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## **Towards a dialogical bond in a humanistic-oriented counseling**

The phenomenon of dialogue in a counseling relationship is described from many perspectives. Most often, you can find practical and instructional texts, conceived to improve the specialists' communication skills or prompt them as to what they ought to do or what they can do in this area, what they must not or should not do, how they can increase the range of impact on the client and how they can become an effective counselor, psychotherapist, mediator. In my article, I want to draw reader's attention to the deeper meaning of the counseling dialogue. The purpose of this article is, therefore, to redirect the reader's attention from the technical dimension of communication to building a dialogical bond in a counseling relationship. The second goal is to stimulate the counselors' sensitivity to dialogue, understood as a meeting of two subjects, and to encourage them to critically look at their attitude and the results of their help practices. The structure of the text reflects statements that show the meaning of a counseling meeting in phenomenological-cum-dialogical terms.

**Keywords:** meeting in phenomenological-dialogical terms, conversation, dialogue, dialogical bond, humanistic-oriented counseling

In the counsellogical literature one can find texts that describe the requirements for counselors. However, there are few research-based studies on the actual level of their knowledge, skills and competences, and their preferred work styles and results of counseling activities. The majority of the texts that are prescriptive and describe the area of professional counseling work, stress the importance of interpersonal skills with a particular emphasis on the communication aspect (making contact with the counselee, having conversations, asking questions, listening, building relationships) (Kulczycki, 1985a; Balawajder, 1996; Egan, 2002; Berlin, 2008; Szłapińska, 2013; Szumigraj, 2016). Just to clarify, my *concern* comes from *observation* of the situations in which professional counselors in their statements and/or behaviors present a shortage of basic communication skills. I notice this during short educational events (workshops, trainings) in which

I participate, striving to develop my competences in the field of providing professional psychological and pedagogical help. In the communication process, the language used by the counselor plays a key role. I have often noticed how difficult it was for counselors participating in these workshops to construct open-ended questions (the so-called 'Wh'-questions). I remember situations when counselors were asked to specify their communication skills used in the help relationship – in the beginning they rated them highly, but during the exercises it turned out that the vast majority (even about 70%) of them had serious problems with asking such questions. Despite a fair introduction to the issue, giving good examples and the trainers' patient support, very often professional counselors were not able to go beyond the 'yes/no' questions, even though they made a lot of attempts, trying to choose the right words. Mistakes and corrections were very common. The process of changing the way of thinking seemed to be difficult. Experienced specialists became impatient because their next questions were again expressed in a yes/no form. Sometimes it became a routine. For example, instead of asking, «Why were you satisfied?», The counselors gave that version: "Were you satisfied?" It was equally, or maybe even more worrying when the counselor already suggested the answers to the counselee: "You were satisfied with what happened then and then...". Even when the workshop participants managed to 'break out' of controlled open questions, the questions they asked still suggested answers, because, tirelessly, counselors attached unnecessary content: "What made you happy when your boss/brother reacted, he said this or that?", etc. I mention my observations not to put specialists in an unfavorable light, but only to indicate that communication skills require careful practice, deep reflection, supervisory cooperation with more experienced practitioners, and participation in inspiring forms of professional development.

The difficulties in establishing and sustaining communication seem to indicate that they are not only problems related to training, the problem goes much deeper. If it was only a functional difficulty, it would be relatively easy to eliminate. Probably, however, it is more complex, and one of its sources may be the mental barrier associated with a reflection on what communication, conversation, and dialogue are for. It is relatively easy to notice that specialists who do not consider this – and they seem to constitute the majority – want to collect, in an instrumental manner, basic, superficial information about the client and his problematic situation (without knowing him and his whole life situation). They measure people's problems, using only the resource of their own knowledge/ignorance, with which they are quickly trying to diagnose and classify problems and give specific recommendations. Questions asked by a humanistic-oriented counselor are deeper. They lead to self-reflection and delving into one's own future, e.g. in a double subject form *What is your life for you? What do you want to change in your life? How can you shape your life?* – which do not occur in the conversation with a client. Their way of thinking is opposed to the thinking of

the minority of counselors and counsellors, whom Violetta Drabik-Podgórna describes as *sensitive to dialogue*<sup>1</sup> with other people, in that their thinking is aimed at diagnosing and reducing problems. In this article, I propose to look at the humanistic-oriented counseling views on dialogue.

