

COUN 200 - Seminar in Counseling Techniques

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*The client is the source, the
client is the problem solver.*

Carl R. Rogers



Who seeks counseling?

People who are . . .

- confused or conflicted.
- being encouraged by others to decide in a particular way.
- receiving conflicting advise or counsel.
- fearful of making decisions on their own.
- dependent and mistrustful of their own decisions.
- unwilling to take responsibility for the consequences of making their own decisions.

Who do those seeking help turn to for assistance?

- Trusted friends and relatives, elders in the family, or community system.
- Teachers and others within the educational system.
- Medical personnel.
- Professional counselors.
- Ministers and other spiritual leaders.
- Uninvolved others.

Important facts on the Helping Process (p. 1):

- There are very few "new ideas" or "novel solutions" to life's problems.
- People seek help when the "known solutions" don't agree with their view on life.
- Counselors who respect client **feelings** and **thoughts** tend to have the best outcomes. Our everyday conversations usually do not regard feelings at all. The inclusions of feelings in the helping process is the most difficult aspect of helping.
- People want to make decisions that "feel right" and they can "believe in." When people make decisions that don't feel right, the outcome is rarely satisfactory.

Important facts on the Helping Process (p. 2):

- "Advice" is generally not helpful because it comes from the counselor's perspective rather than the client's need. "Good advice" creates dependence (with long-term consequences); "Bad advice" creates resentment and provides an avenue for the client to blame others for the outcome.
- Effective counselors are best known for giving information rather than advice. The idea of "what I would do if I were you" is not generally viewed as helpful because "I am NOT you!"

Example 1:

John, a 22-year-old college student is told by his father that to be successful he must be a doctor or a lawyer. The young man has no interest in or aptitude for either of these professions. He wants to be an artist. He seeks your assistance to help with his confusion. What can you do to help?

Example 2:

Jennifer, a 17-year-old high school student is pregnant. Her parents want her to keep the child; her "boyfriend" is pressuring her to get an abortion. She seeks your assistance to help with her confusion. What can you do to help?

What does research show to be the “best” help? (p. 1)

- Help that supports the individual's core belief system.
- The most durable decisions are the ones made by the individual him/herself.
- Decisions with the most commitment to success are those made by the individual him/herself.
- Most problems are expressed in "past tense" terms, yet counselors support solutions in the "here and now." One's past can't be changed, but one's view of the past can be changed in the present.

What does research show to be the “best” help? (p. 2)

- The most helpful counselors clarify confusion and values rather than impose answers to follow.
- It is essential that “help” does not take responsibility for decisions away from the individual.
- The most significant factor in the helping process is the "nature of the relationship" between counselor and client. In psychotherapy, "the relationship" is the value most associated with "success" or "positive outcome," and may be enhanced by using certain helping techniques.

What does research indicate about using “questions” in the helping process?

- The use of questions may be helpful if they encourage the client to clarify their feelings or further develop their values. The most helpful questions begin with the words “What” or “How.”
- The most frequently asked question begins with “Why,” and these questions are rarely helpful at all! Most clients feel defensive when asked why they are doing or feeling this or that.

Example 1:

"How do you feel about your decision to become an artist rather than a lawyer?"

Example 2:

"What would it mean to you to if you give-up a child when you are not sure that is what you want to do?"

Example 3:

"Why did you do that?"

How do counselors establish the best environment for helping?

What are the basic conditions for establishing a helping relationship?

Research since the 1940s has consistently identified seven Core Conditions of Helping Relationships:

1. Empathy

The counselor responds with accuracy to the client's deeper as well as surface feelings--is "tuned in" on the client's wave length. The counselor has a full awareness of who the other person is and with a comprehensive and accurate understanding of that individual's deepest feelings. For empathy to exist as a Core Condition, this understanding must be communicated to and be understood by the client.

Feelings? So, what are these feelings?

Affection	love, caring, like, respect, admire, trust, close, adore, devoted, attached . . .
Guilt	blame, regret, shame, embarrassed, wrong, rotten, humiliated, ashamed . . .
Anger	resentment, rage, annoyance, infuriated, bitter, hate, offend, mad . . .
Fear	timid, anxious, worried, doubt, hesitant, nervous, scared, afraid . . .
Confusion	bewildered, puzzled, baffled, frustrated . . .
Happiness	content, glad, hopeful, alive, satisfied, elated, thrilled, good, fine . . .
Hurt	rejected, put down, used, let down, disappointed, exploited . . .

