

Presence, Being, Initiation: Understanding and Teaching Presence,
the Lineage and Legacy of James Bugental

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Abstract

Presence is a foundational construct in humanistic, existential, and existential-humanistic psychotherapy. One of the prominent theorists and practitioners of existential-humanistic psychotherapy, James Bugental, articulated the place and meaning of presence and its relation to being or beingness. He trained and truly formed outstanding psychotherapists who continue to teach, practice, and live according to the principles they learned from him. The practice of presence must be learned experientially; those defensive fears, habitual ways of thinking, and self-limiting behaviors that stand in the way of presence must be directly seen and understood. Gradually doing this, clients can enjoy the freedom of living authentically in presence. Bugental's "Arts" courses were the medium he used to give therapists intensive exposure to conditions that supported developing presence and authenticity. The Existential-Humanistic Institute's training program, developed and offered in connection with Saybrook University, continues this formative legacy and lineage in Bugental's format, offering a similar immersive experience and training in the art of presence and connection with being.

Introduction

In humanistic, existential, and existential-humanistic (E-H) psychotherapy, there is an underlying assumption that human beings are multi-dimensional, and that there is a reality deeper and more fundamental than the socialized self or even the workings of the brain and nervous system. Existential-humanistic therapy acknowledges the *being* of the individuals in the therapy encounter; *presence* is the means of experiencing and remaining grounded in that being. Grounded in that reality, ordinary life events take on a deeper meaning or are experienced more directly. Many humanistic, existential, and existential-humanistic psychologists refer to a state of being they call "presence" in which an individual, in this case usually the therapist, manifests qualities of awareness, sensitivity, connectedness, and acceptance. Both a means and a goal in this approach is supporting clients to have moments of direct inner perception, to have contact and eventually make a strong connection with this deeper level of their essential self.

J. F. T. Bugental was a master psychotherapist who played significant roles in the formation of the existential-humanistic psychotherapy movement, as well as in the founding of what is now Saybrook University. This paper briefly reviews writings about presence in the humanistic and existential-humanistic psychology movements and discusses the significance

of presence for the experience of being. With particular focus on Bugental's understanding of presence and being, it reviews Bugental's "Arts" courses as a model for training therapists in presence and helping them identify and work with their own barriers to presence.

Presence has been called the *sine qua non* of psychotherapy by Bugental, Krug, Schneider, and other humanistic and existential-humanistic psychologists. May (1958, 1983) also highlighted the search for an experience of one's being as integral to finding meaning and fulfillment. Bugental similarly emphasized being, distinguishing between the "I-Process," or one's innate beingness, and the "self," (Wittine, 1996). Given the current "mindfulness in psychotherapy" movement, discussions of therapeutic presence and mindfulness appear more often in the literature. However, presence and mindfulness exercises are frequently presented as techniques of managing experience rather than an expression of one's being, an essential, intrinsic aspect of one's existence, and one with which people are not, as will be explained, often in direct contact.

Definitions

Presence

Presence is a term common to existential and humanistic psychology, spirituality, neuroscience, and religion, having slightly different nuances within each discipline. Devoting a section to a discussion of presence in *Psychotherapy and Process*, Bugental (1978) explained that "Existentialists—

philosophers, psychotherapists—make much of the quality of 'being there' [*Dasein*]" (p. 36). Connecting this quality of being with presence, Bugental (1978) offered a definition:

Presence is the quality of being in a situation in which one intends to be as aware and participative as one is able to be at that time and in those circumstances. Presence is carried into effect by the mobilization of one's inner (toward subjective experiencing) and outer (toward the situation and any other person/s in it) sensitivities. Presence is immensely more than just being there physically, it is obvious. It's being totally in the situation...Presence is being there in body, in emotions, in thoughts, in every way. (pp. 36-37)

Defining presence in this way, Bugental (1978) presented it as an embodied, engaged, intentional, and attentional way of being.

