

Graham **BARNES**

What is the key element in psychotherapy?

Hans Persson's interview with Dr. Graham Barnes

This is an interview with Graham Barnes, my friend and teacher for over 20 years, and my way of honoring him for teaching me and helping me to get most of the knowledge and skills that I possess for my therapeutic work.

The interview was held on 24th September, 2009 at his office.

My question for him was: What is your opinion about the key element in psychotherapy?

The following is Dr. Barnes's answer:

That question could be answered in many different ways.

So let's begin with the question itself, with its metaphors of key and element. These metaphors set us on a quest to find the key that will, let's say, unlock the element. Element, in this context, suggests to me grammar, the form or the construction that give us anything we might call psychotherapy.

First we want to find the key. And the logical place to look for it is in the communication, in the interactions, in what is transpiring between the therapist and the patient or client; it has to be in the relationship between them. The key is in persuasion; it has something to do with the use of rhetoric.

This metaphorical key also implies a lock. We are looking for the key to fit the lock, which the patient has. To find the key to each patient's lock we work with outcomes, the outcome as set by each patient. The outcome guides the therapy. When patients come into therapy they say what their life problems and difficulties are. In the beginning of their therapy we ask them to tell us what they have come to therapy to do, asking them, for instance, to imagine, on the last day of their therapy, what they will say when they are walking out the door if someone should ask them: What did you do? What did you change? What is different for you now from when you first walked in that door?

Certainly the key we are searching for is to be found in working with outcomes, bringing the future into the present, letting the future guide what we do in the present.

The key element in psychotherapy for Bradford Keeney in his book, "The Creative Therapist," is creativity. I agree.

Milton Erickson talked about surprise in therapy; he liked to be surprised. And Margaret Mead said, somewhat critically, that he was always inventing a new approach or technique for each patient. It seems she thought he should standardize his approach so people could copy him. For Erickson each patient was an unique individual, so he invented whatever approach was neces-

sary to meet each patient's requirements, lifestyle, experience. So he spoke in each patient's idiom. He called what he did utilization, an approach John Dewey introduced into the philosophy and practice of education: Utilize old habits for the formation of new habits.

Keeney says creativity. Erickson says invention. You invent a new way to interact with each patient.

People are always asking us therapists, What kind of therapist are you? We all have different styles, but we seem to assume that we have to be a therapist of a certain kind. What a waste of resources, what a waste of human abilities, that we therapists have to put ourselves in these little boxes with different labels on them. After studying for years to become therapists, we have to become this or that kind of therapist instead of becoming a human therapist! A therapist who interacts impeccably with each patient that walks through our door.

I think Erickson was a human therapist. That comes through in the book edited by his daughter Betty Alice Erickson and Bradford Keeney, "Milton H. Erickson, M.D. An American Healer." I had the good fortune to have a few human therapists among my mentors. Robert Goulding and Mary McClure Goulding were exemplars.

To talk about the key element of psychotherapy opens the horizon, moves us beyond being a cognitive therapist, or a psychodynamic therapist, or a gestalt therapist, or a systemic therapist, or a social constructive therapist, or a behavioral therapist of this or that kind. We look instead at the therapy as occurring in and through communication. And in that communication, what is going on is the sharing of concepts. And that means not only ideas, but feelings, emotions—everything we share. After all emotion is itself a concept.

So if I could narrow this down to one key element in therapy I would be tempted to appropriate Bradford Keeney's idea of creativity.

Let's consider that what we are doing in our relationships, that what we are doing as individuals interacting socially and culturally, is that we are making up our world. It is becoming, in part, as we make it, though a world is given to us culturally and socially. What we are doing right here in this room as we talk with each other is, we are weaving together a world. Taking that constructive process seriously, let us go back to the moment when the patient comes through the door and we ask, What do you want to change about your life? What do you want to do differently? That question keeps in focus that possibility that the patients do not have to remain stuck where they are; they can change; they can change here and now.

And the key is in the idea of change. This practical development of this idea was part of Bob Goulding's therapeutic genius, asking, without fail, of each patient, What do you want to change today?

And that is what made Bob and Mary McClure Goulding really effective change agents. I am so glad that they touched my life, touched it in so many ways and places, often deeply.

When we ask patients what they want to change we are implying that they can change, that they can make up their mind to be different: In the past, life was like they just described it to us. Admittedly, that was the way they made up their world in the past. Nevertheless, from this point and forward we invite them to take charge of their life, be in charge in a new way. Now they can

make up their mind to act creatively, with flexibility. Yes, indeed, they may have been acting in old habitual ways for years. That is the way it has been, that is the way they made it, or that is the way it was made for them.

