

## **The Person-Centered Approach as a Psychotechnical System. The Person-Centered Approach and Tolerance**

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I have two aims for the paper. The first is to analyze the person-centered approach as a psychotechnical system of development of a person from the point of view of psychotechnical approach, which is being developed in modern Russian psychology. The second aim is to describe a view of people competent in the person-centered approach on tolerance.

### **Part 1. The Person-Centered Approach as a psychotechnical system**

#### 1.1. An idea of the psychotechnical approach.

The foundations of the approach had been developed by very famous Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1968, 1982-84) in his cultural-historical theory of development of human psyche. The main point of Lev Vygotsky's theory is that the laws of functioning of human psyche principally change comparing the functioning of the natural psyche of animals. Human psyche is mediated-so, indirect in its functioning, comparing to the direct processes in animals-by social-cultural artifacts (such as linguistic meanings, ideas, symbols, etc), which become psychological means for organizing and regulating human internal (psychic) and external activity. Comparing to animals, which have genetic and individual experiences, people got also social experience, which is acquiring of cultural-societal experience (cultural ways of acting, working, communicated, systems of ideas and meanings), through education. So the role of society, culture is crucial in the human development. It contains and provides to the individual the ideas, meanings, which become the regulative tools of human life and create human consciousness. Lev Vygotsky specially stressed a role of social interaction in development of especially human, "higher" psychic formations: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapyschological)" (1978, 1982-84). This is so called "main genetic law" of development of higher psychic formations. As a result, human psychic processes are social on their development, mediated (by cultural symbolic tools) by structure, self-regulated on functioning and systemic, interconnected to each other.

Psychotechnical theory and methodology steams from **Lev Vygotsky** cultural-historical theory and is currently developed in works of **Andrei A. Puzirei** (1986, 1993), **Fodor E. Vasilyuk** (1992, 1996) and number of other psychologists in Russia.

Psychotechnical approach is just a project of new theory and methodology. The main premises of the psychotechnical approach are the following.

1. Human psyche may be understood only in the context of continuing applying/influencing it by means of signal/symbolic tools. "The core of the theory is a claim of special signal organization of all special human forms of psyche. They have special "mediated, indirect structure", and as a means for organization of different psychological processes (for example, memory) serve special signal systems, usually built up in history (culture) and acquired by a particular individual in the process of one's development" (Puzirei, 1986, p.77-78). There is a

difference between a sign in its operational function and a labor tool: the tool is situated between a person as a subject of activity and an external object; a sign is always situated between a person and person, as a means for relating/influencing of one person to another (to oneself in a particular case). In other words, a sign always serves as a means for organizing activity for managing one's own psyche (consciousness, activity), as a means of organizing of a psychotechnic act (or significative act as Lev Vygotsky called it).

2. A human activity, hence, may be understood in the context of system of "psycho-" and broader-"culturotechnical" acts. Indeed, people become involved in meaningful practices, become attracted by systems of ideas; make those ideas a means for organizing their lives, ways of being. They start to perceive the world around and themselves by means of the ideas and concepts, which they use as psychological tools for organizing their activity, apprehending and systematizing their life experiences. They create their worldview in this way and use to live in the world they created for themselves. The whole society, culture might be understood as a continuous systems of practice connected to systems of ideas and ideals, which appear, exist and die or transform, develop in new systems of ideas and practice, connected to them.

3. A number of important theoretical and methodological inferences stem from the above. For the aims of the following analysis let me to elaborate here a concept of a "psychotechnic system". As my analysis of theoretical and empirical research and practice shows the most essential elements of any psychotechnical systems are the following:

1. A goal, destination of the psychotechnical system: what it is aimed to, what change in human psyche and activity it is aimed to produce.
2. A coherent system of concepts, ideas, knowledge-more or less entire/complete. This constitutes a signal-symbolic system, which is used for comprehension, explaining and regulating (controlling, correcting) the practice. Peter Ya. Galperin (1999), a well-known Russian psychologist, who worked after Lev Vygotsky, has developed a theory for planned developing of mental actions. In his theory he used a concept of "an orientation in an action" for the system of signs, which was used for organizing and regulation an action. That concept seems very useful in the context of analyzing PCA as a psychotechnical system.
3. A system of activity, which is tightly connected and underlies the conceptual signal-symbolic system. This activity is of crucial importance for creating effects of any practice, creating changes in a person. The activity provides a real experience, which is being organized (comprehended, understood, systematized, etc), in accordance with the conceptual system. A conceptual (signal) system without the activity tends to be a "hollow knowledge". A conceptual system interconnected with the activity tends to create a person's experiential "view of the world" (Leontyev A.N., 1982) and connected to it "a way of living".
4. A teacher (psychologist, parent, leader etc). A teacher is a person who "carries" a psychotechnical system in its integrity of concepts and practice "on one's shoulders", incorporates it in one's own life and activity.
5. Organized intensive interaction between the teacher (psychologist, parent, leader etc) and a student (client, child, follower, etc). A teacher inspires, organizes, instructs, supports, controls, and corrects an activity of a student in accordance with the conceptual signal-symbolic system. Eventually the student (client, child, follower, etc) starts to organize one's activity in accordance with the conceptual system. The conceptual system becomes one's "reality" which is being confirmed and stabilized by everyday activity," a way of living" in accordance with the conceptual system.

## 1.2. The Person-Centered Approach as a psychotechnic system of the development of a person.

Carl R. Rogers (1961, 1980), an outstanding American psychologist, was a founder of the Client-Centered Therapy. In 1940-50-th he has distinguished so called three “core conditions” of constructive change of a person in therapeutic relationships. Those are very famous attitudes of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. The client-centered therapist provides those conditions to a client. The conditions create an environment for self-actualization, constructive change of a client.

Client-Centered therapy is a special model of helping relationships. Starting from middle 70-th of the last century Carl Rogers made an attempt to generalize that model to all relationships. He started to name the general model the Person-Centered Approach.

The Client-centered therapy and Person-Centered Approach are practiced and developed by many specialists all over the world. Ernest E. Meadows, a friend and colleague of Carl Rogers, is actively developing the Person-Centered Approach as a general model for all relationships (Meadows E.E., 1999-a). His main application of the PCA is to business relationships. “All business is being done through relationships. The set of the Person-Centered skills, including empathic listening, congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard, is a necessary and sufficient for successful conduct of all business relationships”(private conversation; 1999-a). The aim of the trainings and workshops of E. Meadows is teaching of the four person-centered skills. I have made a research, which had the goal to demonstrate that people change much deeper, than just a learning of the skills. I intend to show that practice of Ernest Meadows is a complete psychotechnical system, influencing and change people very deeply.

### 1.2.1. A description of the training system.

Here is a description given by E. Meadows in an paper, presented at the 12-th International Pajaro Group Symposium on Person-Centered Approach in Organizations (Amanalco de Becerra, Mexico, February 18-22, 2002)

#### **“Method of Introducing PCA into Organizations [Design and Conduct]**

##### **Assumptions**

- Students are adults and learn best through participation.
- Students have within them the resources for growth, development and learning.
- Human Beings are natural and spiritual.
- Student Centered Learning dominates.
- Spaced repetition is effective in learning.
- Student’s stamina increases with increased exposure and learning.
- Good teaching is not important, learning is.
- Each student is sovereign.
- PCA is necessary and sufficient for the successful conduct of relationships at work.
- Relationships are internal, not between.

##### **Design**

Skills we teach: Congruence, Empathic Listening, Empathy, and Unconditional Positive Regard.  
Often there is an interview with a new client and a demonstration of what we do.

