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Shrink Rap Radio #158, June 13, 2008 – Psychology, Economics and Learning Communities

David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Arthur Warmoth, Ph.D.

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Susan Argyelan)

Excerpt: *If we think that human nature is primarily competitive, and then cooperation is what you do in order to achieve competitive advantage, you have a very different society than if you start with the assumption that the basic goal of human beings is to cooperate in order to meet their needs and sustain the ecology that they’re dependent on, and so forth, and that competition has a role to play within that cooperative arrangement, but the underpinnings should be cooperative, not competitive.*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest and longtime colleague, Dr. Art Warmoth. Arthur Warmoth, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology at Sonoma State University in northern California, where he’s taught since 1969. He has served three terms as department Chair and is currently Chair of the Academic Planning Committee. He’s also a past president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology and has served as a member of Division 32, Humanistic Psychology, of the American Psychological Association. He currently teaches Community Psychology and is involved in community projects related to sustainability, including complementary currencies and the economics of the commons. Dr. Warmoth has been involved in humanistic psychology since 1959, when he went to Brandeis University to pursue doctoral studies with [Abraham H. Maslow](#). This was the period just following the publication of Maslow’s groundbreaking Motivation and Personality. At the time, the use of the terms “humanistic” and “existential” were still being debated, and the idea of the Third Force, which Maslow introduced in his 1962 book, Towards a Psychology of Being, was still being formed. While at Sonoma State, he was co-founder, with Dr. Eleanor Criswell, of the Humanistic Psychology Institute, which is now Saybrook Graduate School in San Francisco. He also served as a founding consultant to the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and has served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations. He has taught and consulted in Mexico with the Universidad Autónoma de la Laguna in Torreón. Dr. Warmoth has published in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, the AHP Perspective, the Sonoma Management Review, the Humanistic Psychologist, and Humanity and Society, among others. Now, here’s the interview.

Dr. Dave: Art Warmoth, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Arthur Warmoth: Well, thank you.

Dr. Dave: Well, this is long overdue. I’ve been meaning to interview you for a long time now, because you and I have been colleagues for more years than I want to say. (laughter) And there are so many areas of your diverse career that we could delve into. But I think the one that stands out as most unique, perhaps, is your

involvement as a psychologist who's very interested in economics. So, I thought maybe that's, that would be one place where we would start.

Warmoth: Actually, this is very good timing in terms of my relationship between my interest in psychology and my interested in economics, because these have kind of come full circle. I started out as a psychologist recognizing that my colleagues seemed to be acting like money just falls from the sky if you're sufficiently virtuous, and it didn't seem like that was quite how it works. So, I went off on this odyssey of exploration of economic theory and economic systems and trying to understand money and so forth. But in the last, probably, half year or so, it's come back to psychology, because I've come to see that if you get into sufficient depth in terms of trying to understand what's going on with the economy and what's going on with money, it really relates to very fundamental questions of identity.

Dr. Dave: Interesting.

Warmoth: Yeah. A lot of the resistance to thinking about alternative ways to run economic systems is really a very, very deep psychological level. And it has to do with our assumptions that money is the way it is, and really, there's no point in questioning it. And we just learn how to live with it.

Dr. Dave: It's funny. You know, it's interesting. Just yesterday, as synchronicity would have it, I was listening to a podcast interview with a guy at MIT who describes himself as a behavioral economist. And this is a guy with a background in cognitive psychology who then does research seeing how manipulating various environmental variables influences the way people behave in various kinds of experimental economical situations. But that might be a little bit of a digression.

