

Therapy process: What we see depends from where we look.

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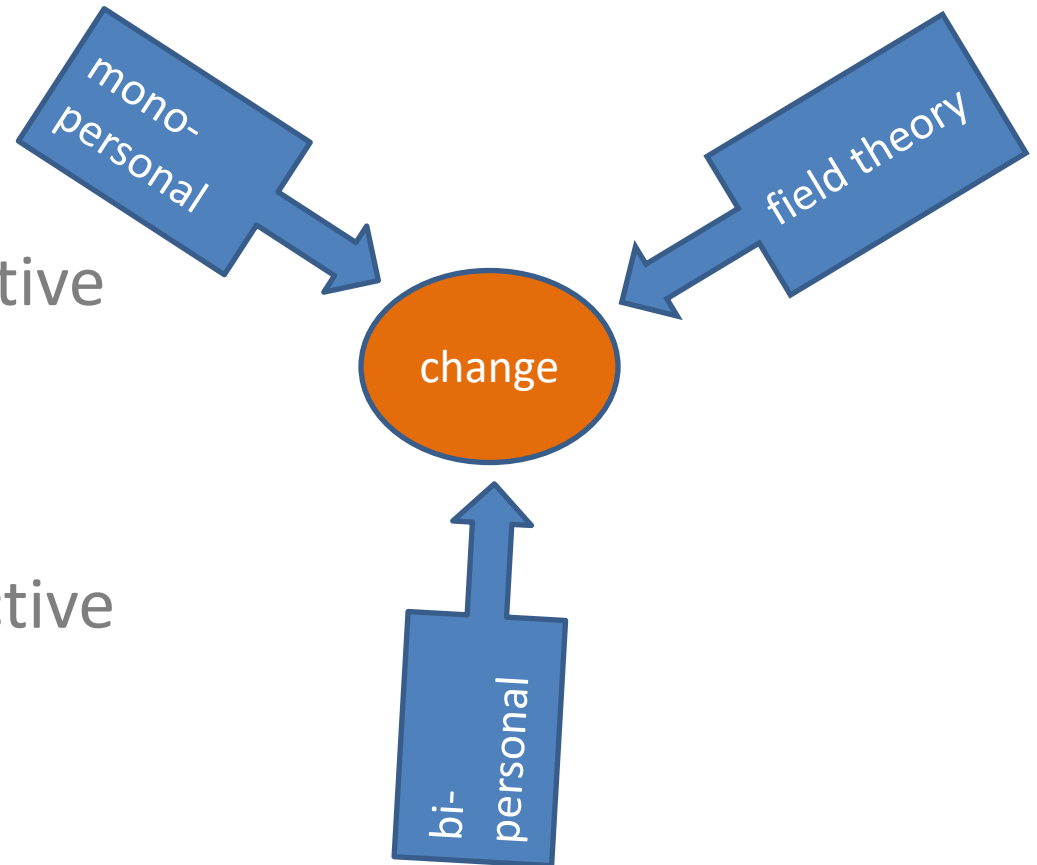
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Process of change in Gestalt therapy three perspectives

1. mono-personal perspective

2. bi-personal perspective

3. field theory perspective





Case example:

Different ways of working

- Steven came because of his sleeplessness and pain in the stomach.
- he suffers from the despotic behaviour of his current boss in his job
- this boss is similar to Steven's father, a soldier who died six years ago
- always submissive towards his father
- he also chose his current job according to the father's wish
- the way of contacting others influenced by this experience with his father
- he learned to live according to the expectations of others

Mono-personal perspective

Conceptualisation:

- Lack of support for learning to recognize his own needs
- Lack of support to step self-consciously into the relationships with the environment to fulfil his needs
- Creative adjustment - fulfilling the needs of others.
- Retroflection of own impulses, needs and wishes.

17th session:

Mono-personal perspective

In the first part of the session, Steven speaks quietly, looking at the floor and breathing very shallowly.

- *Therapist: “Could you now for a little while focus on how you are breathing?”*
- *Steven: “Well, I am not breathing, in fact...”*
- *Therapist: “Hmm..., and how does that feel?”*
- *Steven: “I don’t know... Unpleasant, I have no power for anything.”*
- *Therapist: “I see. You feel you have no power for anything... Well, what would you need then?”*
- *Steven: “I don’t know... nothing... Do you think that... ehh? “*
- *Therapist: “What would your body need?”*
- *Steven: “Well, to breath in, that’s clear. But for some reason, I do not do it... strange...”*
- *Therapist: “What seems strange to you?”*
- *Steven: “That I need something and I don’t do it.”*

Mono-personal perspective

Interventions:

- suggestions for increasing awareness
- in a supportive relationship
- lead to recognition of a repeating pattern
- later to taking responsibility for the pattern
- and developing an alternative way.