Still, we have every reason to congratulate them: They were resourceful enough to find their way to us. Now, from this point, they can take charge of life in a new way. They can give birth to a different way of living. They and their therapist become co-constructors. The therapist has become part of the patient's life, and the patient has become part of the therapist's life. We are participating together, we are involved.

I can now hone in on another idea that is related to the idea that we are creating, to the idea that we are constructing and inventing, which is the idea that we are helping people change *for the better*.

In response to your asking me what I consider the key element in psychotherapy I have been weaving a story, hoping it would bring us to grasp what we might consider that key element to be. So, for now, let me formulate it as helping people change for the better. Having reached that result let's see where it takes us.

Psychotherapy is too complex to be done by a machine or through the use of mechanisms. People are too complex to be fitted inside theories of personality and psychopathology. Just as we are advised not to put our therapeutic selves into neatly labeled little boxes, we ill serve our patients when we box them inside labels of psychopathology.

Doing psychotherapy is, in rather nontrivial ways, like composing poetry, with the exception that poetry has no discernable goal, no outcome. But once the patient's outcome is set and begins guiding the therapeutic activities, therapy can become as creative, as innovative, even as unpredictable, as composing poetry.

Through language poets are creating alternatives for how we talk about life and living, how we see, hear and make our world. And we psychotherapists are doing something analogous in the creative interactions of psychotherapy.

When, for example, I listen to recordings of Erickson's elegant trance inductions, or read one of the transcripts, I hear the poetic; they are so poetic. He is in language, always, or so it seems, on the way to creating a new language for this patient to whom he is speaking, in this place at this time, writing poetry as he speaks. He talks so people can consciously understand his words, even as he uses a language, a kind of rhetoric, which by design is to be more thoroughly and profoundly understood unconsciously.

It can happen that after an experience of deep hypnosis when the language of trance has become poetic, people will look at you and say, "That was beautiful."

That was beautiful! Without the aesthetic dimension therapy lacks all other dimensions. And without the ethical dimension therapy becomes barren, a tree without fruit, it is like water gushing from a broken pipe too polluted to drink.

When we ask patients what they want to change, the changing process itself has to be elegant. It has to be aesthetic. And the beautiful, to remain beautiful, always unfolds ethically. So these are

also elements in the psychotherapy.

Therapy itself is a beautiful experience. The beauty of a life changed for the better, the aesthetics of a person walking from your office feeling with conviction that life has meaning, that they are living ethically, that they have hope. And that is what the change is all about—to have hope. They are becoming more responsible moral beings, they do not consider themselves failures, they are learning to follow their own version of Heinz von Foerster's ethical imperative to act always so as to increase their number of choices.

They feel alive and they are committed to keeping themselves alive. They now belong to the world they are aware of having a hand in making. No longer do they have to live up to the expectations of others or demand that others live up to their expectations. They are becoming themselves. They are somebody! And they know viscerally that they will make it, no matter what.

It is up to us to see the beauty in that. We can know all the technical details but if we miss that we are running on empty.

People walk through our doors who are suffering. We see their pain in bodies so contorted that their beauty is hidden. They may not be ugly but they appear not to be pretty. And, then, that day comes when, before our very eyes, their bodies change. Their beauty begins showing through.

You see people who have been through just about everything imaginable; they are not beautiful, they are not even pretty, and then one day they arrive for therapy and you see their bodies have changed, they are really pretty. There is likely to be a certain therapeutic elegance behind that change. And in that beauty and elegance are the keys to what psychotherapy is all about.

And that is why I talk to people about the kind of society we want to live in together, about creating a society where children can grow up to be sensitive and decent human beings while retaining their creativity. I make no apologies: To achieve a decent society requires engaging in the ongoing experiment of creating a social democracy. My position does not commit us to party politics, but it does commit us to the idea that we do not live in this world alone, that we cannot live in this world alone. Consequently, making a place for all people is necessary, for the human race survives or perishes as a whole.

So, to summarize my answer to your question, I think the key element in psychotherapy is that both therapist and patient are together making a new world in which life is wonderful, and is to be lived with wonder.

Graham **BARNES**

Kaj je ključni element v psihoterapiji?

Hans Perssonov intervju z dr. Grahamom Barnesom¹

Na vprašanje, kaj je ključni element v psihoterapiji, je mogoče odgovoriti na mnogo različnih načinov.