**Basic Skills Workshops:**

New Approaches to Managing Work Relationships

6 ½ Day Session spread over 3 ½ months

**Schedule**

- 2 – ½ day sessions – an afternoon and the next morning about a month later
- a 1 day session about a month later
- a 2 day session about a month later
- a 2 ½ day session

Power Lab: 8 day workshop attached to the Leadership Program – no prerequisite

**Intermediate level Workshops**

The design and conduct of these workshops are all the same. What differs is the theme. Current workshops [themes]:

Task Assignment & Performance Conversations [4 days]

Beyond Conflict

Accountability, Initiative & Responsibility

Power in Organizations

Diversity in Organizations

Work Team Leadership [5 days]

Work Team Building

Custom Workshop [Client’s current theme]

**Advanced Level Workshops**

Leadership Program [63 days over 3 ½ years] 7 – nine-day sessions

Each session has a theme. All sessions have some common themes.

<u>Session</u>	<u>Special Themes</u>
<i>Session 1</i>	Advanced PCA Skills
<i>Session 2</i>	New Community
<i>Session 3</i>	Applications
<i>Session 4</i>	Power Lab
<i>Session 5</i>	New Work Community
<i>Session 6</i>	Philosophical Grounding
<i>Session 7</i>	Moral Grounding

**Themes Common to all sessions** [except Power Lab]

**Study Groups** – Students are assigned authors and are responsible for the transfer of author’s work to other students.

**Leadership Opportunities** – Students select an opportunity having nothing to do with their organization or ours.

**Advanced PCA Skills** – Each session has a 20-hour lab which is an opportunity to practice advanced level skills.

**PCA Discussions** – Cognitive learning about the skills session

**Permanent Partners** – each student forms a partnership for the duration of seven sessions with another student. They use empathy in developing one’s personal leadership vision and then one’s organizational leadership vision.

## Conduct

### Teacher Centered Portion

- Initial description of the four skills
- Teacher prepares penultimate design for each session

### Student Centered Portion

- Focus shifts from teaching to learning
- Teacher teaches what the student is ready to learn when the student is ready to learn it
- Lecturettes based on what students are ready to learn
- Long silences
- Responsibility for learning becomes the students'
- The teacher brings resources and high quality presence"

The main method of learning the person-centered skills in all workshops is a role play, modeling difficult relationships, with a special task for students to use the skills. Every role play is thoroughly discussed by all students and instructor(s) from the point of view of usage of the skills.

### 1.2.2. A description of the skills

Here is a description of the skills made by E. Meadows (1999-b).

## **Empathic Listening**

### First in a Set of Four Skills of the Person Centered Approach

Empathic Listening is the most useful skill of the Person Centered Approach [PCA]. It is the one you will use most often. It is the easiest to learn. So, it has the quickest payoff for an organization. Carl Rogers, the founder of PCA, did not distinguish between Empathy [which it the *following* of an other while they go through growth and development] and Empathic Listening [which is used when you want *understanding* of an other]. He used them interchangeably. Here we are separating them.

PCA is an approach between the self and other.

Empathic Listening can be described in four steps:

1. Decide to listen
  - If the self has something going on in side, then be congruent.
  - If the other has something going on, then listen.
  - If both have something going on, then adjourn with an agreement when to come back together.
2. Clarify the verbal message of the other - What are the words? What do they mean to the other? Find out. You have permission for this step.
3. Guess at the experience of the other - Guess at the experience which might be behind the experience. This involves more risk. If you connect at this experiential level, the result is more intimacy. If you try and do not connect, the result is more distance. Permission cannot be assumed. It must be continually renewed.
4. Validation - Listener cannot do this. To say, "I heard you." Is not validation. Validation comes from the sender, the other. The other confirms your clarification or guess. Validation, has a sense of finality or closure to it. The voice goes down. If the voice is tentative or goes up, validation is incomplete. Self may have part of it, or

might be close, but there is still something not received. Maybe it was sent and missed or perhaps not even sent.

Because you work with others and there is a natural competition for air time, the simple arithmetic of the situation requires that Empathic Listening is appropriate more of the time, than sending.

When you are uncertain which PCA skill to use, pick this one. It is the one most often appropriate. It is a fair substitute for each of the others skills. Whenever you are in a hole, at least this skill will help you “stop digging”. It is possible to Empathic Listen you way out of most difficult situations.

As with the other skill, Empathic Listening is for you to use when you choose, not when you ought, or when others want.

## **Congruence**

### Second in a Set of Four Skills of the Person Centered Approach

The purpose of Congruence is manifesting your experience in the world through language. Synonyms are: centered, genuine, authentic, and real. If you, the self, send a congruent message, the chances of receiving a defensive response diminishes. If you send an incongruent message the chance of receiving a defensive response increases.

There are two levels to the skill of congruence. Level one has four steps:

1. Experience - that flow of what is going on inside of the self at any given moment. It flows. It changes from moment to moment.
2. Awareness - It is tapping into the flow, and bringing it into consciousness, know that it is there.
3. Non Verbal Language - If left untempered, the body will naturally communicate a combination of experience and awareness. If you want to know what the nonverbal language of the other means, . . . ask the other.
4. Verbal Language - You, the self, speaks about the experience of the self, not about the situation of about the other. Pure congruent language contains no “he”, “she:”, “it” or “you”.

Level two is taking full responsibility for your experience. There is no blaming the other or the situation for your experience. For example:

Level 1

From: “You are untrustworthy.” *Knowing WHAT is going on in the self*

To: “I am suspicious.”

Level 2

From: “I am suspicious of you.” *Knowing THAT your experience is going on*

To: “I am suspicious because I am a suspicious person.” *IN you and that you are totally responsible*

Trying to make others or the situation responsible, is a decision to be powerless.

In an organization, it makes for gaps in responsibility. Congruence makes for overlaps in responsibility.

One of the first things you will notice, as you become proficient in this skill, is that you will eagerly seek responsibility. You will not want to let any responsibility get away from you.

Jackie Hicks, of Camelot, write, “**Just because you are not to blame, does not mean you are not responsible**”.

Ever since humankind got the ability to choose, its history has been an attempt to escape the responsibility of choice. This is why it will be difficult to learn this skill. Keep after it. It will come.

## Empathy

### Third in a Set of Four Skills of the Person Centered Approach

Empathy is *following* the other, while the other leads you on a journey through the other’s experience. Empathy is the skill of choice when the other wants to grow, learn or develop. It is not useful when the self wants the other to grow, learn or develop.

In order to use empathy, it is necessary to be secure in one’s own experience. When one enters the world of the other, it is important that the self be able to return to ones own experience at will, not to get lost in the world of the other. This security is also necessary, because the self chooses to set his or her own experience aside. Both the self and the other are focused on the experience of the other. If the self becomes aware of something other than the experience of the other, and the self chooses to set that aside and refocus on the other’s experience, then empathy continues. It is OK to keep an experience of the self, it is only no longer empathy.

The self continues to be empathic until the other has utilized his or her own resources to reach the growth, learning or development he or she seeks. The self is like a catalyst. The self does not enter into the process of the other, only accompanies. If the self were to enter the process, for example to give advice, then the other must build a phagocytic-like barrier around the advice [similar to an invading organism]. If the other utilizes their own resources only, then their solutions are automatically integrated. They fit. They are immediately available to the other.

Carl Rogers regarded empathy as the driver in client centered therapy. Empathy is a very powerful tool for the organizations. It’s impact on individual and work team growth cannot be overestimated.

An empathy event is finished when the other has grown, when they have achieved their goal. It can last 90 seconds or several hours. I prefer to be with the other until the end has been achieved and then some. I follow the other through the end. It is common for therapists seeing clients to allow the end of the 45 or 50 minute session to interrupt empathy to be rejoined next time. At work, it is possible to continue, if conditions warrant.

The result of empathy is a more fully functioning person. Such a person is a more fit member of a fully functioning work team. The demands of business suggest that whenever someone is not fully functioning, a time investment is indicated.

An agreement, at least tacit, precedes an episode of empathy. The other must want to grow and the self must be willing and able to be with them while they grow. Find a place where you will not be interrupted. The rewards for both are great. The other grows. The self gains a more fully functioning person with whom to relate.

