

## The Right to be Desperate

### DIONE (1)

1<sup>st</sup> session with Carl Rogers (1977)

- This transcript is available for purposes of research, study and teaching. It may not be sold.

- Throughout this interview the responses of the therapist (T) (Rogers), and the client (C) are numbered for easy reference

- Source: Whiteley, J. M. (Producer). (1977). Carl Rogers counsels an individual on anger and hurt [Film]. American Personnel and Guidance Association (American Association for Counseling and Development).]

- The film includes stopped images with Rogers' voice giving comments about the interview. All of the dialogue of the interaction between Rogers and "Dione" is included. The voiced over sections do not censor any parts of the interaction. They are in brackets and italics.

T: Well, I'm really glad to meet you.

C 1: Okay.

T 1: I've heard a few things about you, all good things, and I've also heard that you have leukemia but that you're in a state of remission, and that's all I know about you . . . so from there on ...

C 2: Okay.

T 2: Whatever we do is up to us. What things do you feel you want to talk about today?

C 3: I don't know. I was sitting in the room and waiting, before, and I was thinking about when I was about 7 or 8 years old. I remember reading a book, I believe. And I can't recall the name, by Jung, I think it was. I recalled that when I was reading it, at that time, I used to go down in the basement of my home and um, turn off all the lights. And in a way, that was kind of closing the outside world out (C: Mhm, hmm) and concentrating on what I wanted to do and what I wanted to be. And at 7 years old I was into that, and today I'm in the same position . . . um, really at this, you know, trying to find out what I want to do, what I want to be.

And um, I've learned a lot of things. I've learned a lot of things since I found out that I have leukemia (T: Mhm, hmm) which is about a year ago this June . . . and I've learned an awful lot of things.

T 3: I'll bet. And you're going through a stage if I understand is a little bit like what it was at seven, sort of shutting out the world or shutting yourself into a space where you're trying to figure out what it is that you want or who you are?

[Rogers' voice over a stopped image Commentary 1: *Clearly he has rehearsed this first portion and yet, the material is of interest. Whether it's superficial or deep, I want to understand the exact meaning his experience has for him. Whether it's true or false, real or imaginary, this kind of presenting material is very common in first sessions, and is to be expected and to be respected.*]

C 4: I think that I've listened for so long to other people about who I was (T: Mhm, hmm) and I remember in 2nd grade I was a potential credit to my race. That was one of the . . . (T: Mhm, hmm) I used to wonder why I couldn't be a credit to somebody (T: laughs) else's race also. I think I was really conditioned to be something. To be some kind of a symbol, or (T: Mhm, hmm) whatever, and not really being a person, you know, I kind of missed out on my childhood to an extent. (T: Mhm, hmm) I don't really regret it. I don't think I regret it anyway, but I've really been through a lot of changes. And I think that now, after finding out I had leukemia and after dealing with the leukemia in the way I did, it's just really incredible, you see. It was last June when I found out, and um, I proceeded to get everything in order because I was told that I had less than a year to live. (T: Mhm, hmm) And uh, that was the trip. (T: I'll bet.) That was a trip.

T 4: A trip into a fairly dark place, I suppose.

C 5: Oh, yeah. For sure. For sure. On one hand I accepted the death. I, you know, at my young age I think I've lived long and a great deal. But that was the start of some things that really has had an effect on me today. (T: Mhm, hmm) I'm much happier than I've ever been . . . today. (T: Hmm) I'm much happier. (T: Hmm) But there's a lot of hurt too. There's an awful lot of hurt and I think I'm just beginning to realize that. Um, because you know, in being a credit to your race, in being an outstanding student, an outstanding scholar, an outstanding football player, whatever; it leaves you little room to be . . .

T 5: You've been meeting other people's expectations of you and it seems that that's what you should do now. I guess you're really questioning that very much.

C 6: Oh, yeah. Tremendously. And like you get into . . . the fun thing about it is that I'm finding out that some of the things that I think inside of me are okay. And like that isn't . . . you know, I feel okay, and I'm in a process of becoming okay. But like I haven't worked it out. Hurt is a hard thing to deal with. And like conditioning yourself to die (T: Mhm, hmm) is another thing, you know, you see, I didn't let my family in on that (T: Hmm) until March of this year. So it was some months before I . . .

T 6: You carried that within you.