2. Respect

The counselor cares very deeply for the human potential of the client and communicates a commitment to enabling the client to actualize his/her potential. In doing so, the counselor fully accepts the client's gestures toward growth even though they may not be in a direction wholly consistent with the counselor's values.

3. Concreteness

The counselor involves the client in discussion of specific feelings, situations, and events regarding their emotional content; the counselor facilitates a direct expression of all personally relevant feelings and experiences in concrete and specific terms.

4. Genuineness

The counselor is completely spontaneous with his/her interaction and open to experiences of all types, both pleasant and hurtful; and in the event of hurtful material, the counselor's comments are employed constructively to open further areas of exploration. The counselor is being him/herself and employing genuine responses constructively.

5. Self-disclosure

The counselor gives the impression of holding nothing back and of disclosing feelings and ideas fully and completely to the client. This is to draw the counselor closer to the client via some similar circumstance, but it is **NOT** intended as an opportunity for the counselor to process his/her own issues. To prevent the discussion from focusing on the counselor, it is wise to disclose feelings and not facts surrounding the content.

6. Confrontation

The counselor highlights the client's discrepancies in a sensitive and perceptive manner whenever they appear. Discrepancies occur at both the verbal and nonverbal level, and are a signal of conflicting emotions. Confrontation brings the conflict to a conscious level within the client.

7. Immediacy

The counselor's direct and explicit manner of relating the client's expressions of himself in the "here-and-now." This is illustrated in two ways: 1) a client discussing a past event is obviously living it in the present. An "immediate" counselor understands this and addresses the current aspects of the past issues, and 2) the counselor takes every opportunity to refer to the counselor-client relationship as a model of the client's manner of establishing and maintaining relationships.

How do we do it?

How do we implement counseling skills?

The following counseling “formula” has been shown to be the most helpful for encouraging client growth and development . . .

Counselor: "You feel _____, because _____."

This formula includes the "**feelings**" and the "**thoughts**" of the client and helps the client examine their issues in the "**here-and-now**."

Example 1:

Client: "I am not sure what to believe. My boss is telling me that I'm doing a good job at work, but I never get promoted. I'm angry that he promotes others and not me."

Counselor: "You feel really angry and confused because the feedback you are getting is all good, but you don't have anything to show for your hard work."

Example 2:

Client: "My girlfriend says that she loves me, but the other day I overheard her talking to her ex-boyfriend on her cell phone. I don't know whether I'm more hurt, angry, or just scared that she may leave me for him."

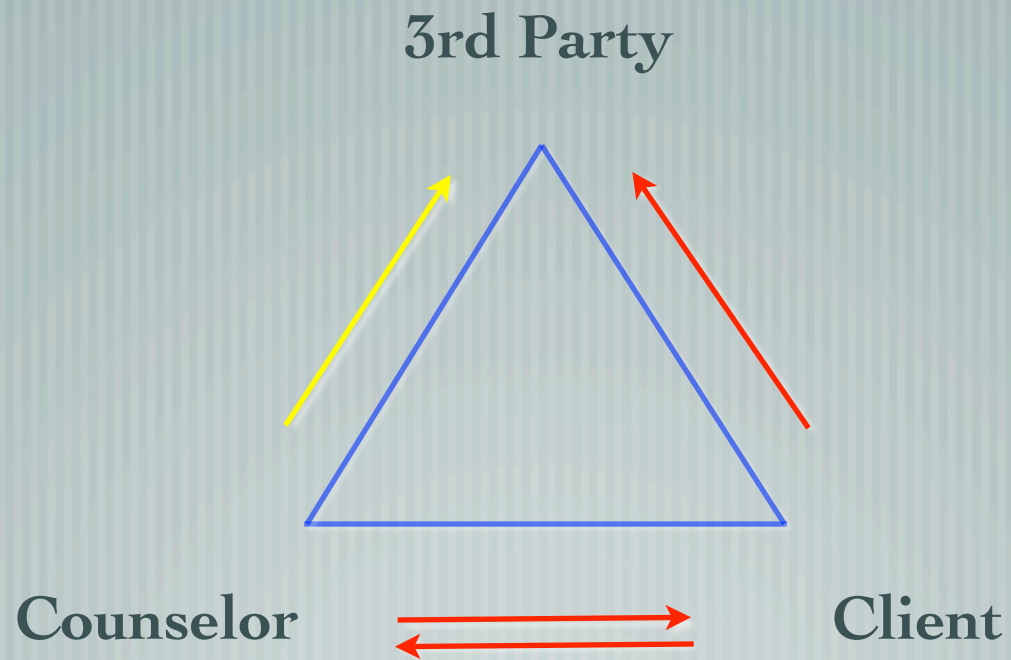
Counselor: "You feel really confused right now, not knowing whether you are hurt or angry, or perhaps both, because you fear that your relationship may come to an end and you don't want this to happen."