Warmoth: Well, I think that's one interesting area of intersection between psychology and economics. People are looking at incentives and how, really, things like expectations and reinforced behaviors influence stock market behavior, and how really the winners in the stock market – the big winners – tend to be essentially psychologists, who can go in counterintuitive ways against the psychology of the crowd. But my sense of it goes, in a way, somewhat deeper. I think one of the things that kind of catalyzed my thinking about it was the recent book by [Robert Reich](#), [Supercapitalism](#). And he basically presents a model of our economic identity that has four components. One is as a worker, another is as a consumer, and then a third is as a saver/investor, and a fourth is as a citizen. And his argument is that the economy, the way it's currently configured, takes really good care of us as consumers. You know, if you go to Walmart, you can get stuff very cheap, and the whole thing is aimed at lowering consumer prices. So consumers do all right, but workers don't do so hot because we're shipping all the jobs overseas in order to get the cheaper prices. And so that leaves workers in the United States in a big quandary.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Warmoth: And then on terms of the saver/investor, if you have enough savings to actually be able to afford to invest, you can do all right with mutual funds and stock markets and bonds and so forth. But all of this leads to us being essentially disempowered in our role as citizens, because an economic system is basically designed by a combination of tradition and public policy. And as history has progressed, it's been more in the direction of public policy and less in the direction of tradition. And the more it requires a sophisticated public policy, the more disempowered citizens are, because they don't understand economics and they aren't served by a political system that's really paying attention to their economic needs, although there's some evidence in the recent Democratic campaign that finally people are catching on that they need to elect people who will serve their economic interests and not just play to identity politics or ideas about same-sex marriage and wearing flag pins and all that kind of stuff.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, I sure hope you're right about that. Robert Reich, he was in a Democratic...

Warmoth: He was the Secretary of Labor for Clinton for a while.

Dr. Dave: Okay, yes.

Warmoth: And now he's teaching in Berkeley. I think he's taught various places. I think he was at Brandeis for a while.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: But he's one of the popular economists who's very well worth reading, along with people like Robert Cutner and... So there is a lot of interesting stuff out there if people are willing to make the effort to educate themselves about how the economy works.

Dr. Dave: I know one of the things you've talked about and written about in the past is "the commons" and the importance of the commons. So where does that fit into your thinking these days?

Warmoth: Well, actually, that is becoming an increasingly widely recognized issue. Peter Barnes' book, [Capitalism 3.0](#) basically argues that the conventional current economic system serves the markets very well, but it doesn't serve the commons. So, kinds of things like quality of life and ecological sustainability are not really well served by the current political system. And he offers some alternative ideas. He thinks that the current political system can't do it because it's too short-term in (inaudible) and too dependent on big money and so forth. So he advocates a concept called "the commons trust," which would be an independent agency. It would be set up by government, but it would be given a charter that it's supposed to manage, some area of the commons like the wetlands, or the forest, or the

ecosystem of Sonoma County. Or actually, in the case of universities, I think we could see ourselves as a commons that's entrusted with the intellectual life – the cultural life – of society. But one of the problems that we have is that we're on this annual budgeting cycle, and things get tight, we tend to get cut.

Dr. Dave: Isn't part of the problem that the commons, in recent years, has not been recognized as the commons, but rather everything's got to be, got to support itself as a, in a market, and everything has to be entrepreneurial. We've been told at the university that we have to be entrepreneurs rather than being a protected entity for the public good.

Warmoth: Right, and in some sense, I think the notion that it should be protected sets a kind of defensive tone, whereas I think that the reality is that the economics of the commons is different than the economics in markets. And markets do some things very well; they allocate resources to individual consumers, and they allocate resources in the production process for individual consumers. But there are a number of areas where we are collective producers and/or collective consumers, and a university is a good example of that because what we're really, what we're trying out is not just degrees and career opportunities for individual students. It's really the sophistication of the general public.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: And that's an aspect of the commons that needs to be recognized. And so it's not so much a question of protection, or there's often kind of a thinking that nonprofits, they require a charitable impulse. That it's not about self-interest, whereas when you're in the market, it is about self-interest. And then in reality, they're both equally parts of our self-interest.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Warmoth: It's just that some of our self-interest is collective, and some of our self-interest is individual.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: And that's where we get into the psychology, you know, because there's a lot of programming in the way we're raised, in the way we're taught to think about money that says that self-interest is primarily taking care of number one – me, as an individual – first of all. And secondly, an erroneous interpretation of Adam Smith's [invisible hand](#) concept, which is basically the notion that the market will take care of everything if people just pursue their individual interests, which is basically saying that the core economic motivation is greed, and that if we're all sufficiently greedy, then things will work out. And that doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but it is built into a lot of our conditioning, our propaganda in the media, the way we train our children to primarily focus on competition rather than cooperation. And

that's actually another major identity issue, because if we think that human nature is primarily competitive and then cooperation is what you do to achieve competitive advantage, you have a very different society than if you start with the assumption that the basic role of human beings is to cooperate in order to meet their needs and sustain the ecology that they're dependent on, and so forth. And that competition has a role to play within that cooperative arrangement, but the underpinnings should be cooperative, not competitive.