This is not the first attempt to draw the reader's attention to the meeting relationship in interpersonal relations. The phenomenon of dialogue fascinates researchers coming from various scientific disciplines. There were, and still appear, very interesting texts on this subject written by philosophers, anthropologists, linguists, cultural scientists, psychologists, educators. In counseling itself this phenomenon has also enjoyed some interest. The authors, using a hermeneutic, dialogical, personalistic, existential, constructivist, symbolic, etc. approach, present various forms of interpersonal communication: conversation, dialogue and the meeting relationship of the counselor and the client. The authors that should be mentioned, in chronological order of their texts are: Alicja Kargulowa (1986, 1996, 2004, 2009, 2012), Bożena Wojtasik (2001, 2009), Violetta Drabik-Podgórna (2003, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2013), Edyta Zierkiewicz (1996, 2008), Maria Straś-Romanowska (2009), Grażyna Teusz (2009), Ewa Trębińska-Szumigraj (2009), Elżbieta Siarkiewicz (2010, 2014), Joanna Minta (2010), Aneta Słowik (2012), Elżbieta Chmielnicka-Kuter (2012), Alicja Czerkawska (2013).

In this text, using the phenomenological view of the dialogue, I would like to point to a certain, relatively rarely perceptible (although very significant) basic element for the way people communicate (so, also an element that occurs in a counseling relationship), namely the formation of a dialogical bond in the counselee-counselor arrangement. The importance of the counselors' efforts to establish this bond, and the difficulties that arise from it, is crucial, because many support recipients probably did not have the opportunity to develop it in families, as it is mindfulness, kindness and patience that build relationships based on such a bond.

## **Thesis 1. Vision of a human being and the world in a humanistic-oriented counseling**

Due to the fact that counseling activities – as written by Alicja Kargulowa (1986, p. 13) – are related to the vision of a human being and the world and their mutual relations, I am going to introduce a simplified description of the surrounding reality and a human functioning in it, which will show some elements that make

<sup>1</sup> Violetta Drabik-Podgórna, in the text *Thinking like a counselor...* introduced anthropocentric thinking sensitive to a dialogue, which was based on the philosophy of the encounter, analyzed from the perspective of personalism and philosophy of dialogue. As the author emphasizes, it is about the humanistic perception of a human being and his or her life situation and the creation of a relationship between a counselee and a counselor based on universal values that will allow reaching the world of internal experiences of a supporting person and finding oneself in the outside world (Drabik-Podgórna, 2013, s. 187–190).

this existence difficult. In many statements, we can hear that the modern world appears to be complicated, multi-layered and uncertain. The external conditions of human life are difficult to understand and, additionally, they change dynamically. It has been emphasized for many years that people experience a lot of individual, social and political crises, mushrooming nationalisms and fundamentalisms, the collapse of authorities (Łukaszewicz, 1995, p. 10). Today, people have fewer opportunities to experience themselves in close social relations, enjoy the presence and wisdom of others, get to know themselves and share themselves. It takes place both within the family and outside of it. We live in an era of individualism, we communicate via satellite, we feel time pressure, we are inundated with noise, we feel general anxiety. Other features of modern times are: chaos in the area of moral norms and values, the phenomenon of objectifying people and ubiquitous consumerism. In the social world, relations become scattered, superficial and instrumental. For this reason, the individual suffers and experiences loss in the way of his existence (Giddens, 1998, pp. 130–134; Giddens, 2008, pp. 2–5; Giddens, 2002, pp. 3–9, 105, 109–110, 248–249; Straś-Romanowska, 2008, pp. 19–20, 28–29; Kargulowa, 2012, pp. 19–20; Szczepański, 1978, pp. 21–22, 24–25; Kulczycki, 1982, pp. 65–66).