Presence has dimensionality and scale, as Geller and Greenberg (2012) attempted to illustrate: for example, a psychotherapist might be said to be present if he or she is paying attention to the client in the moment, listening, noting tone of voice, inflections, mannerisms, and perhaps even the therapist's own reactions to the client. But this can be considered an entry-level experience of presence. A deepening of the presence would include an attitude or intention of openness and care, which Rogers (1957) called empathy and positive regard and others articulate as being with and for the client (Moustakas, 1964; Geller and Greenberg, 2012). Yet even this dimension of presence seems minimal when compared to a "meeting" with the client in an experience of the *I-Thou* of Buber (1958). It is important to note and explore the significance of these dimensions.

Barriers to Presence

May (1958) wrote about Kierkegaard's exploration of *angst*, or anxiety, so significant in May's later writings as well as his own dissertation. Stating that Kierkegaard and Nietzsche "were much more concerned with *man as the being who represses* [emphasis in original], the being who surrenders self-awareness as a protection against reality and then suffers the neurotic consequences" (p. 23), May (1958) posed the following:

The strange question is: What does it mean that man, the being-in-the-world who can be conscious that he exists and can know his existence, should choose or be forced to choose to block off this consciousness, and should suffer anxiety, compulsions for self-destruction, and despair? (p. 23)

In the question he posed above May began to point to a concern with anxiety as that which blocks presence and the connection with being.

Bugental (1998) created the term "space suit" to connote the layers of protective and self-limiting patterns a person creates to have security based on his or her past life experiences and self and world constructs.

Being

Being is a term often used within spiritual traditions to refer to something essential within human nature, perhaps fundamental to human existence. In existential and E-H psychology, being is sometimes referred to as *dasein*. *Dasein* is drawn from Heidegger's (1962) *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger, a student of Husserl, phenomenologically explored the nature of the human being. This nature, he found, was to be realized only

through authentic *being-in-the-world* around one, and *being with*, engaged, caring, related, to where one finds oneself.

Buber's *I-Thou* in Relation to Presence and Being

Buber, a philosopher, influenced many existential-humanistic therapists, notably Friedman (1995, 1998, 2013). Buber's (1958) philosophy of *I-Thou* pointed to an ineffable Reality intrinsic to being and only to be found in "the meeting." The meeting of which Buber speaks is the engagement with all that is encountered in a moment. He refers to it as primal because it comes from a place before/below conceptual thought, from the essential self. This, as I understand it, could be considered the realm of being.

Buber's (1958) description of the *I-Thou* relationship points to a way of being present in and with Reality. His description is necessarily poetic in his attempt to bypass the conceptual mind, which always reduces the nature of things by trying to capture them conceptually, thus objectifying them, becoming the *I-It*. Buber (1958) wrote, "The primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word *I-It* can never be spoken with the whole being" (Amazon Kindle Location 132). This resonates well with May's (1958) description: "*Existentialism, in short, is the endeavor to understand man by cutting below the cleavage between subject and object which has bedeviled Western thought and science since shortly after the Renaissance*" (p. 11, italics original).

Establishing a sense of unity and vastness to the human being, Buber (1958) continued to explain this essential unity. The *I-It*, the objectification that comes with describing, noting attributes, is somehow a denial or a step removed from the directness and unity of the *I-Thou*. And yet, Buber (1958) mentioned that "I must continually do this." Existential-humanistic (E-H) approaches use skills and methods such as trying, as Schneider (2008, p. 62) termed it, to "invoke the actual," or to bring to awareness that which is actually present "yet unregarded" (Bugental, 1999, p. 25) and being acted out somehow in the moment. Attention is drawn to primary or direct experiences. Presence is the aspect of being that can unite these two dimensions.

Regarding being, May (1983) formulated an existential principle: "The whole existential approach is rooted in the always curious phenomenon that we have in man a being who not only *can* but *must*, if he is to realize himself, question his own being" (p.147, italics original). Qualities of presence and being are complex and esoteric topics that depend upon understanding gained through experience and inner work.