Dr. Dave: And I gather that latter picture would be your view of human nature.

Warmoth: Right. And my view of economic systems is they should be designed to mobilize natural and human resources to meet human needs.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Warmoth: And that their human needs we're talking about are represented by the whole range of needs that Maslow laid down in his hierarchy; basic physiological and survival needs, but also needs for esteem and self-esteem, self-actualization; transcendence, which was kind of part of his hierarchy in his later period; and quality human relationships, love and belongingness. All of these things are really about human relationships, and we have an economy that's kind of in hock to the production of material goods. Material satisfactions are not very well designed to promote the satisfaction of the higher needs.

Dr. Dave: Right. I remember when Mother Teresa visited this country that she – at least what I heard she said – that materially, we were very well off, but she thought that spiritually, we were perhaps the poorest country she had visited, and that we were much worse off than the people in the slums that she worked with in India. By the way, I should let our listeners know if you're hearing any background sounds, that actually we're having this conversation in an open courtyard at Sonoma State University, speaking of "the commons." (laughs)

Warmoth: Right. Yeah, the Mother Teresa thing is interesting because as you're aware, Muhammad Yunus recently won the Nobel Peace Prize for his innovations in microlending, microbanking. And he operates out of Bangladesh, and there is an economic indicator that's been developed by some folks called a [happiness indicator](#), and it measures various quality-of-life kinds of things...

Dr. Dave: Right...

Warmoth: ...that indicate how happy people are...

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Warmoth: And he, at one point, made the statement that Bangladesh is higher on the happiness indicator than the United States.

Dr. Dave: Yes, right.

Warmoth: And it's interesting that he won the Nobel *Peace* Prize, not the Nobel Prize for Economics, because the stuff that he's talking about is really fundamental re-thinking of how economic, what economic systems are and how they operate.

Dr. Dave: I'm a big believer in the microlending movement myself. I'm very favorably impressed by an organization called Kiva.org. I don't know if you know them. Oh, you should check it out. I've actually been lending money out there myself to small entrepreneurs around the world. It seems to me one of the more positive things. I hope to get that founder on to interview at some point.

Warmoth: It seems to be a pretty good investment.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Warmoth: Poor people are more reliable paying back loans than rich people.

Dr. Dave: Actually, the repayment is very, very good. And speaking of Maslow's hierarchy, you know, I get the rewards of, those sort of transcendental kinds of rewards of satisfaction, of feeling like I'm doing something good, something noble. Instead of getting interest back, I get *that* interest. And that is – I shouldn't say "instead of" – that's the kind of interest I get. And it's significant enough to me to want to do it.

Warmoth: Yeah, well, that's what Jerry Brown was talking about in terms of "psychic income." And psychic income is very important, but you need enough material income in order to be able to relax and enjoy the psychic rewards...

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Warmoth: If you're in dog-eat-dog competition for a return on your investments, and your only concept of wealth is the accumulation of money and material goods, then you're not in a very good position to really readjust your thinking in a way that takes advantage of these other opportunities. And actually, a point that I think is important to make is that part of the fundamental, fundamentally competitive character of the economy has to do with the design of money, the way money is created. And this is something that has been dealt with at considerable length by [Tom Greco](#), from Arizona, and [Bernard Lietaer](#), who actually was here on a visa, academic visa, for a while, at Sonoma State. He's from Belgium, and I think he's back in Belgium.

Dr. Dave: And he had worked with the World Bank, right?

Warmoth: He had worked with the, actually, he worked with the...

Dr. Dave: International Monetary Fund?