## Unconditional Positive Regard

### Fourth in a Set of Four Skills of the Person Centered Approach

Unconditional Positive Regard is by far the most difficult to learn. The Responsibility portion of congruence is the next most difficult. This is imbedded in Unconditional Positive Regard. This one will require your best work. Don't give up on it. This one is the most personally rewarding. The power you feel will not always be appreciated by the other. It is for you. Unconditional Positive Regard is a mouthful. If one shortens it, then PCA is no longer a necessary and sufficient skill set for the successful conduct of relationships. So, alas, it must remain. Unconditional Positive Regard can be looked at from three vantage points.

The first is the suspension of judgment. Judgment is the shutting off of information and the attribution of "good" or "bad". The brain cannot operate fully the presence of judgment. Judgment happens in 6/10,000 of a second - too fast to prevent. Something must be done with the judgment. What is to be done, is, convert in into congruence [from a "you" message to an "I" message, for which I take full responsibility.

The second vantage point is that of looking at a sunset. Carl Rogers used to say that one does not try to change a sunset [a little darker blue over here, please, and perhaps less orange there, and certainly more pink and red overall]. One regards a sunset just as it is. People are like that. They are just fine the way they are now.

Finally, there is a paradox. We cannot cope with this, which by definition cannot make sense, in the presence of judgment. The paradox is this. You must remain totally committed to your own integrity, while at the same time prize the gift [not the other, but the gift] of the other which threatens your integrity. You move from pushing the gift away - remaining stuck, to embracing it a jewel of great price - precious! The threat becomes my valued friend. I prize it. I don't just understand. I don't just accept it. I don't just prize it. I prize it unconditionally. I am now able to work with it. I am not longer stuck. I am moving again - powerful - free."

It is necessary to emphasize that during the training the trainer demonstrates a high level of presence and use of skills constantly in relations with the students. He also actively and repeatedly uses a system of ideas and concepts for his commentaries, analyses of cases and experiences "here and now".

#### 1.2.3. A description of the conceptual system of the PCA

The concepts and ideas are coherent to each other and create, as I understand it, a core essence of Ernest Meadows' worldview. Let me to present here E. Meadows' article "Philosophical grounding: PCA in organizations"(a paper, presented at the 12-th International Pajaro Group Symposium on Person-Centered Approach in Organizations (Amanalco de Becerra, Mexico, February 18-22, 2002), which describes the most important concepts of the system.

### **"Philosophical Grounding – PCA in Organizations**

I am thinking . . . How do I know what I know?

Don't know? Faith? Reason? No basis? Commit and take responsibility?

A person who manages or leads others has some notion of just whom it is that they manage or lead. Just what is a human being, after all? It seems that there are only two options: either the

human being is natural only [any consideration of consciousness must be based on perception] or natural and spiritual [in addition to a body, the human being has the spiritual dimensions, namely, intellect and will].

Mortimer J. Adler, in his book, “Ten Philosophical Mistakes” makes the point that if human beings are natural only, behavior is caused, then the moral end point is “might makes right”. In this case it is the task of the manager or leader to develop strength in his/her employees or followers. If human beings are sovereign, and then they are responsible for their decisions and creations, then moral philosophy is in the realm of knowledge and not mere opinion.

**Spirit** – intervened into development of mankind to create unique creature, one with sovereignty – can make decisions that cannot be overruled by any other authority.

**First Cause/Because** – Acts of the will are first cause, not because. Not caused events. Responsible events. Trace Aristotle’s explanation of “First Cause”. First Cause = *different, unchanging, spiritual, and power is attractive, not propulsive.*

**Why/Because Loops** – energy sinks in organizations and relationships. not appropriate with human beings. After W/B Loop we are back where we started and still must deal with situation.

**Explain/Complain** – defensive attempts to escape responsibility – apologies. Don’t convince anyway.

**Cowardice/Self Deception** – Kierkegaard cites these as main tools in attempt to escape responsibility

### Big Bang

- Doppler Effect: Cars, planes [sound waves], stars, galaxies [light waves]
- Bar Code of elements on spectrograph
- Red shift = speed and direction of galaxies [reverse to 15.3B yrs ago = same place]
- 1 second after BB, U=57,000 mi diameter
- @ BB space comes into being, matter comes into being, movement comes into being and their derivative, TIME [measurement of the movement of matter in space] also comes into being.
- 1 second “before” [absurd] BB = Spirit ∴ beyond time, space, matter, movement – gives birth to BB

### Self

Kierkegaard describes the self in counterpoint to Hegel’s dialectic. His definition of self is famous, in English: “The self is a relation, which relates to itself and to that which established it.”

### Hegel’s dialectic

<u>Thesis</u>	<u>Antithesis</u>
Individual	State
Individual	Other
Individual	Community

## Synthesis

[= harmonious resolution of thesis and antithesis]

e.g. “the fullest expression of the self is service to the state”

### Kierkegaard’s Self

<u>Thesis</u>	<u>Antithesis</u>
Eternal	Temporal
Finite	Infinite
Necessary	Possible

## Self

Synthesis is a lie. Resolved in favor of the state. Hitler, Lenin loved Hegel.

Self relates to eternally hostile opposites

Result is anxiety, = price of authenticity.

If self gives up thesis or antithesis, in search of serenity, self is structurally destroyed.

### Self relates to self

In a mirror, one can gaze deeply into one’s own eyes.

### Self relates to that which established it.

God

Absolute

Culture

Parents

Self”

Except concepts, described in the article and description of the skills, a number of other concepts and ideas (for instance, “an old (European) and a new community”, “independence” and “interdependence in a new community, “happiness as a whole life well living”, “leader”, “followers”, “visions and functions of a leader” and others) are actively used by the instructor for commenting and describing different facts and events in the process of training. As I mentioned already, all the concepts and ideas are tightly connected to each other in the worldview of Ernest Meadows and are used him for comprehending and organizing his own life and activity.

### 1.3. Empirical study: an interview of participants of the PCA trainings

I have interviewed nineteen persons. Fourteen of them have participated in the different trainings of Ernest Meadows (T.L., J.M., K.M., B.B., T.Z., J.H., B.P., W.M., S.F., D.S., G.T., B.M., L.B., E.S). Four persons are active client-centered and person-centered practitioners (F.V., M.W., W.S., L.G.) One person is an active person-centered expressive arts practitioner (M.K.).

All respondents were asked the following questions:

### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Introduction:** This research deals with the changes of people, who have undergone PCA training. I’ll ask you several general and special questions on the topic.

I. General part: changes in the process of PCA learning and usage

1. What are the main changes you see in yourself because of learning and using of the person-centered approach? (Every respondent was asked to use a number of Dembo-Rubinstain scales for self-estimating of a level of called characteristics/traits before and after undergoing PCA training. Special in-depth conversation was conducted around every scale and characteristic.

Remark. A Dembo-Rubinstain scale is a 10 cm. vertical line. A respondent is asked to imagine that all people are situated on the scale. People at the up end possess the named characteristic in the complete degree; people at the lower end possess the named characteristic in minimal possible degree. The respondent is asked to situate oneself at the scale).

2. Have you noticed any changes in other people who has undergone PCA training or CCT?
3. How was the process of your change and change of other people occurring - any important experiences, observations and comments?

(Remark. In accord with the aims of this research all respondents were also asked several special questions about tolerance and influence of the PCA training to their tolerance. I describe this part of the research below.)

### 1.3.1. Results

1. The content and number of changes in themselves and other people, mentioned by the participants and marked on respective Dembo-Rubinstain scales, prove that the PCA influences people very individually responding to their needs and desires. PCA is a flexible, person-centered practice. Along with that it is possible to distinguish some similarities in the PCA influence for the changes in people.
2. One of the most evident and striking changes in participants of the person-centered trainings of Ernie Meadows appears to be what might be called “coming to oneself”. Six participants said that PCA training and practice enabled them “to be themselves”(6); also were mentioned “became inwardly focused and independent of approval of others”(2), “better knowing of myself”(5), “being O.K. with myself”(5), “self confidence”(2), “expanded a range of feelings”(1), “became at deeper place with other people and myself”(1), “connection with inner experiences”(1), “congruence”(1), “realness”(1).