A human being – as an integral, physical-psychological-spiritual unit who develops dynamically in social relations – changes, constantly updates and strives for purposeful and meaningful life. Humans are not passive beings. An individual has the ability to adapt and emancipate in any given conditions. She or he can co-create the surrounding reality, making decisions and numerous choices. He or she is able to use his/her own freedom, to understand themselves and the world, to find their place in it, to form their own destiny and achieve self-realization. They face many challenges, tasks, fascinating discoveries, but also many uncertainties, fears and disappointments. In adverse conditions, they experience problems, difficulties, conflicts and crises. A human being might feel lonely and psychologically broken. Sometimes people feel helpless about what is happening in their life and do not use the resources they have at their disposal. Often, instead of taking actions related to dealing with life/solutions, they complicate them unnecessarily. They find themselves in unfavorable situations, and being disappointed with social contacts, they reduce their social world even more, persist in shallow relations, pass by the others in the crowd, become phony, communicate from a distance, complain about what is happening, think that nothing can be changed. It happens, however, that they dream of “finding” or defining themselves and achieving stability and balance in particular aspects of life. Then they usually realize that life has a temporal dimension, that it passes over in an unsatisfying form. This recognition often leads the individual to take action to overcome obstacles, solve various problems, develop potential and build a new quality in life. Then a number of questions arise: What to bet on in life? How to lead life? What to take responsibility for? What

to choose? Reflection on life is related to the judgment whether it is successful or unsuccessful, empty or full, false or true, imposed by others or self, and, finally, meaningful or meaningless? Long socialization and upbringing do not always prepare individuals to answer these questions in a satisfactory way. Life is complex and difficult to predict. However, when a person does not want to be in a disadvantageous situation, they must make an effort to cope with different areas of existence. We usually try to do it on our own, and in exceptional situations, instead of experiencing isolation and apathy, leading to social and mental “death”, we can turn for help to a specialist, with whom we will co-create the conditions for our own growth and development<sup>2</sup>, for interpretation of what is happening, for constructing and reconstructing our identity and optimizing the quality of being (Sartre, 1992, pp. 195–196; Kargulowa, 1982, pp. 11–13, 18–19; 1986, pp. 19–20; 1996, pp. 90–91; 2004, pp. 38–41; Kulczycki, 1985b, pp. 142–143; 1991, pp. 20; 1997, pp. 27–30; Straś-Romanowska, 1998, pp. 68–74; Yalom, 2008, pp. 25–26, 226; Galarowicz, 1992, pp. 39; Czerkawska, 2013, pp. 51–53).

As Anthony Giddens wrote, “identity is a reflexive project which the individual is responsible for, (...) who the individual will become, results from his efforts to reconstruct it. It means more than just ‘better knowing yourself’” (Giddens, 2002, p. 105). This happens in dialogic interpersonal relationships - most often informal - such as family, in which the person develops important biographical competences associated with gaining knowledge about themselves and the world, and about how they can co-create their life in a world that is far from perfect. Some, however, have no one to turn to in this existential crisis, when support provided by relatives turns out insufficient. People, “bearing in mind the necessity to rebuild their identity” and to create a satisfying life, go to specialists (Giddens, 2002, p. 196). One of the possibilities to provide help is to use humanistic-oriented counseling.

## **Thesis 2. Using the dialogical potential of individuals in humanistic-oriented counseling**

Humanistic-oriented guidance is sometimes accused of mysticism and fanaticism. Moving away from previously developed methods, techniques and tools that are an important attribute of professionals caused much controversy and suspicion in the scientific milieu. The use of an open perspective in this dialogue, in the view of oneself and others, and one’s problems, was perceived as not entirely possible, and if so, then in psychotherapy rather than in counseling. Such a belief was and still is connected with a different type of thinking about helping people. It is expressed in the algorithm: extract information from

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<sup>2</sup> Counseling in growth and development consists in discovering the strengths and potential of the client so that in a given life situation, and in the future, he or she will be able to cope with problems by themselves (teaching self-help).

the person – diagnose a problem or problem situation - indicate how to solve the problem or significantly direct the counselee to a solution.

