

## Transpersonal therapy in the psychological care of the music talento

### A terapia transpessoal no atendimento psicológico do talentoso musical

### La terapia transpersonal en la atención psicológica del talento musical

*Carla Luciane Blum<sup>1</sup>*

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**Abstract:** This article presents the analysis of the case of a 70-year-old talented musician, divorced, who presented to the psychologist with specific symptoms of restlessness, anguish, loneliness: lack of self-esteem, repeated worries and lack of hope for the future. 36 sessions were held between April and July 2022, in a virtual way. During the free interview, it was found that the patient had emotional excitability and existential crisis. The case was approached with the help of transpersonal therapy, specifically from the use of traditional therapeutic resources: listening and regression, and holistic ones: meditation and music therapy. The results indicate that emotional excitability was potentiated for the positive aspect, strengthening the patient's self-image and self-esteem. With this, the patient returned to composing music, exercising the creative and transforming process, he became more assertive, demonstrating individual growth and personal evolution, being able to make decisions about his future.

**Keywords:** High skills. giftedness. musicians. Emotional development. Self-regulation.

**Resumo:** Este artigo apresenta a análise do caso de um músico talentoso de 70 anos, divorciado, que se apresentou ao psicólogo com sintomas específicos de inquietação, angústia, solidão: falta de autoestima, preocupações repetidas e falta de esperança no futuro. Foram realizadas 36 sessões entre os meses de abril a julho de 2022, de modo virtual. Durante a entrevista livre, verificou-se que o paciente apresentava excitabilidade emocional e crise existencial. O caso foi abordado com o auxílio da terapia transpessoal, especificamente a partir do uso de recursos terapêuticos tradicionais: escuta e regressão, e holísticos: meditação e musicoterapia. Os resultados apontam que excitabilidade emocional foi potencializada para o aspecto positivo, fortalecendo a self-imagem e a autoestima do paciente. Com isso, o paciente voltou a compor músicas exercitando o processo criativo e transformador, tornou-se mais assertivo demonstrando crescimento individual e evolução pessoal, sendo capaz de tomar decisões sobre seu futuro.

**Palavras-chave:** Altas habilidades. Superdotação. Músicos. Desenvolvimento emocional. Autoregulação.

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<sup>1</sup> Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste - UNICENTRO. Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0863582713179217>.  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8655-7840>. Contato: [cvestena@unicentro.br](mailto:cvestena@unicentro.br)

**Resumen:** Este artículo presenta el análisis del caso de un talentoso músico de 70 años, divorciado, que acudió al psicólogo con síntomas específicos de inquietud, angustia, soledad: falta de autoestima, preocupaciones repetidas y falta de esperanza en el futuro. Se realizaron 36 sesiones entre abril y julio de 2022, de manera virtual. Durante la entrevista libre se constató que la paciente presentaba excitabilidad emocional y crisis existencial. El caso fue abordado con ayuda de la terapia transpersonal, utilizando específicamente recursos terapéuticos tradicionales: escucha y regresión, y holísticos: meditación y musicoterapia. Los resultados indican que la excitabilidad emocional se potenció en un aspecto positivo, reforzando la autoimagen y la autoestima del paciente. Como resultado, el paciente volvió a componer música, ejerciendo el proceso creativo y transformador, volviéndose más asertivo, demostrando crecimiento individual y evolución personal, pudiendo tomar decisiones sobre su futuro.

**Palabras clave:** Altas habilidades. Superdotación. Músicos. Desarrollo emocional. Autorregulación.

## 1 PRESENTATION

Music comes from the soul and touches the heart  
and opens up a creative space in the mind.

Carla Blum

The talented or gifted are considered to be those who demonstrate exceptionally high-level performance, whether in a range of endeavors or in a limited field, or who have the potential for exceptional performance. The word 'gifted' here includes 'talented', as in music and fine art.