Let me to quote some responses. “What happened to me, my psychology might be compared to a Copernican revolution! I have placed the center in me, not outside. I realized how conditional my life was before. I reclaimed my inner locus of evaluation!”(J. M.). “I used to deny myself to be what people wanted me to be. Now I know myself better and I am actively seeking to know myself better. Leadership was clearing garage away for knowing myself... I decided to be free, independent without getting counter-dependent”(K.M.). “I did not know who I was. Used to be the way people around me wanted me to be. That brought me to a heavy and very painful crisis in my life... I just didn’t know who I was... I know who I am and what I want much better now, not only intellectually, but also spiritually... I learned a power of being responsible for myself and not being responsible for others. I take care of myself, responsible for myself”(B.B.). “I became inwardly focused as opposed to being externally dependent before... Became independent, being myself in relationships without fear... I don’t spend much time on changing others now...”(T. Z.). “Not giving up myself is may be the most important change in me, the biggest area of growth for me!”(B.M.). “I am more happy with myself. And it is a continuing process”(G. T.) It is possible to quote also many other responds, which reveal a growth in self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-guidance as a result of undergoing the PCA training. Along with the next change this “coming to oneself” seems to me the most remarkable result of undergoing the training and using the person-centered skills. I will make comment about this in detail later.

3. Six(6) people called “responsibility” as one of the most important changes in themselves; if to add to that “freedom”(4 people), which is closely connected to responsibility, then ten(10) people or 53% of all participants, or 71% of participants of PCA trainings of E. Meadow (all 10 were participants of his trainings) mention growth in responsibility as a major change in themselves. It is a remarkable result and it demands a special comment. It is connected to a cardinal change in personal worldview and ones position/being in the world. Let me to quote some responses here. ”I was reasonably responsible, trying to escape responsibility. I wanted people to be different. Blamed them for my difficulties and problems... I took the responsibility, I seek it now. The whole responsibility is on my shoulders. And it is exactly where I want to be! I think what Ernie really teaches is responsibility. ”(K.M.) “My responsibility was conditional, without joy before. I lived my life as other people wanted me to live for their approval. I feel a real joy of accepting responsibility, I am celebrating it now!”(J.M.) “I am more responsible. I don’t blame circumstances. I took the responsibility for my feelings. And I am not responsible for other people’s emotions...Now I help people, but I don’t take their burdens”(G.T.). “I learned a power of being responsible for myself and not being responsible for others” (B.B.). “I realized, learnt how much freedom we have! I refused of “why-because” thing!” (B. P.). A lot of other responses also indicate how important this change in responsibility was for people.
4. The most often change mentioned as an answer to the first question appeared to be “growth of capacity to successfully relate to people”(10). If to add to this “a growth in capacity to use the skill of unconditional positive regard”(5), “learnt to listen empathetically” (3), ”capable to deal with difficult situations”(2), “capable to talk”(1), “congruence changed”(1), “became more real”(1),“decrease of dominance”(1), “broader level of acceptance of differences”(1),”deep connection with people”(1), “became at deeper place with other people and myself”(1), “capacity to empathetically connect to tragedies without needing to withdraw or intervene”(1), “deep creativity with people”(1) and some other answers, it is possible to conclude, that **PCA training and practice positively influence the capacity to relate, to communicate to other people.** It goes along with the main declared aim of the PCA training- learning person-centered skills to become more successful in relationships.
5. The list of changes in other people undergoing PCA training or CCT therapy appears to be similar to the list of changes participants of the research revealed in themselves.
6. The process of change in the PCA training. As the responses show it is both dramatic and exiting. Here are some remarks about the process.

“Some people go through a narcissism. Being oneself becomes a new toy for them”(J.M.)

“Leadership has changed my life. It scares me I’ve chosen not to take it. It was an uneasy process. Some people escape the training: it is too much for them to face responsibility. It was difficult for most people. And some could not face moral and philosophical questions...Some people looked to their self-deceptions and quit. Others decided to change“(K.M.).

“A lot of grief and chaos. A fear that there is no way I gonna to be responsible for myself. Work. There was a lot of struggle. Sadness and relief”(B.B.)

“ The leadership program is challenging and hard. Some people saw their problems and escaped the training group. For a long time using the skills felt inauthentic to me. Ernie suggested using them even though they felt inauthentic. They felt authentic eventually.... The process was scaring sometimes. The power lab, for example...There is a continuum. At the beginning you pretend you are not aware of the skills. Then you become aware of them and you want to use them. First in training setting, then, eventually, in daily life... It is very important to have victories along the way. People who didn't have them escaped the leadership”(T.Z.)

“The process of learning wasn't easy. I used to say to myself: ”You can do that! You can do that!”(B.P.)

“It is a journey which never ends. It demands a strong discipline. The more you invest, the more returns... The biggest insight, most important change is people's recognizing that they are responsible. And they are amazed about their own escaping the responsibility!”(W.M.)

“It is still a long way to go”(G.T.)

“There is an awkwardness phase in learning. Painful a lot, clumsy”(B.M.)

“It is a hard work. Ernie is really good at that! You learn by example, practicing. It is a personal learning...If you see the benefits, you start practicing it. It is not intuitive. It is counter-intuitive. It takes effort, practice!”(L.B.)

### 1.3.2. Discussion

Let me to comment the data conceptualizing the training system of E. Meadows as a complete psychothechnical system. I mean that it includes a coherent, solid and detailed conceptual framework about human being, its nature, activity and life, about relationships, either working or personal, and conditions for their effectiveness, about community and leadership. A system of learning and real activity is closely connected to the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework serves as a means for organizing, regulating and controlling the learning and real activity of participants of the training (take into consideration here that one of the cornerstones of the system is a concept of sovereignty of a human being and inalienable capacity for a free will!). There is a trainer-teacher who enactments the conceptual framework in ones life, everyday relationship and communication. And the teacher provides a high level of presence in contact with the students, using the person-centered skills, commenting, supporting, encouraging, confronting, controlling the learning activity of students. The aim of the training is acquiring the person-centered skills and applying them to relationship and leadership. I insist that the entire person, which accepts the system of views and activity, changes cardinally ones worldview and personality.

I want to discuss essential characteristics of E. Meadows training system comparing it to the client-centered therapy, which I also see as a special psychothechnical system for providing psychological help.

To begin the analysis I want with a quotation of a methodological statement from A. Puzirei (1986).”There are two main and tightly connected tasks, which arise in front of new psychology, methodology:

1. A reconstruction of structure of some “machine”(tool, organ), but machine taken from the side of it’s psychotechnical function of reorganization (and, in particular, development) of behavior, psyche, consciousness of a person;
2. A reconstruction- in accord with the described “machine” and analysis of it’s functional structure –of those changes of psyche, consciousness, which that “machine” has to produce, changes, which the machine was built for and was used for.

As a “ machine” here we understand a means for reorganization of psyche, consciousness; those are signs and different kinds of signal systems: first of all signs, which were created in history, fixed in culture and are translated from generation to generation by means of specially organized practices (education, for example) “(p.79-80).

So, let us try to undertake primary (the complete analysis will demand more effort and time!) analysis of PCA as a psychotechnical (and culture-technical) “machine” for reorganizing human psyche.

My main thesis here is that the PCA system makes its main emphasis on the self of the person, ones sovereignty and responsibility for one’s experience and happiness as the whole life well-living. CCT, as a special model, a psychotechnical system of helping relationships, makes emphasis on the other person.

Indeed, the meaning and sense of self and responsibility for oneself fulfills every element of the conceptual framework of the PCA. Let me to underline some of those aspects.

The two main values of the system are:

1. The person is sovereign.
2. The resources for dealing with problems are inside the person, not outside. Here already the emphasis on strong and sufficient self is clear.

“Most of relationships in human life, in particular work relationships, are not helping relationships. A person uses skill for one’s own behalf, not for the behalf of the other.”(Meadows E.E., 1999-a). An evident accent on the self and ones activity is declared here.