Začniva z vprašanjem samim, z metaforama ključa in elementa. Vodita naju na pot iskanja ključa, ki bo odklenil element. V tem kontekstu je zame element slovnični izraz, oblika ali konstrukcija, ki nam lahko odpre pogled na nekaj, kar bi lahko poimenovali psihoterapija.

Najprej želiva poiskati ključ. In najbolj logično je, da ga iščeva v komunikaciji, v interakcijah, v tem, kar se dogaja med terapevtom in pacientom ali klientom; ključ naj bi bil v njunem odnosu. Ključ se nahaja v prepričevanju; v nečem, kar je povezano z uporabo retorike.

Ta metaforični ključ implicira tudi ključavnico. Iščemo ključ, ki se bo prilegal pacientovi ključavnici. Da bi našli ključ za ključavnico vsakega pacienta, delamo na željenih razpletih, to je na ciljih, kot si jih postavi pacient. Željeni razplet vodi terapijo. Ko pridejo pacienti na terapijo, povedo, kaj so njihovi življenjski problemi in težave. Na začetku terapije jih vprašamo, na čem želijo v terapiji delati. Spodbudimo jih, da naj si npr. predstavljajo, kaj bi rekli, ko bodo po zaključeni terapiji stopili skozi vrata ordinacije na cesto in bi jih nekdo vprašal: Kaj si delal? Kaj si spremenil? Kaj je zate drugače zdaj v primerjavi s takrat, ko si prvič vstopil skozi ta vrata v psihoterapevtsko ordinacijo?

Gotovo bomo ključ, ki ga iščemo, našli pri delu z željenimi razpleti. To pa pomeni, ko bomo prenesli bodočnost v sedanost, ko bomo dovolili, da nas prihodnost vodi pri tem, kar delamo v sedanosti.

Bradford Keeney v svoji knjigi *Ustvarjalni terapevt (The Creative Therapist)* pravi, da je ključni element v psihoterapiji ustvarjalnost. Strinjam se z njim.

Milton H. Erickson je govoril o presenečenju v terapiji; rad je bil presenečen. In Margaret Mead je nekoliko kritično pripomnila, da je za vsakega pacienta izumljal nove pristope ali tehnike. Menim, da je s tem mislila, da bi moral standandizirati svoj pristop, da bi ga ljudje lahko posnemali. Za Ericksona je bil vsak pacient enkrat en posameznik. Tako je vsakokrat iznašel nov pristop, ki je ustrezal potrebam vsakega pacienta posebej, njegovemu življenjskemu stilu, izkušnjam. Govoril je v enkratnem jeziku vsakega pacienta. Svoj pristop je poimenoval utilizacija. To je pristop, ki ga je John Dewey vpeljal v filozofijo in prakso izobraževanja: Utilizirati stare navade za oblikovanje novih.

¹To je intervju Hansa Perssona z dr. Grahamom Barnesom, ki je potekal 24. septembra 2009 v Barnesovi psihoterapevtski ordinaciji v Stocholmu. Z intervjujem je želel Persson tudi izraziti spoštovanje svojemu prijatelju in učitelju, od katerega že več kot dvajset let srka znanja in veščine za svoje psihoterapevtsko delo. Glavno vprašanje, ki ga je Persson postavil Barnesu, je bilo: Kaj je ključni element v psihoterapiji?

Kenney pravi ustvarjalnost. Erickson pravi inovativnost. To pomeni, da z vsakim pacientom posebej izumljaš nove možnosti za interakcijo.

Ljudje nas, terapevte, vedno znova sprašujejo: »Kakšne vrste terapij si? Kakšen je tvoj pristop?« Vsi imamo različne stile, vendar smo sprejeli predpostavko, da moramo biti terapevti določene vrste, da moramo pripadati določenemu pristopu. Kakšna potrata virov, kakšna izguba človeških zmožnosti, da se moramo terapevti stlačiti v majhne škatle, na katerih so različne nalepke. Po dolgih letih študija psihoterapije moramo postati te ali one vrste terapevti, namesto da bi postali človeški terapevti! Terapevti, ki se v popolnosti odzivajo na vsakega pacienta, ki vstopi skozi naša vrata.

Mislím, da je bil Erickson človeški terapevt. To je razvidno iz knjige z naslovom *Milton H. Erickson, ameriški zdravitelj* (*Milton H. Erickson, M.D., An American Healer*), ki sta jo napisala njegova hčerka Betty Alice Erickson in Bradford Keeney. Imel sem veliko srečo, da sem imel med svojimi mentorji kar nekaj človeških terapevtov. Robert Gouling in Mary McClure Gouling sta bila zgled.