For Antipoff; Campos (2010), the western stereotype of gifted people is different from the Eastern perspective, in that the gifted person has an inadequate emotional level, generally, they are considered little teachers, incapable of making friends out of tune with the world, therefore they are prone to suffering of emotional problems. However, such problems are less frequent in the Far East, where giftedness is defined more in terms of effort producing notable achievements. Internationally, most research indicates that the definition of giftedness is related to the child's precocity within formal education.

Self-esteem is the greatest emotional influence on the expression of a talented person's high potential. For creation to expand and creativity to be provided, confidence must be boosted by self-esteem.

Another factor that interferes with the development of high potential is gratification. The decrease in gratification still allows for a positive relationship with intelligence and greater social responsibility to occur. Delayed gratification can directly interfere with the development of high-level achievements. In the case of talented young people, delayed gratification can define their own expectations as impossible to achieve. In the case of children, this can cause frustration and, consequently, giving up on the task. Let's look at a



child whose hands are not big enough to cover an octave on the piano. Even though she knows what it should sound like, she needs to bounce between her thumb and little finger, rather than bringing the two together so that the sun is interrupted. This can be frustrating and stressful and can discourage learning. Without adequate emotional support, the most musically talented may simply give up. In the case of adults, they may feel unmotivated and experience a block in their creative field, preventing them from composing new songs. This occurs due to a lack of self-confidence resulting from a lack of self-esteem.

Perfectionism can also influence the development of high potential. For Silverman (2009), perfectionism is multifaceted in healthy and unhealthy forms. There are several levels of development of perfectionism, this is the case from narcissistic self-absorption to a life of pure service Dambroski (1964). Individuals tend to be predominantly at one or two levels of life.

From a first level the self is at the service of egocentrism being tyrannical, where they do not see their imperfections by focusing on the faults of others. At the second level, perfectionism is based on a “neurotic style” (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, p.456). There is insecurity, thinking of inferiority, and all or nothing polarity, I am perfect or I am useless. As for the third level, multilevel development, the healthiest forms of perfectionism emerge at higher levels. The individual becomes a seeker of self-perfection. Instead of feeling inferior to others or feeling inadequate to meet the expectations of others, the person becomes aware of their potential to be fully human and feels inferior to their potential.

Getting a glimpse of the possibilities within yourself for integrity, empathy, wisdom, and harmony is a powerful incentive for growth. The desire to become the best of oneself drives the individual to look for the blind spots, see the naked truth about oneself, and transform one's pettiness into lower-level instincts. The path to becoming your highest self is an arduous journey that requires support and encouragement to meet this challenge. (Macdonald, 2013, p. 2).

The dynamics of level III shows that the experience lived by the person with high abilities is not comfortable:

- Hierarchization (of critical perception and evaluation of one's own values).
- Dissatisfaction with oneself, (frustration and anger with what is).
- Inferiority in relation to oneself, (frustration with one's own inadequacies).
- Restlessness with oneself, (agitation and anxiety about what is).
- Amazement, (surprise and shock in relation to what is).
- Shame (about one's own disabilities).
- Anguish (guilt over moral failure).



- Positive maladjustment (antagonism against social opinion and protest against the violation of intrinsic ethical principles). (Dabrowski, 1977, p. 44).

A person who is experiencing these intense feelings can easily be misunderstood by a therapist whose concept of perfectionism is limited to the path of multi-level development to appreciate the importance of this inner journey of personal transformation. (Macdonald, 2013, p. 3)

At level IV, one gains a greater capacity for self-reflection, acceptance of others and of oneself. A person's perspective is informed by a clearer view of the meaning of life experiences (Macdonald, 2013, p. 4). Perfectionism at this level is the wholeness and appreciation of perfection inherent in all life.

Level V, perfection of personality. It is life without inner conflict. It is a life directed by the highest guiding principles. One releases autonomy from the lower layer of reality filled with confusion and violence. And he starts to see living life in the service of all humanity, no longer in the service of the ego.