The skills in the training are operationalized for the convenience of learning and use, for the sake of and for the success of the user. The skill of congruence distinguishes the first level, essential part of which is becoming aware of ones experience (from here there is just one step to knowing and understanding oneself in a concrete situation and in general) and the second level: ”Level two is taking full responsibility for your experience. There is no blaming the other or the situation for your experience... Trying to make others or the situation responsible, is a decision to be powerless.” This statement, along with the value/conviction that all the necessary resources are inside the person, being accepted and regularly used –first in learning setting and then in daily life-become a regulative mechanism of accepting and seeking for responsibility and create a self understanding, self-concept of “me responsible”!

This self-concept is further strengthened by the conceptual system of the skill of unconditional positive regard. The first part of the “paradox” in the third version/level of the skill is being fully committed to oneself. “You would better not use the skill, but be committed to your own integrity”(E. Meadows in a discussion at Leadership program). And even unconditional prizing of what one gets from the other is made for the sake of the person oneself-to be able “to work with it... not longer stuck... moving again - powerful - free.”

All the skills are used on the behalf of oneself at free will. Even the skill of empathy, which demands to put one's own experience-the Self- aside and to be with the other, at a highest quality of presence concentrating on the other's experiences, is practiced when the person decides that on any reason one wants to support the other in solving problems the other has.

All this does not mean the PCA system is egocentric and egoistic. As have noticed absolutely correctly one of our respondents, there is possible narcissism, when person discovers oneself and learn to be responsible for oneself. E. Meadows also used to say that the error of narcissism may be a stage in development of a self-responsible person.

The PCA teaches to value and unconditionally prize the other as a sovereign person with all necessary resources inside. The sovereignty of the other is valued not less than ones own. Yet PCA teaches not to handicap the other by taking responsibility for the other person's problems and difficulties. We may use the skill of empathy to catalyze the process of actualizing the resources and solving problem by the other.

The active learning and practicing the skills in the training, with the support and control of the trainer and other participants, eventually lead not to just learning the skills by the students, but to viewing oneself as responsible and free people, with all necessary resources inside. An openness to the experience leads to good self-knowledge, the congruence on the second level makes ones responsible and powerful, empathic listening and unconditional positive regard lead to success in difficult relationships. The PCA system demands and teaches a person to value and accept oneself. The experience of successes increases self-confidence and confirms a constructive attitude towards problems as solvable tasks. And the whole worldview, inherent to the PCA system, in a process of active "operating"-communicating, using, experiencing in the training and later in everyday life -to more or less degree becomes a worldview of the participants, reorganizing their internal and external activity and changing them. The people become more successful, satisfied and fully functional. All that we see in reports of participants of the PCA trainings of E. Meadows.

I want to make several comments about the client-centered therapy for comparison with the PCA system. The CCT, from my point of view, is a very powerful psychotechnical therapeutic system. The core conditions practiced by psychotherapist concentrate all attention, understanding, faith and unconditional regard on the client - the other. Even congruence of the psychotherapist relates to the prevalent degree to the client, ones problems and activity. All that creates for the client a "tender environment"(W.S.), the unique conditions-means for self-acceptance, self-understanding, self-trust and to grow personally to solve actual problems and to live more authentic, fully functioning life (C. Rogers). One of participants of our research, a CCT practitioner himself, describes one of his first experiences of being a client of Gay Svenson, one of the most famous client-centered therapists: "She had a capacity to be really fully present and acceptant with others, a tremendous beauty in her. Sometimes it was like she was losing her person, put it aside, and she and I would connect from that place at a very special level. And something wonderful happened at that level: I realized and opened which never opened before. In the conditions of trust and recognition to me I gradually changed myself"(L.G.). A lot of similar remarks were done in psychological literature about Carl Rogers work and work of other PCA therapists.

In client-centered therapy therapist uses the core conditions for the sake of the client. The personality of the therapist appears to become a means for and catalyzer for the client change. The evident emphasis on the other person is clear here. Empathy becomes the main tool in the therapy; empathy implies to put your own experiences aside and to be with the other person. By

the usage of empathy CCT practitioners encounter the depth and wonder of human experiences! And observe the impressive and wonderful change to better in people under the core conditions of the CCT. Such powerful experiences produce a valuable attitude to the core conditions as a wonderful, tender and powerful means for facilitating personal growth. There is a temptation to generalize the therapeutic kind of relationships to all relationships. It happens among the CCT practitioners that they start to use the core conditions as a value system- always and in every situation. People use the core conditions towards other people in daily peer (non-helping, equal) relationships and expect that others will do the same towards them. If that not happens there is often a lot of tension, bitter offence and blame towards the others. That way uncritical generalization CCT to all kinds of relationships and conceptualizing it as a general value system makes it oppressive and keep people dependent on the relationships of others. We can often observe that in CCT communities.

#### 1.4. Conclusions.

1. On the basis of the ideas of cultural-historical theory of Lev Vygotsky and the ideas of psychotechnical approach developing in modern Russian psychology the concept of the “psychotechnical system” has been for the first time elaborated. The elements of any psychotechnical system are the following: 1) the goal destination of the system; 2) a coherent conceptual (symbolic) system; 3) a practice, tightly connected to the conceptual system; 4) a person (teacher, instructor, parent, etc) who realizes the conceptual system and connected to it practice in one’s life activity; 5) organized active interaction between the person and people who want(choose) to learn from the person.
2. PCA trainings by E. Meadows was primarily analyzed as a psychotechnical system. (A detailed analysis of PCA, CCT, as well as different other educational and psychological practices, as psychotechnical systems I plan to make shortly)
3. As empirical research revealed, PCA system results not just in learning the person-centered skills by the students, but changing their worldviews and personalities. The most evident changes are deeper and better self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-regard and full acceptance of responsibility for one’s experience in particular situation and the whole life.

### **Part 2. The Person-Centered Approach and Tolerance**

A life in modern civilization becomes more and more dynamic, active, intensive and interactive. Interests of different individuals, groups, nations and states come into confrontation, controversy or conflict often enough. In addition, different groups and states become “much closer” through modern technology. Individual, group and national differences appear sharper and more evident. It is no wonder that people look for new ways for mutual existence and development in these conditions. The issue of tolerance/intolerance becomes very actual today.

As UNESCO has put it in the Declaration of the Principles of the Tolerance:

“ Article 1 - Meaning of tolerance

1.1 Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is

harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty; it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace

1.2 Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In no circumstance can it be used to justify infringements of these fundamental values. Tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and States.

1.3 Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

1.4 Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behavior and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others”.

The term “tolerance” is actively used in mass media and political talks. However, there is no much serious research on the nature and essence of tolerance. Tolerance and its political use are critically discussed by a number of authors (“ A critique of pure tolerance”, 1970)

A number of humanitarians in Ural State University (Yekaterinburg, Russia) in 2000-2001 initiated a discussion on and research of tolerance.

The initial design of this research was to make a forming experiment. The easiest experimental scheme might be to form equal experimental and control groups. The experimental group would be taught the person-centered skills (a detailed description of the skills and the description of the training see above) in a basic skills training by E. Meadows. Both groups would be tested on tolerance before and after the teaching. The idea of the forming experiment was associated with the general psychotechnical methodology (see more details of it above) and, in particular, with the theory and practice of a professor of Moscow State University P. Ya. Galperin on “planned forming of mental acts”(1999). Accepting the idea that the person-centered skills and conceptual system which organizes, regulates and orients performing the skills contain the elaborated view of the self, the other, constructive relationships and effective dealing with differences, we believed that acquiring the skills will lead to tolerance as one (not the only!) of the effects of acquiring the skills. We also believed that the correlation of acquiring the PCA skills and tolerance would enable to understand better the internal (psychological) structure of tolerance. That conviction is based on a methodological idea of the A. N. Leonyev(1982) and P.Ya. Galperin(1999) that external actions being internalized and structurally transformed constitute a system of internal (mental) actions equal in their meaning to the meaning of external actions. So the analysis of the system of external actions and skills would enable to understand a psychological essence of qualities and changes in people who learnt to use and internalized the external actions and skills. That analyses might be a part of a broader psychotechnical analysis of the cultural PCA-“machine”, a symbolic system of ideas and concepts and practices closely connected and regulated by it, which produces changes in a person who actively uses the system.