C 7: Oh, yeah. But I proceeded very meticulously to carry out a plan, where my children would live in an area that I wanted them to live. And that, I was trying to control something after I died. Only when I went back this year in March to celebrate my children's birthday, and I had four weeks, incidentally, to live at that time; I was told on March 15 that I had four weeks to live. And it was really incredible because like, for the first time, I saw all my relatives and my friends. And they were coming in and they were very loving, very loving people, and very kind, you see. Um, but at the same time, they were all throwing flowers on my grave. (T: Mhm, hmm) And I don't think they knew that. And as a result, I got worse and I got worse, and um, I took a friend back. You see, I'd lived out here in California. um, after I found out that I had leukemia, I proceeded to develop a plan to move my family out here. (T: Mhm, hmm) And we moved out in approximately November after several trips out in the area. The trips were basically to find a doctor (T: Mhm, hmm) and also find in a way some kind of a hope. You see, (T: Mhm, hmm) I have this conditioned thing about being a fighter. So, on one hand I accept that, (T: Mhm, hmm) and on the other hand I was trying to do all I damned well could to live.

T 7: If it's going to be death, okay, you'll take it. But you're not going to take it unnecessarily.

C 8: No. Not at all.

[Rogers Commentary 2: *I like the way I'm being a companion to him, trying to discover just how the prospect of death seems to him. I find that important because a client needs most to be understood in the darkest portions of his experience.*]

C 9: You know, the thing that uh, you know, after I was sitting in there and I was thinking . . . I had really conditioned myself to, to really get ready and find the nearest cross and crawl up on that, and I've been doing that since I was seven years old, and I'm not sure why.

T 9: To really crucify yourself, is that what you're saying? Or to be a martyr? I'm not really sure . . .

C 10: Oh, I'm not really sure. But I think the activities I was involved in, in terms of trans-racial communication, (T: Mhm, hmm) working with groups, and helping people (T: Mhm, hmm) I would hope very similar to what people like yourself did. (T: Mhm, hmm) Um, always being available for everybody, all the time. (T: Mhm, hmm) I think that's being a martyr or (T: Yeah) something. Yeah.

T 10: Putting the other person first.

C 11: For sure. Yeah. Instead of saying, "Hey, there's some time for me." Because you see, I worked so hard and so long that it was just really, really difficult for me to get used to, you know, being sick, not working' and not being in control (T: Mhm, hmm) because I definitely was not in control. (T: Mhm, hmm) And there were a lot of things that I did that I am not really very pleased about. (T: Mhm, hmm) But you know, after thinking about it for just a little while, or whatever, one of

the things I miss you know, I guess maybe from not telling people or whatever, about I was ill . . . but uh, after I told them, some months later, when I had four weeks to live, I didn't find anybody that allowed me to be desperate, that could understand some of the things that I didn't want to do. (T: Mhm, hmm) And that brought on another guilt trip. (T: Mhm, hmm) And so now I'm in the process of kind of washing all that stuff out.

T 11: Mhm, hmm. Is that part of the hurt? You referred earlier to hurt and I didn't quite understand that. (C: Mhm, hmm) I can understand the feeling of desperateness and also I can understand how hard it would be to have no one really understand that feeling in you.

[Rogers Commentary 3: *I can let him feel desperate. Friends and family cannot allow this. It's important that someone can really permit it. I also go back to his earlier feeling of hurt, I wanted to get a more complete feeling for his inner world but he, as you will see, doesn't pick up on this particular portion.*]

C 12: I've lost my father-in-law, which was a terrible loss to me, and it was a loss that I never could talk to my wife or anybody else about. (T: Hmm. Mhm, hmm) And I gave a lot to that family, you know, for five or, I don't know, seven years I guess. And when I went back, there were just some things that happened that they showed me there wasn't, there wasn't very much of a connection. There wasn't very much of a connection between, between all of that love and whatever that I put in, and then all of a sudden you know, I became just another uh, you know, I became just another black person. I became just another nigger. You know, and I think it's important to understand that my wife is you know, is white, German Irish. (T: Mhm, hmm. I see.) And I think that's a part of that whole thing. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) Um, when we first married, you know, my father-in-law, we just fought tooth and nail, but then after that we loved each other . . . for about six long, good, hard years. And basically, he was my only connection and when he died . . . I found that there was no support. (T: Mhm, hmm) There was absolutely no support.

T 12: And I, I imagine . . . or perhaps I catch a little bit of resentment, that you really poured a lot of love and caring into that family and had gotten some back from him, but after his death, none of it paid off for you in any way.

C 13: Right. For sure. Yeah, I think that, you know, what I wanted, what I wanted more than anything else, was just to you know, I guess, was love. I guess it was that mutualness, you know, what I felt for each of them. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, I thought that was not only my responsibility, but you know, it was very natural for me to care about people (T: Mhm, hmm) that were very close to my wife (T: Mhm, hmm) at that time.

T 13: So it hurt not to get that love back. It wasn't mutual.

C 14: Oh yeah. For sure it did.

