

# Empowering the Implicitly Functioning Relationship



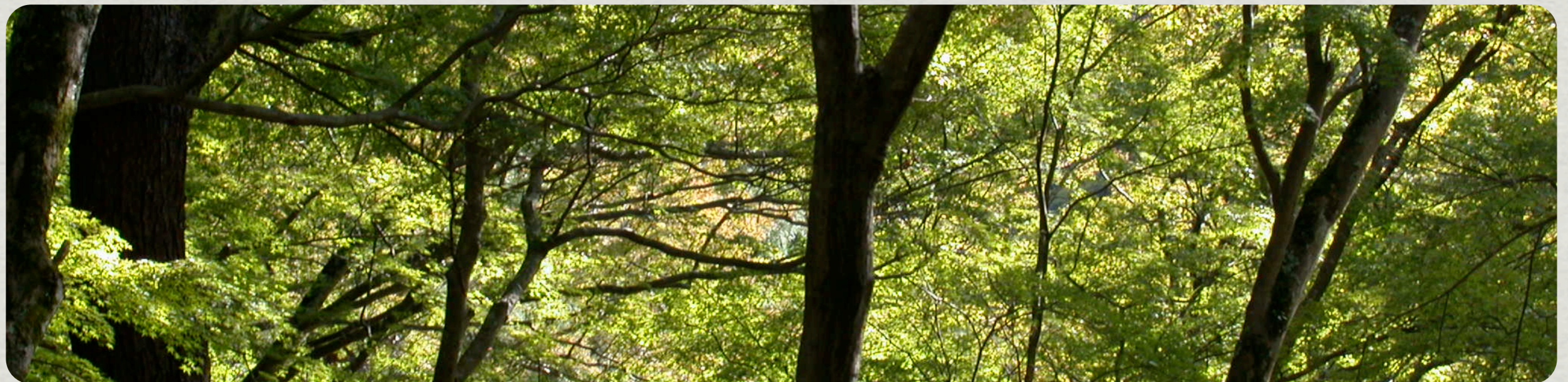
**Akira Ikemi, Ph.D.**  
**Kansai University, Japan**  
<http://www.akiraikemi.com/ai>

**PCE Conference 2010, Rome**



# A little about Japanese language

- ✿ The Japanese language is distinct from many other languages.
- ✿ There is no singular/plural distinction

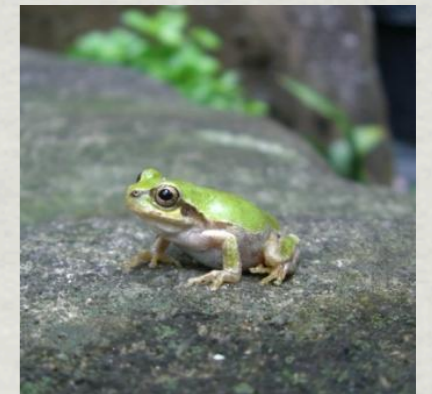


# The implicitly functioning felt meaning



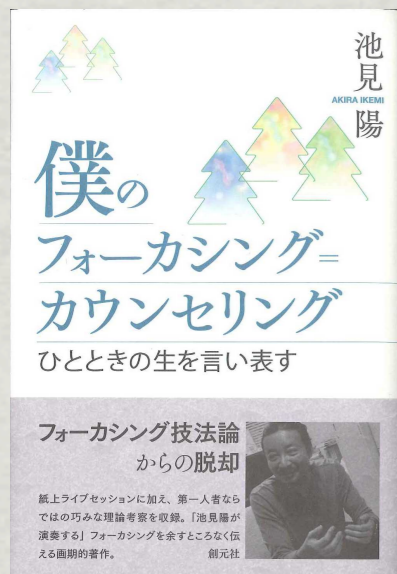
✳ 松尾芭蕉 Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)

✳ 古池や蛙とびこむ水の音



✳ Ancient pond / frog(s) jump in/ the sound of water

**HOW MANY FROGS IN THIS POEM?**



# I. The felt meaning is always already functioning implicitly in experiencing.

- \* How do we understand this?
- \* “My mood started *sinking* after I talked to Joe...”
- \* Dictionary.com gives 17 definitions for “sink” as a verb. “To fall or descend into or below the surface or to the bottom.”  
Ex. The battleship sank in two hours.
- \* We need our implicitly functioning felt meaning, more than the dictionary, to understand the other.