However, this model of thinking has long been undermined, e.g. by Carl R. Rogers, who in the 1950s helped to shock the professional environment with his bold statements and redirected their attention from a problem to a person, from methods and problem-solving techniques to the meeting relationship between two individuals (Rogers, 1991, 2002a, b). Within the “helping turn”, one can see connections with philosophical trends developed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: phenomenology, existentialism, philosophy of dialogue and hermeneutics. This can be seen in the work of the above mentioned humanist, inspired by the views of philosophers Martin Buber and Søren Kierkegaard, psychiatrists and psychologists, such as Ludwig Binswanger, Ronald D. Laing, Abraham H. Maslow, Rollo May, Irvin D. Yalom. This inspiration is clearly seen in his statement:

By being coherent and sincere, I can often help other people. When the other person is honest and coherent, it often helps me. In these rare moments, when the deep reality of one person comes into contact with the reality of the other, there appears a remarkable account of «I-You» as Martin Buber would call it. Such deep, mutual personal encounters do not happen often, but I think that if they did not happen at all, we would not live like human beings (Rogers, 2002b, p. 34).

Due to the limitations of the present paper format, I will only mention the most important issues related to the development of dialogical and humanistic thought that has infiltrated into counseling and counsellogy.

In the humanistic approach, initiated in psychology by Kurt Goldstein, Kurt Lewin, Gardner Murphy, Fritz Perls, Gordon W. Allport, Victor E. Frankl, Alfred Längle, and Rogers, Maslow, and May already mentioned above, one of the main assumptions is that a human is a psychophysical whole with a great creative potential, that there are good qualities and motives out there, and that there is a natural tendency of self-improvement (Jankowski 1976, p. 9). As Längle (2003, p. 42) observed,

a human being, thanks to his own power to resolve, can achieve the fullness of existence and fulfillment. This is possible when the individual opens himself to the internal and external world by starting the dialogue». In turn, the lack of internal or external dialogue is treated as a serious pathogenic factor. Thus, in counseling, an important objective is to give the counselee «help in gaining emotional freedom, in finding a genuine inner attitude and achieving a responsible way of expression and behavior both in relation to himself and in relationships with other people or things (Längle, 2003, p. 42).

A successful process results in living in internal harmony with one's own actions and remaining in a dialogue with the internal and external world.

The dialogical approach emphasizes an individual's return to these basic experiences connected with the existence in the interpersonal relationship of *I-Other*. This approach stresses the importance of creating this relationship. It is

emphasized that through it individuals develop themselves, get to know themselves and the world around them, share themselves with others, experience empathy and closeness, perceive similarities and differences, learn the rules of life and coexistence in the surrounding reality. The meeting *I-Other* reveals what is the most characteristic in the human world. It creates an ethical space. Real interpersonal relationships are based on the ethical principles of life including immediacy, security, openness, mutual respect, acceptance and partnership. This creates a climate of the meeting, during which subjects can reveal their individuality and uniqueness. The meaning of the encounter is not revealed in determining who is right, but in accepting difference and being in the agreement with yourself. The aim of the encounter is to accept the other side and to achieve mutual agreement and understanding (Buber, 1991, pp. 37–41; Gadamer, 1993, pp. 334–336; Galarowicz, 1992, pp. 39–40, 291). When interpersonal space is created in such conditions, one gains insight into the mental state not only of the other person, but also of one's own. You can then enter into a relationship with yourself, develop, change the quality of life and build reflective projects regarding your future. Dialogists did not appreciate the relationship of the individual with himself, because they recognized that the monologue is a form of anti-dialogue, but still, they significantly contributed to the development of thinking about this particular relationship. Thoughts by Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and numerous representatives of the so-called “third force” inspired Hubert J. M. Hermans, a Dutch psychologist, to create the dialogic ‘Self’ theory. His collaborators also used the works of Emanuel Lévinas and Hans-Georg Gadamer. This relatively new – created at the turn of the last millennium – theory is based on the phenomenological tradition and states that being in a relationship with oneself is dialogical. Thus, Hermans and others justify that the *Self* is polyphonic, dynamic and intertwined in mutual relations (Hermans, 2003; Oleś, 2011, p. 146).

The dialogical nature of human beings – i.e. their linguistic activity and language-mediated experience of the world – is the natural way of human existence in the world. It is visible in children and adults in encounter relationships, as well as in communing with oneself. Dialogue forms include meetings of the *Self* with the *Other* in face-to-face relations, long-distance relationships mediated by various media (Zierkiewicz, 2004; Zielińska-Pękła, 2009) and those where the ‘I’ meets itself.

