter.

Concluding Observations

Our interviews were designed to focus on the workshops and related sequels in each person's experience, which thus were bound to be central topics. In the way they were described in these vivid and thoughtful accounts, the workshops appeared as landmark experiences and lasting reference points in the further professional journeys of the interviewees. Most of them also referred to or implied effects in their personal lives and relationships. The observations that follow sum up a few broad but distinct impressions of my own, which the engaged reader might well add to.

Everyone in this sample developed a strong interest in intensive sharing/learning groups. A few (e.g., Lee) had come originally with some related background experience. No one had stood still in the decade after Armidale, in the specific way they worked with groups, or in counselling or teaching when mentioned. Several people referred to moving from purely verbal interchange to include physical movement expression. To these people responsive movement initiatives were felt as freeing and enhancing to their sharing exploration and relationships, in groups and one-to-one.

Notwithstanding the long time lapse and extensive intervening experience since the original workshop(s) specific happenings, interchanges and feelings came back with great clarity to most people in this sample. For some, it was as though they possessed an "inner recording" of etched memories and images that they could unroll and replay once they got into it. Some of the remembered events and qualities were painful or disturbing at the time they happened. However, they were not recalled as destructive but as a significant stimulus urging and preparing the person for further movement.

The reflected-upon ideas, observations and thought in these interviews also are arresting in their rich and evocatively conveyed content and substance. They speak to many issues relevant still to students of the experiential group, counselling and human relations movements. In sum, they are a live reference source with potential to set interested readers thinking around and beyond the edges of their existing interest

and related understandings. It is partly for this reason that much time and work, from the interviews themselves onwards through the various further stages, has been devoted to this documenting from participant communications.

Some of the interviews bordered on being lightly guided counselling sessions – certainly there was an overlap in process. I think this contributed to the richness and depth of the sharing involved, which surprised me a little on returning to and going over our interchange after so long. It is my general attitude that psychosocial research should be fruitful for the participants, and certainly not alienating to them at all. These interviews entailed not only a recall of significant experience but also an enabled fresh search into the remembered process and its aftermath – of value in itself to the participant contributors and carrying richness for the listener or reader.

Part III

Theory and Wider Application

10

A Theoretical Understanding of Intensive Experiential Groups

The Armidale workshops were a turning point for me towards more systematic thinking about intensive groups as well as impacting on my later practice. This practice included work with groups of students taking courses with me in the small-group field – a considerable added stimulus to articulating a more comprehensive and searching view. This chapter draws on, but extensively revises and changes, a long article (Barrett-Lennard, 1976)[1] written during a leave year in Canberra, during which the data were collected for the work the previous two chapters are based on. What follows is much influenced also by later thought (e.g., in Barrett-Lennard, 1979; 1998, Chaps. 9 and 14; 2003, Chap. 6) and includes quite fresh elements.

Intensive groups are an exceedingly complex phenomenon occurring in many specific forms, in a wide variety of settings, time frameworks, compositional and leadership arrangements and involving a range of process patterns and varying outcome effects. To use my 1976 metaphor,

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[1] Publisher advice to me is that the book containing this former chapter article is long out of print, and there is no constraint on my further use of content from it.

they may be likened to a pregnancy, in which the general character of the growth process and species nature of the offspring is known, while its particular features become evident only as and after birth takes place and, in large measure, still lie in the realm of potentialities.

Since a group entity starts with already-formed major components (the individual members), the analogy with a pregnancy has limitations. However, the emergence of a dynamic whole distinct in nature from its parts applies in both cases. And in each case, complex interrelations within these wholes are occurring and helping to form subsystems – unmistakable as an embryo develops and discernible in groups. And like the in-utero gradual forming of a baby, the character of the developmental-growth process in a group can be examined on many levels. These range from fine detail elements to larger constituent features and properties of the whole, and the ways these unfold and change and are affected by exterior conditions.

In this chapter as a whole, further observations on the species nature of experiential learning groups are first outlined, through a simple listing of generic properties of such groups. The main section that follows delineates the within-group *process* from several different angles of view. These are designed to complement each other in yielding a comprehensive view of process aspects. Beyond this, variations in group composition and leadership, and in duration and setting – all with potential bearing on the process and effects – become the focus. An original examination of issues and approach in the study of outcome follows that. The chapter ends with a summarising restatement that pinpoints main ideas and added implications.

The Species Nature of Experiential Learning Groups[2]

By way of brief definition, an experiential group in the present context is a small temporary collection of persons who differ as individuals and vary in the mix of their characteristics, who meet intentionally

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[2] Group experiences occurring under the headings of human relations training (T-groups) or learning (L) groups, sensitivity groups, encounter groups and closely related designations can, but do not always, have the generic characteristics identified next.

within a planned time framework and usually with a designated leader-facilitator but mostly – and notably – without any set agenda. There is a broad aim of interpersonal and self-enquiry and wider discovery learning that is generated within the group. Members are engaged simultaneously with each other and with self. It includes an emergence of meanings that participants bring to and find in the group, and frank interactive disclosure both of difficulties and discoveries in their process together. The role and impact of process qualities such as empathy, honesty and trust or its lack are likely to be experienced more distinctly than in most social situations and form part of the experiential learning.

As a class, experiential groups can additionally be identified by the following properties:

1. *In size, each group typically ranges from 8 to 14 persons altogether.* Larger or smaller numbers are possible, but generally associated with differences in other species characteristics. The range cited appears narrow but turns out to be a very broad one seen from one of the main perspectives to be advanced here, concerned with the mosaic of relational subsystems within an intensive group.
2. *A group includes one or (less often) two designated leader-facilitators.* "Leaderless" experiential groups have been reported, but generally are organised under the auspices of experienced leaders who assist indirectly (Berzon, Solomon, & Reisel, 1972; Farson, 1972; Goodman, 1984).
3. *The groups typically have a 15–50 hour in-session lifespan.* Even in two-week residential workshops, scheduled intensive group meetings are unlikely to total more than 50 hours. Weekend "marathon" groups generally run to 15 contact hours, more or less.
4. *Membership is self-chosen and from populations not identified as disabled in their personal or interpersonal functioning.* Members generally are seeking enrichment, positive learning, growth and the like, rather than recovery from dysfunction, although members may experience elements of the latter.
5. *Group meetings are without formal agenda or predictable specific content.* Interchange is largely in terms of what members *find themselves*

experiencing, eliciting in one another and wanting to express, explore, work out and respond to.

6. *While the group leader usually has an important influence he/she does not direct or literally orchestrate the process. Responsibility is vested in all the group members,* although the matter of how to exercise this responsibility has to be found out within the group and generally is not susceptible to rapid consensus.

7. *There is opportunity and implicit sanction to experiment* and try out self-expression and response to others that members are not fully accustomed to or already at home with.

Complementary Views of the Process

The central phenomenon of intensive groups is the in-group process in its various aspects, although this process is vitally also a means to ends beyond the lifetime and context of the group itself. At least six main levels of viewing the process in experiential groups are of interrelated salience. The six complementary views involve (1) the level of basic "elements" found in but not exclusive to small groups; (2) broader normative qualities or characteristics which, taken together, are distinctive; (3) the group "life-cycle" or sequential properties; (4) individual experience and the self-learning aspect; (5) the process from an interactionist/member relationships perspective; and (6) the whole group as a phenomenon and system in motion.

Constituent Elements

Looking at the phenomena at the level of its basic constituent elements can provide a broad base for comparison between groups and other kinds of discourse (including therapies with individuals, couples and families). The frequency distribution of particular component elements also may be distinctive to the class of experiential groups in focus. The aim of including this level is to provide a more complete logical-conceptual

picture than would be the case without it. The constituent elements fall into at least three classes:

(a) *Experience in awareness*, ranging from sharply differentiated perceptions or meanings to unclear, emerging "sensings," comprises a major category of personal process elements. Such experience falls especially in the realm of feelings and self-awareness, personal meanings, interpersonal/relational perceptions and participant observations of movement, flow, pattern or atmosphere in the group. Significantly included are such elements as wishes, desires, longings and hungers (perhaps more openly felt than in other social contexts); anxieties, uncertainties, worries, confusion, conflict (both "inner" and relational); feelings of closeness or distance from others, of loneliness or of contact and connection; and feelings of inner freedom, purpose, confidence, strength or trust. Elements of immediate felt response or reaction to particular others and what they express tends to be a major sphere.

(b) A second major category of elements consists of various aspects, modalities and contents of *intentional communicative behaviour*, which is the main sphere of visible activity in the group. Communicative acts are nearly as varied as the experiencing of members, which they mostly express or reflect. A working list of communication elements could be adduced from the broad spectrum of elements of experience already outlined.

(c) A third class of elements encompasses a variety of kinds and levels of *spontaneous behaviours* in the group (non-verbal and verbal) which are expressive and generally communicative although mostly not with deliberate intention. Included are reactive responses and patterns that the reacting person does not distinguish, at least as they happen, but that may have expressive-communicative meaning and impact for other group members.

   Additional classes of constituent elements might be discriminated, and this outline leaves room for additions within the above groupings. Any of the elements referred to can be found in many life situations. Experiential

groups are made out of the same basic stuff as other social life experiences, while possessing higher-order qualities and patterns that are distinctive. Overlap in issues and experience between experiential groups and other life-contexts would seem essential to their useful outcomes in those contexts.

Normative Characteristics

The following qualitative features appear to characterise effectively functioning intensive experiential groups. They are not necessarily "norms" of group members but characteristic of what happens for a group to fully belong in the class under consideration.

1. People attend particularly to their own and each other's feelings, personal meanings, ideas and attitudes and personal styles and communication. There is also attention, in varying measure, to multiperson and group-wide interactional qualities, sequences and relationships.
2. The attention to immediate felt experience and process is active, moving, enquiring and has a searching or exploratory quality. There is sanction if not direct encouragement to be venturesome and experimental especially in such areas as expressive communication of experience arising in the group, being a catalyst or enabler in relation to others and in offering (even if awkwardly) person-focused and relational feedback.
3. The substance of interchange is the experience that happens when members are with each other in the group. Effectively, the focus is on *what is found to be present* and which unfolds as it is followed. In some respects, this is not dissimilar from many social groups, but it is quite distinct from most situations intended to be of an educational-learning nature and is a main source of the term "experiential" learning.
4. Members tend to "own" or take primary responsibility for their own experience in the group, while also recognising mutual influence. The idea of interdependence, or its equivalent, typically emerges but usually not in ways that reduce the experience of self-responsibility.

5. There is a valuing of down-to-earth honesty, directness, realism, a concern for getting at the reality or truth of what is happening, interactively and in felt experience in the group.

6. Consistent with and partly implied in other qualities, members "work" (much more than in most social situations) at listening, tuning into and sensitively picking up each other's feelings and ideas. With opportunity, they often acknowledge or check out what they hear.

7. In the personal feedback sphere (see (2.) above), one or more members may directly share their "pictures" of another person in the group, in a way which is personally involving and important to the giver(s) and receiver of this feedback.

8. The intensity is uneven, with peaks that usually follow some spontaneous catalytic action by one or more members that "spark" or help to bring about a release of energy, a feeling of some block or barrier being dissolved and very active or deeply felt experiential/communicative interplay within the group. One form of peak involves a shared, strong experience of self and others at the same time. Such peaks reflect and further a lowering of "guards" and a strengthening of trust among the members of the group.

9. Shifts in level or texture of the process tend to be acknowledged when or soon after they happen. An example of such shifts is the change from spontaneous expression of immediate experience and interchange *to* a more reflective consideration of what this flow means to members or how it came about. This might unfold into sharing thoughts about how the *group* is changing, or to how it all is to members who were just now silent.

10. The designated leader of the group works as a facilitator by engaging him- or herself personally over most of the same spectrum as other members but with a special purpose, concern or felt responsibility to further the kind of qualities and patterns outlined. He or she tends to be attentive to all members in ways that are a genuine expression of his or her observational perceptions and feelings, and to play a part in each person's feeling of connection and opportunity in the group.

Since the personalities and experience of leaders differ, and given the valuing of authenticity, the specifics of leader-facilitators' ways of being and working in the group are varied, not standard. As a group proceeds, a leader's involvement and contribution typically becomes less distinct and different from that of others. She/he becomes increasingly assimilated in a relational-attitudinal atmosphere of shared responsibility and awareness of each other and their processes together.

The Developmental Sequence

Insofar as experiential learning groups are a special-purpose class of social phenomena that begin and end in a limited time frame, it is plausible to expect a *relatively* consistent developmental pattern over time. There should tend to be a natural order of progression, even though differing compositional structure, leadership orientations and temporal arrangements may produce significant variations in this order, or in the quality of particular phases or transitions. One way to establish sequential characteristics is to work from recordings or samples of interaction data, from actual groups. Content analysis of members' statements, interchanges and/or larger "episode" units or themes is one such approach. Another example involves the use of rating schedules used at the end of each group session to tap member perceptions of particular aspects and qualities of the group that are then charted and compared over the group's lifetime – as exemplified in this book (Chap. 5).

Carl Rogers's first major paper on encounter groups (Rogers, 1970) used the form of a developmental sequence of characteristic steps based on his experience in the intensive groups he had participated in and observed up to that time. His schema involved 15 overlapping steps. I have drawn on his detailed discursive account, together with elements from my own later thought, to distil and distinguish *three broad groupings or phases*:

An ***entry phase of becoming connected*** with a forming sense of direction or priority comes first in my grouping. The "experiential fluency" and general interpersonal trust level of members make some difference to the quality and duration of this phase. Likewise, its course differs

somewhat as between "stranger" groups and those made up of persons already connected in existing relationships. However, this phase always applies as participants begin to move beyond an initially self-conscious process and into more spontaneous expression and active exploration. There is significant testing, trial and error and likely discontinuity in communication, and concern in varied expression about the safety and and/or meaning of dropping one's guard and being open in the group. There tends to be more readiness at the start to express past feelings, general ideas or there-and-then occurrences than immediate "in-here" perceptions, feelings and meanings. In the low-structure situation without set agenda, some anxiety or frustration is typical. The first immediate feelings to be expressed may be strongly questioning ones – directed to the leader, specific others or the process more broadly. Expression of such feelings, however, already implies some measure of felt connection and safety, and near-readiness to go further.