Some gifted adults resort to writing memories or ethical wills as a way to leave a legacy (James, Gore, Karnes & MacDaniel, 2004). Others make efforts to reconnect with family on a deeper level than was possible to become important as a way to renew social/emotional connections, as well as a way to celebrate and reinforce shared values and heal old problems and conflicts.

The physical implications of aging fade, and the intensity of gifted seniors tends to be offset as they deal with the issues involved in taking into account any attention to their intellectual intensity to investigate everything related to what they are experiencing physically. Some with emotional intensity will find great satisfaction in whatever they can do to prolong the vigor of youth, others will feel extreme frustration when they can no longer function at the same levels as when they were younger. (James, Gore, Karnes & MacDaniel, 2004, p.179)

Sheehy's (1995) study found that women in their 70s, 80s, and 90s who had mastered the art of letting go of their egos gracefully so they could focus their attention on a few finely tuned priorities, close contact with nature was important to them. , as well as maintaining a multigenerational network of friends. And, as they grew older, they found themselves more concerned with feeding their souls than their egos.

For Streznewski (1999), the combination of work with the brain and mind made older gifted adults remain active, because they saw an interest in life. Another study, carried out by Jacobsen (1999) noted in adults over 50 years of age that they continued to have dreams throughout their lives. "My philosophy of life is that: my life has far surpassed



my wildest thoughts about what it would be like. When my best laid plans fell apart, ‘the best laid plans came to fruition’.” 1958 North Park Academy Memoir Book, May 10, 2008, p.39.

Dambroski (1977) observed that the levels of development of a talented or gifted person seen by a lay person are interpreted as emotional difficulties and conflicts can be understood as an aspect of their moral and emotional development. Seen from a positive point of view, levels of developmental disintegration require potential development that is created by the presence of overexcitability, especially emotional excitability.

This may reflect the benefit of older gifted adults being able to reflect their intellectual and imaginative intensity in conjunction with their emotional intensity to develop and maintain a positive and optimistic outlook on life, regardless of their age or physical condition.

The five areas of overexcitability described by Dambroski's (1977) theory as sensual, psychomotor, intellectual, imaginative, and emotional describe the intensity that is integral to the day-to-day experiences of gifted adults. This intensity often causes them serious problems with others, far beyond what might have been suggested by Erickson's understanding of the stages of development.

Many adults do not reach level III of positive disintegration – spontaneous multilevel disintegration (Tolan, 2009). There is an internal and vertical conflict between the lower self and the higher or ideal personality, the individual sees the self as it is and the self as it should be. Which is essential to developing more advanced levels, while we can find children with talents or giftedness already at this level, operating abstractly, and genuinely aware of both the nature of the self and the nature and needs of others. On the other hand, we can find children, adolescents and adults, at level II, with the inability to obtain certain responses, this can create pain and intense struggles, which would result in psychoneuroses such as depression, anxiety and existential crisis, that is, in emotional problems.

In this context, psychotherapy is essential so that the talented person can build their gifted identity, strengthening their Ego and developing their personality, developing a self-image, which includes the design of themselves, their perspectives on today and the future in view of a life purpose.

This article addresses the case of a 70-year-old musician, divorced, who presented to the psychologist with specific symptoms of restlessness, anguish, loneliness: lack of self-esteem, repeated worries and lack of hope for the future.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

Art is reconnecting with the soul,  
without interference from the mind.

The mind becomes a tool for  
May the invisible come true.

Carla Blum

Transpersonal psychology uses the qualitative research method and the phenomenological approach (Giorgi, 1997; Patrick, 1994). From the lived world of experience, transpersonal psychology has come to be seen by many as consistent with the underlying worldview and values promoted by third- and fourth-force psychologies (MacDonald & Friedman, 2013, p. 282).