As Piotr K. Oleś emphasized, apart from the forms of the dialogue aimed at/towards others “dialogue is manifested in loud thinking, speaking to each other, speaking on behalf of other characters, but mostly in conversations provoked in thought” (Oleś, 2011, p. 148). According to him and Małgorzata Puchalska-Wasył, there are three forms of internal dialogical self activity: (1) monologue, (2) imaginary dialogue, (3) change of perspective (i.e. point of view). They emphasize that internal dialogues can take place between parts of the self, in imagined or recalled relations with others, and take the form of simulations of social dialogues.

According to Puchalska-Wasył, creating internal dialogues with oneself and one's own life story fulfills seven functions in the processes of individual adaptation and development. They include:

Support (source of hope, sense of security, sense of life), substitution (a substitute for a real contact, form of an argumentation exercise), exploration (way of seeking new experiences, escape from dull reality), bond (sense of understanding, communication with someone close), self-improvement (caution against repeating mistakes, self-discipline), insight (way of getting a new point of view, advice, distance to the problem) and self-steering (motivating factor, criterion for self-assessment)" (Puchalska-Wasył, 2011, p. 74).

The following figure illustrates the polyphony of the counselee in the dialogical space created together with the counselor. One can see here individual elements that constitute complex reference systems in the individual's dialogue with their own past, present and future. The counselor tries to reflect the conviction that a counselee, by engaging in an open dialogue, refers to their own internal psychic structures, the influence of important people in their lives, the socio-cultural context in which they are immersed. Thanks to the conversation and the dialogue with the counselor, the counselee combines these elements, looks at them, gives him new meanings, organizes the history of their life and understands better their own life situation. The counselee also experiences the presence of an attentive and committed counselor who helps them to get acquainted with individual biographical topics and understand their own existence.

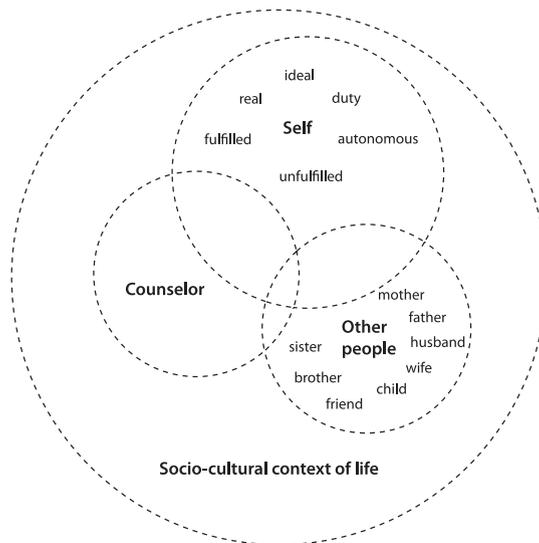


Figure 1. Dialogical space emerging in the counseling relationship (original representation based on Oleś, 2011; Puchalska-Wasył, 2011).

The support processes triggered in a dialogue, connected with getting to know and understand oneself and others, with organizing social relations and one's own positioning in them, with solving problems and conflicts and making decisions, become the basis for creating reflective projects related to the future. They reduce the discrepancies in the *Self* system, and thus increase the sense of integration and internal cohesion, raising the individual's self-esteem (Oleś, 2011, pp. 148–149). Just as in everyday life, and in the counseling relationship, some internal dialogues appear spontaneously or are provoked (Oleś, 2011, p. 145), so that, according to Elżbieta Chmielnicka-Kuter: “advancing awareness and understanding one's own history of life, the distinguishing points in it and the repetitive themes which, by escaping daily attention, significantly determine the ‘stories we live by’” (Chmielnicka-Kuter, 2011, p. 380).

Using the dialogic potential of humanistic-oriented counseling is crucial. The *Self-Other* meeting relationship, and what is happening within it, is significant not only for the cooperation between the counselee and the counselor. Above all, it is significant for the individual who meets with her- or himself.

