

THE MEETING BETWEEN CARL ROGERS AND REG REVANS

The Person-Centered Approach and Action Learning

Carl Rogers was an American psychologist who lived between 1902 and 1987. The Person-Centered Approach was developed by him, also considered a pioneer in scientific research in psychotherapy.



Reginald "**Reg**" William **Revans** was a British academic professor, administrator and management consultant who pioneered the use of Action learning. He is considered the "father" of Action Learning. He lived between 1907 and 2003.

Although they lived at the same time being contemporary, they may never have met, or at least I have found no evidence of this meeting. However, their approaches are absolutely complementary and consistent with each other.

Action Learning is a team based solving **problem** process that, at the same time, develops leadership skills. It involves a small **group**, from 4 to 8 people, it is led by a trained and certified **coach**, who has the role of stimulating the best performance of this group. Statements are made only in response to **questions** - this is a ground rule. The question keeps participants in focus, stimulates a different look at creative solutions and encourages connection between people. At the end of each session, which lasts an average of 90 minutes, at least one **action** is addressed to solve the problem and there is a reflection on individual, group and organizational **learning**. I often say that Action Learning is much more than a process. There is an "Action Learning Way", which incorporates values such as: appreciation, belief in development of people and also the strong belief that the group is able to find its own solutions.

These characteristics have a lot in common with the Person-Centered Approach attitudes that create conditions to facilitate the process of growth and change. The main belief is in the **Self-actualization**, the unconditional affirmation of a person's inherent tendency to move towards individual self-fulfillment, the premise that every living being is always seeking the best for him/her/itself. The facilitator's attitudes are: **congruence** - self-aware, genuine and authentic behavior; **unconditional positive regard**- translated by the non-judgment and appreciation; **empathy** - understanding the people/client's experience from their own perspective, offering her/him attention and presence.



When an Action Learning coach is trained and certified, some skills are developed and required, such as: competence (proficiency in the process), self-confidence, asking questions, listening, **trust in the process and in the group**, **courage**, **self-knowledge**, commitment to learning, creativity, thinking systemically and at the level of the organization. These skills are certainly interrelated and correlate to the Person-

Centered Approach attitudes described above. We know that the WIAL Action Learning approach was influenced by several theoretical, academic and philosophical currents, among them the Humanist Psychology, of which Rogers was a pioneer and a major contributor.

In my role as M/SALC, in which I prepared more than 170 new Action Learning coaches and mentored many others, I always reinforce that the main quality of an action learning coach is the humble apprentice attitude, having empathy and unconditional positive regard for him/herself, considering that there are no mistakes in the team's performance, only learning. It's important to take a non-emotional look at the team's behavior by analyzing what went well, what could be better and how to improve next time. And to keep studying and deepening knowledge.

I offer a special invitation for action learning coaches to know and deepen their knowledge about the Person-Centered Approach. It is also an invitation to everyone to know about both approaches.

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