That was the in initial design of the research. It has been not realized because on some external reasons there were no trainings of the person-centered skills during the period of the scholarship. It stays a task for the future study.

## 2.1. Empirical research: Interviewing of people competent in PCA

Instead of making the forming experiment we decided to interview people who learnt the person-centered skills in trainings of Ernest Meadows or actively use the core conditions of the PCA as practitioners. We asked them several questions about tolerance and the influence of PCA on tolerance-their own and other people. Our hypothesis (hope) was that answers and reflections of people competent in PCA, i. e. *competent in relationship skills*, would enable to understand tolerance better.

Nineteen persons have been interviewed. Fourteen of them have participated in the different trainings of Ernest Meadows (T.L., J.M., K.M., B.B., T.Z., J.H., B.P., W.M., S.F., D.S., G.T., B.M., L.B., E.S). Four persons are active client-centered and person-centered practitioners (F.V., M.W., W.S., L.G.) One person is an active person-centered expressive arts practitioner (M.K.).

### 2.1.1. A questionnaire:

1. Are you a tolerant person?
2. How do you understand tolerance? Please, give your definition of tolerance.
3. Estimate your tolerance before learning PCA and now (The scale of Dembo-Rubinstain has been used with detailed conversation around the estimations, made by respondents).
4. Have you noticed change in tolerance in your group mate(s)?
- 5.(I introduced the following definition of the tolerance: “Tolerance is being OK with other to be different and not giving up any of one’s own integrity”). Do you agree with this definition of tolerance? What do you accept and what –don’t? Give me your feedback of the definition.
- 6.Taking that definition of tolerance for granted estimate level of your tolerance before and after learning the PCA skills (The Dembo-Rubinstain scale has been used). Please, comment your estimation.

### 2.1.2. Results and discussion

On a question “Are you a tolerant person?”

7 (seven) respondents (36,8%) answered “yes”;

1 (one) person-“no”;

10 (ten) people gave answers in between (50, 8 %) (“inspired to be”, “value differences”, “some days-yes, some-no”, “I can be tolerant with people and I am intolerant to some practices”, ”yes ; not always”, “yes, and also I am also very judgmental”, “have more work to do to say “Yes”, “yes and no, prefer no”);

1 (one) person (5,7%) said, that tolerance is not an appropriate dimension to evaluate himself.

All respondents (19 persons=100%) agreed the PCA influenced in some way their tolerance.

(Changes of T –their scale and “my” scale-?)

18 (eighteen) of nineteen participants (94,7%) expressed their attraction to the definition of tolerance I suggested, ranged from complete agreement to insisting that it goes beyond tolerance, is not definition of tolerance. 1 (one) person (5,3%) was not able to give comments of the definition.

The Dembo-Rubinstain scales showed change in tolerance under influence of PCA.

The participants expressed their understanding of tolerance. The most striking result has been that 13 (thirteen) participants (68,4%) in different ways expressed their negative attitude towards tolerance as a way of relating to others. I intend to discuss that in detail below.

Pretty common understanding of tolerance among people, competent in PCA, was as the following:

“ I do not have much use for the word “tolerance” ...For me the way tolerance operates in my life is that there is a certain spectrum of expected “normal” behavior. And if you deviate from that, I’ll give a lot of room to deviate before I judge you as bad and explode into violence towards you. This violence at the end of “tolerating period” is worse, because when I use tolerance in that way I consider myself as a “good person” and you as a “bad person”. There is contempt for you and not much respect for me either...”(J.M.)

“Tolerance is willing to give up myself to be with you when you are doing something that disgusts me. I tolerate that. And I am sick to my stomach... When I am tolerant I am judging other person as something below me. I put myself above one, put myself into superior place. Rather than be at one to one with that other person...I am judging others and hold them in contempt... I was very tolerant and willing to give up myself to be with which I was disgusted, because it was “good and right” and I “should do that!”(K.M.)

“I understood tolerance as enduring something bad, without embracing that, with a lot of judgments. Put up with this, because I wanted either to avoid conflict, or “supposed to be” that way, or you were more powerful...In any case I was dependent on others...Tolerance used to be under a pressure of “should” of other people’s ideas to me, I did what other people wanted me to do: to keep contempt down, keep myself cut, give myself up. And then I had internal feelings: anger, chaos and junk. A lot of internal chaos and anger from having been tolerant...For me to tolerate means “to put up with others or having to compromise”... The word “tolerance” implies “I choose for you.” And it is not my task to choose for you!”(B.B.)

“Tolerance deals with my approval of somebody’s behavior. It is an application of one person value system to other person. Tolerance is judgment-based. It is based on belief: I am more valuable than other person, because I am tolerant.”(T.Z.)

“Tolerance doesn’t go far for me. “To tolerate” for me means to put up with you. Someone is annoying you, and you are “polite” to allow that going on, won’t let one know as if one is a child. Not satisfactory relationship!”(J.H.)

“I feel discomfort with the world tolerance...It feels judgmental. One person(that which tolerates) is on a superior position, another-on inferior position. The formula of tolerance is: “I know you are inadequate, but I can tolerate you”...To tolerate seems abandoning, not adequate at all! It seems like we are just a bit away from blowing up...When I am talking about tolerance it feels like there is a slightest difference between tolerance and intolerance. Talking about people, races, religions, cultures I don’t think, I am not confident “tolerance” to get it done, it is inadequate. To tolerate is to keep tightness until cannot keep it, then- explosion!”(W.M.)

“The term “tolerance” has too many disgusting political connotations”(S.F.)

“The term “tolerance” in the USA is politically biased, negative”(B.M.)

“Usually tolerance is understood as if it is necessary to give up yourself”(L.B.)

“Not just tolerance, but understanding, appreciation. Tolerance is not a right word...Beyond tolerance are mutual differences, understanding, respect, caring, valuing. ”(M.K.)

“I used to think not in terms of tolerance...”(L.G.)

### **Comments.**

I believe in these expressions have reflected traditional understanding of tolerance and typical attitude towards tolerance. The most important aspects here are the following:

1. Tolerance is being understood as enduring something disgusting.
2. Tolerance is judgmentally based: the tolerating person views oneself as “moral” and “right”, while viewing another person (or a group, nation) as disgusting, “immoral”, “bad”. As a matter of fact, other person (or a group) while being tolerated, is not viewed as alive person-with wishes, feelings, experiences,- but as an object, “it” in terms of M. Buber (1995).
3. While tolerating something disgusting we give up ourselves, suppress our real wishes and feelings, “put ourselves outside”.
4. As a consequence of betraying ourselves we fell badly inside. When the resources of enduring are over there is very probable explosion into violence.
5. The other possible consequence of being tolerant is “loosing oneself”, internal pain and chaos.

These are characteristics of understanding tolerance. I see a few sources of this negative understanding and attitude towards tolerance. First of all, tolerance is a social norm and value. As a social norm/value it originated as a result of people’s awareness and systematization of experiences of mutual interactions and communication in modern complex world. The necessity of co-existence determines forming of different norms (including the social norm/value of tolerance), making the co-existence possible, more comfortable and constructive for all parties.

There are many social mechanisms involved to make the norms/values a regulative mechanism for a person’s behavior. These social mechanisms include, but not exaggerate:

- 1) ideology and propaganda through mass media, social organizations (for example, the issue of the Declaration of Principles of Tolerance by UNESCO);
- 2) up-rearing, learning and educating youth: a lot of forms and ways are involved;
- 3) social approval or disapproval in moral and/or legislative (?) form.