As the members become an experientially connected, self-active group which has a felt "pregnancy" and special meaning, a second broad phase of ***trust development and exploration,*** with a breaking-new-ground quality is likely to emerge. Here-and-now feelings and ideas are increasingly expressed. *Members speak not to address others but to share and be in contact with them.* Active listening, strongly communicative self-expression and sustained exploration all occur more than in the first phase. Members become valued resources to one another in various ways and combinations. (In Rogers's terms, a healing capacity develops in the group.) An evolving climate of trust, candid exchange, a quality of immediacy and active, unfolding "self-generating" exploration develop during this phase. However, it isn't an even process, considerable struggle may occur in achieving these qualities, there are still back-and-forth swings, and the group is not necessarily in a steady state when the third distinguished phase comes into view.

The third broad phase of ***encounter and change*** (Rogers speaks of "basic encounter") evolves out of the second. Members are active and aware in their engagement with each other and, at the same time, with themselves *and* how things are working in the group. Some understandings and issues are settled, at least for the time being, opening the way to exploration on further levels. Members are both more accepting of others (and of self, where this has been an issue) and more at ease in questioning

or challenging what others express. Thus, generally, the confidence of participants in communicating directly and openly with other members has increased, and may include confronting demands to drop residual fronts or facades. With or without any such confrontation, personal feedback processes may be prominent. Helping or supportive relationships and further relational exploration outside group sessions often occur between members, especially if they are in residence together in a full-time workshop. Episodes of deep sharing can occur and warm or close feelings between group members are usually experienced and expressed. Some changes in behaviour outside the members' previous or customary repertoire often become noticeable in this phase.

Earlier descriptions and research on the sequential development of process in intensive groups are included in a review by Tuckman (1965), and also by Cooper and Mangham (1971, Chap. 7). Lacoursiere's (1980) whole book titled *The Life Cycle of Groups: Group Developmental Stage Theory* remains pertinent, as does Durkin's edited work subtitled *Group Psychotherapy and General System Theory* (1981). Beck (1974) also advanced a detailed account – closer to my own thought – of the sequential pattern of development in low-structure therapy and experiential groups. Nine phases were distinguished. Within each phase, the group's focus and main issue, its characteristic process and the way leadership is working were examined. The conceptual kinship of this work is evident in this brief outline:

In the *Entry Phase* the central issue is, effectively, to establish a collective "We" born from the whole membership. This becomes a working group with goals and developing norms of group functioning. There is an implicit contract to work together in the group. Beck suggests that a subsystem or pair bond involving each member tends to result and to contribute to the whole group "We." Whatever his/her style, the designated leader is seen as playing a crucial part in the emerging group identity, but a separate "emotional leader" often also emerges. This member is particularly ready to make use of what the group has to offer and contributes to the subjective-emotional engagement of other members and the tone of the whole group. (In my experience, most members at times are a catalyst for others, as a group goes on.)

The *Phase 2* reflects a more explicit development of group identity. Some main properties of the "we" are now forged. The members have a beginning history together that includes communication and likely struggle over the key aspect of the purpose of the group and an *implied* "code of conduct" (my term) evolves. Beck observed that competitiveness and scapegoating frequently became evident in this phase, the latter coexisting, however, with strengthening in-group feeling. The "scapegoat" challenges and may oppose purposes and meaning held by most others. Resolution of the scapegoat member difficulty can result from someone else acknowledging anxieties in the group and casting this initial threat in a different light that helps to accommodate diversity within the group. (These first two phases approximate the becoming connected entry process distinguished above.)

A (more) co-operative climate helps to define *Phase 3*, including active interest in others, more spontaneous sharing and greater reflectiveness in the group. The "emotional leader" *may* be seen as going through something of a growth spurt that encourages and helps to trigger others. These qualities tend to unfold into what Beck calls the *emergence of intimacy* in the group, distinguished as *Phase 4.* This is reflected in a more sensitive and at times tender quality of sharing. In *Phase 5*, feelings of vulnerability surface (or do so again) and the intimacy comes under test. "Passing" this test involves increased mutuality, including a shared sense of responsibility in communication and relationships within the group. The designated or "task leader" is increasingly another group member. At the same time, what Beck and colleagues call a "defiant member" might well emerge, someone for whom all this closeness and reciprocity is too much emotionally or implies pressure to conform. (This "defiance" role might occur earlier and is muted in some groups.)

In *Phase 6*, leadership of the group is widely distributed among the members, and there is a general sense and assumption of "ownership" of the group by its members. The sense of a bordered "we" becomes strong. Especially in more therapy-oriented or distinctly growth-oriented groups, self-searching in *Phase 7* reaches a new level, enabled by a climate of trust or confidence supportive of each person's quest. There is a fuller quality of interdependence. The freer self-disclosure tends to be followed through, with increased consciousness of self and identified others. *Phase*

8 and the approaching ending of the group tend naturally to include elements of review and consideration of what members take away from their experience together. How they now want or expect to go on qualitatively, perhaps in their inner lives but, more particularly, in overt interaction and relationship with others in their life settings, comprises a likely focus.

The concluding *Phase 9* continues and extends the process begun in Phase 8. It is centrally concerned with way members finish their intensive strongly enquiring and connective association and then separate as a group. There may be unfinished business in the communication between members and, in any case, a desire to further share the meaning of their experience together. The very last session is a goodbye period, with exchange of feelings and meaning around this separation, including meanings about going home (literally or figuratively) and resuming their regular lives and activity. It is likely to include references to more informal follow-up contact between subgroups of members within reach of each other.

This account, although supported by research on the sample of groups studied and very reflective of qualitative transitions, leaves me with a question: "Is each phase as described a precondition for those that follow, as its authors imply?" It portrays a more evenly consistent course of development than my own experience suggests is typical and implies the almost exclusive aim of personal growth with a healing quality. Nonetheless, each described element helps to define worthwhile low-structure discovery-oriented intensive groups, even if the *regularity of their order and scope* is linked to a subtype of therapeutic experiential group. More broadly, such groups are conducted under different auspices and in varying contexts, with different membership criteria or composition, and meet under varied time arrangements and with diverse between-session activity. As well, since experiential groups embody search over complex territory – necessarily including a degree of trial and error as group members find their way – the process sometimes falters and appears to go backwards for a short while, until some catalytic action and refreshment releases more unified energy and motion again.

Searching work by Beck and her colleagues on group development continued for many years (Beck & Lewis, 2000), with consistency of pattern in the unfolding of groups as a major theme that allowed finer

distinctions and emerging foci for study (e.g., Beck, 1981; Beck, Dugo, Eng, & Lewis, 1986).[3] Although a group evolves on a path with recognisable features, the flow is not continuous – indeed, some discontinuity is implied in the very idea of phases. A particular issue that occurs to me is how to understand what is going on when a vigorous group comes to a halt as it faces a critical issue not reached or not in the foreground before. In my thought, this occurrence may be both an advance and a regression into loss of confidence, felt apprehension and being (temporarily) stuck in uncertainty. This can be seen as a new test of its member resources and potential. Fresh awareness, initiatives and mobilisation of these resources then combine potentially to transcend this hiatus, with the group a little wiser in its active motion again.

Self-Process Within the Group

Viewing the group as a context in which things happen on a person-by-person level differs from the other perspectives in its direct focus on individual self-activity and experience, and changes on these levels within the group context. The visible aspect of *individual* process in the group is that of self-focused expression and exploration – stimulated, assisted or provoked by others and the total group context, but centring on qualities of self and inner life that surface in the group. There is of course much silent participant observation and experiencing (some of this self-focused), given that there is only so much "air time" for each person. For a given member, gaining a clearer view of self in its complexity may be a vital aspect. From seeing and accommodating more of the diversity within, partly through the sharing and feedback from others, a member may gain a more inclusive sense of self.

Felt loneliness and apartness is a very familiar human experience. Partly from their inner listening and sharing in the group a participant is likely to come to feel more self-with-other relational connection. A related aspect of personal search is to look directly and with question at previously implicit personal meanings and values in action. Such inquiry

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[3] The fullest expression of this fertile stream of work, including the extensive research on its many aspects, is reported in a major book, subtitled *Systems for Analyzing Change* (Beck & Lewis, 2000).

can shade into a process of exploring the kind of world that has personal meaning and value, and action implications of discovering and living in such a world.

Why is the *group* a context for distinctive individual (intra-personal) as well as overt relational process? Experiential groups lack predetermined structured pathways or "maps" and place the individual in a position of having to find his or her way, not alone but with searching others. Under these circumstances, members are thrown onto use and development of their personal resources in an unusual way. It can be likened to being on a life raft in a large body of water, where the crew either are strangers or don't know each other's capacities, tolerances or desires in this type of situation, where the usual navigation instruments are lacking or won't work, where there is a "facilitator" but no captain and where it is known (in a general way) that coming to terms with oneself and the other crew members is the key to a safe and fruitful outcome.

Specifically, one aspect of the group ethos is that it is a place to break new ground and another that its particular nature and process emerges from its own membership. The individual must help to fashion the group (although not able to fashion it just to suit himself/herself) and is there, in part at least, for the sake of personal learning. She/he faces the need to respond in some unfamiliar ways. Each one also has a stake in contributing and learning through assisting others in self-enquiry and learning. In short, the individual must explore, and part of this is an inward search, stimulated and assisted by others.

Thus, a large proportion of events in a group can be viewed through a lens that focuses on each person, one at a time, and projects a moving image of that individual person's experience and actions in the group. The image has a pattern and trajectory related to personal meanings and outcomes of the group. For each person, the experience is a limited part of the larger journey of their life, part of "my history" of experience, action and relationships – often with episodes vividly recalled. What each person engages in, and the motion and unfolding of this engagement, is a large part of his/her picture of the "group" process. Experiential groups are principally concerned with development; and direct consideration of

individual process is not at odds with but complements the other perspectives advanced here.

The Relational Subsystems Perspective

Experiential groups may be viewed as theatres of intensive communication – with "actors" who have no ready-made script, who must work to articulate their own perceptions and experience and do this largely within and through the context of their evolving relationships with each other. Here, I work to bring the relationship processes on various levels into systematic view. The approach is also applicable to family process, where there are some broad historical antecedents (e.g., Laing, Phillipson & Lee, 1966), but nothing resembling present specifics. In outline, the main features are:

Dyads

- The two-person system or *dyad* is the most basic unit in interpersonal communication and relationship. As a small group of n members develops, each individual is potentially involved in n-1 dyads. Typically, in an experiential group, each person becomes increasingly aware of the presence of each other member. Mutual awareness and some sense of engagement imply a level of relationship – varying throughout the group. Each such dyadic association is a potential avenue for exploratory new experience and developments in awareness and relational learning.
- The term i*nterchange* is a convenient one to refer to a short episode of communication or exchange of messages. Some proportion of the overt process in a group centres on two-person interchanges, during which other group members are involved participant-observers.
- In total, or as viewed from the outside, there are $n(n − 1)/2$ pair combinations in the group as a whole (=45, in a ten-person group). In a low-structure, sustained intensive group, it can be expected that episodes directly involving most of these dyad combinations will occur

during the group's lifetime. Relatively small differences in group size make a very big difference to how many potential pairings there are. For example, 8 persons generate 28 dyads, whereas 12 give rise to 66 pairs and 16 individuals to 120 different pairs in total.[4]

- While in practice some dyad relationships will be more in focus and eventful than others, this perspective implies that some (perhaps many) potential dyads will be an untapped resource in most groups. As group size increases, some potential dyads may never be in the spotlight. In effect, every member does not (or need not) directly engage and communicate with every other member. More familiar or "arousing" relationships can predominate, with relative absence of new learning from submerged or inactive ones.

Triads

- Besides his or her direct involvement in $n-1$ dyads, each person is potentially an involved observer of the interchanges and evolving relationships between other pairs of individuals in the group. There are $(n-1)(n-2)/2$ possible pairs of others (= 36, in a ten-person group), offering a variety of participant observational experience of human interchange that can be highly evocative in its own right and potentially a significant further source of learning.
- An involved observer of a particular dyadic interchange may break silence and respond actively to that interchange in a way that involves and relates to *both* prior participants rather than simply following on in response to one of them. The immediate process has then become a *triadic interchange*. A group member might engage in this way with any other active pair – one of the many such possible pairs just mentioned.
- In a productive group, the ongoing communication of a given pair may be enhanced or furthered by an actively responding third person.

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[4] By simple calculation, in an eight-person group, call the members as P1, P2, P3and so on. Starting with P1, she or he can be paired with seven others. The P2, already connected with P1, adds six more potential dyads. P3, already paired with P1 and P2, adds five more and so on. 7 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 28.

Triad systems are prominent in family interaction, especially involving two parents and a child, or two children and a parent (Barrett-Lennard, 2003, 79–85). In such systems, the relational interaction between any two members may be greatly influenced by the participation or even the presence of the third. Triadic interchanges and systems also occur frequently in friendship and work groups. They are more complicated than two-person systems, and their complex and sometimes destructive working in everyday life adds to their learning relevance in a group.

