

## **Thinking at the Edge (TAE): Process-Theory and Practice**

### **The suggestion...**

TAE and Focusing are two practices stemming from Gendlin's philosophical stance about living organisms and life in general. Both are based on his concepts of the "body" and the "implicit" as well as on the principle "interaction first". The most fascinating thing for me is how he came up with these philosophy-concepts and the fact that he is offering all this knowledge to society, enhancing the importance of people and their inner potential. Everybody has something unique and important to offer to society and by using TAE they can actually express and share it. In this way, each and every one of us, can discover their own voice and position in the world and participate in the forming of the society without being outsiders that are compromising by following ordered concepts that somebody else came up with. I believe that this has huge social implications and also works as a very fruitful antidote to fear, a situation which actually devours humanity's potential for creative living.

Actually for me fear is, among other things, a situation generated from not knowing - that kind of "knowing" which will be discussed in this paper. Ignorance and lack of awareness produce and enhance fear. Fear is also a very efficient mean of control, a fact which becomes evident once looking at humanity's past and present state. On the other hand it seems to me that freedom from fear has to do with that kind of "inner knowing" Gendlin speaks of, which is felt within the body once one dips into themselves, encounters a bodily-felt "something", and waits... In that silent place "intricate processes" take place and new meanings are created. That is what Gendlin himself has discovered after many years of commitment and this is what he actually suggests with his philosophical practices: a pathway to freedom, a pathway - especially with TAE - to create our own philosophy from within us and contribute our "... to the world's "...

### **The Process-Theory...**

For Gendlin everything begins with and keeps on as "interaction". Plants, animals, humans exist as "interactions" within themselves, the environment and situations:

"Everything is what it is through how it is affected by other things, which themselves are what they are through how they are affected by the first thing" (Purton, 2004. p. 113).

The world - we - exist as "structures" because we "are interactions"; "the process makes the structure", (Gendlin, 2010). Thus structure isn't just a product of physiological actions and logical relations, as we have been trained to think. The same "interaction principle" applies also to the concept "body":

“The body IS an interaction process with the environment and therefore the body IS its situations. The body isn’t just a sealed thing here, with an external situation over there, which it merely interprets. Rather, even before we think and speak, the living body is already one interaction process with its situation. The situation is not out there, nor inside. The external ‘things’ and the subjective ‘entities’ are derived from one single life-interaction process (which they always bring along with them)” (Gendlin, 2004a).

Thus the body is not just a mechanical thing, a sum of units which perform certain actions following some specific rules; its “process” is much more “intricate” in that it “implies its right next step” (Gendlin, 1993. p. 30) in order to move forward and continue as a “living process”. There is an event/an “occurring into this implying in such a way that it carries the implying forward to its own next implying...” (Gendlin, 2008). This is Gendlin’s perception of the “living process”. It is important to mention that for Gendlin the “implying” isn’t something pre-existing as a form “waiting to be found” (Gendlin, 2004a), it is shaping during the pause in silence.

This “revolutionary pause” (Hendricks, 2003) has played an important role in my TAE process (Steps 1-12), and will be discussed further down.

According to Gendlin, the world and the situations are part of the body and experienced through it. This “experience is felt rather than spoken or visual” and “it does not fit the common names or categories of feelings” (Gendlin, 1993. p. 23). That is why, as I understand it, no word can convey the whole of the situation which is “bodily lived”. There is always something “more” to our “experiencing” which we can access to, during a pause in silence, and use it as a “direct referent” - what Gendlin calls the “felt sense”. Gendlin says that:

“This silent checking is possible because something is there to check against. It is something felt but not yet known. It is sensed as meaningful but not immediately recognizable. It is the ... We now call it a ‘felt sense’” (Gendlin, 1993. p. 26).

About language, Gendlin believes that it isn’t something external put into us but it “is rooted in the human body” (Gendlin, 2004a). He also notes:

“The body can always give the words more feedback than can possibly be derived just from concepts or forms or distinctions” (Gendlin, 1992. p. 193)

Hence mainly because language comes from the body, we can check from and through the body whether a spoken word is right or not (by right I mean whether the spoken word conveys our meaning of it, as we are using it in a particular situation). If the word fits, then the body responds with a sense of “physical relief” and that is what Gendlin calls a “felt shift”:

“... somewhere in your body, something releases, some tight things let go. You feel it all through you: Whew!” (Gendlin, 1981, p. 38).