Ko razpravljamo o ključnem elementu psihoterapije, se nam lahko odpre obzorje, ki nas dvigne nad to, ali smo kognitivni, psihodinamski, geštalt, sistemski, socialno konstruktivistični, vedenjski ali kakšne druge vrste terapevti. Namesto tega zagledamo terapijo kot nekaj, kar se odvija v komunikaciji. In to, kar se dogaja v komunikaciji, je izmenjava konceptov. To pa ne pomeni le izmenjave idej, ampak tudi občutkov, čustev – skratka vsega kar lahko podelimo. Navsezadnje je čustvo samo po sebi tudi koncept.

Če bi lahko vse to zožil na en ključni element v psihoterapiji, bi se znašel v skušnjavi, da se odločim za idejo ustvarjalnosti, ki jo predlaga Bradford Keeney.

Kar počnemo v odnosih, kar počnemo kot posamezniki, ko vplivamo drug na drugega socialno in kulturno, je, da gradimo svoj svet. Čeprav nam je dan kulturno in socialno, ga deloma ustvarjamo tudi sami. Kar počneva zdaj v tej sobi, ko se pogovarjava, je, da skupaj tkeva svet. Vzemiva ta konstruktivni, graditeljski proces resno. Vrniva se v trenutek, ko je prišel pacient skozi vrata in ga psihoterapevt vpraša: Kaj hočeš spremeniti v svojem življenju? Kaj hočeš narediti drugače? To vprašanje pacienta osredotoči na možnost, da mu ni treba obtičati tam, kjer je; lahko se spremeni; lahko se spremeni tukaj in zdaj.

Ključ je v ideji spremembe. Praktični razvoj te ideje je bil del terapevtske genialnosti Boba Goulinga, ko je brez izjeme vprašal vsakega klienta: Kaj hočeš danes spremeniti?

Zato sta postala Bob in Mary McClure Gouling res učinkovita spodbujevalca spremembe. Zelo sem vesel, da sta se dotaknila mojega življenja, se ga dotaknila na tako veliko načinov in na več mestih, pogosto globoko.

Ko vprašamo paciente, kaj hočejo spremeniti, jim s tem sugeriramo, da se lahko spremenijo, da se lahko odločijo, da postanejo drugačni: Njihovo življenje, kakršno nam ga pravkar opisujejo, je del preteklosti. S tem priznavamo, da je bil to način, na katerega so si ustvarjali svoj svet v preteklosti. Vendar jih od te točke naprej vabimo, da prevzamejo odgovornost za svoja življenja, da postanejo odgovorni na nov način. Sedaj se lahko odločijo, da se bodo vedli ustvarjalno, prožno. Ja, vsekakor, po starih utečenih navadah so se obnašali mnogo let. Tako je bilo, tako so si postlali, ali pa so jim tako postlali drugi.

Kljub temu jim lahko iz več razlogov čestitamo: Imeli so dovolj virov, da so našli pot do nas. Sedaj, iz te točke, pa lahko prevzamejo odgovornost za svoje življenje na nov način. Lahko sodelujejo v porajanju drugačnega načina življenja. Skupaj s svojimi psihoterapevti postanejo sooblikovalci. Terapevt postane del pacientovega življenja in pacient postane del terapevtovega. Skupaj prispevata in sta sovpletana.

Sedaj lahko nadaljujem z brušenjem nove ideje, ki je povezana z idejo, da ustvarjamo, konstruiramo, gradimo in izumljamo. To je ideja, da ljudem pomagamo, da se spremenijo *na bolje*.

V odgovor na tvoje vprašanje sem stkal zgodbo v upanju, da naju bo pripeljala do bistva, kaj lahko pojmuje kot ključni element v psihoterapiji. In ta trenutek sem poudaril, da je bistveno pomagati ljudem, da se spremenijo na bolje. Poglejva, kam sva s tem prišla.

Psihoterapija je preveč kompleksna, da bi jo lahko izvajal stroj ali da bi potekala z uporabo mehanizmov. Ljudje so preveč kompleksni, da bi se prilegali teorijam osebnosti in psihopatologiji. Tako kot sem odsvetoval, da bi umeščali svoje terapevtske jaze v urejene etiketirane majhne škatle, prav tako škodimo svojim pacientom, če jih tlačimo v etiketirane škatlice psihopatologije.

Če izvajamo psihoterapijo na netrivialen način, je to podobno pesnjenju, le da poezija nima določenega cilja niti željenega razpleta. Vendar ko je enkrat klientov željeni razplet postavljen in začne voditi terapevtske aktivnosti, lahko terapija postane tako ustvarjalna, tako inovativna, celo tako nepredvidljiva kot je ustvarjanje poezije.