The area of psychology that focuses on the study of transpersonal experiences and related phenomena, including the causes, effects, and correlates of transpersonal experiences and developments, as well as the theories, disciplines, and practices inspired by them (Walsh and Vaughn, 1993, p. 203). As such, it provides “a way of thinking about how theories and methods aimed at generating knowledge can be reconciled with the mystical aspiration to know things – as they are.” (Mac Donald, 2013, p. 320).

## 3 THE CASE STUDY

Art transforms people!

Carla Blum

In this case, we initially proceed with free listening to the patient in the first session, as he is a singer. During the listening session we were able to gather the patient's life story, as in a classic anamnesis. The records were saved in the hangout, an electronic medium through which we communicated in April 2022. Such records were relevant to the progress of the therapeutic work and the search for a cure. We consider the instruments of the therapist himself, his own personality, his psychic and bodily functioning. The object of analysis, we take into account, the other human being, their frustrations, personality and conflicts, with the review of the therapist's own life being directly involved, as in a systemic



view there is a connection between life stories, that is, the systems of the patient and the therapist have elements in common.

In a transpersonal paradigm, binary logic is transcended, a holistic view of life is made possible, overcoming the rejection of the unknown, by contemplating other ways of knowing, including introspective methods.

To analyze the case, concepts from Transpersonal psychology were used, basic instruments arranged to deal with the demands brought by the patient. When such demands are analyzed in light of the dynamics of development, the human personality, being wisely manipulated by the therapist and exercised by the patient, tends to result in a strengthened ego (Hall and Norbby, 2005).

The therapeutic work with John (fictitious name) lasted five months – April to July 2022, totaling 36 therapeutic sessions.

## 4 CLINICAL HISTORY

From the diagnostic interview carried out with John, signs of constant bouts of loneliness, bitterness, frustration with romantic relationships, and lack of true friendships were observed in the syndromic aspects. It was also found that the patient presented emotional hyperexcitability and an existential crisis.

John presented himself in the first session, distressed and very tense, he did not open the camera, he used the hangout chat. He typed quickly, exposing his frustrations with life, the past he had lived, today and without hope for tomorrow. It demonstrated that it is not connected with the greater energy that surrounds us and permeates planet Earth.

## 5 LIFE STORY

John will learn piano from his classical pianist grandmother with whom he will spend years of his childhood and youth. He will show talent for music, especially the instrument, from a very young age. In this regard, the grandmother reported that she learned very quickly and did not get tired of having to dedicate hours to exercises, demonstrating persistence and a love of learning. He began composing, singing and playing alongside other young people, forming a band when he was almost 18 years old. In the 1980s he released several solo songs, receiving several awards. He married twice, had three children, and divorced his second wife in the early 2000s.



## 6 CASE ANALYSIS

In the first sessions, the patient demonstrated a connection with his choice of profession. It is noted that, on many occasions, we are deceived by the ego, which tells us that we must choose the profession to be followed, when in fact the essence shows us which profession we most identify with; Thus, the profession lights up and materializes before our eyes. This is so incredible that it is possible to see ourselves projected, exercising it with great joy and professional commitment. Even with this connection, the patient showed anguish and loneliness when he reached 70 years of life. He questioned each previous stage of life, not finding the meaning of his life, despite his success and fame in his profession, he found himself in an existential crisis.

Being humanized comprises a state of conscious presence of the self in the world, which implies connecting with the essence of life. We all intrinsically have an essence, which drives us towards the path of our life purpose.

Reconnecting and reconnecting in the profession also expands to other areas of human relationships. In this regard, we remember a passage written in allusion to the intellectual Edgar Morin, when Cristovam Buarque mentions the pleasure of meeting and being with a person “[...] of dignified character and respect for his ideas: in addition to the wisdom that inspires, I discovered the generosity, good humor and existential strength with which he leads his life.”