Then the “implying” is carried forward to its explicit state with a specific word or phrase and what was unclear and “murky” is now becoming clearer. This is for me the essence of Focusing and TAE.

### **The Process-Theory in action...**

#### **TAE Steps 1-12 (Gendlin and Hendricks, 2004b)**

<b>STEP 1: Let a felt sense form</b>
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*Please note that what feels important to me is in bold letters.*

Paragraph from my “felt sense”:

As I am sitting down to write this paper, something inside feels restless and tense. There are two parts coming there – one that needs to say something and another one feeling more pushy and wanting to put its words in the process and get done with it. It needs for this process to flow and has strong feelings of rejection regarding any kind of its getting stuck. Sometimes this particular part takes the whole place in me, so I that I am losing my objectivity and any sense of whatever might also be there. I am noticing that there is absolutely nothing I can do about this whole situation I am experiencing, except accepting it. And be with it. **Let it develop from the inside.** So as I am sitting with the whole feeling the word distance comes to me. What is it that I know about distance that has to do with my whole situation?

When the distance is too close, I feel suffocated, when it is too far, I feel insecure. I need somebody inside to watch over me, being there, without me feeling, neither suffocated, nor insecure. And something in me just knows more about this, I can feel it in my body, there’s a funny moving tingling feeling in my stomach. It wants to show me something about the distance and the space it needs in order to be approached, there’s something about the trust I feel it knows and the whole feeling is kind of playful and inviting. But there is not only this... As I stay with it, something else comes, and I start feeling again a bit tight and tense. And there I notice that I somehow have come too close to it. It is like **playing a kind of a game of distance and space to find a trusting spot that needs constant checking...**

Like sitting in front of a fire place where you are hypnotized by the different colors and playful moves of the flames, you don’t want to lose anything from that beautiful exciting theme that is in front of you, you wish to catch all the small details about it, so you feel like getting closer to watch this process in greater detail, but once you get too close, you get too hot and uncomfortable, it burns. So you need to go back

and find just the right spot where you can watch, experience and even enjoy the whole process without losing anything from it and without being too cold (too far) or too hot (too close), even burned.

I feel very drawn into exploring this.

Short sentence with the crux: The delicate distance of space holds the right spot of trust.

### Instance

When I was little I was fond of a very big and wild dog who watched over a gas station near our house. I always felt sorry for the poor dog being always on a leash and barking angrily to everyone walking by. I felt it was so alone being leashed there, so I decided one day to take it for a walk. I went to the gas station which was closed, took the leash off and told it that we were going for a walk together. It never barked at me, it was as if it understood everything. I didn't take it on its leash, which was still around its neck, I just left it there and we were walking together side by side - a perfect kind of togetherness. There was trust for both of us to stay together, but at the same time there was a very delicate distance, I didn't hold it and I felt that it felt it didn't want to be held.

<b>Step 2: Find what is more than logical in your felt sense</b>
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### Paradox

There is trust in the not-trusting

<b>Step 3: Notice that you don't mean the standard definition of the words</b>
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My sentence with a slot: The delicate ..... holds the right spot of trust.

1<sup>st</sup> word: Distance of space

Dictionary's definition:

Distance

- the length of the space between two points
- the state of being distant
- the far-off point or place

- the full length or time of a race

#### Space

- unoccupied ground or area
- a blank between typed or written words or characters
- the dimensions of height, depth and width within which all things exist and move
- the universe beyond the earth's atmosphere
- an interval of time
- the freedom to live and develop as you wish

There are elements in the dictionary's definition that move something in me, but by distance of space I don't exactly mean two points that are just standing there in a distance from each other; this doesn't state anything about what is happening in the place in-between, and also about the kind of relation that exists in that in-between place.

2<sup>nd</sup> word: Interaction

Dictionary's definition:

- reciprocal action, effect, or influence
- *Physics:*
  - a.** the direct effect that one kind of particle has on another, in particular, in inducing the emission or absorption of one particle by another.
  - b.** the mathematical expression that specifies the nature and strength of this effect.

This word comes a bit closer to what I am trying to express, including the element of how one part affects the other and vice versa, still there is something more which has to do with the whole of the situation that is missing.

3<sup>rd</sup> word: Territory

Dictionary's definition:

- an area controlled by a ruler or a state
- a division of a country
- an area defended by an animal against others
- an area in which a person has special rights, responsibilities or knowledge

In this case the concepts of control, defense and division stir something inside which rejects these concepts, and that surprises me a lot! But still, the last definition

provides me with something that feels to be important regarding the ability and freedom to move and act creatively within boundaries. This is another aspect of what I am trying to say, but not all of it.