[Rogers Commentary 4: *I always try to sense the feelings just below his words and he welcomes that. I try to catch the resentment and the hurt which he hasn't yet voiced very clearly.*]

C 15: And there were various things that happened in terms of things that were happening back east . . . that people were wondering why I had left, you know, a good position and all that kind of garbage. And uh, because, see, I hadn't told anybody that I had leukemia. (T: Mhm, hmm) And uh, one thing led to another. And there were stories that needed, I think to um, I think every story, every situation needs to have two sides. (T: Mhm, hmm) And there was only one side and I was, I was hurt because I didn't have my chance.

T 15: You never were heard.

C 16: Never. And, but at the same time, like, in a way, in a way, I used to feel that I put myself in that position. Because no one knew what was happening inside of me, you see. Because I had to take care of myself. And I had to be better than everybody else. Because I was always told that. You can, in a majority society I had to be 100, 200 percent better than my white counterpart (T: Mhm, hmm) or my brown counterpart, (T: Mhm, hmm) or whatever. I had to do that, because that's what it took to survive .

T 16: Mhm, hmm. And in striving for that, one reason you really weren't heard was that you didn't dare express the person you were, the sick person you were at that time.

C 17: Oh, no. Not at - I really, I really had a fear of that. You know? (T: Mhm, hmm) I really, I guess, didn't trust some things that were happening, (T: Mhm, hmm) um, gee, at a whole global level, you know. But to, then to entrust that kind of information (T: Mhm, hmm) to other people. (T: Mhm, hmm) I was very uneasy about that. (T: Frightening) Very uneasy about that. (T: Mhm, hmm) And I did a lot of things that I didn't, didn't really want to do (T: Mhm, hmm) because I was very desperate. Um, I gave up my, my job and came out here, and I did consultant work and so forth, but I had to use a great deal of money for diagnosticians or (T: Mhm, hmm) whatever and, and, and all kinds of little gimmicks to keep me alive. (T: Mhm, hmm) And consequently I had to borrow money. And when I borrowed that money, I didn't borrow it in a way that would say to you like, "Hey, uh, Ted or whatever, I need, you know X amount of dollars, you know, and like . . . 'cause I've got, I have leukemia," and so forth. I'm scared to death to say that, you know? (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, I needed some money because of uh, I think I must have invented about ten stories, you know. And I think about it and you know, like, I felt real bad about that, you know. (T: Mhm, hmm) And uh, because like I had developed a professional uh, attitude I think, about myself, or at least a kind of . . . I had a lot of respect from a lot of people. (T: Mhm, hmm) And you know, I really did have that . . . I don't know if that was love or caring or whatever, but it was respect. (T: Yeah) When I got involved with money, the situation with money, I had to borrow money and I really couldn't tell. And in a way, you know, I really wanted to tell, but I hadn't even told my wife (T: Yeah) and my family. (T: Yeah) And I said, okay, well one thing, you know, and I'm gonna, I'm going to be okay, and this money is going to be here, and everything else like that and I

think that's a part of, uh, me that I really, I'm not really sure, that ah, you know, is really acceptable you know, because I have to be perfect.

T 17: Yeah. Yeah. So, it's not acceptable even to you to do some of the things you did, and also I gather to live behind that facade of falsehood for quite awhile . . . not telling anybody what the score was.

C 18: Oh yeah. For sure. Very true. I . . .

[Rogers Commentary 5: *The hurt and fear of revealing himself as ill is almost worse than the illness*]

C 19: That was very difficult. The most difficult part, I think, of (T: Mhm, hmm) I think it was the most difficult part of my illness. It was that, "Hey, I couldn't have cancer," you know. That's like having V.D. and three kinds of V.D. at the same time. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, how do you tell someone, "I have leukemia . . . I have less than a year to live, or whatever (T: Mhm, hmm) . . . and I need some money." (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, it's like when people you know, look at a drinking glass or whatever, and you know, after you told them you have cancer . . . and they make kind of a . . . shy away from your drinking glasses.

T 19: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm. How could you possibly let anybody know where you were physically?

[Rogers Commentary 6: *One of the hardest things for a dying person is the reaction that others have to him. So, when he's talking of death and dying, I feel it's highly important to be right with him; to recognize and accept his feelings.*]

C 20: I really don't know. I really, you know, I've really tried to debate this thing in myself for a long time, and I really, I really don't know how I could have done anything any other way, because, you see, it was my character (T: Mhm, hmm) to not, I never . . . I'm always there to help other people. (T: Mhm, hmm) I wasn't there for . . . to say, "Hey, you know, I need some nourishment right now, whatever, you know."

T 20: You've just had no experience in being the needy person that needed help and needed . . .