I remember one night when, after a theoretical debate in Dijon, we met for dinner, but Morin did not attend the dinner. He apologized and explained that the next day he would have to leave very early to go to Paris by car, as he had to move to a new apartment, to which he would move with his future wife, whom he would marry after being widowed. This is Morin who, almost 90 years old at the time, cancels a dinner at the end of the night because of a commitment with his fiancée in the early hours of the next day. He left us frustrated with his absence, but in awe of his vitality and enthusiasm for life.

In Quito, I saw something that deserved to be filmed: Morin dancing with Joan Baez. Although she was already in her 60s, he must have been almost old enough to be her father. Still, they made a perfect pair, which delighted everyone who was influenced by her books and her music, and who then saw them gliding to the rhythm of Latin music. It was already late that night, the same day he had arrived from Paris, going from the airport to the lecture: but, despite the many hours of flight, and his age, Morin spoke in Spanish for an hour without stumbling, without getting confused. sit down for a second and fill ourselves with new ideas, in tune with the spirit of the new times. (Nascimento; Amazonas; Pena-Veiga, 2021, p. 39).





The art of living is confused with the art of loving itself, in the deepest sense of the word, of connecting the essence to the purpose of life. Morin (2017a, p.13) asks us about this: is the art of living poetry and wisdom?

For Morin (2017a, p.14), when we realize that we have gained a living, we can also realize that we have lost it, since material goods bring satisfaction, but, even in possession of them, spiritual dissatisfactions arise; Finally, we could complement this idea, adding our understanding to it. Man, faced with himself and his achievements, finds himself alone, helpless by existential absences, such as the lack of great love or a family. This causes an inner discomfort that leads to a decrease in activities and their quality, or even to agitation, in which unlimited leisure and fun diverts you from your true needs. Emptiness arises and grows.

The more the emptiness grows, the more the will and desire to find the soul, heal it from a deep illness, bring the spirit and body into harmony; one turns to specialists in the human psyche or “[...] the guru, yoga, Zen or Tibetan Buddhism and the therapist” (Morin, 2017, p. 134). Ultimately, existing in the world is constant disharmony and self-regulation, constituting a process of pain and healing that mix and differentiate. And the movement is driven by the deep desire to love and be loved. The same love that makes you sick can be transformed into love that heals, psychic self-regulation is here.

The movement of reuniting with oneself allowed the patient to look into his soul, his self and strengthen his ego. This loving and welcoming movement integrates a look at your life story, your inner child, and the remarkable facts of your childhood and other lives, reported to the therapist in regression sessions and after meditation exercises.

The patient can recover their self-esteem, this is the greatest emotional influence in expressing the high potential of the talented person. For creation to expand and creativity to be provided, confidence must be reinforced by self-esteem. (Vestena, 2022)

It is noted that the idea of wisdom becomes more complex as it integrates and no longer eliminates affectivity. As Morin (2021, p. 135) reminds us, “[...] passion can blind, but it can also illuminate reason if it reciprocally illuminates it [...]”, as we are affective beings, we need rational intelligence, but it is insufficient to keep us connected with life and the essence of our being. Affection is what connects us to people and to ourselves; in the social sphere, from a psychic point of view, affectivity structures emotions, being able to regulate or deregulate them. In the field of emotions, love drives action for life or death.

“Regaining the evolutionary energy of love for self-development can build scientific and spiritual paradigms that are worthwhile and respectful of everyone's life and the

cosmos as a whole,” Blum (2022, p. 258) When we are able to recognize and accept our own shadow without projections or displacements, that's where humility begins.

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## 7 CONCLUSIONS

From the transpersonal approach in the clinical field, the patient's symptoms of emotional overexcitability were positively enhanced. We notice the development of individualization and the strengthening of the Ego, which allows us to guide the patient in the elaboration of their creative and transformative process. Soon, after the 5th session, the patient returned to composing music, and reported interest in pleasurable activities before no longer performing them.

After the 36 sessions, it was noted that the patient became more assertive as the meetings, he understood through individualization that his individual growth and personal evolution happened every day, he learned to deal with the negative and was able to take decisions about your future.

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