Presence in Humanistic and Existential Psychotherapy Theory

In the 1950s and 1960s, both existentialism as well as a broader movement based on humanistic approaches to psychotherapy were nascent. Rogers (1957) published a seminal article regarding three necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic growth: therapist authenticity, empathy,

and unconditional positive regard. Later in his life, Rogers came to regard these conditions as constituting presence (Geller & Greenberg, 2012).

Sharing most of May's (1958) principles outlined in *Existence*, Rogers, May, Maslow, Bugental, and others began moving to form an organization that could give voice to these principles and the Society for Humanistic Psychology was born. Maslow and Sutich founded the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* in 1961. There was an inaugural conference of humanistic psychologists in Philadelphia in 1963 and a later one in Old Saybrook, Connecticut (Anastoo, Serlin, & Greening, 2000). Bugental's (1964) paper was foundational in outlining five postulates that are still reprinted in each issue of the *Journal for Humanistic Psychology*:

Five Basic Postulates of Humanistic Psychology

1. Human beings, as human, are more than merely the sum of their parts. They cannot be reduced to component parts or functions.
2. Human beings exist in a uniquely human context, as well as in a cosmic ecology.
3. Human beings are aware and aware of being aware—i.e., they are conscious. Human consciousness potentially includes an awareness of oneself in the context of other people and the cosmos.
4. Human beings have some choice, and with that, responsibility.
5. Human beings are intentional, aim at goals, are aware that they cause future events, and seek meaning, value and creativity. (pp. 19-25)

These principles implied presence, and situated presence in the three existential worlds or dimensions (May, 1958), and also the cosmological (Schneider, 2004; van Deurzen, 2007), as foundational to our human beingness.

Bugental and Presence to the Essential Intrapersonal

As notable humanistic and existential therapists continued to publish and to attract and form their own student therapists, foundational constructs were fleshed out with more specific descriptions and included the therapeutic processes they transmitted to their colleagues. Krug was one of those therapists who became part of Bugental's art of therapy or "Arts" group, meeting at the Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma, CA. She was mentored by Bugental in this approach over several years (Pierson, Krug, Sharp, & Piwowarski, 2015). Reflecting on this mentorship, Krug (2009) noted that, for Bugental, presence was contextualized by an inner awareness:

For Bugental, cultivating presence means a focus on the client's subjective processes, listening less to what is said, and more to how and when the saying occurs; his aim is to have the person in therapy recognize their actual but unregarded ways of being that are avoidant or distortive and begin to take responsibility for their life choices. (p. 338)

Taking upon himself the task of communicating existential constructs and existential psychotherapy, Bugental (1978) made a case for presence. Bugental (1978) explained that clients interact in ways that avoid being present in the therapy session, which provides essential opportunity for the therapist to bring the client's awareness to these patterns of self-protection or avoidance. The client's ways of resisting being fully present "display the patterns through which the client in the past sought protection from what seemed an overwhelming threat, ways that are now being continued inappropriately" (p. 40). It is these patterns to which Bugental tried to direct

the client's awareness, bringing awareness directly into the pattern in the moment.

Therapist presence allows the therapist to refine sensitivity. Bugental (1978) explained the value in this:

The ideal therapist has refined (polished, developed, trained) sensitivity (the use of all senses, including intuition). That sensing is like a fine instrument, capable of picking up clues that the average person might not register: nuances of meaning, intonations of voice, slips of speech, and all the thousand and one subtle expressions of a person in the midst of life. (p. 41)

Bugental (1978) noted two very significant general philosophical truths and contexts regarding presence, applicable to the fundamental reality of being human. The first:

Most of us are truly present in the moment but rarely

These words circle around a fact of unique and powerful significance. Our usual condition has been called *sleepwalking*, while *being truly awake* is that only occasionally achieved state in which we are in a place of power and from which we may have true governance of our lives. To truly and fully experience one's life and one's concerns in a present-tense, here-and-now, active voice, first-person way is to bring about an evolution in these concerns. Any other posture is impotent. Only those who come to this recognition through working toward full presence fully appreciate what a fundamental truth is here available. (p. 121)