- Viewed as a whole, a group contains $n(n − 1)(n − 2)/2{\times}3$ possible triad combinations and systems (= 120, in a ten-person group). Unlike the situation in regard to dyads, only a small proportion of all possible triadic interchanges are likely to be manifest in a group. The extent to which they do arise helps to distinguish one group from another in their varied usage of a relevant avenue of relational engagement and learning.

Quadrals

- A triadic interchange is occasionally followed by a fourth person responding to a triad in a way that is inclusive now of all four. As implied, there is a great variety of *possible* triadic combinations for any particular person to make up an interactive foursome with.
- A four-person interactive system also can emerge from a conjunction of dyads. Family systems, including two parents and two children, provide natural instances. Friendships between two couples that arise in everyday life are another instance, as are games (e.g., doubles tennis) in which two people partner in playing with and against another pair.
- Thus, opportunities in an experiential group for a pair of members to respond together to another pair carries the potential for discovery learning with relevance in other life contexts. Such configurations probably are of quite low frequency and tend to pass unrecognised, which limits helpful discrimination and facilitation.

One-to-All

Larger relational-interactive subsystems are possible but appear to be of less interest and salience than those mentioned – with one exception. At moments, everyone else in the group may be experienced by some member as an undifferentiated "other" with one attitude. There is always potential for this because there is one "myself" and a group of "others," for any member. Particularly, at moments of intense and difficult absorption in oneself, "others" can tend to blur together; and their casting as an undifferentiated collective may even help to elicit a relatively uniform response from them. Being aware that this can happen, and responding sensitively when a person feels apart and on their own, facing a collective that is or seems to be unaware, alien or actively critical, can be releasing and illuminating.

Factions

A further important mode of subsystem formation and interaction occurs when "factions" arise in an experiential group. Such "factioning" minimally involves felt and implied commonality among members of a subgroup which distinguishes them from some or all others in the group, who in some degree then feel their shared identity in contrast to the first subgroup. Division (usually temporary) into subgroups, with for and against feelings in relation to some process, attitude or outlook, behaviour or goal, are typical forms.

Factional interaction could occur without everyone in the group being in one or other faction. Those not "aligned" may be active participants in cross-factional interchanges, contributing distinctively to the overall movement in the group. An emergent factional structure and process might only survive a short sequence of interchanges, or it may continue and evolve over a large part of the group's lifetime.

Since factioning within groups and organisations is common in everyday life, its occurrence in the special conditions of an experiential group provides an avenue for further awareness of how this happens and how it sits with one's own makeup. For example, through the faction expe-

rience a person might discover more of their own complexity – if drawn, say, to aspects of more than one faction – a complexity that, when examined, may now seem unextraordinary and natural.

This particular systematising perspective, on relationship structures and process within an experiential group, has no precedent (beyond some of my former writing) that I am aware of. To me the effect is something like that of using a diver's mask under water, where the environment springs into view in a level of detail and patterning not otherwise seen. Further, the whole perspective suggests numerous possibilities for research, particularly in the sphere of comparative study of process in different groups, of process development in the same group over time, and of differences among members of a group in salient interpersonal aspects of their exploration and resulting awareness.

Dialogue in an engaged group is (variably) heard by the membership present. Except in the starting stage, communications follow and mostly relate in some way to what the previous speaker and/or others have expressed. Responding to other individuals (or twosomes or larger subgroups) is happening in the presence of everyone else and may at any moment call forth a response from a further member. People are not neatly bracketed into the subsystems distinguished above, in the flow of interchange *as it occurs.* In afterview, it can be seen that parts of this flow are especially among and between pairs and subgroups of others. Regardless of how visible this is, the underlying relationships between members are evolving through the flow of communication – not only relations between the active communicators at the time but also between them and the temporarily silent listeners. Sometimes, as noted, the relationship of a person to the whole group is an issue, at least for that person – and *sometimes* this ties in with a sense of precarious membership or belonging in other parts of that person's world.

How, and how much, relationships evolve, results partly from group-specific features of composition and leadership and also from its setting and the time structures involved – as later considered. This theoretical analysis suggests that a group, especially of over ten people, needs more than the available time to exploit fully the numerous avenues of personal-relational enquiry and learning that exist in the group. It would seem,

also, that fairly explicit attention to the interpersonal avenues outlined can bring groups closer to features and issues in everyday life and enhance the carryover value of the group experience.

The Whole Group System

The group "we" in its totality is a phenomenal entity for participants and has overall characteristics to an observer. What can be said about this whole that helps to define the species and could also be useful in comparing groups? One approach to considering overall properties is to derive them from the activities of individual members, or of interactive-relational subsystems and obtain a group result by some form of averaging. Another broad approach is to conceive of the group as an emergent entity in its own right, and to discriminate salient aspects of its activity and quality in this light. While it is difficult, in practice, to maintain a sharp distinction between these two approaches, the in-principle difference between them is fundamental. The focus in this section is on the second approach.

The members of a voluntary, intensive experiential group start with somewhat varied impressions regarding the nature of the situation they are entering together. Whatever these are at the beginning, they typically converge much more as the group proceeds. Even in the process of conflict or confrontation, members are co-operating in sustaining a context in which such processes are taken as part of the life and meaning of the group. Thus, the group has the character of a purposive self-aware system or "team," as this term was developed by Pentony (1970) drawing on Goffman's work (1959). An experiential group is a special form of team with its own kind of selfhood, in the broad sweep that Pentony considers. It evolves rapidly, does not come to a steady state but ordinarily develops a strong sense of a valued "we" without trying to preserve itself as an active group beyond a limited and usually preplanned life span.

The *process* mode of the group/team refers here to qualitative characteristics of its overall functioning at a given stage. The writer's prior discussion largely distinguishes *component* features. Most groups do not stay in session continuously for more than two or three hours at a time, and

individual meetings are a convenient referent when participants are called on to make in vivo judgements about their group – for example, as illustrated in Chap. 5. Each person's judgement is an estimate of a "group" characteristic during the referent interval. Pooling such judgements from everyone in the group increases the reliability of a single estimate for that session.

While it is feasible to generate group qualities based on personality concepts (as, e.g., in Bion's pioneering work: Bion, 1961), the more literally this is done, the less the group is being regarded as a life system with properties of another order than those applicable to its individual members or their relationships. There are at least three broad process qualities that do appear to apply directly to emergent *properties of the whole group entity*.

Cohesion The aspect that has probably received the most attention and study – in a wide range of small-group contexts – is the extent to which a group is cohesive in its functioning; the degree to which it is firmly bonded, unified and close-knit reflected in part by the level and quality of "we" feeling among the group members. In the experiential group context, cohesion probably develops most strongly in residential workshops or laboratory groups, where members share a common environment and relatively continuous contact. In these circumstances, the participants may literally become a band of explorers for whom each scene is new, directly experienced by themselves but no others in that place and time, who see themselves in and through their process together and see present others partly through *their* immediate searching and discoveries. Interdependence is an aspect of cohesion implicit in fruitful process in the group.

Tempo A second aspect is the extent to which the group, in its total motion, displays a high *tempo of activity*, vigour, flow, development and released or "kinetic energy." Variations in this aspect would also involve both degree and quality. The movement of the group may be rapid and in a relatively even, continuous flow, or it may be intermittently very active,

moving in staccato-like bursts with relative quiescence between. Or the motion may have a surging, wavelike or cyclical quality.

A generally active, fast-moving group is likely to differ qualitatively from one session to the next – although not in an evenly cumulative fashion. Marked shifts or transformations may also happen within a meeting session. The group may seem to "run" or spin, with or without periodic "braking." In high-tempo flow, there is little stillness, relative absence of a halting or "waiting" quality, few silences except those filled with inner activity through which the group moves or shifts in some discernible way. A less active group would tend to linger, perhaps with intermittent surging movement, to display a lower "free energy" level and to evolve more slowly. However, its general direction might be more continuous than the highly active one, and no direct or simple relationship between activity tempo and productive process and change is implied.

In task-oriented groups, a closer relationship between tempo and productivity would tend to occur than in the case of experiential groups, which are by nature inward focused and where the most important outcomes are what members take from the experience and life in their group. The tempo of activity in this kind of group is an aspect that could be discriminated by participants and/or careful observers in its variation from session to session and within sessions. Its varying level is potentially a central feature of the *group's* motion and identity, connected with a great many other process aspects and tracing a pattern over time effectively distinguishing one group from another.

Intensity A third aspect is that of *group intensity* level. This involves the extent to which interaction is personal, immediate, disclosing of self and ideas, and open in respect to shared mutual impressions and feedback. In a pertinent study, Wilkinson (1972) proposed that the predisposition of members to be personally trusting of others is the key to the intensity level achieved in a group. Within the practical constraints of this study (not conducted with highly intensive groups), this view received some support. The result did not rule out influence by other compositional and contextual factors.

A high-intensity level has its own attributes differing from those of the two other broad factors. The process may be quite intense, given the personalities and circumstances of a particular group, without the membership being bonded in a highly cohesive unit. A group may be very active but not strongly engaged in direct exchange and exploration of personal, immediate, owned feelings and perceptions and thus not intense.

As with the two other aspects in any given group, the process will vary in intensity, within and between meeting sessions, thus following an individualised "signature" over each group's history. Warm-up periods imply low initial intensity, while times of strong involvement and interplay of candid, open, self- and other-focused exploration imply higher intensity. *Group* intensity appears to have received little d*irect research attention* in experiential groups. Individual meeting sessions can have "peaks" in intensity level, possibly triggered by individuals but viewed as tidal fluctuations of the whole group.

Turning from the aspect of group system properties, and although the process on its many levels is interesting in itself, it is justified and significant finally through its outcomes (see Chaps. 6, 7 and 8). That is, the value of the multilevel phenomenon and process described lies mostly in effects beyond the limited life and special context of the group itself. How to *think about* and conceptualise these potential effects, direct and indirect, in the stream of each person's life experience and activity, is a further focus of this chapter. However, the relevant context of structures and arrangements call, first, for an attempt at clear formulation.

Group Structure and Other Built-In Features

This section examines features that are built-in or exist as "givens" when a group begins and that can be expected to influence the process and, hence, the outcomes of the group experience. The member composition of a group, its formal leadership and the temporal arrangements and setting are the main structural givens distinguished here.

Group Composition

At least six component aspects of composition bear on what happens. These are:

1. The numerical *size* of the group.
2. The presence/absence and nature of *prior outside relationships* among members.
3. The expectations, goals, eagerness and other aspects of *motivation of members*.
4. The "mix" within the group of *personal styles and value attitudes* of members.
5. The *gender* composition *and age/generational composition* of the group.
6. The ethnic and language, educational and social class and spiritual belief characteristics and mix of the participants.

Implications of group size have been mentioned in several places and flow particularly from the relational subsystem issues and dynamics discussed above. The detailed process in "stranger groups," where all or most relationships start from the beginning, differs from that in "life-connected groups," where members already know each other and in some significant sense will be living together afterwards. In stranger groups, members may search and experiment more in their relationships, new through the group. The relationships so formed will sometimes be of continuing importance to the participants, but, in general, they are a means to the wider end of development in life relations outside the group. And there is less to lose than in the life-connected case if some in-group relations become strained or remain undeveloped. In the life-connected case, the valuing and/or sensitivity of relationships brought to the group and their quality afterwards are directly important to members, who are likely to start carefully and proceed, initially at least, with modest overt intensity in their interchange.

The general strength and quality of motivation of members, particularly towards common or interrelated goals, is of obvious importance in principle although difficult to pin down in practice. Particularly, in

regard to personality and motivational qualities, ways in which groups are homogenous or heterogeneous in composition have received a good deal of attention, in terms of process and outcome effects (Harrison, 1965, and later work). Voluntary participation in a group whose intent and expected characteristics have been clearly portrayed in advance would tend to result in significant commonality on the part of members while leaving room for differences that can be advantageous – providing members are quite strongly committed and motivated towards the kind of journey a group can provide. From the process perspective advanced, diversity in personal styles within the context of broadly shared values and readiness for experiential involvement and exploration would provide the potential for breaking more new ground than would a high degree of homogeneity.

Groups composed entirely of women may focus more readily on relationship issues and development than all-male groups – who nevertheless have as much potential to break new ground in this area. Mixed groups, of their nature, are likely to include more diversity of outlook and experience of members, with additional possibilities for experiential learning. Groups quite mixed in age and generation of members start with people having somewhat different expectations of, or assumptions about, each other and thus also with potentials both for struggle and discovery that differ in part from generationally more homogenous groups. A mix of formally well-educated professional members *and* members whose educational and occupational backgrounds are not of this kind is a diversity of varied potential. One possibility is that the group takes longer to build up a momentum of sharing exploration. It may also make for a wider range of focal issues than in a group more uniform in social-occupational background.

Formal Leadership

"Formal" in this context implies reference to prearranged, designated leader-facilitators and not on informal and emergent leadership participation by other group members. Built-in aspects of leadership tie in with some of the compositional features mentioned and include at least four

aspects: (a) the presence and number of designated leaders in the group; (b) the orientation, style and purposes of the leader(s), for example, in terms of extent and kinds of initiative, personal sensitivity and openness, degree of attunement to self vs. interpersonal vs. group process exploration, and inclination to meld into the group vs. maintaining a role distinct from others; (c) the attributes of the leader(s) in terms of general standing or status and perceived expertise in the small-group context vis-à-vis other members; and (d) the role and responsibility of the leader-facilitator(s) in the initiation and advance organisation of the group experience.