**Step 4: Write a sentence or fresh phrase to say what you wanted each of the three words to mean**

(Please note that the new words appear in blue color)

- *Sentence with the 1<sup>st</sup> word:*

The delicate distance of space holds the right spot of trust.

What I want distance of space to mean: the right kind of **regulation**, but regulation in a sense of natural, **soft**, not controlled - an all inclusive leash-less being togetherness.

My sentence now becomes: A delicate **kind of soft regulation** holds the right spot of trust.

- *Sentence with the 2<sup>nd</sup> word:*

The delicate interaction holds the right spot of trust.

What I want interaction to mean: interaction has to do with the act of **approaching** each other in a fine **balance**.

My sentence now becomes: **Approaching each other** in a delicate **balance** holds the right spot of trust.

- *Sentence with the 3<sup>rd</sup> word:*

The delicate territory holds the right spot of trust.

What I want territory to mean: As being able to stand on **safe ground** that holds both your feet, **within boundaries** that also provide a kind of safety – meaning the sense of safety someone has when something holds them without trying too hard, it is just there available.

My sentence now becomes: The delicate **safe ground within boundaries** holds the right spot of trust.

**Step 5: Expand what you wanted each word to mean by writing fresh, linguistically unusual sentences**

1<sup>st</sup> word: Distance of space, meaning from Step 4: kind of soft regulation

Expanding the meaning: When we regulate we move within rules and usually try different approaches and many different ways to see what fits the most. We are free to go back and forth from within and this is a kind of **ruled openness**.

2<sup>nd</sup> word: Interaction meaning from Step 4: approaching each other in balance

Expanding the meaning: Every time being aware of what is going on regarding every attempt to communicate and exchange what we really are. A **multi level continuous balance stating**.

3<sup>rd</sup> word: Territory meaning from Step 4: safe ground within boundaries

Expanding the meaning: The sense of the firmness, strength and support the **grounding** of the present reality provides.

String-Sentence:

**Territorial grounding is provided at the right spot of trust, which is held by the delicate distance within a ruled openness and being continuously stated, making an interaction multi leveled and balanced "..."**

**Step 6: Collecting facets**

**1<sup>st</sup> Facet: Family**

Once I had a discussion with my family about a personal matter, for which I needed to listen to other opinions. What happened during that conversation left me stunned. Everybody was speaking being in their own world without listening to the others, even trying to impose their opinions on the others, including myself. There

was absolutely no space and no communication. I felt as if we were all trying to communicate by speaking different languages.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Facet: Friend**

During a phone call with a friend of mine, I was surprised when she told me something I did a couple of months ago, which had annoyed her at that time. I couldn't understand why she didn't tell me right away how she felt about it. I couldn't trust her ever since.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Facet: Dance Performance**

During a dance performance I was watching, I was impressed by the dancers' moves and the sense of the whole thing they were conveying from the stage to the people. I was sitting quite far from the stage and felt that part of me wished to catch the expressions of the dancers' faces. That detail was missing, but on the other hand I realized that by capturing that detail I would lose the sense of whole thing.

### **Instance from Step 1**

When I was little I was fond of a very big and wild dog who watched over a gas station near our house. I always felt sorry for the poor dog being always on a leash and barking angrily to everyone walking by. I felt it was so alone being leashed there, so I decided one day to take it for a walk. I went to the gas station which was closed, took the leash off and told it that we were going for a walk together. It never barked at me, it was as if it understood everything.

I didn't take it on its leash, which was still around its neck, I just left it there and we were walking together side by side - a perfect kind of togetherness. There was trust for both of us to stay together, but at the same time there was a very delicate distance, I didn't hold it and I felt that it felt it didn't want to be held.