When one begins to sincerely try to become present and to deepen and expand one's sense of presence, it can be discouraging to find the extent to which one is "asleep" even while ostensibly *trying* to be present to another. Indeed, a thorough study of one's own historical context (a term frequently used by Krug) and one's own self-protections can offer pointers to

what limits one's ability to participate in life from an authentic, embodied presence. Further, it takes repeated efforts, not just for a weekend or week-long training period, but years of practice, to cultivate a constancy and depth of presence (Pierson, Krug, Sharp, & Piwowarski, 2015; Schneider, 2015).

Another significant idea from Bugental's quotation is the notion that only those who are able to become fully present understand from experience the significance of being truly present. The necessity of subjective verification attests to the difficulty people have with "teaching" presence; it must be learned experientially.

Bugental's (1978) second, emphatically-expressed truth concerned the significance of being present, awake, and engaged, in the moment *Now*:

Presence, being here, centeredness, and immediacy—all are terms to point to a fundamental reality. Only in this moment am I alive. All else is in some measure speculative. Only now, *now*, can I make my life different. The client who experiences this fact of great power realizes that its importance goes far beyond the therapeutic office. (p. 121)

Powerfully stated, this assertion of Bugental points to the necessity of work with what is manifesting in the present-moment therapy encounter.

Transmitting Existential Values and Developing Presence

Bugental developed a program of experiential mentoring of young psychotherapists via consultation groups but also by means of a unique transformational training program. Krug and Schneider were among the psychotherapists mentored by Bugental in his art of therapy or "Arts" course

(Pierson et al, 2015). The intensive training took place over a period of four years, with participants meeting for five 4-day retreat sessions in which they stayed together in a residential setting. It was over this period of time that Bugental directly conveyed his theoretical approach and worked intensively with therapists to practice various aspects of the approach, such as: attending to process; therapists' *pou sto*; exploration of the therapists' self and world constructs; and tendencies to objectify clients or lapse into problem-solving or reliance on technique. It was a format like this that enabled the esoteric and noetic aspects of the work to be communicated: presence, attunement, openness—impossible to transmit through written word only, yet accessible through direct experience. Pierson, et al. (2015) commented on the experience of these intangibles, reported via a survey conducted to evaluate the course:

Bugental's presence as a mentor, teacher or elder was specifically mentioned as being an essential element of the Arts series for a number of people in our sample...Bugental was highly esteemed and, frankly, loved by those who participated in the Arts series. This quality of personal regard was clearly reciprocated and permeated the atmosphere at the Arts retreats. The spirit of generativity [Erickson, 1982] was consistently demonstrated in Bugental's way of being in relationship. He offered younger colleagues profound respect for their individuality and individuation processes as psychotherapists (p. 641).

Bugental, Schneider, Krug, Shabahangi, Saltman, Edelstein, and others founded the Existential-Humanistic Institute (EHI) to carry on Bugental's lineage and orientation. In 2012, Pierson et al. (2015) reported,

EHI began a certificate program based on Bugental's Arts course, in conjunction with Saybrook University:

Intended to steep participants in the principles of E-H therapy, but unlike most training programs, they also focus on the development of the trainee as a whole person, appreciating not only that psychotherapy is an art as much as a science but also that personal development is encouraged by mentoring experiences... The learning objectives are grounded in the principles of practice. Consequently, students learn (a) to be present to the process dimension of therapy—presence to process encourages what is most alive in the moment to emerge; (b) to work with contextualized meanings and protective life patterns, understanding meaning making as an aspect of human nature grounded in one's particular context and understanding life protections as a means to cope with overwhelming experiences; (c) to work relationally with transference and countertransference enactments, cocreated by therapist and client, understanding that within a safe and intimate therapeutic relationship disowned painful experiences can be faced; and (d) to work not only with explicit existential issues but also with implicit, unrecognized existential issues underlying the presenting problems (p. 643).