Through both example and direct effects of their sharing and responsive communications in the group, and by what they do not do, skilful enabling leaders would substantially influence and contribute to the process. This influence tends to be most distinctive in the initial engagement phase. The perceived standing and expertise of the leader is also most important at the beginning and can work in different ways as the group proceeds. If a leader's distinction or status is high, and members see themselves on a lower plane, that makes challenging him or her difficult and feelings around authority may well be triggered. Leader standing would interact with his/her style and range of response, such that potentially important areas of learning and discovery may either be realised or tend to be bypassed in the group. If the leader's role in organising the group has been central, and especially if group members find themselves collectively stuck in some way, the leader/group relationship could come into focus with overt questioning, criticism or strong demand on the leader.

Two official leaders can provide valuable example from their own interaction and truly complement each other in their contribution. However, if leaders are not very free and secure with one another, the effect might be a neutralising one. Or, their interaction may become a distraction rather than a freeing and evocative example. Thus, the presence of more than one leader could influence the process in varying directions and, other things being equal, would add to its complexity. Organised groups who meet without an official leader usually have a leader-guide, initiator or model who, while not present, is indirectly influential (see, e.g., Farson, 1972; Goodman, 1984). Effects would depend greatly on the form and thrust of this indirect leadership, as well as the composition of the group.

Time Structure and Setting

The setting and duration of an experiential group interact in their variations, altogether with important bearing on the process and its effects. The main alternatives in practice are (a) a full-time residential experience, away from the member's life environment and running for a weekend up to two or even three weeks; (b) a series of meetings spaced up to a week or more apart and sometimes interspersed with one or more all-day or weekend full-time sessions; and (c) meetings on a daylong or weekend basis of members who belong to the same "host" organisation or affiliative community – meetings that could in principle be repeated periodically.

The extended residential alternative, particularly studied in this book, brings the members strongly into relationship with each other, away from their home bases and usual occupational and family activities. For most participants, it provides very substantial opportunities for self-review, new interpersonal experience and close engagement with diverse others in professionally illuminating and life-relevant ways. It significantly challenges those who take part, often to the extent of feeling stressed at some points. Being in residence together, the impact comes not only from low-structure organised small-group sessions but potentially from topical meetings and all of the informal "togethering." Short-term groups, who meet full time over a weekend or for a similar period, tend to be more structured. Even with the same leadership, the relative brevity makes for a qualitatively different experience, without vital opportunities of the longer-term residential workshops.

The non-residential spaced meeting alternative is likely to be a less intense experience even if continued for series of sessions similar in total contact duration to the full-time residential alternative. At its best, this may provide more opportunity for integration of discovery-learning outcomes with ongoing professional and life relationships. It is less likely that the group will remain intact over its whole life in this case, which both adds issues to explore and reduces opportunity for some kinds of resolution. There is some "change of worlds" each time a person attends a group session, and issues they might wish to disclose and explore may be more easily deferred until, perhaps, the members present at the time are felt to provide a safer more receptive opportunity.

The auspices under which a group is held can have indirect bearing on the process, especially if it is sponsored by an organisation with a particular ethic or a concern for development that would contribute to personal effectiveness, say, in the members' working or domestic life. This could apply, for example, when people from the same host organisation are given encouraged opportunity for communication-exploration sessions in a retreat setting away from the work environment and with an outside facilitator. This might be quite fruitful on levels such as freeing up communication and easing tensions. However, if the "retreat" is literally that, and held over one or two days, my sense is that an intensive experiential learning process and its prospective outcomes – to next consider – are quite unlikely.

Consequences: A Perspective on Outcome

To meaningfully consider and investigate the effects of experiential groups, a contextual body of thought is needed. This may be cast in the form of a set of key assumptions and principles. Here, the group experience is seen as an episode of a qualitatively exceptional, personally eventful nature occurring within the larger context of each member's life journey. This journey undoubtedly includes other "nodal" episodes, of varying nature but in each case vivid personally, occurring against a background of relative continuity, repetition with small variation, the preservation of familiar "programmes" of activity and experience and gradual (perhaps unnoticed) progression or change.

Orienting Principles

In spelled-out form, the contextual assumptions and propositions offered as a starting point for the study of outcome are as follows:

1. Change is part of the natural order in human life. Growth, maturation, learning, progression in the life cycle all imply change. Adaptation in the rapidly changing environment most of us live in is a process of

adjustment. Movement through the cycle of life implies continuing change. Human beings by nature are not static in their consciousness and behaviour patterns, but unfolding or altering – gradually and sometimes swiftly – in varied ways.

2. Change or "growth" associated with an experiential learning context such as an intensive group or personal therapy is often more significant in regard to the doors that are opened than those which are immediately passed through. Greater openness to experience and capacity to communicate from immediately felt experience, more available or nuanced empathy and inclination towards listening, more awareness of complexity within self and others and of the influence of context lay the ground for further discovery and development in the journey that lies ahead.

3. Deeper levels of personal and relational learning, important developments in one's consciousness and shifts in orienting goals or attitudes seem not to occur in an even, continuous flow. Such changes tend to happen, or at least to become apparent, in "climactic" spurts, an emergent sense of a new focus or of many "bits" falling into place, perhaps a dawning awareness that crystallises in a certain context, or a decision that may change the subsequent context and texture of one's life.

4. Shifts in meanings of experience, in significant purposes and energy, movements in sense of self or personal identity, in qualities and choice of relationships and other life patterns all can arise from intensely involving experience that the person is somehow "ready" for. In practice, they tend to reflect a combination of relatively continuous change and the received impact of unusually potent, personally eventful experience.

5. Voluntarily and purposefully taking part in an intensive group is itself an outcome, in part, of prior formative influences and learnings. In common with these previous steps, the group experience is a contributing cause of later directions, choices and shifts.

6. It follows that change effects of an experiential group cannot be adequately investigated simply by measuring immediate outcomes and determining whether before-to-after differences are sustained during a follow-up period. While this approach catches, as it were, one two-dimensional slice of the total sphere of potential change, it implies no

recognition that it is a potentiating link in a chain of interweaving influences and movements. This "chain" has varied interacting strands and runs through time, which implies indirect and delayed effects beyond short-term change.

7. Literally viewing the group experience as one key episode in a developmental life journey that is most likely to include other critical episodes and turning points complicates the study of outcome affects. Taking account of such "complication," and the additional issues it may well include, is considered part of any real search for an extended vision.

Kinds of Effect

Consistent with these observations and the full perspective presented in this chapter, the outcome effects of a fruitful experiential group are expected to include the following aspects:

- Participants may leave at the ending of an intensive group, especially a full-time one, needing to rest and wanting to process further aspects of the experience. They are likely to find themselves feeling more alive and at home with their own subjectivity and the feeling life of others. The change would tend to have temporary, enduring and potentiating aspects. Away from the group "generator" a person's enlivening "high" may at first diminish but leave them knowing experientially what it is like to be more vibrant, attuned or expressive on a feeling level and something of how this came about.

- Some deepening of affiliative contact and communication in life relationships outside the group is an expected outcome. In the case of groups composed of members from the same affiliative community, or including members already in significant relation (e.g., to close colleagues or friends), immediate and near future effects in those relationships may matter most to participants. When they stand back at a later time, their thoughts and sense of advance are likely to have a wider reference than those relationships.

- More awareness of self in its complexity, with different sides of self in easier connection, is a basic area of potential effect, both immediate

and, more significantly, in a longer-range sense. Besides the core idea of wholeness, this aspect implies greater openness to experience (or increased "experiential fluency") and more differentiated and reflexive awareness of self. Such an effect tends to build on itself, for example, so that the individual learns more from personally involving experience, is more adaptive in contexts of crisis or stress and connects more strongly with others.

- A person's more evolved sense of self results partly from feedback aspects of the group experience and from experiencing oneself in action in somewhat new ways. Besides adjustments in self-perception (often with more acceptance of self), there is a more important potential shift. This is the aspect of modification in the process by which members define or form images of self. Especially, there can be a shift in balance towards discovering oneself in and through experience and away from depending as much on an image of self, including the self in relation, unreflectively acquired earlier in life.

- Developmental change in personal priorities and social attitudes is a related sphere of potential effect. This can lead to a reappraisal of choices and decisions in personal, social and perhaps in vocational life. Groups of more diverse membership may provide greater potential for change in this sphere than relatively homogenous groups. Again, changes in the *processes* of value and goal development may be a more significant and durable than particular content changes.

- Increased consciousness of interpersonal and group system influence processes, in readiness to help, facilitate or enable change processes and form another level of potential outcome, an outcome probably more evident in groups taking place in an educational/training context than those involving more exclusively personal motivation. The extent of such change would depend also on confirming follow-up experience, as the life and scope of the group may not suffice as a sole source of broader, generalised cognitive learnings and capacities.

- Depending on the composition of the group and its impact on other levels, members may go away wanting to initiate and/or lead experiential groups themselves, or to seek further experience and preparation with this end in view. Such an effect may also be delayed as other outcomes "gel" or further evolve in interaction with new experiences.

In either event, a potential effect for members with appropriate background is to become active contributors in the small-group field.

Quality experiential group programmes can contribute to wider human relations system change – for example, in health and human service organisations and educational systems. These are potential longer-range outcome effects not acting on their own but within flexible, broadly supportive institutional and community cultures. This level of effect also plausibly depends on how extensively these contextual systems are represented in the membership of the groups. The change envisioned does not come about by "conversion" from the outside but more by a growth and infusion of initiatives that gradually take root within the systems.

It is not an aim of this chapter to review other literature on outcomes. My own research in this sphere is presented in previous chapters, especially in Part 2. Suggestive earlier evidence is contained and referenced in publications by Cooper and Mangham (1971), Gibb (1971) and Lieberman, Yalom and Miles (1972). A later major review of experiential group research is by Bednar and Kaul (1994), and there no doubt is more recent work, specifically on group outcomes, of potential value to the research-interested reader – though it does not rest on the body of thought original to this chapter. Research follow-up to aspects of the theory advanced here is suggested within the summary overview that follows.

Overview and Conclusions

This chapter has presented a systematic perspective, both broad and detailed, on the domain of phenomena involved in intensive experiential groups. Briefly, the group process is seen as an emergent, unfolding, multilevel complex of happenings that grows out of what the group participants and leader are like and what they are up to – individually and in combination – where they are with each other to begin with and in their outside lives, how many are present, the setting of the group experience, how much time they have together and how it is arranged

and other aspects of composition, purpose and context. In consequence, experiential groups differ significantly (as persons do) along with broad commonalities.

The textures of influence and consequence in human relations are necessarily complex and some outcomes at a given point act as a fertilising "yeast" leading on to new steps and change. Simple linear models of cause and effect are not applicable to the group's process itself and, still less, to its effects. Each person comes to a group with an individual history that is likely to include significant personally eventful and formative episodes or turning points. He or she is already developing, learning from experience and changing. The group experience is another potentially nodal episode probably unique in some of its qualities and effects but not unique in mediating important personal effects. It is a further step, sometimes a big turning stride, in that person's total developmental journey. Its eventual influence is a product of the past and future as well as the present; and it is at once an outcome, a movement in itself and an entry to new possibilities.

The intensive group context is very rich in the possibilities for exploration, learning and development that it offers. A great deal is happening on several fairly distinct levels and, like that big part of an iceberg that remains under water, much of what is there no doubt passes unseen in the ongoing process of most groups. The boundaries to discriminated discovery and development tend to be set more by what participants want and can actually attend to, than by the total phenomenon. There is potential for extending the spectrum of what members do take account of by such means as carefully prepared advance information, allowance of sufficient in-group time for diverse exploration and other "augmenting" between-session activity and enhancement of the group leader's reach and contribution.

The leader-facilitator's perceptive consciousness, skill and non-imposing initiatives are likely to be most influential in the earlier parts of a group's life time, but important throughout, to a degree that depends partly on the individual and combinational qualities of other members. The leader potentially can "facilitate" on several connected levels – including those of self-inquiry, interpersonal communication,

consciousness and exploration of multiperson interactional/relational patterns and awareness and evolution of the group's activity as a total system. The *range* of the leader's active but non-imposing responsiveness would complement the *quality* of his/her resourcefulness on any given level.

Group composition, with its wide range of aspects, is highly relevant to the process potentialities and outcomes of the group experience. Size alone, especially, in combination with the duration of the group experience, is closely related to the degree to which members can utilise the varied interpersonal and multipersonal avenues of exploration and learning. Particular implications are that groups of shorter duration should be kept to smaller size (perhaps 8 or 9, including the leader) than those that run for a longer period (12 or 13 people, say); and that under any conditions a low-structure intensive group of more than a dozen persons plus the leader is enormously complex, and potentially less like the full picture given here than groups not above this size. Life-connected versus stranger groups differ in detailed process, and each can be a fruitful avenue in its own terms. Groups can be homogenous and heterogeneous in many different ways, again with corresponding variation in potential. By and large, moderate diversity is expected to be fruitful over a wider range than a high degree of sameness or homogeneity is.

From the perspective advanced, considerable variation in outcome effects from group to group is inevitable. Part at least of this variation can be advantageous for members. There are plausible grounds in theory for planning groups to emphasise certain levels or classes of outcome. Consistent with the species and normative characteristics of experiential groups as outlined the purpose of such planning would not be to narrow the range of developmental learning possibilities but to responsively arrange conditions within the process spectrum portrayed, according to the known goals, ongoing relationships and active concerns and resources of participants.

Significant outcomes of intensive experiential groups are not only, or even mainly, at the level of immediately manifest effects. A vital further level of outcome is that of change in the way former members are able to respond to future circumstances and possibilities. In the same way that

coming to the group grows out of antecedents in a larger journey, the group experience is an episode whose immediate impact is a prelude to the wider significance it can turn out to have in the individual's further choices and development.

