

The Psychotherapeutic Encounter: 'Do you hear what I hear?'

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SUMMARY: This paper argues that ambivalent communications have an inherent dynamic, which creates a tension in our social interactions; in order to sort them out we have to draw upon our internalised map of intentional icons, our emotional template, to interpret them.

KEY WORDS: Ambivalent communications, internalised maps, therapeutic interaction

I believe that inference and implications contained in what a therapist says to a client, has an emotional power about which the client makes a judgment. Carl Rogers argued that change and spontaneity develop out of trust and acceptance. Both child and adult seek and need non possessive warmth and unconditional positive regard, which has to be communicated by the therapist and experienced by the client through how they are treated. Rogers aims to keep the creative space between the client and the therapist uncontaminated by the inappropriate words and deeds of the therapist, by encouraging and empowering the client to take charge of the therapy and to create more than the therapist.

Even in this situation, however, both the therapist and the client are in suggestible frames of mind. Both are looking for clues about the other, based upon direct information, but more likely on that which can be inferred, from tones of voice, facial expressions, body language, and that which can be inferred from what

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