Krug (2013) reported student participants in the first year of the EHI program who were studying existential-humanistic therapy at Saybrook University commented that what they had read in books by May, Bugental, Yalom, and others came to life as experienced, modeled, and lived in the program. Krug, in Pierson et al. (2015), explained:

Bugental (1987) emphatically believed that psychotherapeutic education must focus as much on the person as on the principles of practice... Therapy is a very personal encounter between two people, requiring the therapist to possess sensitive attunement to underlying processes emerging in the self, in the other, and in the relationship. To this end, the mature therapist must cultivate personal and interpersonal qualities such as presence, empathy, and compassion. Consequently, we focus the trainees on their subjective and intersubjective experiences, including reflections on their historical contexts, their personal narratives, and their attachment styles.

Participants are encouraged to attend to how these constructs affect their personal and professional lives. (p. 643)

This mentorship toward becoming a master therapist—presented by therapists widely regarded by their peers as master therapists—seems not only *an* effective means of transmitting these crucial but enigmatic qualities but perhaps *the most effective* means of creating conditions in which therapists can become truly grounded in an ever-deepening experience and expression of presence.

Further, the experience of being, of *dasein*, so foundational to E-H therapy, is tasted—at first, in what seem like unique episodic experiences. Over a period of time, such experiences can become more accessible and, eventually, a way of living. To grow in one's ability to be present one must learn to open in trust to that realm of being. One may become habituated to the groundlessness of existence and yet create that "fluid center" (Schneider, 2004) that allows spontaneity, joy, and love while engaging life's suffering and challenges.

Contemporary Theorists and Presence

Schneider expanded upon the writings of the earlier theorists with his appreciation of presence. In *Rediscovery of Awe: Splendor, Mystery, and the Fluid Center of Life*, Schneider (2004) outlined a context for presence that could hold the paradoxes of our nature, infuse life with spontaneity and fun, and provide a sense of a center that could remain intact within the vicissitudes of experience. In finding this fluid center, one can open to the

awe of existence. Schneider (2004) tied presence to truly inhabiting our lives:

In the therapy office, we also discover these exhilarating shifts of living. Healing, from my standpoint, is "self reoccupation." It is the reoccupation of the parts of oneself that have been cut off from oneself and the absorption consequently of new and evolving parts. The more that we can reoccupy our selves, moreover, the more that we can inspire others to reoccupy their selves and, as a result, share in the dynamism of an enlarged consciousness...The more that clients are able to stay present to themselves—particularly their affective and kinesthetic selves—the more they are able to clarify (and hence prioritize) that which deeply matters. (Amazon Kindle Locations 1252-1262)

Schneider and Krug (2010) expanded upon this idea, pointing to presence as a method and a goal in existential-humanistic (E-H) therapy:

As we have noted, presence not only forms the ground for E-H encounter, it also forms the method of clinical practice and culminates in its goal. To the extent that clients can attune, at the most embodied levels, to their life-limiting patterns of being and to their severest conflicts, healing in the E-H framework is likely to ensue. (p. 36)

In their text, *Existential-Humanistic Therapy*, Schneider and Krug (2010) also presented skills and methods that help clients uncover their own blocks, unacknowledged feelings and meanings, and ways of behaving. It is done through asking questions that shine a light on the behavior directly in a moment: for instance, asking, "Did you notice how small and quiet your voice just became?" or "How does it feel to say this to me right now?" Such methods are presented always as pointers to presence. Schneider and Krug (2010) explained their foundational beliefs:

The core of E-H change processes is the cultivation of intra- and interpersonal presence. Without presence, there may well be

intellectual, behavioral, or physiological change but not necessarily the sense of agency or personal involvement that core change requires. To put it another way, E-H therapy stresses presence to what really matters, both within the self and between the self and the therapist.