Research investigations that take account of the complex working and varied patterns and levels of the in-group process are as important as they are difficult to carry out – especially in the present state of understanding of how human relations systems work (inquiry and approach in Barrett-Lennard, 2013, pp. 55–65). Generalisations regarding the effects of intensive groups mean very little without clear and salient specification of the process nature of the groups in focus.

The type of conceptual approach in regard to outcome effects offered here warrants further translation into an operationally focused research model that provides a full-fledged alternative to existing models. The latter typically imply a steady state beforehand, a change effect during the group experience (if it *is* effective) and a steady state afterwards in the sense of the same "treatment effect" being maintained (or increased) during the follow-up period. This conventional model is sensitive to one diameter within a dynamic sphere of potential change effects. A myriad of specific aspects for further descriptive examination, hypothesis testing and areas of correlational and qualitative study – including a number implied at earlier points – could be drawn from the content and linkages portrayed step by step throughout this presentation.

In thinking over this chapter at its ending, I am aware that a given reader's interest is likely to be sparked more by some parts or aspects than by others in the dizzying scope of my treatment of the complex phenomenon in focus. Readers who do linger and resonate to particular aspects, or whose interest carries them all the way through, will I hope be drawn towards selective follow-up in their research, teaching or practice. This probably is a culminating statement of its kind from me. It brings my total experience, study and interest in groups together in a major attempt to provide the scaffolding for serious continuing enquiry into a fascinating, potent and socially hopeful region of experience-based human developmental learning.

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11

Armidale and Beyond: A Path of Events and Thought

This final chapter, like the last one, has roots in the original Armidale workshops and reaches beyond that context. For at least ten further years, there was a sequel of directly related workshops, and the first part of this chapter outlines how these continued and developed. That information and later reflection led me to update a perspective on what to both preserve and propose doing somewhat differently now in an extended residential workshop. Work in conducting groups with trainee students is also a region of subsequent experience to sketch. But, these contexts, vital though they are, are not the only ones in which to offer developmental learning in experiential groups: independent practice is another to speak of. The role and influence of low-structure groups in wider contexts in the culture is a further region to dip into. First, back to Armidale.

The Armidale Workshops Extended

Mention has been made of a workshop conducted by Carl Rogers, which occurred between the second and third of the events closely studied in this book. Coupled with lecture presentations he gave on

the same trip in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, Rogers's visit was an important further stimulus in Australia to interest in the direction of his thought and work at that time. However, since I have no recordings or research data from that workshop and Rogers himself evidently did not publish any report of it, my sharable observations are quite limited.[1] Rogers's therapeutic work had been mainly one-to-one up to that time, when he too was just becoming interested in intensive personal development groups and had conducted his first related workshop in Wisconsin in 1964. He and I were in close touch about our experiences by mail, and he offered his Australian participation as part of an overseas trip, with his wife – reported elsewhere (Barrett-Lennard, 1987).

Had we asked everyone interested to apply for the Armidale workshop with Rogers, most people would have had to be turned down. Instead, the decision was made to invite selected colleagues, one by one, to take part. The organisation fell on my shoulders, and generous records about the forming and composition of this group remain in my files. In the event, 18 mid-range and senior professionals were included. My earlier account (ibid., 1987) of how it worked out is as follows:

> The workshop group [with Rogers] proved a tough one to work with. It never integrated fully, appeared never to reach the intensity and depth of process on a personal level that the other groups I had worked with there had done. It was a memorable experience, notwithstanding, and there was a great deal of contact with Carl in and out of the sessions. Constraints on the group's process grew perhaps from its structure: not only the mix of personalities as such but also the professional composition and individual purposes. From memory, six of the members were psychiatrists, six or more were clinical/counselling psychologists and at least three were social workers by profession. All were well-established in their fields. The few women

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[1] The only substantive mention of data from that visit I have found does not focus at all on the process or outcomes of the group Rogers led. It reports processed results from "Australian ratings" gathered from members of the Rogers workshop Raskin (1974). The workshop members were used as judges to rate qualities of response of six different therapists (especially including Rogers and Ellis) to their clients, from sound-recorded interview excerpts. A filed letter to Raskin (dated 22 February 1965) confirmed that I was then mailing the completed rating forms directly to him. The therapy research-interested reader could find a connecting report in Raskin's book (2004, pp. 72–97) of collected papers.

had battled harder for their career positions then the men. All had gone to quite a lot of trouble to be there, but it was not only their sense of need for further personal and/or professional development that drew them. Carl was a distinguished and famous visitor, founder and leader of his "school", a world-renowned psychologist and therapist. To sit at his feet, even to challenge him, was an opportunity not to be missed. Thus, initial motivation was less than ideal, and the mix of members and complexities of size were a formidable challenge. And, Carl himself was still learning about groups, as we all were.

Rogers, as was his wont, did not guide the group. My own position was awkward: I had been the main organiser, had invited and corresponded with people there, everyone knew of my part in the workshop series, and yet I just wanted to be on a par with everyone else in the group with Carl, without co-leadership responsibility in the process – and, for a change, with more expression of my own needs. In retrospect, ruling myself out as co-facilitator was a mistake. Such a role would have allowed me to give more active support and contribution to the group's process. Carl said in a letter to me (on 16 February 1965) that the workshop was "a fruitful experience for me" and believed it was for the other participants. However, I think he must have been a little disappointed that the group did not light up more, and it is also too bad that we did not collect post-session rating information from the members. Afterwards, the next step of organising Workshop 3 in the main series was, at the time, mainly to provide opportunity for keen individuals who could not be accommodated in the Rogers group.

Following Workshop 3 (and my departure to an overseas appointment), the momentum and interest remained strong for continuation of these events, conducted from that point on by participant colleagues from the 1963 to 65 series and beginning in 1966.[2] The setting and most arrangements were as before, except that I have no information on any recording of sessions or other data gathering, and doubt that

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[2] On a visit a decade later to the University Extension department at UNE, Armidale, copies of their pertinent outline file records up to that time were passed on to me. The first ensuing workshop (1996) was led by Prof. Pat Pentony (one group) and two former participant members (a second group).

research was in view. The announcement of the following year's workshop (1967), led by three earlier participant members, was more distinctive in its wording:

> The core of the workshop will be sensitivity training. Members will be allocated to basic encounter groups, consisting of not more than 12 members including the leader. These groups will meet twice daily for informal discussion. The focus of the discussion will be the personalities and relationships of the members in the group rather than formal topics. It has been found that this technique effectively increases self-awareness, sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others, and reveals in a vivid way personal and group dynamics…

Areas of likely gain are further spelled out, and the announcement also notes, much as before, that "it is anticipated the 1967 groups will be broadly similar in process and outcomes to the previous ones, although the actual experience depends on the characteristics of the leader and group members." The next year's (1968) workshop was announced in almost identical fashion, with provision for three small groups – one led by Pat Pentony and the two others by experienced members of earlier events.

The workshops resumed on the same residential basis by May 1970, under the overall initiative of a former member of Workshop 1 – Richard Armstrong – by then on the staff at UNE as university counsellor. Thirty-one members and six staff are named as taking part that year. The list for the year after (1971) was recorded under the heading "Human Relations Workshop" and included 62 members and 12 staff!

In 1972, the formal announcement was subheaded "Personal growth of the professional," with participants expected to come from similar fields as before. By this time, the distinctly person-person-centred aims were precisely spelled out and of interest to quote in their exact wording from the announced plan (taken from UNE Extension Department records, late in 1974):

> The aim of the workshop staff will be to promote a climate in which each person will have the opportunity, as far as he or she chooses, for learning to:

- know himself and his feelings better, and understand how those feelings affect his behaviour;
- realize, through honest feedback, how his behaviour makes other people feel towards him;
- become more comfortable expressing his feelings openly and honestly when he wants to;
- understand better the dynamics of small groups and how they work; and finally
- try new behaviour in an interpersonal climate that encourages rather than inhibits change.

The extent to which this learning can take place depends, to a large extent, on the degree of the individual's commitment to involve himself in the opportunities for authentic relationships and open communication as these arise within the group.

The main emphasis of the program will be to work in small groups of 10 participants and two staff members, focusing on the here-and-now feelings and events as they occur. The aim is to meet the needs of people across a wide range of professional backgrounds and experience. The [workshop] will be both emotionally challenging and demanding and consequently it is designed for people who feel that they're functioning reasonably well in their day-to-day lives.

The Workshop will be limited to 40 participants… Priority will be given to those people who had not attended a previous human relations workshop at Armidale… The workshop program will commence at 2 PM on Saturday, 19 August and will finish at 4 PM p.m. on Friday, 25 August [now one week]. It is essential that participants are able to attend for the whole period of the workshop, living-in on a residential basis.

Nine staff members were listed, one more than two per group, perhaps so that a staff member would be available for individual consultation during group meetings, should such need arise. A similar workshop was held in 1973. In 1974/75 the workshops continued but by then included special-purpose offshoots. Among the latter, I have outline records for 1973 and 1974 of workshops staffed by Armstrong and others, on "human relations in agricultural extension," held specifically for field officers in the state Department of Agriculture. There also had been

residential human relations workshops for aboriginal men – the first event of this kind held at UNE in 1970 and reported in a detailed account by Iceton (1970).

New workshops with a psychodrama emphasis were held in 1974 (with about 30 residents) and also planned for 1975. Different language was used in describing the objectives, although some expectations clearly overlapped in substance with aims noted above for the 1972 mainstream workshop. A paragraph virtually lifted from earlier announcements about the emotional and intellectual demands of the workshop spoke of its "design for those who feel they are functioning reasonably well in their day-to-day living." The experience was to run for one full week. Principal staff members were psychodrama specialists Max and Lyn Clayton from Western Australia.

Altogether, over the period 1963 through 1974, upwards of 400 people took part in the Armidale workshops, and a spreading ripple effect must have extended to a very large number of others through these former participants, themselves mainly in mental health, counselling and educational occupations. The illustration in Chap. 9 of the subsequent activities and development of a dozen members of the first workshops traces their course through extensive further work and innovation in the small group sphere, independently and in leadership roles. It was only in the writing of this book that it became clear to me that such an extensive trajectory of interest and development had directly followed from the remote beginning of the workshops. (At that stage I was working for a long period overseas.) Yet for me as well as others the original experience triggered much further practice application and thought.

Workshop Features to Preserve and Improve

With the perspective I now have on groups and relationships, my own approach to the Armidale workshops and specifics of the way we conducted the groups would be somewhat revised. Although it was a momentous beginning, set off a great legacy for the years afterwards and left much to preserve, clarifying adjustments would be called for, even in

a similar setting and circumstance. Of course, contemporaries in mental health-related fields would come to such a workshop with differing backgrounds of experience and more awareness of groups than was the case much earlier. Nonetheless, the exercise of "how would I do it now" complements the early picture, could be adapted or drawn on for related current endeavours and is thought useful to share. Member feedback and other comment in previous chapters anticipate most alterations and refinements. A broad principle of well-informed choice by participants underlies the provisions that follow:

- Expected qualities and demands of the experience would be spelled out more than originally, not as a detailed roadmap but distinctly in terms of direction and emphasis. Everyone who carefully read a present announcement would expect a depth of personal/interpersonal engagement and search. They would expect to be challenged, not by forceful leader confrontation (at least in my approach) but by each other and the inherent demands of a sophisticated searching group finding their way together.
- Everyone selected would be peers in the sense of having significant qualification and experience in and for what they were doing – not in every case with long and specialized university training but at the least with some substantial preparation and reflected-upon experience. People (students) still mainly involved in their formal training or without practice experience would not qualify to take part in these particular workshops. In other respects, each group would be diverse in its make-up, even *if* from the same profession.
- All participants, including the group leaders, would be in residence together away from their usual settings, for the duration of the workshop. In this way their environments would be the same, and there would be extensive opportunity for informal between-session contact and follow-up.
- In size each group would be held to a maximum of 12 people, including the leader; or a maximum of 13, if two leaders were present. In the interest of diversity, any group would include at least eight people.
- Announcements, while noting that the workshop would be personally challenging, would not convey the impression that it was designed

essentially as a personal therapy opportunity. However, there would be an experienced counselor or other resource person, besides the group leaders, available for individual consultation during the workshop. This clearly would be a supplementary resource in case the intensity of the experience should trigger acutely felt need by someone for helping conversation outside and *in addition to* the group. It would not be a potential substitute for the group experience.

- Everyone would have general advance knowledge of any plans to record sessions and/or gather and keep other data for research and evaluation purposes. These arrangements would be subject to confirmation with members at the time.

- There would be much in the way of pertinent resource materials (as before), including some earlier 'classics' and later books, papers and released recordings. Collectively, these materials would convey a dynamic picture of associated thought, practice and research for potential follow-up after the workshop as well as being available during it.

- Leaders (as before) would not dominate communication or initiatives in the group, but would be attentive and responsive over a wider range then originally. While particularly sensitive to individual feeling and meaning leaders also would be strongly attuned also to between-person communications and relationship and to evident broader dynamics and movements in the group. They would be at home with bringing their (owned) sensed reactions and desires of members to the fore – not in directive mode but in responsively enabling ways. While alert and on their toes, leaders would be straightforward, economical and easily person-to-person in their communication.

These features taken together have reference to the residential intensive workshop context specifically. The group members in this situation, by and large, do not have significant ongoing relationships with each other before a workshop begins. As noted in the last chapter, the process naturally differs in "life-connected" groups where people do already know each other, perhaps as colleagues, friends or in their studies. In this circumstance members bring a background of formed communication patterns,

inter-perceptions and relational feelings into the group and, in some significant sense, will be living together afterwards. There is an existing sensitivity, perhaps unspoken agreements about issues to skirt around, and people are likely to proceed together more carefully. Facilitator leaders may tread *more* delicately, even with more advance knowledge of participants. In "stranger" workshop groups, the newly formed relationships may well be of continuing importance to the participants (as seen here), but, in general, they are more fundamentally a means to the wider end of development in professional and/or personal relationships outside the group. And, it may be easier to accept as "grist for the mill" than in the life-connected case, if and when some in-group dynamics bring on anxiety or conflict. The resourceful facilitator's role in the varied contexts is neither simple nor constant in expression, and his or her total prior learning and development is critically important.