### **Thesis 3. Building a dialogical bond in a humanistic-oriented counseling**

According to Antoni Kępiński, a human being basically never grows out of the need to look for support and kindness in a social environment (Kępiński, 2000, p. 87). In a difficult life situation, a person “expresses a longing for integration, order and controllability among the chaos of phenomena, (...) looking for a second human being, help, emotional contact and a better understanding of himself” (Kępiński, 2000, p. 150). According to the observations by this outstanding dialogical thinker and practitioner, the subject is not focused on solving the problems he is experiencing, but on developing his own potential in contact with a friendly companion. Probably, the matrix for the relationship with the doctor/ psychotherapist/ counselor is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural consciousness, in an “emotional relationship with the mother”, which is a model for building other emotional ties in the natural environment (Kępiński, 1993, p. 85). Kępiński is not alone in such thinking. The British psychiatrist John Bowlby wrote that “the role of the therapist is analogous to the role of a mother providing a child with a safe base from which she can explore the world”<sup>3</sup>.

Emphasizing the importance of building a close relationship in a humanistic-oriented counseling, the counselor is compared not only to the parent, but also to a friend. These analogies show the atmosphere of the encounter, in which the specialist empathically reacts to the counselee's mental states, their stories about themselves, their relationships with others and their biographical

<sup>3</sup> See Bowlby. Retrieved from: <https://poradniaonline.wordpress.com/cytaty/> (14.03.2018).

experiences. The counselor is not a friend or a parent, but reveals some characteristics of these social relations – they show empathy and warmth, give attention and understanding, create conditions for growth and development. This relationship is not about emotional entanglement of people who are making a relationship and depend on them, but about creating trust and security that are key in cooperation.

In the psychological literature, the primary bond between a mother and a child is treated as the prototype of other important social relations. Research on this subject was conducted, among others, by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. They pointed to three types of attachment: secure, insecure and insecure ambivalent/resistant. The most favorable bond, based on a sense of security, allows us to build and maintain closeness with important people. A caring mother, sensitive to the needs of her child, creates conditions for the child's proper development, contributes to the development of psychological structures responsible for the system of attachment behaviors in other relationships. The authors believe that in this way, the mother provides the child with good abilities, beneficial later in life. This bond, although natural, requires a lot of mother's devotion, which consists in a positive response to a child existence. Brought up in good conditions, a child who is also surrounded by other people in the family, experiences acceptance, love, intimacy, attention, and interest for many years. They learn that they are important, and that they deserve to be loved. They meet themselves, learn to take care of themselves, create communication with themselves and others, they reciprocate love. Under such favorable conditions, the child does not show fear of rejection, nor experiences the need to pretend they are someone else (see Bowlby, for Marchwicki, 2006, pp. 376–377; Cyrulnik, 2015, pp. 121–130, 295–304). In adults, there are constant tendencies to build ties according to the prototype created in childhood. Not everyone, however, was lucky enough to grow up at a home where climate was favorable for development. Although adults enter into numerous interpersonal relationships, only some are characterized by emotional closeness and intense commitment. These special relations are “the source of a subjective sense of security” (Marchwicki, 2006, p. 381). Most often, in adulthood people experience attachment to parents, to their own children, to a partner in a love relationship, to a spouse, to a friend. Interestingly, they may also develop a similar relationship with other people – including a psychotherapist/counselor (Berman, Sperling, 1994 in Marchwicki, 2006, p. 381).

Just like in the child-mother relationship, the counselee-counselor one is not about creating a symbiotic relationship, but about developing biographical competences that will allow the individual to lead a happy life. The counseling relationship is limited in time. The main beneficiary is the counselee. Therefore, this asymmetry is emphasized – even in a humanistic-oriented counseling, in which partnership, mutual respect and acceptance are crucial. An important element