II. The felt meaning is (has) (an) implicit understanding, which implies a way of relating-to and living-in situations (the world).

### Implications for therapy

- \* “Dilthey says that experiencing is inherently always also an understanding already, and also an expression. Each is a case of the other two.” (Gendlin 1997, p.41)
- \* Felt understanding always understands how to relate to or live in the situation.
- \* We can be client-centered or person-centered, because we believe that the understanding is there in felt experiencing.
- \* “Experience is, for me, the highest authority” (Rogers 1961, p.23)



CAN PEOPLE FIND MEANING FROM THEIR OWN WORKS?



# Experiential Collage Work (ECW)

Ikemi, A., Yano, K., Miyake, M. Matsuoka. S. 2007

*J. Jap. Clin. Psy.*

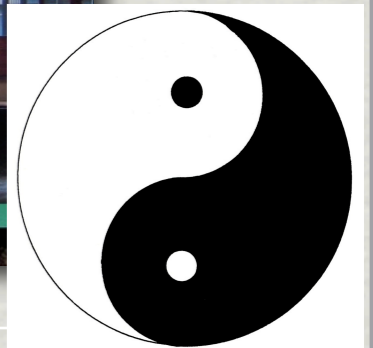
# “The weather inside” Shoji Tsuchie (2008)



\* “If everything is based on theory,  
what would theory be based  
on?” Gendlin, 1986, p.141



YING 陰 SHADOW  
YANG 陽 SUNSHINE



III. The felt meaning, which is (an) implicit understanding, is pre-theoretical. (Our experience is not “made to fit” a certain theory.)

IMPLICATIONS:

The Person-Centered practitioner does not *reject* any theory, but does not *impose* any theory.







”When certain implicitly functioning aspects of experiencing are carried forward by symbols or events, the resulting experience always involve sometimes newly reconstituted aspects which thereby come to be in process and function implicitly in experiencing.” (Gendlin 1964, p.131)

- Carried Forward symbols
  - Newly reconstituted aspects, later carried forward.
- “The law of reconstitution of the experiencing process.”

IV. The implicit understanding can be referred to as a felt sense and explicated so that meanings become.

# V. The implicit understanding can be carried forward in explication

- \* What we feel is an implying of further steps of living. I often say that the felt sense is “a heart’s message”.