<b>Step 7: Allow the facet to contribute detailed structure</b>
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### **1<sup>st</sup> Facet: Family**

**Pattern:** No space in a conversation is abusive and dishonest communication.



2<sup>nd</sup> Facet: Friend

**Pattern:** Too much space between listening and responding produces a lack of trust.

3<sup>rd</sup> Facet: Dance Performance

**Pattern:** The essence of the whole thing comes from being in the right distance.

Instance from Step 1

**Pattern:** Trust can be sensed in a balanced wordless state.

### Step 8: Cross the facets

Crossing facet Family with facet Friend

In the Family facet there was no space regarding communication and that brought a sense of abuse. In the facet Friend there was too much space between the occurring of an incident and the expression of feelings about it. The absence of trust is present in both facets and it has to do with two states (no space/too much space) that seem to contradict each other, but in fact they don't, they are two sides of the same coin. As I am sensing it, they cross on the issue of listening. There is no listening involved in both facets, a fact which is abusive. Not listening and not being listened to means pretending and that equals abusive communication. To go a bit further with this, I would introduce a term out of this crossing: being a **self listener**

**Self listener:** being the provider and the receiver at the same time of honest (in a sense of aware) communication. Then the channel of communication is open. This leads me to another term:

**Open channel:** when there is a flow of communication, a feeling of freedom, without stuck places.

### Step 9: Write freely

I feel that I wish to write about what I am noticing, keeping track on my own process in this TAE process so far. It is as if I am circling around something and getting closer bit by bit, step by step, without a prior knowledge of where all this is going to lead me. It feels as if I am letting off the leash bit by bit and this triggers another process

of mine, a skipping the steps process in order to come to a controlled and well thought “leash result/definition” about the term I am attempting to make explicit. All this co-exists in this one TAE process. I strongly feel the importance of the self listener term which brings another term: **constant adjusting and fine tuning**.

**Constant adjusting and fine tuning:** a continuous back and forth movement, in order to find the proper distance. This movement has its own pace and rhythm and comes from the inside, it is not externally imposed.

The combination of the terms **self listener** and **constant adjusting and fine tuning** leads me to the concept honesty. Being a self listener requires a constant adjusting and fine tuning and that is honest communication. Somehow the distance of space has to do with honesty, as a way of communicating.

#### **Step 10: Choose terms and link them**

My terms are:

A: constant adjusting and fine tuning

B: self listener

C: open channel

“A = B”

“A = C”

By replacing the = with an IS, my sentences now become:

Constantly adjusting and fine tuning (A) IS self listening (B)

Constantly adjusting and fine tuning (A) IS opening a channel (C)

#### **Step 11: Ask into the inherent relations between the terms**

Constantly adjusting and fine tuning (A) IS inherent in self listening (B)

I go back into my felt sense and what comes is:

Being a self listener involves finding the right spot. But the right spot might be lost again.

The right spot is not a fixed position, it is something found through constant adjusting; that means going back and forth and checking whether you are really

listening, from which place you are listening and which part is listening. You need to do this with your body and the bodily feeling will indicate whether you are really listening or not. It is a bodily felt honesty that indicates the honesty as a quality involved in self listening. This brings me to the term: **bodily response of honesty**

**Bodily response of honesty:** when my body as a whole, from top to bottom agrees and gives me the green light to proceed, express myself and move forward as a whole. It feels like a whole bodily completeness, like everything inside is in total agreement. This is a sense of total honesty for me. All this has nothing to do with my logic; it is a sense of being totally present with all my being.

Constantly adjusting and fine tuning (A) IS inherent in opening a channel (C).

As I go back into my felt sense with this sentence I feel that my new term bodily response of honesty is a link for these terms too. The process of opening a channel needs constant adjusting and fine tuning and the bodily response of honesty is the indication that the channel is opening. But the whole process isn't complete, unless the bodily response of honesty can be expressed in an **articulated voicing**.

Articulated voicing is now another new term for me.

**Articulated voicing:** when the bodily response of honesty which involves constant adjusting and fine tuning is articulated, this means that it can take a shape, a form of its own and this happens through the articulation. But it also needs to be heard to have a voice of its own, so that the opening of the channel of communication can take place as a process. It is of great importance for the bodily response of honesty to be able to hear the voicing of its own articulation. Then the opening of the channel of communication can proceed.

### **Step 12: Choose permanent terms and interlock them**

I go back into my felt sense and what comes is the following:

All this is the ruled openness for the opening of the channel of communication, in which I can be me in a whole internal and external communication. The bodily response of honesty gives the green light to the **process** of articulated voicing. The bodily response of honesty is the right spot of trust for me. To come to this right spot of trust, a whole **process** of self listening is needed, where there is constant adjusting and fine tuning of the distance of space, which provides me the territorial grounding.