C 21: Absolutely. Even when I needed money or whatever, I didn't need money (T: Yeah) because of my health. (T: Mhm, hmm) It was because of maybe bad business experience or an investment, or something or other . . . and like, for the people who trusted that kind of information or whatever . . . like I, you know, well, I'm going to deal with that. I'm going to deal with that. But that's not in my character, it's never been in my character. (T: Mhm, hmm) I had to keep that image. (T: Mhm, hmm) I had to keep the image. (T: Mhm, hmm) And uh, it cost me my family, a couple children, you know. I guess that was the most important thing that it cost me. I think the other things are really not that important. But, but what it did do, what the leukemia did do . . . it helped me to, to understand that I'm just an ordinary human being like everybody else. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) You know, and sometimes you know, like, everybody has problems, and so

forth, but at the same time it was like, it was my character to do that. You know, I wouldn't tell them. No. For what?

T 21: But it sounds as though the leukemia helped you to really destroy the notion of you as the "image."

C 22: I think, I think it did. I think it did. Finally, at the end it did. I use the end . . . the four weeks when I was told I had four weeks to live (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) that was the end, at the end of the leukemia. Even though I'm in remission now, (T: Mhm, hmm) I don't plan to, I don't . . . you see, I haven't told you that I went to, I went for the tests and gave enormous amounts of blood. I don't know where they were sending that blood or what they were doing with it. I gave an extraordinary amount, but nothing, nothing was coming of that. But you know, one of the things I did know that if I went to the hospital, if I did what the doctors said, I'd probably die. And it's almost like, you know, when you first become an agnostic in school, or whatever, you know, you go through . . . like I went through all this religious training, whatever. . . and I said, "I don't think that there's a God." Or, "that isn't really important, or whatever." (T: Mhm, hmm) But then at the same time, I hold back, you know. And every now and then I give an occasional prayer (T: Right) just in case.

T 22: Play it safe.

C 23: For sure. I think that's what I was also doing in terms of the leukemia. I really did. I had . . . the logical end to leukemia that my uncle and cousin had had before me was to die. (T: Mhm, hmm) Was to die. And now I think I know some things about that, though, that you don't have to die. Because it wasn't until I saw everybody throwing leaves and things on my grave that I really understood that I had the power to do that, and that, by lying for money, was probably worse for me than . . . than the leukemia, I think. (T: Hmm) I don't know if that makes any sense . . .

T 23: Yeah. It does.

C 24: Now I said it. (laughs)

T 24: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm. Somehow, what I get out of it is that being kind of false to yourself really was more of a burden to you, causes you more concern, than the fact that you had leukemia.

C 25: Oh, for sure. For sure.

[Rogers Commentary 7: *I think this is the first time he voices a feeling that he has not realized before. That's a significant point in any first interview.*]

C 26: The other thing was that I was about ready to leave my children, you know, very young, beautiful children . . . children that I'd brought into the world to do the same kind of, kind of thing that I was doing, you know . . . to take the world on their back (T: Mhm, hmm) and change things. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, and

now that helped me now with my kids in the sense of I don't think I want to raise my children like that.

T 26: Mhm, hmm. You don't want them to carry the kind of burden and image that you carried.

C 27: No. Not at all. (T: Mhm, hmm) Not because they're part Indian. Not because they're part black. Or not because they're third world or whatever. They don't have to carry that burden of trying to change and always being the recipient of certain policies and things like that and always being controlled. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) And I never really, it made me feel apart . . . because I don't know if my second grade teacher thought they were doing me a favor by telling me I was a credit to my race, (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) but then . . . they certainly did, and I didn't feel good about it then. (T: Mhm, hmm) (Sigh) That's a start. (T: Mhm, hmm)

[Rogers Commentary 8: *He has come to the end of his rehearsed part and now he is in new territory. I'm comfortable with the silence and I'm eager to see where he goes next. It's his choice.*]

C 28: And I remember talking to a person when I came down. I'd just discovered I was in remission, and I was hobbling on a cane, and so forth, and God, the first thing I did down here was to take a motorcycle ride. Now, for me, that was radical. (T: Mhm, hmm) For me, that was extremely radical, but it was fun (T: Mhm, hmm) you know, and it was one of the first fun things that I did. (T: Mhm, hmm) Since I was ill, you know, because on top of having the leukemia I was fighting a divorce and having my property ripped away from me, you know, and having married into a family, and a family that was a different race than I was, and I learned later, as my wife told me that she didn't know that a whole community wanted to divorce. (T: Laughs) Like they were married. And I was hurt by that too. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) You know, how very good, (T: Mhm, hmm) Christian, (T: Mhm, hmm) upstanding people (T: Mhm, hmm) can make some pretty serious judgments without knowing you know, the whole story.

T 28: And I catch a note of bitterness there. A feeling that they really make judgments without, without knowing the picture.