Listening to the Heart’s Message  
My paperback book in 19th Printing



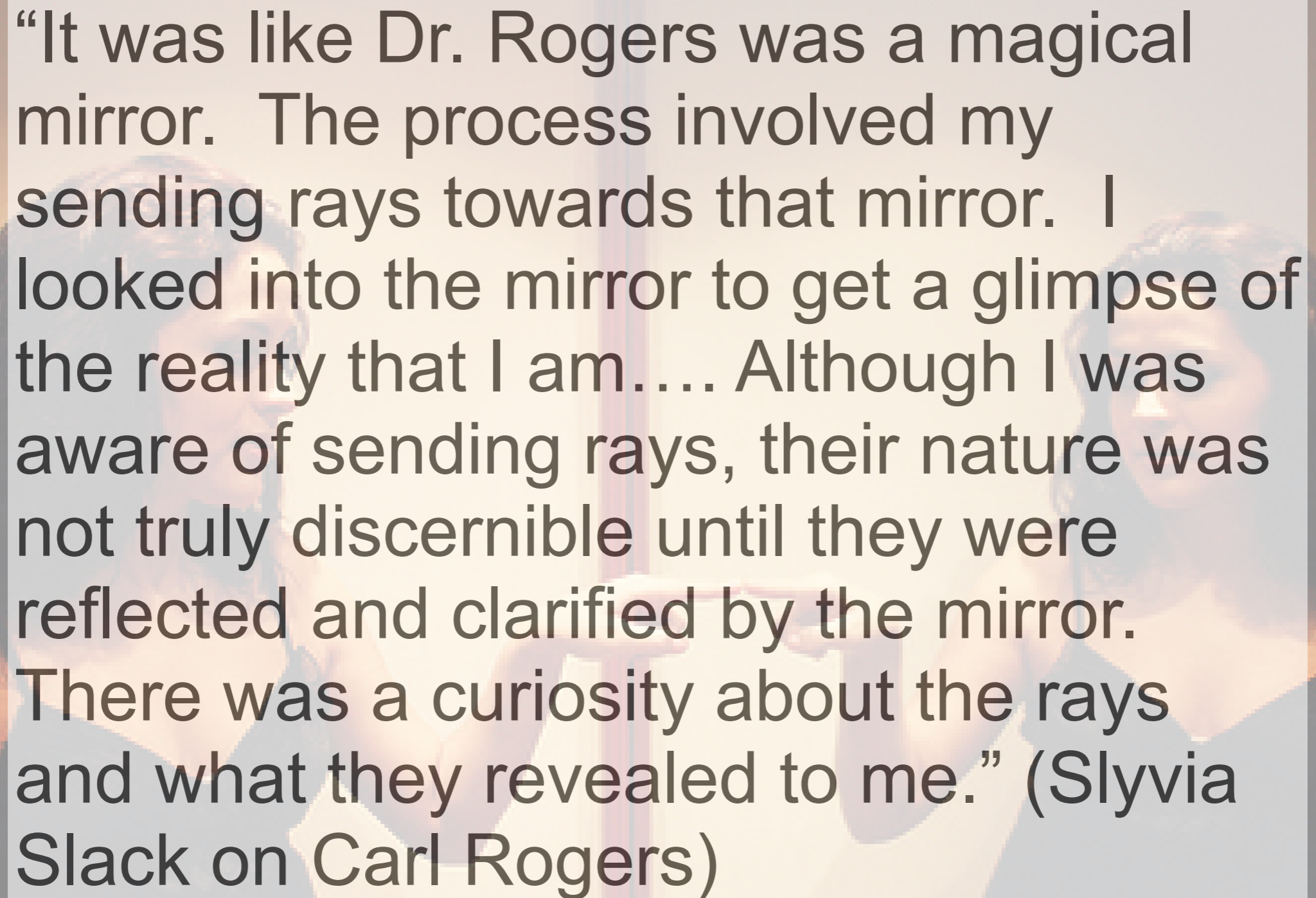


VII. In reflective listening, verbal symbols that are used to explicate experiencing are fed back to the person, eliciting a reflecting mode of consciousness, where direct reference to experiencing occur continuously.

**Do humans have a reflecting mode of consciousness?**

photo by Scarieth White

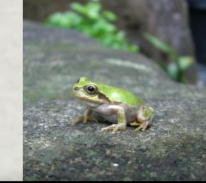




“It was like Dr. Rogers was a magical mirror. The process involved my sending rays towards that mirror. I looked into the mirror to get a glimpse of the reality that I am.... Although I was aware of sending rays, their nature was not truly discernible until they were reflected and clarified by the mirror. There was a curiosity about the rays and what they revealed to me.” (Slyvia Slack on Carl Rogers)

**Do humans have a reflecting mode of consciousness?**

## What happens to the listener when the listener listens?



### HOW MANY FROGS WERE IN HIS POEM?

- \* One (the listener) needs his/her own felt understanding to understand the other.
- \* “Dilthey said that we can understand the authors only if we understand them better than they understood themselves, and this happens only if we carry their experiencing forward with our further understanding, when the author’s experiencing is reconstituted in our experiencing --- accurately but enriched by ours, as ours is enriched by theirs. Or, as I would say it: these cross so that each becomes implicit in the other.” (Gendlin 1997 p.41)
- \* Rogers saw the importance of both empathy/acceptance *to the other* and genuineness *to his own* felt experiencing.
- \* The same process of explicating the implicit understanding runs parallel with the other, as one listens and the other speaks.