Bi-personal perspective

Conceptualisation:

- After the formative experience with his father, Steven is used to put himself into a submissive, even obedient position.
- We don't see the phenomena mentioned above (retroreflection of impulses, needs, and wishes) as belonging to the client now,
- rather we see them as co-created by both the client and the therapist in the therapeutic situation.

Bi-personal perspective

Steven speaks quietly, looking at the floor and breathing very shallowly.

- *Therapist: “Could you tell me how you are feeling right now?”*
- *Steven: “What?... Well, just normal...”*
- *Therapist: “I noticed you are almost not breathing.”*
- *Steven: “Yeah, that’s ... I ... yeah, you’re right, I am not breathing.”*
- *Therapist: “Is there anything I could do that it would be easier for you to breath now here with me?”*
- *Steven: “What? ... That’s a strange question... oh, please excuse me, I did not mean to criticize or...”*
- *Therapist: “That’s fine with me... and how is your breathing now?”*
- *Steven: “It’s better!... How did you do that?”*
- *Therapist: “I don’t know, we might have done that together somehow... Don’t you have an idea, how could it happen?”*

Bi-personal perspective

Interventions:

- The crucial process is happening on the relational level now.
- On one hand, Steven and the therapist are repeating the usual pattern with Steven being submissive and therapist speaking from a position of an authority.
- On the other hand, however, Steven has a chance for going through a new relational experience
- with an authority, who is interested in his opinion and is willing to adjust to his needs.
- Such a repeating experience with the therapist can lead to Steven's bigger self-confidence and courage to step forward in the contact with others.

Field theory perspective

Conceptualisation:

- Insensitivity to own needs and retroreflection are phenomena of the field
- which exceed both the client as an individual,
- and also the relationship of the client and the therapist.

- These phenomena show how the field gets organized.

- Client and therapist are functions of the actual field organisation,
- they are taken by the flow of the situation.

Field theory perspective

Steven speaks quietly, looking at the floor and breathing very shallowly.

- *The therapist notices that and then he switches his attention from the client back to himself, to his own experience here and now, especially to his body.*
- *He realizes that also he is not breathing freely. He is sitting on the chair slightly leaning forward and trying to find out what would be a good way of working with such a inhibited client.*
- *After becoming aware of this, he leans back to the chair, breathes in and relaxes his body when breathing out.*
- *He lets go the expectation from himself (“I should find a good way of working with such a client”), and grounds himself through the contact of his feet with the ground.*
- *He feels more relaxed, looks at Steven, and smiles with a relief.*
- *Steven looks at him questioningly, then looks back to the floor.*
- *After a while of silence, Steven turns to the therapist: “You know, in fact I would like to talk with you about something different now...” He speaks more loudly and watches the therapist, his breathing is deeper.*

Field theory perspective

Interventions:

- The therapist becomes aware of being taken by a field force,
- and he changes his own way of being in the situation.
- The therapist does not try to change Steven or their relationship.
- He is just aware of what is happening to him,
- he lets it be and adjusts his way of dwelling the situation.
- A new figure can now emerge from the transformed background.
- Through accepting the situation as it is, a chance for its transformation opens up.



	What is changing	Psychopathology symptoms	What the therapy aims for	How can the therapist support change	Dominant self-function	Theoretical third party	Metaphor
mono-personal perspective	The clients' functioning in the relation with the environment	Limiting fixed patterns created originally as creative adjustments	New, updated creative adjustments	Raising awareness in the supportive/challenging contact.	<i>Ego-function.</i> What the client and the therapist do in therapy.	One-person models of functioning (contact styles, sequence of experience).	Tree and gardener.
bi-personal perspective	The relationship between client and therapist.	Individual expressions of a lack of support in the relationship	Creating an authentic relational experience where the symptoms are not needed any more.	Enabling a new relational experience by relating to the client openly, honestly, and genuinely as a person.	<i>Personality-function.</i> Who are the client and the therapist for each other.	Co-creative and dialogical approach (inclusion, confirmation, presence, commitment to dialogue).	Relational dance: old dance and new steps.
field theory perspective	The way the field gets organized here and now.	Individual expressions of absences of the field.	Spontaneous flow of presence.	Letting oneself being taken by the field's forces and transforming own way of being in the	<i>Id-function.</i> Bodily sensations emerging as a function of the field	Field theory, Paradoxical theory of change, emergent self, atmospheres.	Client and therapist in the river, being moved by the water