C 29: For sure. For sure. Well, the thing that was incredible was that I didn't . . . forgot about, I guess is that to understand, that you know, . . . I forgot for maybe a couple of years - Now, I'm going to oversimplify this next thing (T: Mhm, hmm) . . . but I forgot that I was black, (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) in that family, in that community, (T: Mhm, hmm) or whatever, you see. (T: Mhm, hmm) And then I quickly learned that I . . .

T 29: And then you were reminded all over again.

C 30: Oh, for sure. For sure. And I think that also caused a lot of bitterness or whatever. (R Mhm, hmm) And that kind of stuff I want to get out of me. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) You know, I can't deal with that . . . someone else's trip on me. Because I really don't hate anybody for that or whatever. A lot of the things I've

brought on myself. But at the same time, I think I really do have the right at that time to have been desperate.

T 30: Yeah.

C 31: And I didn't really understand that.

[Rogers Commentary 9: *This is a real step in self-acceptance: the acceptance of himself as a desperate person.*]

C 32: It was just, you know, hey it was so bad, it got so bad . . . this whole trip of leukemia . . . and lying and things like that or whatever, that I don't know. I thought, "Well, if I can just get ahead a little bit, and make enough money to pay off all those people or whatever, or, and even in my will and with my insurance" (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) You know, I made sure that all of the people were going to be paid or whatever (T: Mhm, hmm) but, you know. I still wasn't, it still wasn't acceptable to me for some reason . . . I didn't want to go out owing anybody or (T: Mhm, hmm) whatever, because that wasn't, wouldn't be the American thing to do, I guess at that time.

T 32: That wouldn't be living up to the standards you've set for yourself and other people have set for you.

C 33: Oh. Yeah. For sure. And like, I'm a little tired of those standards. (T: Mhm, hmm) I'm really a little tired (T: Mhm, hmm) of those standards. And I basically think that the kind of things that um, . . . me and what I'm into, and what turns me on . . . is good for me. (T: Mhm, hmm) And I don't really know why I went into remission. You know, I have some feelings about that . . . you know, personal, religious, whatever. But I think a great part of that had something to do with deciding that I wanted to live.

T 33: Mhm, hmm. Perhaps, sounds as though you're saying several things here, that perhaps deciding you wanted to live made a real difference. And also deciding that what you were experiencing as your needs and your wants and so on, really had some validity.

C 34: Yeah. It's really good to hear you say that. Because I really feel that. Because what I did I think was . . .

[Rogers Commentary 10: *It is so good to feel understood. It's releasing. It shows the value of really getting inside the client's world and understanding it and communicating that understanding to the client.*]

[Rogers Commentary 11: *Little by little he is experiencing his bitterness, and his real desperation.*]

C 37: My phone bill had to be about \$1,500 a month you know, because I was so worried about (T: Mhm, hmm) the children, you know.

T 37: Mhm, hmm. So that was a big, heavy burden too, then huh?

C 38: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it really was pretty heavy. It was pretty heavy.

[Rogers Commentary 12: *This is the first comfortable pause. I feel he is kind of catching up with himself and with the feelings he has voiced.*]

End of Part 1 (End of first reel of the film)

T 38: Life has been a very fluctuating up and down, kind of

C 39: For sure. But the leukemia took me away from Michigan, which I have . . . oh, bless somebody for that. And if you know, I only live a couple of more months, or whatever, it's a lot better (T: Mhm, hmm) than living under uh, constant stress (T: Mhm, hmm) you know of worrying about not being accepted, or not being accepted.

T 39: But that's one good thing that the leukemia did for you.

C 40: Yeah. It really was. Because I got a divorce out of it. My goodness, I got to California. Um, and I really mean that.

[Rogers Commentary 13: *Previously, the divorce was a hurt. Here it sounds more like a blessing. I wish to follow and be with each feeling as it arises no matter how ephemeral it may be.*]

C 41: But even when I say it, you know, there's . . . it was a rough, scratchy, scratchy road . . . and you know, it's extremely difficult for me to talk about it now. (T: Mhm, hmm) It really is .

[Rogers Commentary 14: *Notice how his speech has slowed down. It shows he's working on himself. A client's whole speech pattern changes when he's exploring difficult new terrain.*]

C 42: In getting all those bad things out, I'm not sure in terms of how to deal (T: Mhm, hmm) yet, or whatever. And I'm really not sure. But there are some you know, some things you know, like, I've really got to come to grips with it. "Well, finally," you know. Because they're still, you know, when I talk to my wife from 3,000 miles away and she tells me about what her mother thinks and all sorts of other things, or whatever, I get sick. It happened yeah . . . it happened the other day. She called and everything was really great and then she'd begin to talk about a lot of other people, and what their attitudes and what their opinions was. That night I got very little sleep and was ready to go back to the hospital and was ready to have leukemia too. (T: Mhm, hmm) I was ready. You know?