# Revisiting the Myth of Narcissus and Echo



...In the course of time she (Liriope) consulted the seer (Tieresias);  
“Tell me” she asked, “will my baby live to a ripe old age?”  
“Yes” he replied, “so long as he never knows himself”

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3: 345-348

Narcissus: “This way, we must come together!”

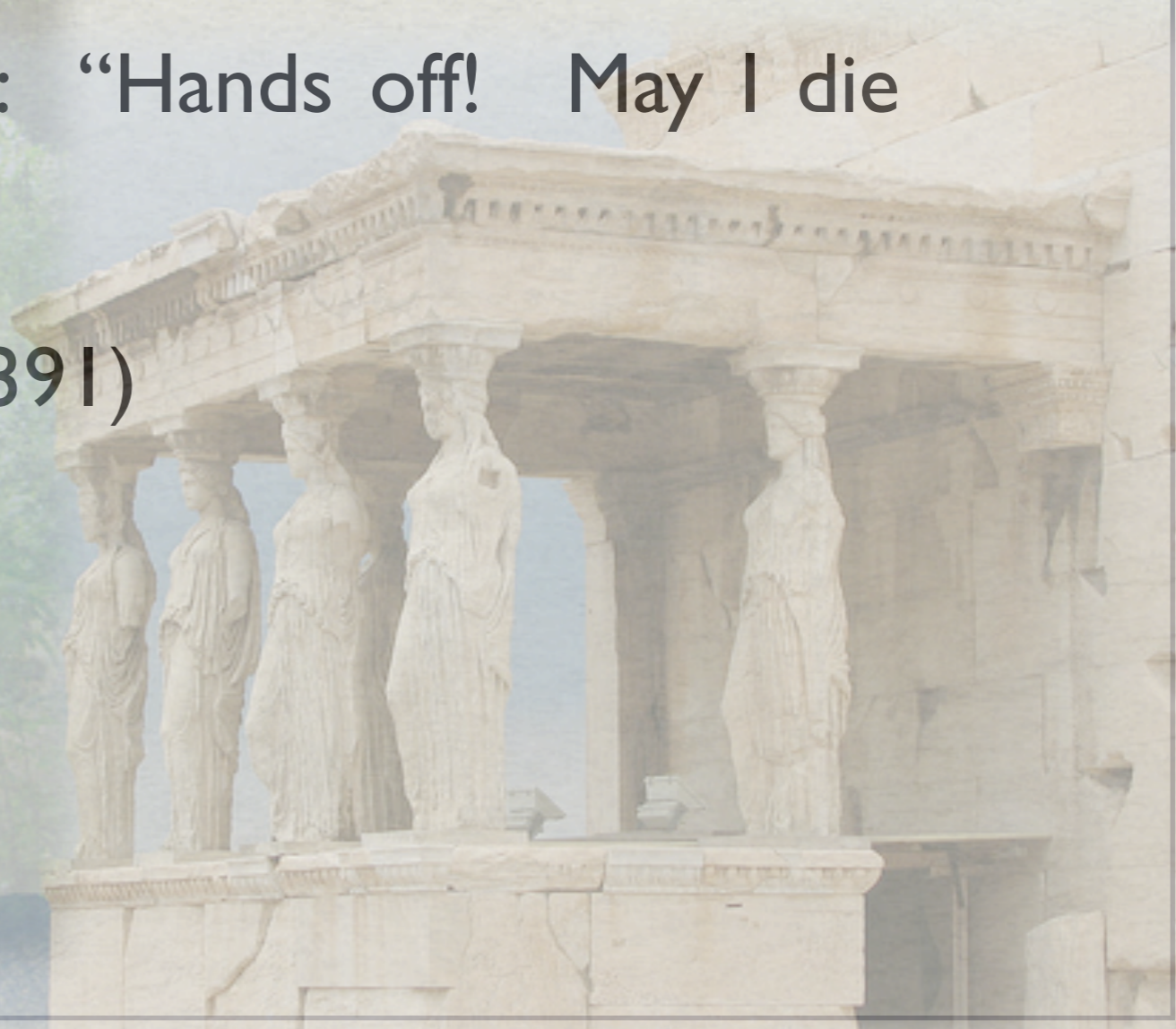
Echo: “We must come together”