of this relation is the verbal and non-verbal expression of who someone is in his uniqueness and separateness. The counselor looks through counselee's existence and makes a decision, taking into consideration the client's will, to what extent they could influence and change their life. The basic condition for a meeting in which such relationships occur is the counselor's openness to a shared world of experiences, their desire to get to know the other person, their will to accompany them and build an intimate relationship with them. To achieve this, the decision of both parties to cooperate is necessary. The relationship established at that time is lively, authentic, honest and involves focusing attention on each other. The relationship in humanistic-oriented counseling is also dynamic, gaining momentum. It starts with the first meeting in which, in the course of the conversation, participants have the opportunity to get to know each other and to enter the world of the counselee. The conversation that follows, does not proceed according any assumed scheme. The counselor adjusts to the individual's psychological and physical state, their openness in the relationship, the readiness to share oneself, the pace of speaking etc. The main activity of the counselor is to attentively listen to the counselee's narrative. The specialist speaks as much as it is necessary. They do not fill the dialogue space with unnecessary comments and reactions. They give voice to the client (Jedliński, 1993, p. 18), try to limit their reactions and be calm (Benesch, 2003, p. 409). Inviting the counselee to share their narrative, the counselor does not put their client under pressure, they are convinced that the counselee will reveal those issues that matter to them and that require counselor's attention. They listen to the story and create a space in which the individual can meet with himself and his life, initiate a journey through his own existence, take important decisions for himself and take responsibility for them. A counselee, having the feeling of being heard and understood, becomes ready for constructive changes in his life (Benesch, 2003, p. 409).

An adult can experience positive relationships in various social systems, learn them and use them in later life. Entering into a relationship with a dialogue-sensitive counselor – who focuses on the narrative and gives it time to develop, accepts, understands, and who remains kind, asks important questions, inspires to establish mutual communication and encourages the counselee to make positive changes in life – provides one of such precious opportunities.

The next figure illustrates the dialogical activity in the relationship between the counselee-counselor and the level of “results” achieved by the participants of the meeting based on a humanistic-oriented counseling.

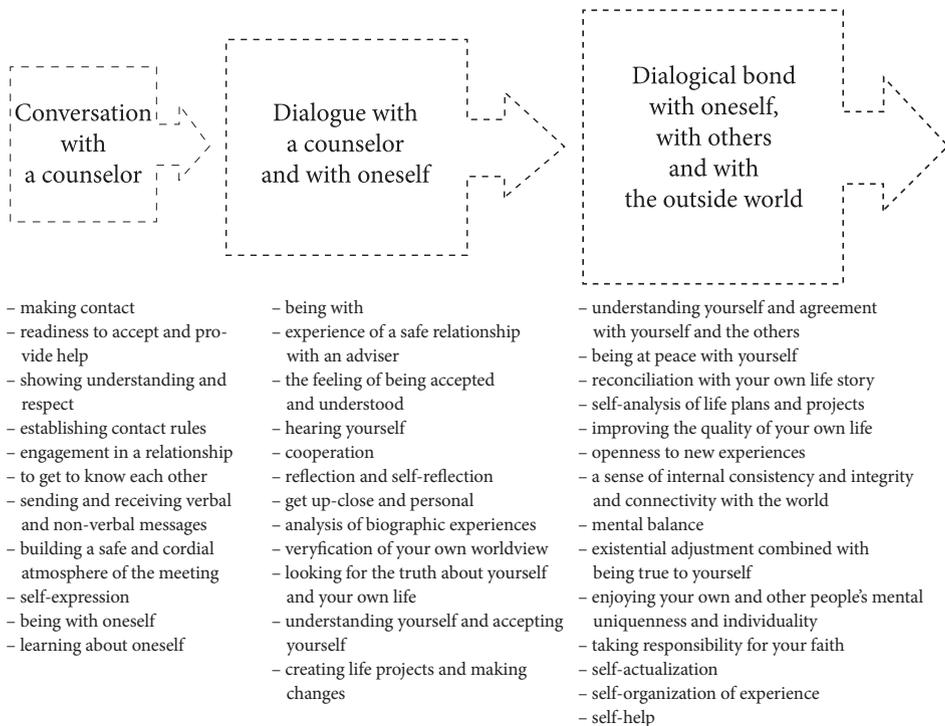


Figure 2. Creation of a dialogical bond in the counseling relationship and expected results (prepared by the author).

