

PCE Conference Warsaw 2019 “Moments of Movement”

Theme

Psychotherapy evolves from the client's quest for change. After seeing the therapist for some time the client experiences change in certain aspects of their functioning. New feelings, thoughts, and actions emerge, together with new responses to known situations and new ways of experiencing certain significant areas of the client's life.

These changes, as Rogers believed, take place in specific moments – moments of movement, when there is an inner shift in the client – a phenomenon referred to by Gendlin as “carrying forward”. One moment the client describes something from the same old hopeless perspective the next a new element appears – a new emotion, thought, and need.

It's a beginning of a process that leads to more and more inner changes. We know how to facilitate the process of change, how to make it more probable. There is no algorithmic instruction though – we cannot determine whether and when the change will undoubtedly occur. What's more, we do not know where a given „carrying forward” will lead to, although we can foresee a general direction of the client's development.

Let us take a detailed and close look at the miracle of the moments of change. Let's see where the boundaries between our knowledge and the unknown lie, and let's try to move those boundaries just a bit.

Lecture Christiane Geiser:

The mystery of change.

About frozen wholes, stopped processes, moments of movement - and the importance of not knowing.

What is the essence of change? *What* changes and - more important - *how* does something change? What has been *before* something changes (which we of course only know in retrospect...). And what has to come together that change can take place?

I want to begin with our own experiences of change: how we remember these “moments”, these “shifts” or openings, the “carrying forward” of something in our lives, on our personal and professional journey. I want us to remember the specific quality. Each change process is highly individual and lives forward in its specific situation - but could we find out something general from this? A typical overall “quality”, which for us is the “nature” of these changes?

I then will briefly touch on the well-known theories, where Rogers and Gendlin found words to frame their experiences of change processes at that time. As persons rooted in their Zeitgeist, they used the findings of their time and exceeded them.

I want to look with fresh eyes at these ideas and question them in the light of current thinking about our approach and about the “nature” of change as such, emphasizing a relational understanding. But I also want to hold theories lightly - in the end change demands from all of us a deep commitment and responsiveness, a capacity to dwell in the unknown, a willingness to fall into a “moment of meeting” together.