No secret that these mechanisms operate in very authoritarian manner in modern civilization, imposing “should ofs” and “musts” to people. That might result in internalization of the norm/value and its becoming internal imperative-tool for regulating the person’s behavior. That person learns “to tolerate”, but it is not a free and conscious choice. Rather it is giving up oneself for conforming oneself to oppressive norm. The result of that is internal pain and chaos (see responds of K.M., B.B.), internal tension growing to explosion of violence (J.M., W.M.), and put up with the other(s), not really appreciating, valuing and understanding, experiencing the other(s) (J.M.,K.M.,M.K. and others). No wonder that this process, even being socially approved, disgusts people.

Another source of negative understanding and attitude to the term “tolerance” is political use of the norm/value or use of it in a context of modern political organization of society. As showed R.P. Wolff, B. Moore, Jr. and H. Marcuse in their papers, social norm/value of tolerance in modern society is used to protect interests of some of groups of people by expense of others

groups, which makes tolerance oppressive (“A critique of pure tolerance”, 1970). That also makes the term ”tolerance” unattractive to many people.

Instead of just tolerating people most of our respondents said that they prefer another kind of relating to people:

“I treat other people as sovereign individuals with a great worth, great resources for solving their own issues. I don’t consider it to be tolerance. For example, you are different. And I don’t think I tolerate that. I am O.K. with it. I don’t experience myself becoming tolerant. And if, for example, you start to impose totalitarian concept to me, I may not like the concept, but I am going to relate to you as a person of a great value. And I’ll ask myself: “What for I am here?”- and I would generate some options. Even then I don’t see myself as I’m going to be tolerant. I don’t frame that like tolerance! Another example. Let’s imagine we have a business meeting. You want to speak on Russian history. And I don’t want and don’t intend to relate to you about that. And I don’t consider that as being intolerant. I’ll make a choice about a subject I want to relate to. And if I relate to you about Russian history when I don’t really want to would not be tolerant. It would be abusive to myself and not give to you my best energy! I don’t think that would be tolerant...Differences are more important than agreement...And I don’t see that as me being tolerant. I see that as getting a gift. I support differences without killing each other. And I don’t call that tolerance. ...I see that as an experiential happening and I celebrate that! And I don’t give up my integrity.”(J.M.)

“I strive to be another way. I want to look for the differences, to celebrate them, to feel joy in a presence of differences. I am not fully functioning when I tolerate... Tolerance is inadequate, not a way I go to. I run out of that. When I tolerate, I am above people, not at one to one level. Tolerance is not an area I want to go. And I give up my freedom, my power, responsibility, I give up knowing myself and I give up being a fully functional person when I tolerate.”(K.M.)

“Tolerance now is associated with what I want now and what you are, what you want now. Tolerance is what I want to do in the face diversity of others, it is a place for using skills and making choice of what I want to do in the situation.”(B.B.)

“More constructive is to understand other, get enough information for that understanding. And to stay yourself in the situation”(T.Z.)

“Tolerance is not satisfactory relationship. I prefer unconditional positive regard in relationships with people”(J.H.)

“I don’t think I tolerate people, but I don’t tolerate some practices”(B.P.)

“I rather prefer to prize, to be empathetic, to follow people in their inner journey, can listen, feel and understand”(W.M.)

“It is at least important to understand that other people are coming from some place you don’t understand. That’s a good place to start. And that place is O.K. just because that is their frame of reference... Unconditional positive regard is a skill which you use when you feel a threat”(B.M.)

“ I think not in terms of tolerance, but in terms of “genuine”, “depth of caring”, “richness”. All that come from clear, open communication”(L.G.)

The influence of PCA is obvious in the answers above. To the direct question of the PCA influence to their tolerance all respondents said that there was an influence (the Dembo-Rubinstain scales also indicated the change). Here are some answers to that question:

“The skill of unconditional positive regard influenced my tolerance... I have more tolerance now...I listen, try to understand, share with people who I am, try to be open”(T.L.)

“The word “tolerance “ implies “I choose for you”. I shifted to congruence. It is not my task to chose for you!.. For me there is no issue anymore: people are who they are. I do not try to change them...”(B.B.)

“PCA is a new philosophy of life. One of the inferences from it is a futility to of applying judgments and value system on other people. Realized that the whole concept of tolerance is just a waste of energy”(T.Z.)

“PCA influenced extraordinarily and very much! I changed from being very judgmental to new understanding of people. I am capable to stay with and understand others. They can be any way they are. And I can be with them... Whatever other person does I am capable to be with one, not to try to change one...PCA taught me to understand people in a way I was not able earlier...I learned to create decisions which satisfy everybody”(J.H.)

“When I choose to use the skills, I am capable to hear, let go prejudices and intolerant behavior...I don't need to change you for me to be satisfied. PCA skills work well with relationships.”(B.P.)

“Now I am much more tolerant (hate the word!). If I chose to be tolerant, ability is not an issue” (W.M.)

“ Because of PCA I have a joy that rainbow has different colors... People see things differently, and is a source of important information for us”(S.F.)

“I am more tolerant, because I am more comfortable with who I am. I am who I am, they may be themselves. It is not so easy to stop to try changing others... Now I don't blame other even in hard situations. I look for ways of change the situation. I evaluate, listen, make decisions”(G.T.)

“ Unconditional positive regard is the biggest skill in regard to tolerance. I can see now where the other person coming from. Unconditional positive regard is the most important part of tolerance, though it is not quite the same”(B. M.)

“ Of course. PCA has influenced on the growth of responsibility, acceptance. You have to develop your own self, to accept your own deficiencies, not to blame other people. The great deal of unconditional positive regard is based on tolerance.”(L.B.)

“Unconditional positive regard as a skill which influenced my tolerance... Most of the impact of PCA is on my capacity to use the skills when I decide. I moved to be open to differences”(E.S.)

“ It influenced my understanding of dynamics in myself, structure of understanding and ways of acting. It influenced understanding and appreciating of differences”(M.K.)

“PCA work influenced my tolerance by increasing my capacity to listen, to understand. PCA groups had a life-change impact on me. PCA has widened my circle of experiences-different from mine. I can understand now where is a person... Lately I have realized how wide are cultural

differences. If you are in a majority group you are often blind to experiences of people from minority group. And are very judgmental to them”(M.W.)

“People have different experiences. I came to appreciate that, came to understanding feelings as social constructions-interpersonal and personal. I don’t need to be attached to them to survive. I look for ways to be with whom I oppose, look for solutions, look for ways to communicate to whom I oppose....May be I become a person, who preaches love... a way of being in the world, that doesn’t make enemies”(W.S.)

“If there are things that I don’t understand, I put my energy to understand that, understand other person. Now I learn how to take care of myself and treat others well, how to be effective and not hurt others. PCA helps. I embrace difficult situations: there is something for me. It is a place of clearness. I operate from the place of love. It enriches my life”(L.G.)

### **Comments.**

The most important aspects of their relationship to other people, which is often opposed to tolerance, are the following:

1. A real, sincere valuing, appreciation prizing of, unconditional positive regard for another person, respect for one’s sovereignty, absence of judging and not trying to change the other. Not just tolerating, enduring the other, but prizing differences as a precious gift.
2. A deep understanding, feeling, experiencing the other as an unique person, not objectifying and stereotyping one.
3. Not giving up oneself at the face of differences and difficult situations, keeping one’s own integrity and identity. Giving up oneself is being seen as an abuse to oneself, not being fully functioning, not giving one’s best energy to the other and to the difficult situation, which is not the best way of dealing with them.
4. A constructive and successful approach to difficult situations: taking responsibility for oneself and respecting sovereignty of another person, not giving up oneself and prizing differences, listening, understanding, getting enough information, generating options and choosing the best.

All these characteristics, from my point of view, are a result of learning the person-centered skills and acquiring-internalizing the whole conceptual system of PCA, which becomes an essential part of the worldview and a regulative tool for activity and relationship for a person. The valuing of the sovereignty of the other person, sensitivity and understanding of the other, capacity to empathetically be with the other, unconditional positive regard to the other person and prizing as a precious gift the threat for our integrity, which comes from the other, responsibility for one’s experience and being devoted to one’s own integrity-all these are very important elements of the PCA as a psychotechnical, cultural system. These cultural signs become personal regulative system after one accepts and learns the skills.