Distance of space is a **process** that holds the bodily response of honesty, which is the right spot of trust. But in order to get there, lots of other micro – processes need to

take place. Actually I realize that my terms are all micro-processes which interact in themselves and with each other within a bigger process which is the opening of the internal and external channel of communication. And all this carries me forward. So now I have come to a new term:

**Carrying forward:** to be able to express my truth, which I feel bodily.

So now I come to the following sentence, which expresses the crux of my felt sense:

**A carrying forward for me is a self listening which is a constant adjusting and fine tuning of the distance that results to an articulated voicing which is the bodily response of honesty allowing the opening of the channel of communication “...”**

### **Reflecting on my TAE process...**

I will use this space to track my own process and research into how it relates to Gendlin's philosophy-theory, so that all this can be more inclusive.

I felt I knew in an “explicit” way that something was happening inside of me regarding verbal expression. I researched that in my Counselling training in relation to PCA theory (Rogers, 1951), namely that human beings have a need for “unconditional positive regard” from the ones they perceive as “significant others”, in order to “maintain” their “actualizing tendency” and “fulfill” their “full potential”. As a person grows up and begins to have a sense of his/her “self - concept”, he/she tends to “deny or “distort” any “organismic experience” (i.e. “organismic valuing process”) which doesn't fit into the “self - concept” due to “conditions of worth” (i.e. “external valuing process”). In Gendlin's theory something analogous is what he defines as “process-skipping”, which has as an outcome the “structure bound” process. In this case however, there is no “distortion” or “denial” but “blocks” in the experiencing process. (Gendlin, 1964)

I stayed for a while on this kind of explanation/“explication” (i.e. the PCA perspective), but once encountering Gendlin's philosophy and started to practice Focusing I had a sense of something else happening. I started to pay attention to my “felt sense”, and the question which started shaping within me was actually, how I could find that right distance in order to relate to my “experiencing”. This applied to me also in terms of the broader field of relationships, a field which is actually what for me Counselling is all about – but this became clearer after the completion of my TAE process (meaning the TAE Steps 1-12). After getting the proper distance from my TAE process I was able to see what I was actually tracking.

I had a sense of a gap between what was “implicit” in me and its becoming “explicit”

and felt that I knew something about that gap. That gap which is expressed in the beginning of the TAE process from my “felt sense” as “distance of space” (Step 1) turned out to be the exact process I was “skipping” in order to come up with an “explicit” shape/word! So I already had an inner experience of that “skipping”, which was at the same time what I needed as content for the gap I felt there. And the content was provided from my internal source and not an external theory. Here for me is also another aspect of honesty in communication.

Now I will say a little bit more about this:

In the first five Steps the main task is to “break the language barriers” (Nada Lou, 2004, p. 14). Here the most important Step for me was Step 3. There I really started to get an idea of what I was actually looking for, as I perceived that the usual words and their public meaning reflected a sense of immobility and this wasn’t what I was tracking at all. At the same time, I had great difficulty to express the “more” of the meaning of the words, due to my “unit” thinking process, which persisted on ending up with explications.

I was very fortunate because the “something” that I was tracking was present all the time, a fact which was at the same time difficult in a sense of blocking the “unfolding” of my process, but also facilitating because I was able to experience it bodily.

My main difficulty also had to do with the fact that this “blank” “...” was something that I couldn’t recognize once “skipping” into my “unit” thinking” process; it was just something not compatible with it. It perceived the “...” as a nothing, as non existence as “the end of things” as a sort of death, if I might say so. This “blank” simply had to be filled with things, with concepts, units, and words. There for me was the stoppage regarding my internal “interaction”; and the “intricate bodily sense” I had, accompanied with a feeling of fear was an indication of that “skipping”, and of my process becoming “structure bound”, or already existing concepts - bound, as these are the “structure”. And there I recognize my concern about the outcome/result or shape/word which intervened throughout my process.

So, these actually were the moments of feeling stuck and saying the same things again and again. The contact to the “felt sense” was lost and I needed to go back to the first paragraph and instance (Step 1) in order to get in touch with it again, a fact that helped me a lot, as it worked peculiarly as a spot I knew from my “bodily felt knowing” I had sort of marked and could go back to... Actually this is also a helpful part of TAE for me, the fact that you write everything down. This worked as a lighthouse when being in the middle of a wild storm. As my “bodily felt sense” didn’t agree with the words/symbols I used, I needed to contact my source again and - yes indeed - stay with, pausing in silence...

Then, there was a feeling of hastiness, namely to come up with shapes/words fast, without offering me the proper time to process. This was another aspect of my “skipping” and had to do with the concept of time, where time needed to be experienced not only as linear (hours, days, weeks, deadlines) but also as an internal process by itself. And this was pretty hard due to the fact that using my “unit” thinking, my “experiencing process” was given a specific “explicit” content, namely that of a waste of time and also an interpretation of a lack of intelligence.