T 42: So you feel as though in some sense you prepare the readiness for the illness, or you, are taking in something from outside; it makes you ready to have it.

C 43: It seems like it. You know, I didn't believe that. I didn't believe that statement that you just made, some time ago, (T: Mhm, hmm) but I believe it now. (T: Mhm, hmm) I believe it.

[Rogers Commentary 15: *A fascinating awareness of the psychological source of his symptoms.*]

C 44: You know, I recall when I went back, and, and, and um, for the first time, my parents had learned that I had leukemia. You know, what do you say to your mother? What do you say to your father? I remember I got a phone call. And I was staying at my wife's house where we were going, keep in mind now, we were going through a divorce, the whole bit, and were, uh celebrating my children's birthday at the same time. My mother calls. "We're coming over." Nobody at the house. All of a sudden I lose my . . . my vision goes. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, that was one of the symptoms (T: Mhm, hmm) of leukemia. And uh, and, it scared, it scared the hell out of me (T: Mhm, hmm) like I really wanted to run. But I couldn't run, I couldn't see. (T: Couldn't see.) And um, it was only when I got back to California that I tried to put that together, you know (T: Mhm, hmm) of what happened when (T: Mhm, hmm) in terms of you know, the paralysis that I had in terms of my legs. It's incredible, it really seemed like somehow, somehow I've got control of that, in some way but I mean I'm not really sure. But I'm convinced that I have control. (T: Mhm, hmm) But I'm not sure how. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know. (T: Mhm, hmm)

T 44: I gather you feel that where before these things happened to you because of what happened to you from the outside, now you are beginning to feel control over it yourself . . . from the inside. Is that, is that part of what you're saying?

C 45: I think that's what I'm saying.

[Rogers Commentary 16: *This raises the whole question of what is illness? In what sense is it psychological and what sense is it physical? I can only go with the psychological reality as he presents it to me.*]

C 46: When I'm positive and when I'm doing things that I enjoy, I don't have symptoms (T: Mhm, hmm) anymore. (T: Mhm, hmm) I don't have symptoms. And I don't you know, like, when I came down here, the doctors wanted me to have transfusions and things like that, you know, and I remember one doctor saying to me, "I don't know really who's got you into playing this tennis and all that, or whatever, but you really need to come in here and have a transfusion." I said, "For what? I'm doing okay." "To be on the safe side." You know? (T: Mhm, hmm) That's . . . well, I won't say what that is. (Rogers laughs) But, you know, like, to some extent though, that confirms some things to me about not trusting doctors to take care of myself. (T: Mhm, hmm) I'm talking about the leukemia. (T: Yeah) I'm certainly not trying to indict all doctors or the medical profession (T: Sure) by what happened to me, (T: Mhm, hmm) you know, I think, I hope, in some way that other people who have life-threatening illnesses can deal with it because I think I have, and I do have that control. And like, since I was 7, to some extent, when I went down in that basement and turned that light off, or whatever, and I shut the outside world off . . . or whatever, somehow I've lost that . . . because somehow in the process of becoming educated and socialized, and whatever, (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) I let other people control what I wanted

and what I wanted to do. And I really . . . I did. That was a . . . Jesus, that was a, yeah, well, okay.

T 46: That has a lot of meaning to me, and I want to make sure I'm getting it straight. Down in that basement as a 7-year old with the lights out . . . you were really finding yourself and, I gather, trusting yourself. (C: Mhm, hmm) And then life was, said to you, "No, no, don't do that. We have the standards for you. Live up to our expectations. You've got to be the image. You've got to be just right. And everything." And now you are gradually recapturing what you felt as a 7-year old.

C 47: I believe that to be true. Because even though that you know, the responsibility, you know, it was like something inside of me could touch something that wasn't seen . . . when I was seven. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) And I can't remember what the book was that Young wrote, or whatever. (T: Mhm, hmm) But it had an extraordinary effect on me, this seven- year-old, you know? (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, I started writing poetry. My first poem. But I guess I did lose it. I did lose it. Like I still had it, but all this garbage about me being . . .

T 47: It was well buried?

C 48: Yeah. Yeah. And then other people were shaping me up by saying, well, you know, "You're really good if you do it this way, or whatever."

T 48: "You're a credit to your race."

C 49: Oh, yeah. "You're extraordinary. You're a credit to your race." You know, and, I don't know. Maybe they meant very well, or whatever, but it didn't do the job. It didn't do the job, you know, because in a way, by accepting that kind of praise, and their kind of . . . buying into their kind of system, or whatever, like, I gave up something that I knew already at 7 years old.

T 49: And that something, as I get it, is you were giving up something of yourself.

C 50: Yeah. I've . . . sounds good. Yeah, I did. I did.