Education and Training in Experiential Groups: A Personal View

By itself, the term "training" seems antithetical to developmental and discovery-oriented learning. Yet the phenomenon of intensive experiential groups is a complex and demanding one as this whole book bears witness to. Developing an awareness of the intricate dynamics of such groups and good ability to facilitate their fruitful unfolding requires much learning, however achieved. With my own move away from Armidale overseas, it became possible to mount formal courses of study in the small group sphere, with a significant experiential learning component. In my case, these progressed to fall within a pioneering human relations and counselling programme that involved both graduate and undergraduate students. The "course" experiences needed to fuse conceptual and personal experience-based learning. At best this also would (and did) include examining applied research evidence, especially in follow-on or more advanced professionally oriented studies.

Conducting an experiential group with people with whom one's relationship is also that of teacher to student and includes formal evaluation

responsibility is a subtle and delicate process to manage well. Colleagues involved in therapist training would also be familiar with this challenge. Not only in teaching but in any situation that is partly role defined, there are "realities of context" to confront and be open about, at least where there is an ethic of transparency and devotion to interpersonally sensitive enabling engagement.

The particular arrangements in my own teaching experience varied, but a typical pattern was to include both a topically focused and experiential group session each week, with a full weekend devoted to experiential discovery learning included along the way. If the "course" focused on group process, one of the earlier structured sessions centred on a striking exercise demonstration of the way the membership structure of a group, especially its size, influences process and relationship development in a group (graphically described in Barrett-Lennard, 2003, pp. 68–72). At times, I flexibly offered other exercises (such as a "friends as family game") that seemed helpful in student groups with spaced meetings, especially in bringing nonthreatening feedback communication into the group. The way in which this or any "exercise" was done could be fully in keeping with the facilitative attitudes and climate that applied generally – even, as far as possible, in arriving at a grade for each student.

Clear outlines provided at the beginning, usually before students were fully committed to a course, included a close portrayal of the approach to evaluation. Students were actively involved in the appraisal process, which we took to be a reality of the context we were working in together. Some built-in features of the course, such as an essay requirement, were subject to my own careful evaluation and feedback and carried a predetermined weighting. Essay topics were largely self-chosen with consultation readily available as each person framed their choice and general approach. If there was need for a dyadic recorded interview, for example, in a counselling course, the student and I (sometimes with the interviewee) would go over this together and share evaluative impressions in a process that was itself a further learning experience, and that normally resulted in a "mark" sensible to both of us. Each student and I might also rate their qualitative participation on a multi-aspect rating form and would meet to share our appraisals, thus informing both of us further.

In most contexts, students would make an independent self-appraisal in accord with some stated principles, which itself directly carried some weight.

In my case, the last phase of this formal teaching experience occurred at Murdoch University over an eight-year experience of conducting an elective course in counselling, essentially on person-centred lines and with an experiential group component. This was for Year 4 psychology undergraduates as a structured applied learning opportunity available by application as an option to a supervised field placement. Given its planned intensive nature, the numbers were kept down to 12–15 people. Shared appraisal along the lines just noted above, provision for a group experience and the range of topical foci were all carefully spelled out. In fact, the course design continued to be refined in that context, for an enterprise that was both demanding of time and commitment and very rewarding to me and generally to the other participants.

Small Experiential/Encounter Groups in Big Group Contexts

Clearly, there are many contexts in which small groups exist inside and as parts of larger ones. Big organisations almost always have small working groups and teams nested within them, groups that carry out the service, produce or sell goods or provide other functions of their system. These small groups effectively do most of the work of the organisation and generally are task oriented rather than existing to assist members in their own personal development. Yet, the organisation itself is a system of relationships likely to be important in their own right to members and which help to mediate the task functions of the group and system, as discussed elsewhere (e.g., in Barrett-Lennard, 2013 pp. 96–102). [3] Even in systems, such as educational institutions, that do exist to aid in the learning and

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[3] The language of "teams," which implies a degree of sensitivity to qualities of relationship, is now in wide use. Teams that go on "retreats" together do so partly at least to deepen or refresh communication, plan or solve problems, aid mutual understanding and, often, to improve leadership skills. They may employ an outside facilitator-consultant, and the process language resembles some properties of experiential learning groups as I describe them.

development of their members, experiential learning groups are a distinctive and infrequent special case. They are not directly outcome oriented in their process, although flexible outcomes are crucially relevant to their value. Self and relational learning are often implicit goals but rarely have a place in the curriculum. First-hand experience in low-structure groups conducted by skilled facilitators evidently is unavailable still to the great majority of school students, although the conduct of formal education in schools and elsewhere is gradually more interactive and experience based than formerly. In other contexts, where small working groups or factions are under considerable strain, outside facilitator-consultants may be called in to help open up new levels of communication, mutual awareness and problem solving that overlap in aspects of process with experiential groups.

Practice experience, feedback and systematic thought interlock in my belief in the needed small size of fruitful intensive experiential groups. Not everyone in the field would support this view. Carl Rogers was encouraged by experience in the La Jolla Program (Rogers, 1970 p. 153) to go on to work with residential "community" groups of over 100 people and several staff (Rogers, 1977. See also Coghlan and McIlduff, 1991). However, in addition to the whole big group experiential community meetings, nearly everyone in this case also took part in small encounter-type groups. I was a participant member in one of these workshops (reported by Barrett-Lennard, 2005, pp. 89–97; Rogers, 1977, pp. 143–185; and Wood, 1984). Supported by a small interest group, it became possible as we wound up to obtain rather hastily formed questionnaire data from a large majority of members. One finding from this exploratory study was that most respondents rated the encounter groups as "more important for their sense of membership in the community" than their experience in the more dramatic, turbulent and at times chaotic whole group community sessions (Barrett-Lennard, 2005, pp. 94–95). This suggests, more broadly, that a felt sense of inclusion and identification with a community "hinges, in crucial part, on networks of more personal relationship among the members." This view also implies that big-group workshops which proceed directly to intensive sessions of the whole are effectively short-circuiting steps in the building of relationship

in a community (ibid.). Wood (1999, especially pp. 151–156) searches deeply into these and related issues in small and large groups.

Experiential Groups in Independent Practice Contexts

Intensive small groups also take place outside institutional settings. Part of my own relevant experience occurred in a private psychological practice, in which mounting and conducting a group has its own complexities on organisational and ethical levels. Supervisory or similar consultation, data-based appraisal and other safeguards are not easy or straightforward to establish, especially in a single-person practice. Generally there is a fee-for-service aspect that involves the facilitator-practitioner, and no commitment to stay in the group once started can be binding on a member. No like-experienced and interested colleague may be available to call on collaboratively or as a backup helper. However, it is always possible to make serious use of post-session feedback rating forms and to provide careful pre-group information via individual intake discussions and written description – to illustrate shortly. In these circumstances, no one comes into such a group as a complete stranger to the leader. Thus, for members one relationship in which they would feel some confidence has already started. The group can be quite small, with likely member expectation that the leader-practitioner will set the ball rolling, facilitate actively with an element of guidance, track the process of the group in helpful connection with each person, and mediate as relevant.

My pre-group information included a two-page introduction for potential members headed "Experiential Learning group program: Philosophy and background, in brief" (unpublished), and this outline followed expressions of interest to general notices that such a group was planned. It was a challenge to enable well-informed choice, partly through information participants also could find helpful in approaching the groups. I thought a good deal about the issues involved and am sharing what follows for its interest and possible value to readers who are conducting, or wish to offer, such groups in their practise.

Small groups can be a powerful context for personal growth learning and even healing. This flows partly from the shared concern of members to inquire and reach beyond their present limits, from the leadership and climate of the group, and from the mix of likeness and difference among members. Each person tends to find reassuring common ground with some other members; even with all others at some moments. Each one also encounters styles or particular attitudes very different from their own. This strong mix of likeness and difference is both supportive and challenging. It does not simply reinforce familiar habits or patterns of thinking. Instead, it works with other conditions to foster new steps in self-action and awareness, and to affirm members in the growth aspects of their shared and individual nature.

Within the group, the leader offers 'permission', example, understanding and encouragement to members as they reach to connect from their own experiencing with others in *their* experiencing. Effectively, the facilitator works hard to keep in touch with various levels of ... process in the group, and to help members find effective space and opportunity for themselves and each other. Usually each member comes to be both receiver and giver in the group – of understanding and personal feedback and natural 'modeling' of personal styles…

The differences between the groups described here and literal therapy groups are relative, and apply more to the way members see their own needs than to the basic process. In the present case, members tend to be seeking positive developmental change, enhancement in the quality of their communication and relationships, perhaps an extended sense of meaning in their lives. They do not see themselves as incapacitated, as deeply depressed or extremely anxious, or as completely alone and incapable of attachment to others. However, any member may be going through a distressing crisis, and their self-esteem might be severely shaken… Painful experiences, loneliness, a sense of being unable to put ones best foot forward, and worries around relationships and communication, may all have a part in bringing members to the group… A person's responsibility for their search, exercised in their choosing to take part in the group, is not taken from them, it is nourished.

It is not possible in a few lines to fully describe the group process – although hints can be given…. starting with examples of attitudes and values: *Once a group begins, all members belong because they are there* (as in many family situations but few other life contexts); *the group is a place for honesty and realism*, in the sense that such qualities are positively valued but

not of trying to force something, which can *produce* artificiality; and *group members are not seeking to sit in judgement on each other* – although there is no rule against expression and working-through of spontaneous judgemental reactions.

There is another cluster of characteristics, concerned with what the group process tends to be like in action. Briefly expressed: *each group member endeavours to be personal, direct and specific in communications*; *each of us listens to the other*, not always with sensitivity, or even patience, but generally with concern to know what the other *is experiencing now*, and *we often share impressions and feedback with each other*. Also, we *proceed from where we find ourselves* in the grou*p*, in presently felt concerns and response. That is, '*we tend not to exchange rehearsed stories*, to occupy staked-out positions, or to carefully edit and inwardly stay ahead of all we say'.

Another group process feature is summarised in the simple observation that '*what we express can be expected to call forth varied responses in different others*, because each listener is different as a person and in their inner position at the moment and in relation to the speaker, and because the group is a place for honesty… I suggest the rich variety of effect that the same sharing expression might have, in these words: '*One person's self-expressive searching may open a doorway for another to some important quality or pattern in their own experience. It may evoke in a second responding person a concern to check out his/her personal understanding. It may speak to a third listening person of something that they vividly recognize in their own experience but had not known before in another person. It may trigger an illuminating feedback message from a fourth listener, and to a fifth give a compelling example of a process to later try in their own search…*'

An added final paragraph to this statement was a brief summary of the experience, and interest behind my availability to conduct and facilitate the planned group. Of course, each person, with their own background and way of construing meaning, would not follow everything in this kind of careful outline. However, it seems that the written words contributed both to informed choice and to the members who elected to take part doing so with a more immediate sense of direction and less of mystery. They could anticipate a freedom and opening for themselves, along with a growing awareness of others and their intersections and differences in experience, outlook and ways of coping. Once started, it is what each

one found in the actual situation, inwardly and with everyone else, that would influence them most.

Conclusion

I am glad to have recorded the story, thought and evidence conveyed in this book. It would in principle have been possible to go further (but also see Chap. 10) in relating its substance to other reported work – searching through the literature for overlap and examining differences, as may be more within the bent of another scholar. My priority has been to document and share the original content and ideas and, finally, to set these forth for interested readers. It arises from intense interest in the phenomena engaged in and studied, an inquiring bent and vital institutional supports and opportunities at various times. It would not have been possible to mount and carry all this through entirely in a private practice setting[4] yet it hinges on practice – and a kind of disciplined curiosity. On the research side, it is an action study or, more grandly, a systematic investigation of a valuable phenomenon in its natural complexity, with potential to encourage and contribute ideas to related studies, practice and learning.

   Small groups in which people connect and learn intentionally through an unfolding process they engage in together are in quite wide use, although there are many influences in the culture that work in a contrary direction. I say "in the culture" as though this is "out there" and doesn't involve you and me. But, something in our nature also draws us towards the fixity of settled views, into regulating inquiry and practices, towards planning in detail and knowing our way at all times. Then, a surfeit of this fixity can leave us longing for fresh new experience, wanting to extend our reach and experience and learn new things – all within the makeup of our complicated species. Such divergent inclinations may oscillate in some people, while some of us lean in one direction or the other. If we are or become unhappy about continuing to repeat ourselves, experiential learning groups can be a vitalising, even life-giving, medium.

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[4] Private practitioners can be excellent observers but are seldom able to combine this with the collection and systematic study of a substantial body of research data – then formally reported.

Interest in the restoration or healing of relationship and, in general, providing opportunity for others seeking more knowing and flourishing qualities in their work and personal lives, has multiple origins. The groups of primary concern in this book have such aims, pursued through intensive developmental learning groups composed of people already in the helping field. Special conditions are needed to provide "space" for this to happen. Specifics of method and connecting theory can vary yet with similarity in underlying value principles and process. The interested reader might be able to identify a small family of differently identified enabling approaches that work, effectively, to facilitate experiential discovery learning of broadly related kind. One example of a starter to a broader search could be Schein's very accessible book on "Helping" (2009). This speaks of the facilitator as a "process consultant," especially on communication in relationships (personal, collegial or group), and includes illustrations in a range of contexts.

