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## Person of the Month: Carl R. Rogers (1902-1987)

Ankit Patel<sup>1</sup>

<b>Born</b>	January 8, 1902 Oak Park, Illinois, U.S.
<b>Died</b>	February 4, 1987 San Diego, California, U.S.
<b>Citizenship</b>	American
<b>Known for</b>	Client-centered therapy, Student-centered learning, Rogerian argument
<b>Fields</b>	Phenomenal field, Theoretical works



Carl Ransom Rogers was an American psychologist and among the founders of the humanistic approach in psychology. The person-centered approach, his own unique approach to understanding personality and human relationships. Throughout his career he dedicated himself to humanistic psychology and is well known for his theory of personality development. He began developing his humanistic concept while working with abused children. Rogers attempted to change the world of psychotherapy when he boldly claimed that psychoanalytic, experimental, and behavioral therapists were preventing their clients from ever reaching self-realization and self-growth due to their authoritative analysis. He argued that therapists should allow patients to discover the solution for themselves. Rogers received wide acclaim for his theory and was awarded various high honors.

Dr. Carl R. Rogers was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1902. He received his B.A. from the University of Wisconsin in 1924, a M.A. from Columbia University in 1928, and his Ph.D. in psychotherapy from Columbia University in 1931. In 1940 Rogers became professor of psychology at Ohio State University where he stayed until 1945. He then transferred to the University of Chicago in 1945 where he served as the professor of psychology and the executive secretary at the Counseling Center. In 1957 he took a joint position in the departments of

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psychology and psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin. After this Rogers traveled to a variety of colleges.

Rogers is a leading figure within psychotherapy and developed a breaking theory of personality development. This theory developed as a result of Rogers frustration with the authoritative analysis that therapists were imposing upon their patients. He is well known for his emphasis on personal awareness and allowing clients to have increasing flexibility in determining the treatment. Rogers believed that it was important for the individual to learn to understand himself and make independent choices that are significant in understanding the problem.

### **ROGERS' THEORY**

Theory of Personality Development Rogers' therapy was an extension of his theory of personality development and was known as client-centered therapy, since the basis of the therapy was designed around the client. According to Rogers each person has within them the inherent tendency to continue to grow and develop. As a result of this the individual's self-esteem and self-actualization is continually influenced. This development can only be achieved through what Rogers refers to as "unconditional positive regard."

The element of free expression can also be illustrated in the case Mrs. L, and her ten- year- old son, Jim. During the first hour of the session the mother spent a full half-hour telling with intense feeling example after example of Jim's bad behavior. She tells of arguments with his sister, his refusal to dress himself, annoying tendencies such as humming at the table, bad behavior in school, and his refusal to help at home. Each one of her comments is highly critical of her son. Throughout the mothers talking the counselor makes no attempt to persuade the mother in feeling any other way about her son. Next, the son engages in play -therapy in which Jim makes a clay image and identifies it as his father. There is a great deal of dramatic play in which the boy shows his struggle in getting his father out of bed and the fathers resistance. Throughout this Jim knocks the clay figurines head off and crushes the body while shouting frantically. In both occurrences with the mother and her son the counselor allows the feelings to flow and does not try to block or alter them.

Another aspect of the therapy is that of positive action. Here once insight is achieved the actions that are taken are suited to the new insight that is gained. Thus, once Mrs. L has achieved a better emotional understanding of the relationship between herself and her son she is able to transfer that insight into actions which show the depth of her insight. She plans on giving Jim special affection, helping him to be more mature, and avoiding making the younger sister jealous. If such behavior had been suggested to her after the diagnosis of the case, she would have either rejected the suggestion or carried it out in a way that would almost certainly fail. Since it grew out of her own insight, she will be able to become a successful, mature mother.

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The methodology of Rogers theory proved to be very successful within the case of Mrs. L and her son. This approach has helped millions of people since Rogers first developed it.

### TIMELINE

- 1902 Born in Oak Park, Ill.
- 1924 Completed B.A., University of Wisconsin
- 1928 M.A., Columbia University
- 1931 Ph.D., Columbia University, Psychotherapy
- 1940 Ohio State University, Columbus, professor of psychology
- 1944 President of the American Association for Applied Psychology
- 1945 University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., Professor of Psychology and executive secretary ,  
Counseling Center.
- 1946 President of the American Psychological Association
- 1955 Nicholas Murray Butler Silver Medal
- 1956 First President of American Academy of Psychotherapist and special contribution award,  
American Psychological Association
- 1957 professor in departments of psychology and psychiatry; University of Wisconsin
- 1960 member of executive committee, University of Wisconsin
- 1962 Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
- 1964 selected as humanist of the year, American Humanist Association
- 1968 honorary doctorate, Gonzaga University
- 1971 D.H.L. , University of Santa Clara
- 1972 distinguished professional psychologist award, Division of Psychotherapy
- 1974 D.Sc. university of Cincinnati
- 1975 D.Ph. University of Hamburg and DS.Sc. University of Leiden
- 1978 D.Sc. Northwestern University
- 1984 Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities, Cincinnati
- 1987 Died of heart attack, San Diego, California

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