To prove her words, she burst out in excitement out of the forest, arms outstretched to fling them around the shoulders she yearned for.

Shrinking in horror, he yelled: “Hands off! May I die before you enjoy my body”

Echo: “Enjoy my body”

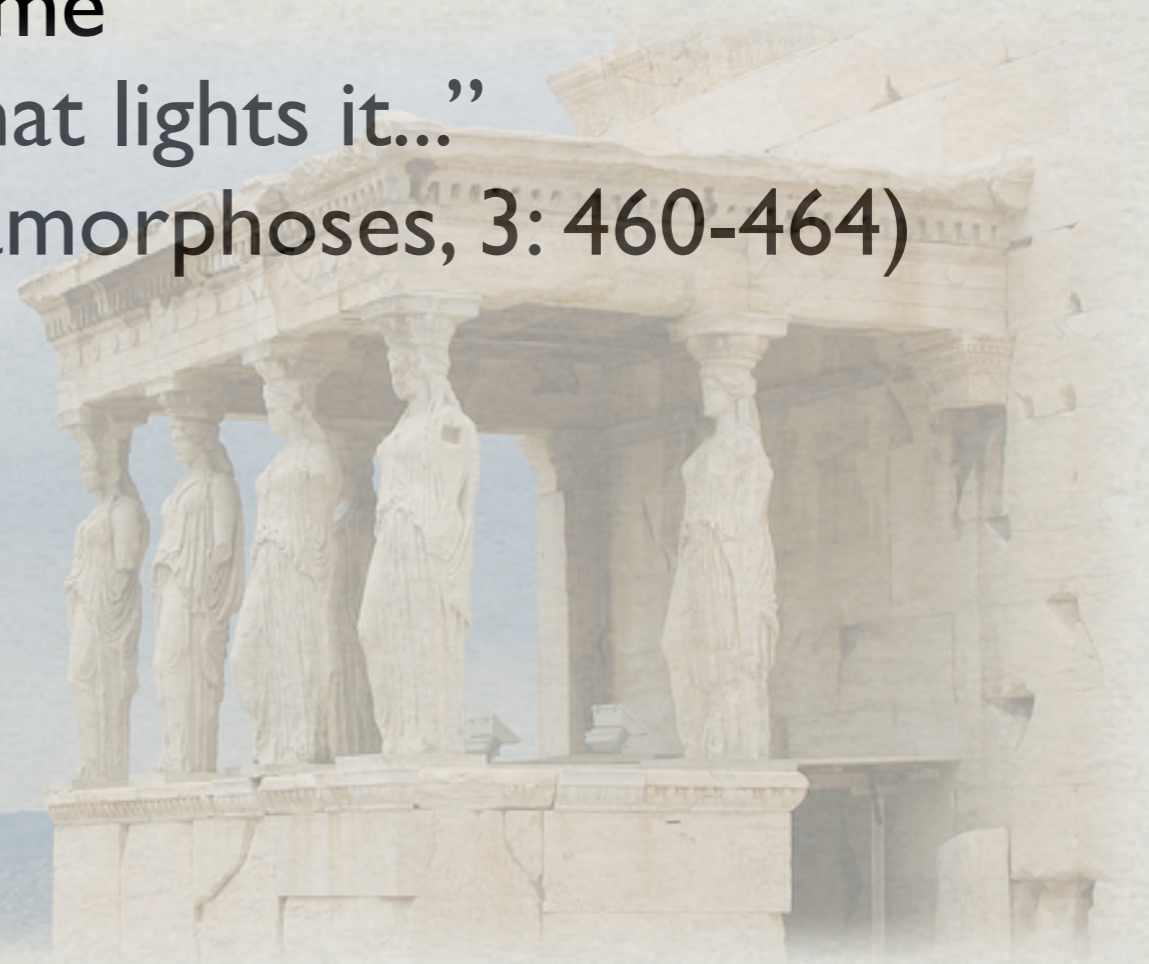
(Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3: 387-391)