As implied, a significant potential of groups broadly of the kind in focus here is that members learn or discover their ability to be in effective satisfying contact and communication with a now wider range of others – others who vary in their origins, specific occupations, attitudes, coping styles, access to their own immediate feelings and/or facility in self- or meaning expression. If a group simply reinforces one quite particular style, this could narrow rather than widen the persons' genuine relational/interactive repertoire. Intensive groups naturally differ in process according to their composition, as seen in earlier chapters. To encourage only one highly discrete pattern would be contrary to the thrust of ideas and work presented here.

I recently conducted a group with seven graduate student members in fairly close contact with each other – most of whom had already met with me to discuss theory and ideas. I agreed to meet with them (I was not their formal course instructor) for five longish spaced experiential sessions, for a total of about ten hours. The students valued the experience highly (each one wrote to me afterwards), but I was very conscious of the overall time limit and life-connected nature of the group and adapted my part to this context. More broadly, I support entering such bounded situations with the same consciousness, values and general approach that one would bring to more sustained and intensive groups, but to express these in ways that carefully take account of the circumstances under which the

group comes into being, who is taking part, and for how long and with what prior relationships and expected situation afterwards. Experiential developmental learning is not narrow in its application and may naturally occur in greater intensity or depth in one context rather than another.

Western culture is changing in ways that suggest both more need for and more openness to and I hope more availability of experiential learning groups – by that or other name – that embody values and process qualities like those advanced in this book. To some this would seem a luxury out of relevance where conflict is rife or survival and health needs are very seriously at risk. Circumstances change, however. Only a dozen years ago, during the genocide in Rwanda, the social fabric was ripped apart in a tragic orgy of internecine mass killing. Basic change in controlling forces and government structure was essential just to end the slaughter, and the kind of group experience and process focused on in this book was out of sight. Yet this is no longer true. Indeed, the underlying values and relationship process ingredients have great relevance and emerging significant application even in that context (see Barrett-Lennard, 2013, pp. 117–120 and sources therein). No single modality, including the intensive experiential group, is a panacea in responding to societal ills or deficiency. Yet, small groups are ubiquitous in human social life, and, in carefully crafted and facilitated experiential process applications, deeply engaged members develop in their perceptive awareness and capacity for movement in ways that enrich their living and work with others.

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Appendix 1: Studying Outside Relationships Viewed Pre- and Post-workshop

Outcome effects of an intensive experiential learning experience can be studied in various ways as already seen in this book. Taking account of the view of outside observers who already know the participants in important relationships is in principle an important avenue beyond those considered thus far. Implementing use of such observers is difficult, especially with any rigour in a measurement study. However, an exploratory attempt of this kind is the main topic of this appendix.

The data were collected from workshop participants and nominated "observers," using the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (BLRI). The instrument had at the time of this data collection recently undergone its main revision into the 64-item OS (Other's response to Self) and MO (Myself to Other) forms (Barrett-Lennard 2015, pp. 101–107). In the first step, intending participants were called on, before they converged for Workshop 1, to describe their response (using the MO form of the BLRI) to the last client person to enter therapy (or other helping relationship) with them. After the workshop, and before any further contact with the other person, each member again described their response as they now perceived it. It was tentatively thought that on the second occasion respondents would be more open to their experience and/or that they

would be setting different standards for themselves. Scores on each BLRI scale, and on the four scales combined, for the pairs of returns were examined to distinguish increases and decreases from pre- to post-workshop.

It was found that obtained scores on the congruence scale had diminished for 26 of 32 respondents. By estimate using the Sign Test (e.g., Siegel 1956, pp. 68–75), there is a less than 1% probability that this imbalance would occur by chance. Scores for unconditionality also fell by almost the same proportion, and for one of the two groups (Group X) most empathic understanding scores fell as well. There was little shift in level of regard, but the combined score for the four variables declined to a highly significant degree ($p < .01$). The workshop experience evidently had a strong immediate impact on member perceptions of their past helping behaviour. Given that they had become more sensitised to the qualities assessed, it seemed unsurprising that they now saw themselves as having been more conditional and less empathic and congruent than they had implied the first time. Related to this, it is possible that greater openness and authenticity resulting from the workshop lessened any "desirability effect" that might have influenced more positive estimations the first time.

The BLRI was again used in the same way, in Workshop 2, but without the same result. One of the three groups (led by the same person as Group X had been) trended in a similar direction, but with no such trend in the other two groups. Overall, there was no consistency in the direction of members viewing their past helping behaviour more negatively after the workshop. This second result does not nullify the first – though it works against any generalisation – and it is only possible to speculate on reasons for the difference. As earlier implied, in the second workshop members knew more in advance what they would be getting into and most may have come with a somewhat different mindset or aim than the original group. In other words, they were not a fully comparable sample. If they wound up being generally less self-critical, this might extend to their view of self in the recent past, or at least negate any effect of having higher standards for themselves than before.

Back to Workshop 1, the members *also answered* a parallel "ideal" form of the BLRI. Instructions on this form asked the respondent to "*consider each statement from the standpoint of your own view of an ideal counselling*

or therapy relationship. Put yourself in the position of the counsellor, the other person being your client." The wording of the same 64 items was adjusted to the first person and conditional form: for example, "I would respect him/her as a person" and "I would feel quite at ease in our relationship." Table A1 compares the scores obtained from this form with the scores for the corresponding actual client referred to above. *The first column of numbers derive from pre-workshop data. The second (italic) numbers are from the corresponding data collected just after the workshop.* One would expect the personal Ideals to present a more positive picture (with higher scores) than those tending to obtain for actual relationships. In fact, this was very predominantly (but not universally) the case as discussed shortly.

Given the scoring ranges (e.g., +48 is the maximum possible) and the ways scores tend to distribute on the BLRI scales (Barrett-Lennard 2015, pp. 39–42), the mean differences between actual and ideal are very substantial, with one exception. Level of Regard scores often are higher than on the other scales, and were so in this sample for the actual relationships, tending to leave little room for numerical differences with the ideal. The actual-ideal differences are striking on the other three scales, and even more marked in the post-workshop data, particularly on the congruence measure. Clearly, *the participants generally would not have been content with their levels of responding on these theoretically crucial aspects of a helping relationship.* Not every person conformed to the main pattern, however. On one or more of the scales for empathy, unconditionality and congruence, 3 (of 32) people rated their actual relationship a little more "positively" than their ideal. Also, some five people gave markedly "lower" ratings in describing their ideal than the

Table A1 *Actual versus ideal therapy relationship differences*

BLRI scales	Mean of differences between actual and ideal	
	Before	After
Regard	6.8	*7.3*
Empathy	19.5	*24.6*
Unconditionality	14.8	*16.6*
Congruence	13.9	*28.3*

others did.[1] Although differences in understood meanings, especially in answering the conditional form of the BLRI, might have been a factor in this variation, the results suggest some differences of view about what was desirable or optimal in a helping relationship.

In Workshop 3 the BLRI was used differently. The aim was to tap into the way that members were experienced in relationship by non-participants who knew them, both before the workshop and afterwards following further contact. The method was to write in advance to all intending members about the research aspect, sending OS (perceived response of the Other to Self) BLRI forms, asking if they would be willing to give one of the inventory forms "to a counsellee or patient after your last interview with them prior to the workshop, with the request that they answer it with reference to yourself and mail it back to me direct? In selecting a client the only requirements are that he or she be a person with whom you have had at least two or three interviews… and who you are fairly certain will resume counselling or therapy with you after the workshop." My letter went on to make a further request: "Could you [also] ask someone with whom you have a continuing personal relationship to answer the other Inventory form, again in reference to yourself. This person could be a member of your family, a friend or someone you are closely associated with in your work." Return envelopes were included with the forms. I suggested that respondents be assured that the information was solely for research purposes and would not be seen by the member, and that its value "depends on the respondent being quite candid in disclosing his/her real perceptions."

I acknowledged that this was rather a lot to ask, especially in advance and at rather short notice, and that to act on it the recipient would need to feel reasonably comfortable about doing so. If they were willing but it was not practical to call on someone in both categories (client *and* family member/friend/colleague), it would still be helpful to ask two people in the same category or even just one person in total. There would need to be some indication on the returned form itself that identified the mem-

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[1] That is, with scale scores of 24 or less, although in *most* of these cases ratings for the actual relationships were lower still. Potential meanings of scale scores such as 16, 24 and 32, from *client perceptions* of the therapist, are discussed in Barrett-Lennard (2015, p. 42).

ber and kind of relationship. I implied that the request would be repeated after the workshop, and that there needed to be some way of matching the before and after forms. The pre- and post-returns that I received and could clearly match were cumulated as one sample – whether two or one return(s) had been generated in reference to a given member.

Some of the forms for respondents to answer the second time around contained two additional questions at the end. The first question: "Have you experienced or noticed differences in his[her] response to you (or in his actions and attitudes, etc., outside your relationship) since you answered this questionnaire previously?" If the answer was "Yes," a second question asked the respondent to "please comment on the kinds of change you see or in the feelings you have with him/her. If you can recall them it would be helpful to mention particular situations where you have felt or observed these changes." Several observers said "No" they were not aware of any change. Illustrative observations from those who said "Yes" follow:

> He [husband] seems more anxious to bring any difficulties we may have into the open, and also to see my side of any differences of opinion we have.
>
> I [trainee] find him [supervising person] more outgoing, better able to express affectionate feelings, and more self-assured…. There have been times when he has returned to his 'old self', but has been able to discuss his feelings with me.
>
> He [husband] appears to be more tolerant towards the children and plays with them more e.g. reads occasional books, doesn't become so annoyed by their giggles etc, and will now tolerate and even enjoy their intrusion into our bed after 8 AM at weekends.. He appears to become more irritated by some of my actions … mostly very small things…
>
> C [counsellor/therapist] was more reassuring through a personal reminiscence from his own experience of life [week 1 interview]. C was more fluent in pin-pointing patient's uncertainties/problems [week 2]. C was more prepared to give his advice when this was directly requested (topic: marriage relations – the 'need' of a man and woman for each other). Through this tentative 'probing' by the patient, the patient now feels more ready to discuss more personal issues… [week 3]
>
> J_____ [husband] has become aware that in his relationships with women his tender feelings have been very much inhibited and that this is tied up with a non-acceptance of sex feelings toward anyone but me….. Previously his tenderness and concern for me alternated with intense intellectual preoccupation,

but now he is more aware of the latter and more concerned for the former. Changes have occurred I think more in his relationships with other people, mainly his colleagues or with clients…[which] I only know about because of our talking together. I sense a great concern amounting to anxiety that this new insight shall not be lost…. We are tender to one another but not more so than we have often been in the past…. At the moment he feels insecure having left the old safe pathway and not really having found the golden mean of the new one…. I am most grateful that he could go to Armidale [and] I feel very much included in all this and that in a small way I'm helping in the post-Armidale tasks and stresses.

I _____ [client in reference to counsellor couple] have answered Yes to this question because although her [female counsellor] rapport with me… [was always] strong he [male counsellor] had never really succeeded in 'getting through' to my husband. However, since last answering this questionnaire it's as if a miracle has occurred. Her approach suddenly became more direct and vigorous and she showed her own feeling quite clearly instead of remaining uninvolved. I sensed that my husband thought 'Ah, now she's telling the truth. She's not soft-soaping me any more.' He admitted to me that everything seemed to make sense for the first time. We have seen her four… [more] times, and in these few weeks have progressed 10 times further than in the last four years – especially my husband. His understanding of human relationships has leapt forward and it seems that at long last we are really hand-in-hand. Summing up, my husband is a very practical person experiencing great difficulty in expressing his feelings. When our counsellor clearly expressed what she felt about him (even though it was very blunt) he recognised the truth… Whereas when her approach was less direct he floundered… I too had a few truths to face, but because of the rapport with our counsellor have found this less difficult.

Typically, as in these examples, the noted change was in the direction of former members being seen as more open, forthcoming or confident in self-expression. This is in broad accord with increase in their perceived congruence, where there were 15 increases and 7 lower scores from pre- to post-workshop. There was no such pattern on any of the three other relationship scales. The large majority of matched returns involved family, friend or colleague relationships, and it is very possible that most of these had not had time to adjust or resettle since the members' potentially formative two workshop weeks. However, further data provides clearer relationship outcomes.

The workshop *members* themselves were called on to use the same BLRI forms, but with a different focus. They were asked to predict *how they expected their observers would perceive them*, both before the workshop and again (*with* some further contact) three or four weeks after the workshop. The main question behind this was: "Would their post-workshop predictions be more accurate?" As Table A2 indicates, there was in fact a reduced difference between the scores from observer data (regular OS form) and member predictions. In other words, overall convergence occurred on all scales. Absolute differences (regardless of direction) were used in calculating the main differences in the table. The numbers of reduced observer/member differences plus the cases of increase differences don't all add up to the total sample size of 23 as there were occasional ties (three altogether).

Table A2 *Pre- and post-workshop differences between observer and member ratings*

BLRI scales	Mean difference pre-workshop	Mean difference post-workshop	Pre to post Converged	Diverged	Sign test
Level of regard	15.8	10.1	16	5[a]	$p < .02$
Empathy	21.4	15.1	16	7	$p < .05$
Unconditionality	22.2	17.1	15[a]	7	$p < .07$
Congruence	19.5	13.9	16	7	$p < .05$

[a]Numbers reduced because zero differences are omitted in these counts

Although the results in Table A2 are meaningful and the "observer" estimations support other data indicative of change, limitations of method need to be considered. The data-gathering forms were delivered by the person whose response was to be described. There was no written message directly from me to the observer respondents, and inevitably there would have been differences in style or detailed expression in delivering the request to them, each of whom was in effect doing the member (and me) a favour. And, there are large "gaps" in the data: complete sets of returns, from observers and members, represent about 60% of the total workshop membership. Subtleties of feeling and communication in the long-standing personal relationships (represented in the majority of returns) are part of the context in which the information was provided, with unknown

possible effect on the ratings. At minimum, however, the convergence results are such as to encourage more exacting related study calling on non-participant perspectives.