Example 3:

Client: "Why can't I do anything right? My parents are always angry with me because of my problems with school, and I'm doing the best that I can."

Counselor: "You feel really misunderstood. You are working hard in school, yet your parents are unable to recognize your efforts."

Who is in the counseling room?



Example 1:

Client: "I am not sure what to believe. My boss is telling me that I'm doing a good job at work, but I never get promoted. I'm angry that he promotes others and not me."

Good Counselor Choice: "You feel really angry and confused because the feedback you are getting is all good, but you don't have anything to show for your hard work."

Not-So-Good Counselor Choice: "Your boss sounds like a real jerk. He probably hates women or has some other big issue from his childhood. What a loser!"

Example 2:

Client: "My girlfriend says that she loves me, but the other day I overheard her talking to her ex-boyfriend on her cell phone. I don't know whether I'm more hurt, angry, or just scared that she may leave me for him."

Good Counselor Choice: "You feel really confused right now, not knowing whether you are hurt or angry, or perhaps both, because you fear that your relationship may come to an end and you don't want this to happen."

Not-So-Good Counselor Choice: "Girls are like that, you know. You can never know where you stand with them. It's always that way."

How do we “rate” the quality of a counseling response?

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Counselor responses are rated on the Carkhuff Empathy Rating Scale:

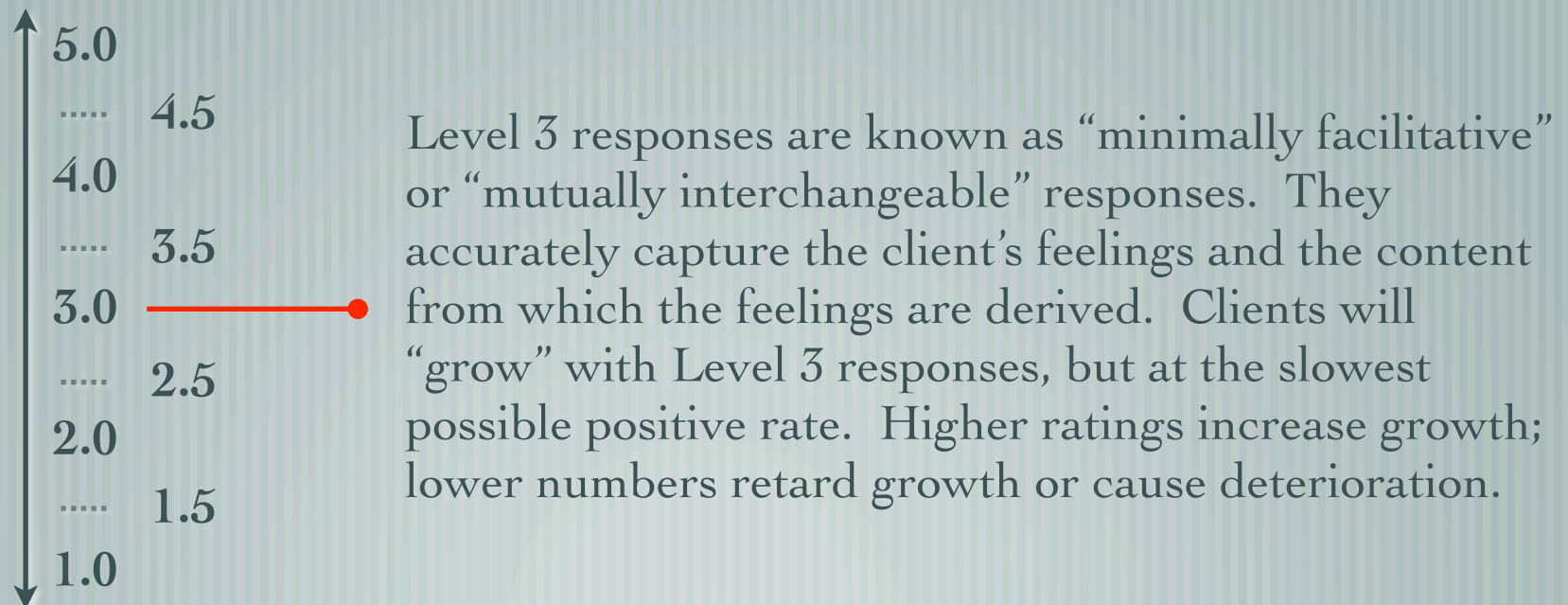
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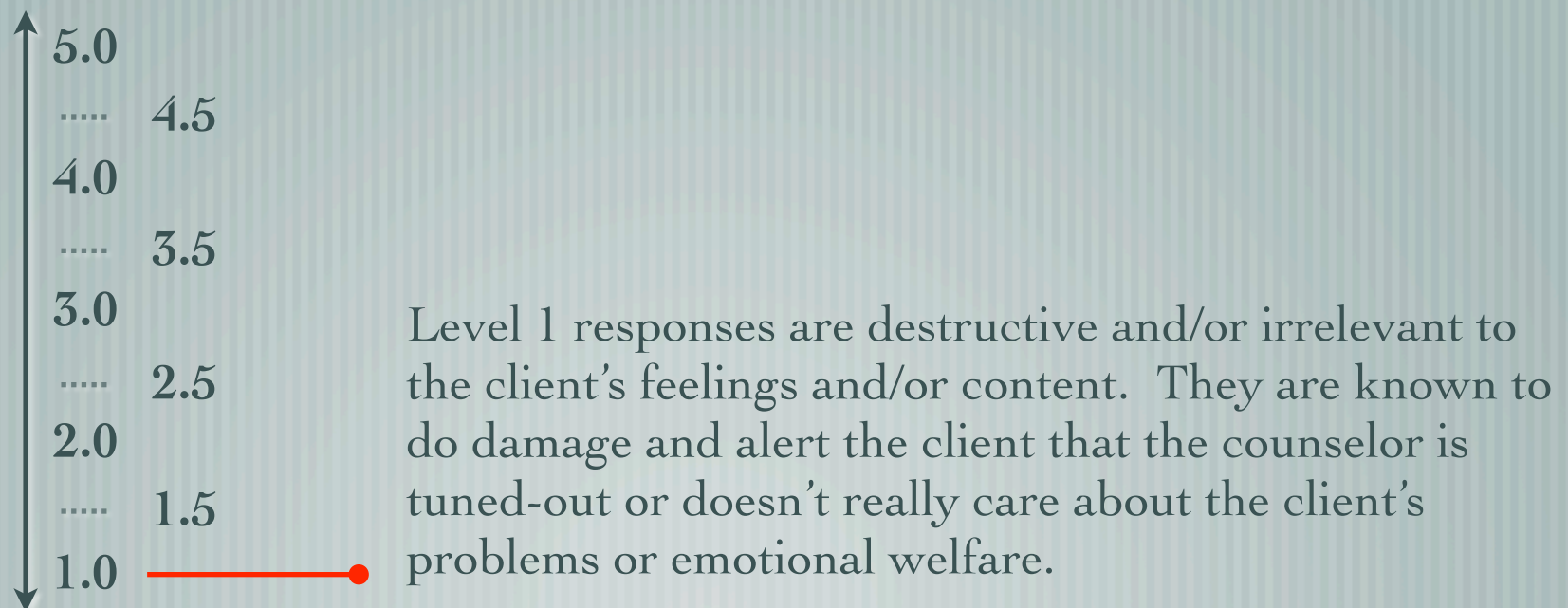
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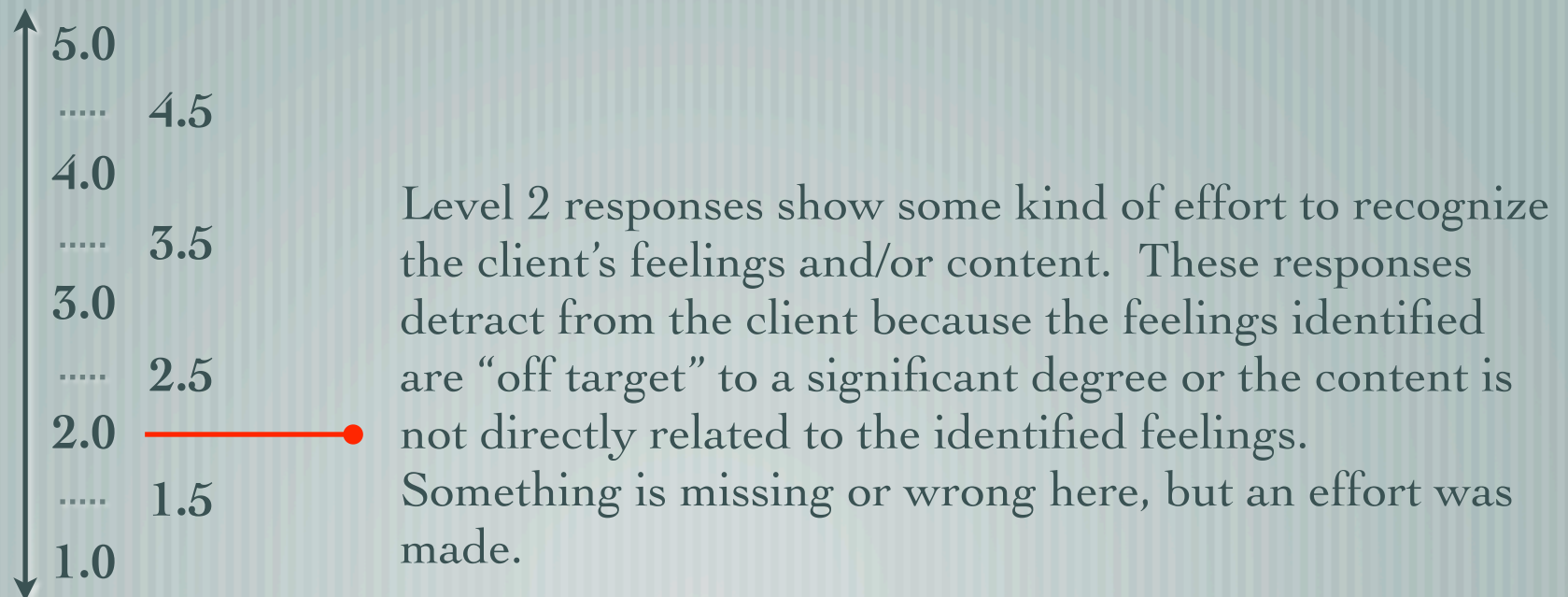