As we can see, in the humanistic oriented counseling, the basic assumptions relate to the relationship of the *Me and You* meeting and the attitudes and values present in the contact: empowerment, voluntariness, co-presence, striving for an agreement, maintaining the parties' acceptance, mutual respect and partnership. Thanks to the experience of help from specialists, conditions are created for experiencing freedom and "becoming more autonomous, more spontaneous, more self-dependent" (Rogers, 1978, p. 289). It is about freedom, which Rogers sees as an existential issue. He defines it, referring to the views of Viktor Frankl, as a subjective category, located within the human being, connected with his responsibility for who he will become in the historical time in which he will come to live, with such and not other systems of external forces. Freedom understood in this way is expressed in the conviction: "I am able to live, here and now, by my own choice", (Rogers, 1978, p. 297), think and feel my own way, update my own identity and acknowledge my own existence and existence of other people, and the world in this form (Rogers, 1978).

The counselor "assists" the individual in the dialogue process in these areas. This makes it possible to look at yourself and your own biographical experience, discover and experience important issues, dilemmas, difficulties, find solutions,

design yourself and continue to live. The counselee feels, thinks, acts, evaluates, mentions, sets goals, plans, etc. He tells his story, re-experiences experiences, organizes them, sets directions for change, implements them in life. He gets to know himself in all of this, he begins to understand the course of events better, his participation in them, he accepts the past, he changes. Thanks to the cooperation with the counselor, the counselee enters into a real, accepting and deep dialogue with himself and with others, with his past, present and future. The counselor witnesses the counselee's effort, analysis, experience, meetings with the multi-voice I, in the process of asking own questions and searching for answers. Through the subjective counseling relationship, the counselee begins to create strategies for dealing with the natural (inherent in every person) anxiety, to mature and gain strength, reveal the truth about himself, analyze mistakes and failures, solve problems and learn the secrets that affect his existence. All this is happening in parallel with shaping acceptance of oneself, others and the outside world, with self-realization and simultaneous existential adaptation. Certainly, such counseling processes take a long time and require a lot of commitment from both individuals, but their result translates into self-help.

Due to conversation and dialogue, the individual develops or strengthens the dialogical bond, which I call the "system" of communication with the internal and external world. This communication has a positive meaning in reaching personal existential truth, self-updating and self-regulation, while taking into account personal and non-personal possibilities and limitations. This transforms into a realistic assessment of oneself and one's own life situation, building new qualities in interpersonal relationships, achieving balance in individual spheres of life (Rogers, 2002b, pp. 24–27, 129).

A whole range of possibilities is revealed that enable an authentic and satisfying life, shaping one's own fate and coping with difficult circumstances.

On the part of the counselor, the accompaniment of the individual does not require communication, diagnostic or methodical virtuosity, but the creation of a field in which the person will meet with himself and his experiences. This space is an opportunity to think again about matters that are important to the counselee, to experience them, to look at them, to learn themselves, to update their meanings and (re)organize their experiences. The empathic understanding is needed ("the ability to explore and sensitively understand the experiences and feelings of the client and the meanings that he gives them", "entering the private world of one's perception and settling in it") (Rogers, 1991, pp. 8–10), unconditional acceptance (deep and genuine concern for the client, "kindness and warmth, deprived of possessiveness, limitations and evaluations) (Rogers, 1991, p. 17) and congruence (self-conformity, transparency of feelings, thoughts, attitudes, avoiding the "temptation to appear under the guise of professionalism") (Rogers, 1991, p. 20–21). It is tuning in to the counselees, being with them in a real relationship, being alert to

them. Listening to their issues can give grounds for creating conditions for further development (Rogers, 2002b, pp. 24–27).

## Conclusion

As I wrote in the beginning, organization and implementation of counseling activities depend on the vision of a person and the world adopted by the counselor. Patient and cautious being with the *Other* is more difficult than diagnosing problems, controlling the counselee, imposing own will, giving advice, instructing and manipulating, or colonizing people (Zierkiewicz, 2008, pp. 138, 142–143). The counselor's strength in the dialogical approach is not expressed in persuasion and influence, but in creating conditions for growth and development as well as accepting difference and accompanying others with respect, without taking away their dignity and the right to individuality. I can already hear indignant specialists' voices, saying that not every person needs such help. Yes, I agree. However, I imagine the opposite situation, when I ask myself how many people who are ready to build a dialogical bond with themselves and the outside world during meetings with counselors sensitive to diagnosing and reducing problems, but finally have been deprived of this unique opportunity.

*Translated by Iwona Tumidajewicz*

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