The cultivation of presence has four basic functions:

1. It reconnects people to their pain (e.g., blocks, fears, anxieties).
2. It promotes an experience of agency and assumption of responsibility.
3. It attunes people to the opportunities to transform or transcend that pain.
4. It builds an intimate and safe therapeutic relationship, which in itself promotes growth and change. (p. 66)

The "experience of agency" noted in the above quote is key to Krug's approach and a core belief behind her admonition to work with what is present in the moment rather than interpret. As the client does his/her work in this way, it affords this experience of agency, which is so necessary for the client to feel empowered enough to drop protective stances or habits and inhabit new ways of being (O. Krug, personal communication, March 27, 2015).

Geller and Greenberg (2012) offered another significant insight into the healing power of presence, saying that in a world where moments of presence are at best fleeting and all too few, as Bugental (1978) noted above, most clients are not used to being held and received in presence. Yet, as Siegel (2007, 2009, 2010a, 2010b) claimed, we are wired for connection; presence is our birthright. I believe, then, that there is an inborn thirst to experience presence, *dasein*, even to live in presence. What clients experience as depression may well have this longing underlying it, though clients may not have words to explain or identify what is missing.

A deep presence infuses a sense of the sacredness of being, of the holding space within which we find ourselves or within which "we live and move and have our being." It imparts a sense of awe (Schneider, 2004, 2009, 2012). This sense of being "held" makes it possible for clients to experience the groundlessness of their existence in moments.

Ongoing training and development is a lifelong process, not just oriented to technique development, but to the therapist's own inner growth and being. Schneider and Langle (2012) wrote:

Not only should training focus on the cultivation of personal skills, such as empathic listening and forming an alliance, but it should also concentrate on the therapist's own life, his or her own emotional and intellectual growth and his or her own responsiveness to clients' needs. These elements may be stimulated by relevant reflections on psychology, culture, and the arts, but they may also be explored by personal therapy, meditation, and experiential exercises (e.g., dyadic role play). The intent here should be on helping trainees to become well-rounded (engaging-empathic) people, not just competent technicians. (p. 481)

Mindfulness in Psychotherapy

The mindfulness in psychotherapy movement continues to gain popularity. Yet this raises concerns. Is mindfulness or presence being presented as a technique--that is, is presence presented as a "medicine," a technique to control unpleasant emotion without doing the psychological work of engaging with one's "shadow," in the Jungian sense, or one's darker or *daimonic* side, in the existentialist tradition, or having the aim of the experience of one's being? The fullness of an embodied presence and an

appreciation for engaging with life goes missing. The depth of being is not explored in the training.

The other concern is the relatively anonymous internet accessibility of such trainings now (see the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine, www.nicabm.com). Geller and Greenberg (2012) advocated that therapists be committed to ongoing personal growth and working on their own psychological issues. One wonders how many therapists feel the call to do the depth of inner work. Hopefully, those who are attracted to practicing therapeutic presence feel such a call.

Presence—Existential and Humanistic, also Transpersonal

Bradford (2011), in memorializing Bugental, sought to highlight Bugental's approach as essentially transpersonal:

As Jim [Bugental] taught, to be open and responsive in the world rather than closed and reactive is to be vitally present here and now. To seek to live one's own life and source oneself from one's heart's desire rather than to live someone else's life...is to seek, and embody, authenticity (Bugental, 1976, 1980, 1987). To the extent that an impulse for self-realization arises from within rather than being programmed from the outside, the intimately personal search for authenticity reveals itself to be exquisitely transpersonal, in that one comes to source oneself from beyond the ego and superego. In the flow of mindful experiencing, neat conceptual categories dissolve in the ever-changing tide of non-conceptual presence. It is in these senses that Jim was a transpersonal pioneer of the practice of presence in psychotherapy, a skillful guide for those of us inclined toward seeking our more authentic nature. (p. 120)

As Bradford (2011) presented it, the work to be present can come from a ground beyond the conceptual, found in the moment. Certainly this

has been variously theorized by Buber (1958), Bugental (1978), Heidegger (1962), May (1981), and the teachings of many spiritual traditions.