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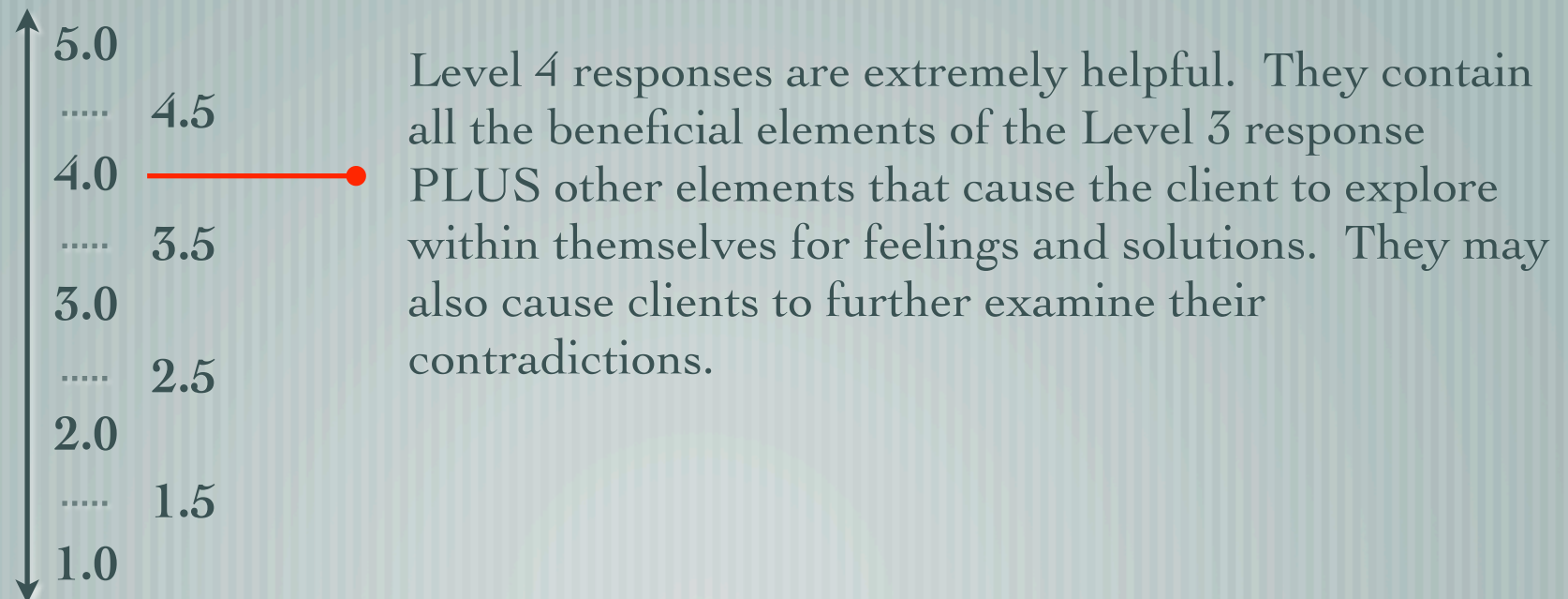
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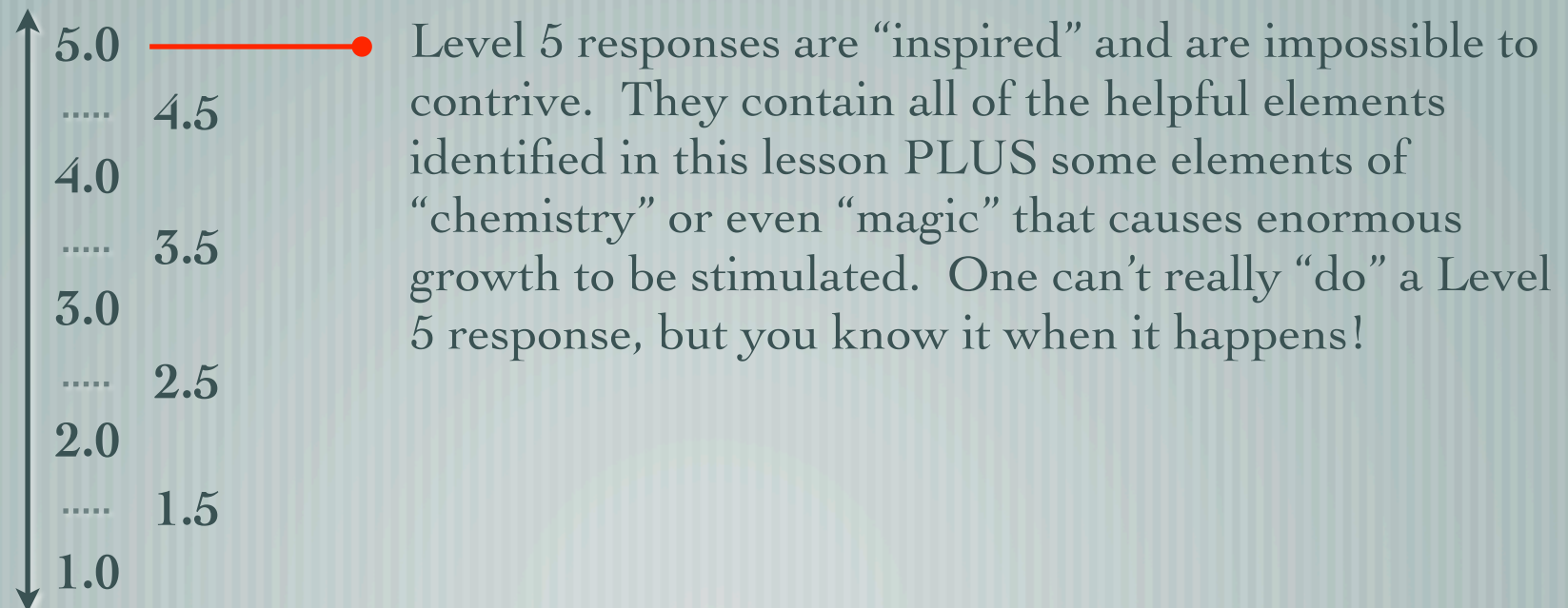
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Midpoint ratings are for those times when positive elements of the response are mitigated by negative aspects of the response. Such might happen when a response accurately identifies the feelings, but the content is a bit “off.”

The End