Preko jezika pesniki ustvarjajo alternativne oblike govora o življenju, o tem, kako vidimo, slišimo, gradimo svoj svet. In mi, psihoterapevti, počnemo nekaj podobnega v ustvarjalnih interakcijah psihoterapije.

Ko na primer poslušam posnetke elegantnih Ericksonovih indukcij v trans ali berem katerega od transkriptov, slišim poezijo, tako pesniški so. Zdi se mi, da s svojim načinom izražanja vedno ustvari nov jezik za klienta, ki mu govori; ko govori, tu in zdaj piše poezijo. Govori tako, da ljudje lahko razumejo njegove besede zavestno, čeprav uporablja retoričen jezik, katerega vzorec bolj popolno in globlje razume njihovo nezavedno.

Lahko se zgodi, da vas bodo pacienti po doživetju globoke hipnoze, ko je jezik transa postal pesniški, pogledali in rekli: »To je bilo čudovito.«

To je bilo čudovito! Če psihoterapija nima estetske dimenzije, potem izgubi tudi vse ostale. In brez etične dimenzije terapija postane neplodna, drevo brez sadežev; je kakor voda, ki teče iz polomljene pipe, preveč onesnažena, da bi jo pili.

Ko vprašamo paciente, kaj želijo spremeniti, naj bo proces spreminjanja sam po sebi eleganten. Naj bo estetski. In da bi lepo lahko ostalo lepo, se mora vedno razkrivati na etičen način. Tudi to so ključni elementi v psihoterapiji.

Terapija je sama po sebi čudovita izkušnja. Izpolni jo lepota življenja, ki se spreminja na bolje, estetika oseb, ki odhajajo iz vaše ordinacije prepričane, da ima življenje pomen, da živijo etično in da imajo upanje. In to je tisto, kar je pri spremembi ključno – imeti upanje. Postanejo bolj odgovorne moralne osebe, nimajo se za zgube. Učijo se slediti lastni inačici Heinz von Foerster-

jevega etičnega imperativa, ki pravi, da naj ljudje vedno delujemo v smeri povečevanja števila možnih izbir.

Počutijo se žive in so odločene take tudi ostati. Sedaj pripadajo svetu, v katerem se zavedajo svoje ustvarjalne vloge. Nič več jim ni treba živeti v skladu s pričakovanji drugih ali zahtevati, da drugi živijo po njihovih pričakovanjih. Postajajo oni sami. So nekdo! In v svoji notranjosti vedo, da bodo zmogli, ne glede na karkoli.

Na nas je, da v tem zagledamo lepoto. Lahko so nam znane vse tehnične podrobnosti, vendar če to spregledamo, se izčrpavamo v prazno.

Ljudje, ki prihajajo skozi naša vrata, trpijo. Vidimo bolečino v telesih, ki so lahko tako spačena, da se njihova lepota skriva. Morda niso grdi, toda sebi se ne zdijo lepi. In potem pride tisti dan, ko se pred našimi očmi njihova telesa spremenijo. Njihova lepota se začne kazati.

Srečujete ljudi, ki so prestali vse mogoče; niso lepi, niso niti čedni. Potem pa nekega dne pridejo na terapevtsko srečanje in zagledate, da so se njihova telesa spremenila, da so postali zares lepi. Najbrž je v ozadju te spremembe neka terapevtska eleganca. In v tej lepoti in eleganci so ključni za to, kaj je psihoterapija.

Zato se z ljudmi pogovarjamo o družbi, v kateri bi si želeli živeti skupaj z drugimi, o ustvarjanju družbe, v kateri lahko otroci odrastejo v čuteče in dobre ljudi, kjer bodo ohranili svojo ustvarjalnost. Ne opravičujem se nikomur: Da bi dosegli zadovoljivo družbo, se moramo vključiti v eksperiment ustvarjanja socialne demokracije, ki poteka tu in zdaj. Moje stališče nas ne zavezuje določenim strankarskim usmeritvam, pač pa ideji, da v tem svetu ne živimo sami, da v tem svetu ne moremo živeti sami. Zato je nujno ustvariti prostor za vse ljudi, kajti človeška vrsta lahko le kot celota preživi ali pa izumre.

Naj torej povzamem odgovor na tvoje vprašanje. Mislim, da je ključni element v psihoterapiji to, da oba, psihoterapevt in klient skupaj, ustvarjata nov svet, v katerem je življenje čudovito in ki naj bi ga živeli s čudenjem.

Prevedla Miran Možina in Darja Roškar