The above mentioned difficulties “cross” on the issue of acceptance, namely to accept that my “unit” thinking - my logic - is also part of my whole process. Logic is used throughout TAE in such a way that it promotes “more than logic”. The difficult part for me was to accept that experiencing precedes structure and not vice versa. And in order to accept this I needed the experience of it in relation to thinking, which I mainly perceived as a construct (by construct I mean something which is built out of mathematical relations, because I have a very strong sort of mathematical function regarding my way of thinking). So for me, thinking, as I perceived it, had nothing to do with experiencing, thinking was mainly an escape from experiencing. It was either thinking or experiencing. Using TAE I realized that thinking can be an experiential bodily process, it can be felt, and words can be felt in my body but they need to be spoken in order for me to be able to create their meanings from within. I also observed that quality expressing words (meaning here the how, the “kind of”) helped me towards creating my own meanings; for example, in my TAE Process, the word wasn’t just “voicing” it was “articulated voicing”. This brings me to what Gendlin says about philosophy:

“In philosophy we don’t just explain things; we try to explain what ‘explain’ can mean. If this makes you a little dizzy, it’s because you’re not used to philosophy. There are different kinds of ‘explaining’”. (Gendlin, 2000. p.255)

And I won’t lie about this; it made me very dizzy...

I also was quite confused with the TAE structure (and by structure I mean the numerical sequence of the Steps). As I have mentioned above, my mathematical thinking understands numerical sequences and follows them by heart. That was the way I understood the structure of a process, as a numerical sequence of steps. It was quite hard to grasp that “... what is not formed is very demandingly ordered although unfinished in regard to being formed” (Gendlin, 2004a). What comes as a theory in my TAE Process in Step 12 has a very precise order, is very clear (bodily clear not cognitively clear) and thus makes sense, and all that was implicitly there, in my body from the beginning.

I also had difficulty regarding “crossing”, which I consider as an essential process of TAE. At first I understood “crossing” as finding commonalities between “facets” or

“patterns”. But by using “crossing” like that, nothing new came up, only repetitions of my old patterns. I could feel this in my body, where no sense of release took place (this was a signal of repetition) and my “bodily felt implying” was still there (oh no, that’s not it... again...). “Crossing”, as I have experienced it, is not mathematical, it has to do with depth, that depth where the “felt sense” is formed. It has to do with a more spherical kind of understanding. For me “crossing” is a very “intricate” “interacting” process which takes place in the “felt sense” - depth allowing a kind of linking/bridging that wouldn’t be possible with logic.

Using my mathematical thinking process I can only work on the x and y axes, but then my experiencing of life and situations is limited, two-dimensional, a fact which I can feel as an uneasiness in my body. (You see, the fascinating fact for me is that the body is so precise regarding language...) But the concept of the “felt sense” adds for me a third axis, that of depth. The structure of the x and y axes is linear, but once the third axis is added, then the thinking process becomes three-dimensional, meaning that I can experience thinking in my body. Words become living entities/living “processes”, because that is what they were in the first place.

### **On Creativity...**

Creativity for me is that kind of process, where I am able and willing to shape my unique “unclear” “inner knowing” into new words/symbols so that it can “interact” and be shared with other people. It is an “experiencing process” and from my relating to it new meanings are formed.

Rollo May (1976) in his book “The Courage to create” speaks about Creativity and encounter. He suggests that: “Creativity occurs in an act of encounter and is to be understood with this encounter as its center” (p.77).

But encounter between what? He says:

“The very fact that the creative act is such an encounter between two poles is what makes it so hard to study. It is easy enough to find the subjective pole, the person, but it is much harder to define the objective pole, the ‘world’ or ‘reality’”. (May, 1976. p.78)

Rogers (1965), on the other hand, in his book “On Becoming a Person”, gives us his definition of the creative process, where he is clearer on what “the world” is:

“My definition, then, of the creative process is that it is the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other” (p. 350)

For me, what they both try to convey here is the meeting between us and our “experiencing”. What comes out of this encounter is a “product of creation”, for we are the cause/the “process” and not just the outcome/the “structure”.

Our encounter is with our “implying”, the “Non-being”, the “world - waiting - to - be” (May, 1976. p. 79). Right there in that uncomfortable “murky” zone new things are born. What was for me a kind of a grey zone is becoming a colorful creative zone, which is full of life and meaning.

## References

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