Here are some feedbacks of the participants of the study about the definition of tolerance I suggested to them.

“ If I divorce myself with my previous understanding of word “tolerance”, I agree with your definition”(J.M.)

“I like it and I don’t call it tolerance” (K.M.)

“O.K.” in your definition is not enough. A true meaning of tolerance for me is that we are fundamentally human...People are one whole... It is necessary to see unconditional part of human beings, here is an active part of tolerance or congruence.”(B.B.)

“It reminds definition of unconditional positive regard, close to the concept of “respect”. So it is more than tolerance here. It goes beyond it”(T.Z.)

“The definition is closer to the definition of unconditional positive regard, than tolerance”(W.M.)

“This definition is close to mine”(S.F.)

“It is a good definition. Being devoted to yourself goes beyond tolerance” (B.M.)

“I agree entirely. It’s a very good definition. It is very important not to give up your values.

Usually tolerance is understood as if it is necessary to give up yourself... It is most difficult to keep balance between being O.K. with the other is different and being devoted to yourself”(L.B.)

“I like it, feel it close to PCA concepts. The definition means that tolerance is situational, not permanent. I differentiate permanent and situational tolerance. I stress more feature-like tolerance. But I feel O.K. about your definition. ”(E.S.)

“ Keeping identity is important. But may be it’s appropriate to a “white” culture. Other cultures are very different”(M.K.)

“It fits with PCA. Not giving up oneself makes sense, it is very important...My definition of tolerance less involves self”(W.S.)

### **Comments.**

The definition of tolerance, which I suggested for a feedback to the respondents in the study, was created on the basis on ideas and concepts of the PCA and psychotechnical approach. Initially it was formulated this way: “Tolerance implies a conscious wish (willing) and capacity (able) to deal with the differences between me and other person, while unconditionally regarding the other’s sovereignty and not giving up any of one’s integrity”. The definition implied, that all person centered skills are involved for the competent dealing with the differences, while unconditional positive regard (prizing the other person and the differences and not giving up oneself) and congruence (in being devoted to oneself) played the primarily role in it. Ernest Meadows strongly stressed the “not giving up oneself” part of the definition. After interviewing the first respondent (T.Z.), who suggested his definition of tolerance (“Tolerance is being O.K. with people being different”), the initial definition had been changed to a form, which was suggested to all other respondents: “Tolerance is being OK with other to be different”.

As the results of the interview show, most of participants, on the one hand, express their being attracted to the definition and, on the other hand, insist that it goes beyond the term of tolerance.

From my point of view, it is no wonder, that the definition was attracted to the respondents. The definition is PCA-coherent and goes along with how the participants see the world, relationships, other people and themselves.

I tend to agree, that the definition goes beyond the common and typical understanding of tolerance (the understanding was expressed by our respondents and has been commented above). The traditional concept of tolerance is unnecessary and out of frame of reference for most of people, competent in PCA. They understand and create constructive and successful relationships with people by means of different concepts and skills.

Yet I think, that the way PCA-people, competent and successful in relationships, understand and relate to themselves and other people, deal differences and difficult situations may be very useful for creating a new content of the term tolerance.

It is evident, that the concept of tolerance may become much more adequate and effective regulator of personal activity, while confronting difficult situations connected with human differences, if we would view tolerance as more complex “enduring the disgusting”. Our study

reveals that competent dealing with difficult interpersonal situations includes at least two capacities:

1. valuing the “different other” and the differences.
2. being devoted to yourself, your own true integrity.

The notion of not giving up oneself, while appreciating and valuing the other and the differences between the other and ourselves, is of extreme importance! The destructive effects of betraying oneself were revealed in an array of psychological research. We observed them in reports of our respondents as well (K.M., B.B.). The paradox is that people give up themselves and put themselves aside with the aim of more smooth and effective dealing with difficult situations. The effect usually is quite the opposite. People don't function fully in the situation, don't put their best energy to the situation. Besides, they suffer internally, psychologically heavily. So, it is extremely important to be your best, your real self in a difficult situation. This aspect is being lost in traditional understanding of tolerance: giving up yourself, your integrity and interests for the sake of the other are being evaluated as a virtue and almost the essence of tolerance. And that is the source of disability of the concept, norm, value of tolerance traditionally understood.

I want to notice, that in the definition of tolerance by UNESCO the importance of being devoted to oneself is stressed. “...The practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions” (Article 1.4). So, the importance of being one's real self, not giving up oneself is a very important part on new content of tolerance if we wish it to work effectively.

Some respondents in our study noticed that words “being O.K. with other is different” in the suggested definition are not enough to underline real valuing of the other person's sovereignty and deep experiencing and prizing, appreciating the differences, which is a part of the constructive and successful way of relating to the “different other” PCA-people practice. I accept the notion and tend to change the words “being O.K. with other is different” in the initial definition to words “value and appreciate the other is different”. So the final definition of tolerance I suggest as the result of the study is: “Tolerance means valuing and appreciating of the other person (group, etc) is different and not giving up any of one's own integrity.” This way tolerance is a predisposition and a basis for constructive and effective dealing with difficult situations, which steam from people are different.

The UNESCO “Declaration of Principles of Tolerance” says, that education is the most important way of promoting tolerance (Article 4). The question is quite reasonable: “What (and how) should we teach in order to promote tolerance?” Should we teach “tolerance” as an ultimate norm/value? As I view it, that would be a “natural” mistake in an authoritarian society. That would be one more way to discard the concept and to make it once again an oppressive instrument for human beings. Rather, to promote tolerance we need to support the growth of free and responsible individuals, who prize sovereignty-one's own and other people and capable to competently deal with difficult situations based on human differences. One of the most possible ways for that may be teaching of the person-centered skills and the PCA as a conceptual and practical system. (I had expressed this opinion in a recent expert investigation by Russian Academy of Science of the necessity and ways of developing educational programs on tolerance in Russian schools)

In this context I want to express my view, that tolerance is not an isolated value or norm, it is rather a complex attitude, which is based on valuing of one's and the other's sovereignty and competence in dealing with differences and difficult situations. To develop tolerance as an attitude we need to promote what it is based on-prizing of sovereignty and competence in relationships.

Is the understanding of tolerance I suggest and support in this study universal or appropriate for the “white” culture of the western society? That question was asked to me by one of the participants (M.K.). The fact is that 15(fifteen) of 19(nineteen) participants (79%) in our study belongs to the “white” culture, 1(one) person is African American, 1 (one) is originally from Puerto Rico, 1(one) is Asian American and 1(one)-Native American. Three of four non-white persons participated in the person-centered training of E. Meadows and emphasized the positive effects of it and influence on their relationships. They also expressed their attraction to the definition I suggested to them. That may be seen as sign of a proof for the universal quality of the suggested understanding of tolerance. Nonetheless, special research is necessary to resolve the issue.

## 2.2. Conclusions.

1. Prevailing of negative attitude toward the traditionally understood concept of tolerance was revealed. The traditional concept of tolerance appeared to be out of the frame of reference for people, competent in the Person-Centered Approach.
2. The constructive and effective dealing with differences in interpersonal relationships, according to competent in PCA people, is based on real valuing the sovereignty of the other person and devotion to one’s own integrity, prizing the differences and using the person-centered skills.
3. In accord with the result of the study, a new definition of tolerance is suggested, which goes along with the description of tolerance in the UNESCO “Declaration of Principles of Tolerance”: “Tolerance means valuing and appreciating of the other person (group, etc) is different and not giving up any of one’s own integrity”. In this way tolerance is a predisposition and a basis for constructive and effective dealing with difficult situations, which steam from people are different.
4. To promote tolerance we need to support the growth of free and responsible individuals, who prize sovereignty-one’s own and other people and capable do competently deal with difficult situation based on human differences. One of the most possible ways for that may be teaching of the person-centered skills and the PCA as a conceptual and practical system.

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