

MY SOUL NEEDS TO BE WASHED: AN EXPLORATION OF THE BASIC ENCOUNTER GROUP IN JAPAN

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Resource Guide

About Makiko Mikuni

As part of her journey into a professional life and network, Makiko embarked on a research project to examine the history of the Person Centred Approach in Japan and its place in contemporary Japanese culture.

We enjoyed talking to Makiko about this rich history and the relevance of the encounter group in Japanese society.

You can read more about Makiko's work on her blog here,

person-cnetred.dreamlog.jp



Makiko Mikuni

Event Details

Welcome to our series of events "Encounter Groups" where we explore the history and contemporary experience of the encounter group as pioneered by Carl Rogers.

In 1970, Rogers wrote in the forward of his book "On Encounter Groups":

"For more than thirty-five years individual counselling and psychotherapy were the main focus of my professional life. But nearly thirty-five years ago I also experienced the potency of the changes in attitudes and behaviour, which could be achieved in a group. This has been an interest of mine ever since."

We are excited to explore and have a dialogue about whether this potency is still relevant and can be experienced in the 21st century society.

This series on "Encounter Groups" is being extended as part of the warm up for the The Association for Person Centred Therapy (Scotland) 25th Anniversary Celebrations. Part of the celebration will be a 2 day international encounter group in Glasgow, you can find out more by [clicking here](#).



Here is the abstract from Makiko's PhD thesis entitled "MY SOUL NEEDS TO BE WASHED: An Exploration of the Basic Encounter Group in Japan".

In this thesis, I explore through qualitative inquiry the development of the person-centred approach in Japan focusing on the encounter group movement. I look at how the approach was introduced to Japan after the Second World War, at how it became accepted, and at the place it holds in Japanese life. The research began as I returned home to work as a counsellor after two years of counselling training in England. This thesis, therefore, tells the story of my process over eight years of inquiry, as a counsellor, facilitator, and researcher. At the start of the research, I wanted to look for ways of building bridges between the Japanese and the Western person-centred approach. This aim changed as I realised how difficult it was to be accepted by the Japanese person-centred world, because I had trained overseas, and how little I knew about the approach in Japan. So, as I began to facilitate and then to organise encounter groups, and to translate Western person-centred texts into Japanese, I collected data: from the Japanese person-centred literature; by interviews with counsellors, facilitators and members of encounter groups; through conversations with critical friends. In doing so, I built the networks and bridges in Japan and beyond I had first hoped for.



In the thesis, I make links between how encounter groups were accepted by Japanese people and the way of being and concern for relations with others shown in Japanese culture, in the tea-ceremony and the Noh theatre. I show what characterizes Japanese encounter groups, of the preference for traditional settings and the respect for hierarchy and seniority. I show how an encounter group is structured by the perceptions, experiences, and theories of members and facilitators. In the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011, I explore how encounter groups might help in our recovery.



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