[Rogers Commentary 17: *This really touches him. He's letting it sink in. He's experiencing his loss of self. This is the very heart of therapy. When I can provide a climate in which the client can experience his buried feelings rather than describe them or be told about them, it has a much more powerful and enduring effect.*]

C 51: You know, maybe I'd have been better off if I'd just gone on and lived my life rather than try to live other people's lives or whatever, you know. But I gave up being happy myself. You know, I didn't expect you know, I guess I didn't expect myself to be happy, or to really maybe deserve happiness, or something.

T 51: Sounds like you wanted so much to help people, that ah helping yourself didn't fit into that picture at all.

C 52: Not at all. Not at all. There was enough to do without worrying about your own (T: Mhm, hmm) little problems and things like that (T: Mhm, hmm) at that time,

so I said to myself then, you know? Oh, yeah. A lot of things are racing through my mind as we talk and, but there are certain things that go through this whole thing that I pick out in terms of when I was seven, and those are just really important times for me, you know. They were important times in terms of when I was alone, and when I was sure, and when I felt good and I felt a part of the you know, the stars, the universe. I really did feel that. You know, I remember I used to go out when I was 7, 8, 9 years old . . . three or four o'clock in the morning, look up in that beautiful sky and see those stars (T: Mhm, hmm) or whatever, (T: Mhm, hmm) and I'd say, "That's mine over there and I'm going to be there." And I felt good. I felt I don't know, in a sense integrated, more integrated than after . . . and as I continued (T: Mhm, hmm) to do this and fill out the forms for a scholarship, or things like that, I lost it. I really lost it.

T 52: At seven, you were really a part of the universe and you knew it.

C 53: That's what I thought. But you know, what does a 7 year old know, you know, I don't know.

[Rogers Commentary 18: *This has been a marvelous picture of the wholeness of the child and it's description by society. I'm trying as in all my therapy to help him get back to the kind of realness he had as a child.*]

C 54: I think I did. Yes, I knew it. I knew it because I knew, because I was always drawn to the stars, you know. (T: Mhm, hmm) It wasn't anything like my parents would wake me up in the middle of the night, or whatever, I woke up; I don't know why.

T 54: It was something that you wanted to do. It was something you had a view. Not because somebody else said, "Hey you should be interested in the stars or something like that."

C 55: For sure. For sure. And I was, I think at that time I was really the best person that I could be. And you know, I guess, for some reason, I don't want to heap it on everybody else you know, but I was just taught, conditioned or something that . . . to not trust that anymore. (T: Mhm, hmm) To . . . you know. (T: Uh, huh) It's like those things when you're young you hold onto or whatever.

T 55: "But then, that's just childish. That's just . . ."

C 56: Right. Right. Yeah.

T 56: "Don't trust that stuff." (C: Mhm, hmm) "They're telling you what's right." (C: Yeah.)

C 57: Yeah, yeah. I've really suppressed . . . I guess a hell of a lot of anger. 'Cause you know, when you said that, you know, I felt you know, like . . . you know, I think of all kind of words now.

[Rogers Commentary 19: *Speaking in society's voice when I said, "Oh that's just childishness, they're telling you what is right." There's something intuitive on my part but it released his anger. I like to follow my intuition and I've learned to trust it.*]

C 58: Really for sure. You're a minority . . . and in terms of a minority within a minority within a minority. Like mother's Osage. She's part Indian, (T: Mhm, hmm) her family . . . that history. (T: Mhm, hmm) Father a descendant of black slaves. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know? And then being picked out, you know? (T: Mhm, hmm) Because that's what it was, you know, 'cause I knew what was happening to other people in the class, whether they were white or black or whatever. But it was . . . you know, but I always really understood that I had to be 200 percent better than everybody else so I'd achieve. I almost killed myself playing football because I wanted to be the littlest superstar, whatever that means. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) It's crazy things. You know, it was that competitiveness, or whatever, you know. And it was that I wouldn't have anything if I didn't compete and if I didn't do it like, you know, somebody else told me to do. (T: Mhm, hmm) I guess.

T 58: So those standards and what they did to you really, really dominated your life, if I get it right.

C 59: I think so. I really think so. I, I uh, my reference point became . . . and I guess I bought into that. You know, I really bought into that. And I really, it really seems foreign to me now. It seems as foreign, I think, as leukemia, you know. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know I've . . . it really does, you know.

T 59: Yeah. One way of putting it is I feel you are saying, "Damn it, that seven year old was more right than all that's gone on in between."

C 60: Yeah. Yeah. And maybe trying to get back to that, and whatever, and now and uh, you know, I just wonder how, how that person at 7 would have been dealing with the leukemia and all those other problems now. (T: Mhm, hmm) It would have been interesting, I think. Probably would've handled it much better. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) (Pause 7 seconds) (Laughs) Feel some kind of release. I don't know.