“I smile at you and you smile back at me  
I weep and your tears flow fast  
You nod when I show my approval  
When I read those exquisite lips, I can watch them  
gently repeating my words, but I can never **hear** them!  
I know you now and I know myself  
Yes I am the cause of the fire in me  
The fuel that burns the flames that lights it...”

(Ovid, Metamorphoses, 3: 460-464)



## Notes from a Focusing Session (1)

CL: I am puzzled, undecided. I thought I put all this away some time ago, but it is filling me up to here now, and it feels hard to handle.

TH: I wonder how you are feeling in there... somehow the words “undecided” does not fit with me, like “undecided” seems to be about making one choice or another, but there is something there, that is filling you up.

CL: Oh, that’s right. It’s not undecided, (pause) it’s anxiety.

TH: There is some sense of anxiety there.

CL: Oh, it’s like pain here in the gut. Pain...pain is a little too strong a word ... it’s like being pushed.

TH: Some sense there of being pushed in the gut.

CL: Yes... like something that I put away is back and is about to run around (violently).

TH: Oh, let’s welcome that. Like, it might be wanting to be noticed.

## Notes from a Focusing Session (2)

CL: It wants to be noticed? (silence). I never thought of it that way, but this here (she points to her chest) is resonating with those words (silence) it wants to be noticed, yes... now it's become lighter. Somehow (she laughs) like it's not affected by gravity, and the color has become lighter too, like beige color, it was like a dark rock a while ago... (omission)... it still feels like being pushed here in the chest.

TH: Let's see ... if that "being pushed" sense is telling you something, what might it be saying to you.

CL: Hmm .... never thought like that .... oh, it telling me that "I don't need to think so hard about it"

TH: You don't need to think so hard about it. I sense also that it might be saying, the situation is not so serious.

CL: The situation is not so serious? (silence) ... Yes, that's right! It's not as serious as I think it is, and besides, there's nothing I can do about it. As I say that, I am feeling ... light ... expansive. (laughing) the pushed feeling is gone, I feel expansive. (Her posture changes)

## Notes from a Focusing Session (3)

TH: OK, I think it's time to end this session can you be with the expansiveness for a little while and when you're ready we can end the session.

CL: (silence) .... (frowns) ... I feel like a little dizzy, like sea-sick. Maybe it all came so fast, I've been working on this for some years...

TH: Tell me, did you do something to yourself between the expansive feeling and what you just told me?

CL: Yes, (smiling) how did you know? I tried to put away (contain, keep) the expansiveness in me.

TH: (smiling) How can expansiveness be contained? That's a tough thing you're doing to yourself.

CL: (bursts out laughing) That's right. It was an impossible thing I was trying to do....

TH: (laughing) Yes, why don't you live with expansiveness. It feels to me that you always put things away.

## Notes from a Focusing Session (4)

CL: (looks startled) How did you know that? Yes, I always put things away ... I can live with expansiveness? (silence) I'm thinking of many situations where I put things away, but I could live with expansiveness (laughing and crying at the same time). (This continues for about 3 minutes) I can live with the expansiveness? ...*I feel like my life is changing!*

A genuine encounter happens when each person empowers the implicitly functioning relationship.