The very large volume and considerable variety of later research with the BLRI, including further development of the instrument itself, would open the door to new avenues of study in any related context (Barrett-Lennard 2015). Examples that come to mind are briefly as follows: A "group to self" form of the BLRI (Form GS-40; ibid., pp. 141–142) could throw significant light on each person's experience of the group's response to him or her, at particular stages in the life of the group, and also lend itself to comparison of different groups. The dynamic of two-person relationships in the group could be closely studied using an *adapted* version of the life relationships form (OS-LR-40; ibid., pp. 132–139), with one column for each other group member. (For practicality, the number of items would need to be reduced, perhaps from ten to six or even four for each scale.) Answering this form also would further alert members to the way they were experiencing each other. How members feel about themselves in the context of their relationships with the other individual members might also be a salutary focus, using an adaptation of the author's Contextual Selves Inventory (ibid., pp. 160–165).

The inventiveness of other investigators seriously interested in the nature and potential of intensive groups, and wishing to do research that could also be beneficial for members in their experiential learning within the group, could lead into further possibilities with the BLRI or related instruments. As author, I see the primary value of this appendix report as being to introduce and illustrate the avenue of calling on outsiders, in significant ongoing relationships with workshop participants, in ways that assist in tracing effects of the experience. The methodology and, especially, the results described, are suggestive even though not conclusive. Sharing this work will have achieved a main aim if it encourages related thought and more rigorous inquiry that can add to knowledge in the fascinating arena entailed.

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Appendix 2: Discovery Learning Exercises for Student Readers and Interested Others

The exercises that make up this appendix are offered as ways of further engaging with the chapter-by-chapter content of this book, preferably in company with fellow students or the members of any study group, in order to further one's active search and discovery learning. These exercises are inventions broadly growing out of the author's experience but not directly trialled (so far) on the material they refer to. They are suggestions to call on as described, but are subject also to inventive variation by participants. Since the chapters vary in kind, the exercises differ with each kind and context – granted a similarity in underlying approach. There is no exercise for Chap. 1, although a fellow author might think of a somewhat different scope or kind of introduction.

For interest, I would love to receive feedback (gt_barrett-lennard@iinet.net.au) on applications of and experience with these exercises – and of course on any of the content they refer to. So, I wish you an interesting and fruitful experience in drawing on and/or adapting these potential steps in your own active inquiry and learning.

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Chapter 2, on Group X Beginning Sessions

What happened in this intensive group is not offered as a model to emulate but as an example of how such a group of sophisticated participants *may* begin and rapidly develop an engaged intensity and dynamism of its own.

I suggest that each person in your student or study group begin by *separately noting down four or five adjectives* that fit your overall sense of this group so far – and share and discuss your impressions.

As a second step, turn from the "now" in this transcribed dialogue to what may lie ahead, given that the group will be meeting twice a day for 15 more sessions, thus with much more communication happening. (Resist reading ahead, for now.) In what directions is the group's process likely to change and evolve, do you think, with its present leadership and the members in residence together and meeting daily? Start with adjectives or brief phrases, with "more" or "less" in front of each to indicate direction. *Alternatively*, just focus on three or four of the more vocal members and indicate how or in what directions you think their attitudes, self-awareness perhaps, and relationships in the group are likely to evolve. If possible discuss your expectations with each other. Also, if you keep any notes from this exercise, it could be interesting to see how much your predictions are borne out, as the group record goes on. (This is of course an inquiring/ learning exercise not a test, and in an unfamiliar context where intuition, personal experience and speculative inference may be your main tools.)

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Chapter 3, on Group X in Later Sessions

There is a great deal of content in this long chapter, with dialogue drawn from five group sessions. I expect that you have been conscious of shifts in the atmosphere and/or qualities of process and relationships in the group. At times any given person seems to be addressing the whole group and at other moments is particularly responding to the leader, a certain other member or maybe a few others. Even in the latter cases, she/he is speaking in the presence, itself evolving, of the whole group, which naturally can affect what is said or how it's put. I suggest that you try to

sense the tenor of feeling or attitude behind various communications at different stages (perhaps in Sessions 6 and 16) in the life of the group. Again, think of several adjectives or short phrases to describe qualities of change you distinguish. Put, for example, "more" or "much more" or "less" or "much less" before each word or phrase, to indicate whatever broad direction you observe in the group. If you prefer, choose three or four particular members and apply the same discrimination to them, one by one. If themes or issues strike you as repeating, identify those too. If possible, share and discuss with others what you came up with – thus to compare perspectives and maybe extend your own.

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Chapter 4, on the Group Y Process and Implications

I expect you would agree that group Y differed considerably in its process from Group X. But why was it so different, what contributed to the differences in atmosphere and process? Again, choose several adjectives or phrases to characterise this group, as you see it. Then, think about the make-up of the group, especially going by what people say *about themselves and one another*. Does that suggest any further characteristic?

Go on to consider the communication in the group more broadly. Is it about ideas, what people do or their feelings or goals? Is it about relationships in the group? What is the subject matter, and does this lead to any of the overall process qualities you distinguished? What about the official leader, about his role(s) in the group. Consider a few of his differing responses or initiatives. Which kind of contribution would *you* find most helpful, if you were part of such a group? Assuming you see broad change(s) in the group, over its course, try starting with the words "It becomes more…" or "It becomes less…" and note any shifts that especially strike you. But if you find it difficult to generalise for "the group," pick three or four of the members that interest you and speak of movements (or their lack) in the ways they engage and evidently think or feel. If possible, share and discuss your observations.

***

Chapter 5, on Member Post-session Rating Evaluation

Try to imagine yourself in group such as one of those presented so far. Think about coming out of a "full-on" two-hour session and being asked about its impact and qualities. Look again at the rating sheet near the beginning of this chapter. Are there any questions you would add or perhaps change for the present group? What about the alternative answer categories? Are there any you would like to change to get a more distinct picture without making it burdensome for the member respondents? Also review the different rating form in the chapter appendix. Note that the post-session ratings were designed not so much for research as to foster stock-taking reflective appraisals as a further potential aid for participants in learning and gaining as much as they could out of the experience. Underlying questions such as "How is this going for me?" "How do I think the group is travelling?" and "Just what is our process?" we thought would be helpful for members to monitor their response to at the close of sessions.

Would you, however, favour more open-ended free-answer questions on such issues or, at another extreme, a simple yes and no checklist of possible felt reactions and observations? In practice, most workshop people concentrated silently as they answered the rating sheet, which did not take them long. They then left the group room for some refreshment, perhaps to share more informally with selected others, think further, or turn to a different activity for a while.

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Chapter 6, on After-the-Workshop Member Reflections

I imagine that some post-workshop reflections engaged you more strongly than others did. By "engaged" I don't simply mean that you felt a particular affinity with where certain people were coming from. Someone might have left you feeling puzzled, put off or wanting to dig deeper if that were possible. Select out a *varied* small subgroup (perhaps just 4 or 5 people) and imagine sitting with these few former participants and inviting them to discuss their experience with you and each other. It may take a little time

to feel your way into doing this. The idea of the exercise is to conjure up and bring more to life the experience and mindset of the selected ex-workshop members, the whole process of doing this also being expressive of yourself.

What issues do you think would (or should) arise in this imagined member exchange that reflect and help to account for the diversity (or commonality) in their feedback letters? *For example*, would different reactions to the leadership of the group elicit points of conversation? Aside from the leader, do you imagine any particular other members being variously referred to? Would differences in member personal outlook and aim in being there be a point of focus in the exchange you envision? Do you imagine the aspects of professional identity and experience arising in the discussion? What about relationship dynamics, as variously experienced? And, how about the important feature for each person of any new awareness or other noticed change or its lack through the workshop? From what these members said in their written feedback, and your active sense of where they were coming from, can you imagine particular points of dialogue in their exchange? (You might even try writing up part of the dialogue you envision.) Finally, how does your own outlook, and what *you* would look for, enter into what you can envisage happening in this interchange? As far as possible, share and discuss what you come up with in going through this.

***

Chapter 7, on the Six-Month Follow-Up Data and Outcomes

This chapter focuses on outcome investigation both in low- and high-structure ways and, secondarily, on looking at the remembered process retrospectively. As I frame this note, I am wondering about your reaction and thoughts on the methodology. Does it makes sense *to you* to have started with a broadly guided qualitative level of enquiry in which the respondents selected what was important to them in the area of potential change effects from their workshop experience, effects which then had to be systematically examined and sorted into a common framework? As

you think on this, one unique recent resource that you could find valuable to consult is the book edited by Clara Hill (2012). In any case, what is your view of the highly structured second part of the inquiry, either as revealing by itself or as having more assured meaning as a complement to the first part? I can imagine making adjustments in detail, myself, to the original crafting of the questionnaire and extending its scope somewhat. If you find yourself thinking, even quite tentatively, along these lines, I suggest discussion of this aspect in your group. Finally, as you recall the two groups from the early chapters, were you surprised at the extent to which members of the same group converged at this later time in their estimations of its qualities? What do you think helps to account for the similarity (granted there was variety too) in perception? Does it have implications for outcome change?

<div align="center">***</div>

Chapter 8, on 'Indirect' Long-Term Follow-up via Study of Key Life Events

The original method and rationale of this study was designed in part to avoid the risk that some participants would exaggerate workshop outcomes (without intention) if asked directly about the consequences in their work and lives. Rather than nominating and focusing on the workshops as the event of interest, the method used took account of a likely range of life-altering events over a dozen years during which the workshops may or may not surface as one of the major ones. It also allowed for complex linkages in the working of influence between these events, and for me opened a broader domain of prospective interest.

    This kind of strategy probably is new to you and would merit discussion in your group. As a more specific suggested focus, examine the questionnaire closely and see whether or how you might improve it, especially for possible application with people in different fields *or* who are less advanced in formal education. Also, looking closely at Table 8.1, would you expect much the same span of categories to emerge from differing samples of respondents – assuming fairly large samples? Or, which present categories do you think would crop up in most significant samples and which others

may not? Which do you most readily relate to from your own life experience and observation of major events in other people's lives?

What do you think of a possible further step of forming a pre-structured questionnaire listing a whole range of potential categories of important life event or episode, to each of which respondents could just answer Yes or No, in reference to their own lives? Aside from being easier or more practical to implement, what advantages and disadvantages do you see in the results that method could yield?

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Chapter 9, on the Long-Term Follow-Up Interviews

People would need to read this long chapter before your student group meets for discussion around it. From this reading, I suggest that each person single out one of the interviews that interests you, to reflect on closely and prepare to talk a little about. You might want to start in discussion by saying something of why you chose that interview. Then zero in on one or more particular ideas expressed by the interviewee, and share your own attitude or questions around those ideas. Point to one or more described features or emphases of the person's practice – including changes in this practice that they may mention. Finally, if the interviewee says something of his/her own personal or relationship development, draw attention to this and how you think it ties in with any other mentioned change? Comment on the process of the interview, as you go along, if anything about it was especially interesting to you *or*, possibly, gave you pause.

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Chapter 10, on Systematic Theory

Much concentrated thought, refined over time, went into the preparation of this chapter. I know of no precedent for its scope; the result is satisfying and full of meaning to me, and I am pleased to be sharing it. I also

expect that there is too much in it, systematically laid out, for anyone to take in and closely reflect on all at once. Such tightly configured and organised development of ideas would not be everyone's cup of tea, especially on first acquaintance. Others, perhaps including you, might readily welcome this approach to making coherent sense of a complex phenomenon of serious interest, even if it takes some coming to grips with. I have thought of an activity that might be feasible and helpful in this regard, in a smallish student/study group.

The "exercise" would start with each person looking over the scope and components of the chapter, to fix on any section that maybe jumps out at you. In case two or three people make the same choice, it would help if you provisionally select more than one section. Hopefully choices can as necessary be adjusted in discussion such that the participants between them cover all or most of the chapter.

My suggestion is that each person would then closely study and think about the component they centre on, and share its substance (not just the wording, which anyone could read) and his/her own initial ideas about it, with the group. Through this, each one will have engaged with the theory directly and via other members, and with related ideas sparked off in discussion. At best, everyone would in fact have come to grips with main themes and elements within the theory and be forming an individualised conceptual understanding that can continue to grow.

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Chapter 11, on Subsequent Groups, Settings and Thought

I think you would agree that this chapter is a big change of pace from the previous one. It both advances the underlying "story" contained in this book to later happenings in the same setting and opens out a wider range of contexts in working with intensive developmental groups. You might well have found yourself drawn more towards one kind of situation rather than another among those distinguished: an updated version of the immersive original workshops, a well-crafted group in a formal

learning/training context or a group (probably with less contact hours) mounted by a skilled private practitioner. Which avenue – assuming each was available and accessible financially – would you presently favour, and why? Within your preferred choice, is there something you personally would want to see added or subtracted from the given description? Would you expect your preference to change, with more experience under your belt? I hope you can discuss your preferences, pro and con, in your student or study group. My thought is that doing this could both further your critical ideas or discrimination of how beneficial experiences can occur in these settings *and* where you stand personally: what you would desire or are attracted to, for your own further development and relationships and work with others.

Reference Hill, C. E. (2012). *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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