[Rogers Commentary 20: *Notice how his voice has slowed, become more thoughtful and calm. He's getting closer to himself by revealing some of himself. And it feels good.*]

C 61: I told a lot of people you know, about um, about me. You know, and something that came out you know, and that other part of me may be . . . I'm really wondering about trusting too, right now. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know (T: Mhm, hmm) 'cause I've trusted a lot of other people, too. (T: Mhm, hmm)

T 61: And so you're wondering, "Yeah, but can I trust him?"

C 62: Hmm. Well . . .

T 62: Maybe part of that reason is you feel, "My God, I've told him a lot. I've trusted him. Have I trusted him too much?"

C 63: Sure. Well, I guess I'm just going to have to deal with it in terms of do I trust myself to tell you. (T: Mhm, hmm) You know, but I do have that, you know. I have that history. (Laughs)

[Rogers Commentary 21: *Is it safe to trust me with this more vulnerable part of himself? Clients often have such doubts and I respond in a way which helps him to realize that I recognize and accept that question.*]

C 64: You know, . . . but I've really been you know, like a lot of other people, like a lot of other people, you know, or whatever. But I've learned so many things from this, this whole thing, or whatever, you know. And even just sitting here and talking with you, whether you're Carl Rogers or Jesus Christ or whatever, you know . . .

T 64: Or Joe Doakes.

C 65: Or whomever, you know, it's a, still it's a very difficult thing for me to . . .

T 65: Yeah. Yeah.

C 66: And I don't know if I just haven't allowed myself to be open, you know, and to be needy or whatever. But is that junk? That "credit to . . ." You know, that really makes me mad. That really made me mad. I mean, I keep, in mind as I'm talking, it keeps coming back to me, you know. "Credit to my race, to my race." I remember that teacher so well, with big boobs, and she put my head right in them and said I was a credit to her race. And you know, that . . . oh, that burned me up.

T 66: So as you get deeper into that feeling it isn't just that you, earlier, you said you wondered if it was wise of her to do that. Now you know, "Damn it, I'm really angry at her for doing that to me."

C 67: Yeah. And I'm even more angrier when I see it happening all the time. And I don't want it to happen to my kids. (T: Mhm, hmm) And I didn't really want my kids to be a credit to their race. You know? (T: Mhm, hmm) And I know that now. Getting militant. (Laughter)(Pause 6 seconds)(Sigh)

[Rogers Commentary 22: *He finds it very hard to experience his anger. He only talks about it rather coolly. The sigh though, is one of real letting down. A relaxing, a trusting. We really are in relationship.*]

T 67: Our time's about up and I don't know if there's more you want to say now for today, okay. Or if not, we can call it quits for today.

C 68: Well I'd like to be able to tell you something.

T 68: All right.

C 69: That is going to make me feel good. That is going to continue to have me feel positive about myself and to grow and to be nourished or whatever, but I'm really not sure what to say. You know, but I really want to do that, so that I can continue to live, you know. (T: Mhm, hmm. Mhm, hmm) That's important to me, and so

(T: Mhm, hmm) um, but it's just not coming. But I think I really want to say that and be comfortable in saying, you know, "I got raked over the coals and I resent it and I'm mad and I'm angry and I need to get that to be angry (T: Okay) You know. (T: Mhm, hmm)

T 69: "Okay. I was really screwed by a lot of people, and I have reason to be angry, and I am angry, and I need to say that." I can hear the anger in there.

C 70: Yeah. But you know how I haven't said it yet, though, you know. I really haven't. You know, I think it um, I think it's just a part of being civilized maybe.

T 70: Mhm, hmm. You're talking about it in a very civilized fashion. (C: Right) Living up to those standards.

C 71: Yeah. Which I'd like to just go back and kick some butts, I think. (Sigh) Well, enough of the militancy.

T 71: Okay? Shall we call it quits for today?

C 72: Yeah. I think so.

T 72: Alright good. See you tomorrow.

[Rogers Commentary 23: *He has revealed more of himself than he expected to. He's going from a presentation of himself to exploring himself. From talking politely to talking honestly about anger. I believe this has happened because I've followed every feeling I could even when he seems to be scattered, to be talking about several different things, I've tried to stay with and respond to the most central of his feelings. I feel like we've made a start. On a more intellectual level, this session provides dramatic evidence of the theory that the child is open to all experiencing. That he or she feels the locus of evaluation is in the self. Then the family, the educational system and the culture pound home the lesson, "Don't believe in your own experience but learn to live by others' expectations. Then you'll be rewarded by love." Therapy means slowly discarding those introjections and gradually recapturing the person as he was in his childhood.*]