In daily life one's sense of oneself can be lost. Since the E-H therapy approach meets the client where he or she is, therapy may well start at the place of ordinary conflicts and confusions. But, as the client is willing, it may take on much deeper dimensions. Bradford (2011) commented:

...Jim [Bugental] understood that the path of becoming true to oneself proceeded along a continuum. One had to address more gross confusions and self/world estrangements before attending to the more subtle fixations obscuring one's true nature. While Jim worked primarily on the noisier emotional knots and mental fixations that characterize "psychological work," he was well aware that the continuum of authenticity stretched to include spiritual realization. As early as 1965, Jim put it like this, "*As one approaches the stage of letting go to the suchness of Being without striving against it, one is attaining to full authenticity*" [p.33]. (p. 121)

Clearly, therapists who understand a continuum of being in this way are capable of bridging the existential-humanistic to the cosmological, whether or not they identify with the transpersonal label.

Recounting his own experience of psychotherapy with Bugental, Wittine (1996) cited Bugental's terms for differentiation:

Differentiating *I* or essential self from *self* or constructed identity, Jim wrote:

Our truest nature is our contentless being. It has no habits or patterns, no *neurosis*, or, for that matter, health. It is pure awareness, pure subjectivity.

What I have called *I-process* is our pure beingness. The human form it takes is what I have called the *self*. The *I-process* is awareness, exists in subjective space, is outside time. The *self* is content, is objective, is of the nature of time. The *I-process* is perceiving; the *self* is being

perceived (read that two ways: is beingness perceived, is that which is perceived. [1981, pp. 423, 425] (p. 37)

Wittine (1996) thus highlights in Bugental's own words his underlying philosophical stance about the individual self. Clearly, particularly in his later years, Bugental was willing and capable of meeting his clients and students at this deep level if they wanted or needed to go there (Bradford, 2011; Walsh, 2015; Wittine, 1996).

Conclusion

Humanistic and existential psychology, the Third Force in psychology, is a heritage that informs the work of contemporary E-H therapists such as Krug and Schneider. Through the Existential-Humanistic Institute, they and other therapists mentored by the likes of May, Yalom, and Bugental carry on the practice of E-H therapy, adding their own creative insights and nuances to what they received. Presence remains both the ground and goal of E-H therapy.

The Third Force was not only, it seems to me, a psychological movement. Having come of age in the 60s, my perception is that it was part of a wave that swept the West—indeed, much of the globe. That wave was stirred in the 1950s by existentialism and beat poets awakening a ferment. Later the Beatles dropped acid and told us all about another way of non-linear seeing and went off to India to study with the Maharishi. It was Dylan telling our parents, "Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command." It was Trungpa Rinpoche and Swami Satchidananda bringing the

East to us and people chanting *Hare Krishna* in airports. It was Earth Day. It was a paradigm shift. Arguably, humanistic psychology remains a large part of that initial and ongoing ferment, encouraging people to awaken to their inner life and to search for authenticity.

As part of an authentic search for many people, *presence* is a term they have come to understand. However, just what they understand by presence may differ. Distinctions drawn in this paper may be meaningless to the general public. Shahar and Schiller (2016) may perceive that existential and humanistic practices and theoretical perspectives are becoming integrated into the mainstream, and perhaps they are; but whether the evolving therapeutic offerings cut below the distinction between subject and object and practice “as one existence communicating with another,” as May (1958) said, remains to be seen. Not everyone is seeking to practice the *I-Thou* relationship.

Presence is, indeed, the *sine qua non* of existential-humanistic psychotherapy. It has been since May's (1958) initial explanation, which connected presence with *dasein*. Bugental (1978), mentored by Rogers (among others), developed and passed on an approach based on presence as the means and goal of therapy, saying, “Presence, being here, centeredness, and immediacy—all are terms to point to a fundamental reality. Only in this moment am I alive. All else is in some measure speculative” (p.121). This is the approach to therapy I aspire to practice.

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