Warmoth: Monetary Fund. He was involved in Europe with the design of the Euro.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: That was one of his claims to fame. And he's worked with various countries and banks, and so forth on an international level, but the point that Greco and Lietaer make is that the way most money comes into being is created, is by putting new money in accounts and banks that are created on the basis of loans. So, a bank has to have a certain amount of reserves in its coffers, but if you take out a mortgage, most of the money that shows up in your checking account that you can spend is actually new money. And so it's the control of the creation of new money by the banking system that the Fed attempts to manage when it's trying to manage the money supply. And it tries to keep the quantity in circulation low enough so you don't get inflation in relation to the demand for money. And it also tries to pump more liquidity into the economy when we're looking at the possibility of recession. But the basic flaw in this system is that when the money is created in the account, there is an interest charge attached. So you have to pay back more money than was created, because you have to pay back the loan, plus you have to pay back the interest.

Dr. Dave: Sure.

Warmoth: And if the interest is never created, then there's always a shortage of money in the economy relative to the amount of money that's needed to pay back the debt that's been created. And so that shortage that's created because national currencies or what are called "debt-based fiat currencies," that shortage that's created by the convention of interest, and it's made worse by compound interest, leads to the fact that there's always competition. And in some sense, at a fundamental level in the economic system, there's competition for money. But the point to really understand is that competition is not created by human nature. It's created by the design of the monetary system.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, you know this is, you're so much on the same page with this guy that I was listening to yesterday. I'll have to get his name for you, because he was making a very similar argument that we need to start with human nature and understand what our human capabilities are, how we process information, what our needs are, etc., and design a world that is in accord with that, rather than a more arbitrary kind of world that we, then, have to fit into like round pegs in square holes.

Warmoth: Right, and the bottom line is that you need to start with redesigning the monetary system and the financial services system that serves the [store-of-value](#) function of money. Because there are basically two major functions of money that economists recognize. One is a medium of exchange.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Warmoth: And that's the money that's in circulation to manage the transactions that are going on in real time as we move forward. And the money to do that – the liquidity to do that – is always in short supply because of the way money is created, as I just explained. But then the second function is the store-of-value function of money, and that is where you want to take some money out of circulation now and invest it so it'll be there in the future, when you want to actually spend it. And basically, [John Maynard Keynes'](#) explanation of recessions and depressions is that you get in a situation where the intention to save exceeds the intention to invest. And so the money supply dries up because of that. But there are all kinds of games – what Reich calls “paper entrepreneurialism” – that people who are experts in the financial services system can – investment banking and so forth – can play to accumulate cash, accumulate money...

Dr. Dave: And wreck lots of people's lives...

Warmoth: And wreck lots of people in the process...

Dr. Dave: ...in the process, yes... We've just seen that.

Warmoth: ...without really contributing anything useful...

Dr. Dave: Right.

Warmoth: ...to the overall well-being of the economy, which is not to say that managing a relationship between savings and investment isn't useful. We need to have institutions that can do that, you know. We need to have institutions like the Public Employees' Retirement System, mutual funds, and so forth that will manage our savings so that when we need, that when we retire, there's something there that has real economic value, but it needs to be invested in processes that produce real value so that the money that isn't being spent on consumption can be spent on increasing the productivity of the economy. That's essentially the responsibility of the investment-management community. And until... And that's where Muhammad Yunus is operating, in a region that has real integrity, and is dealing with increases in the ability of people to create real wealth using relatively small amounts of capital.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Now, I know one of the things that you've been really interested in are local economies and barter economies, and that for years, you've tried to get something off the ground here in Sonoma County. I don't know if you're still working on that or not, but where does that fit into your...

Warmoth: I'm still working now on that. Phil Beard is doing a lot of the legwork. There's a new kid on the block called [Derek Huntington](#) who is connected with the Sebastopol Economic Forum, where a lot of these discussions have been going on.

He's actually in the investment services industry. So he understands the savings/investment side of it as well as the local currency/complementary currency side of it. And the...

Dr. Dave: So, as a psychologist, what is the value of having a local currency?

Warmoth: It can be created on system principles that are other than those that require debt-based money creation. So, it can be created as a public utility that serves to provide liquidity in the community rather than as a commodity that people are trying to exploit in order to corner the market on currency.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: And it also insulates the local economy from the fluctuations in the national currency manipulations that go on globally and can suck liquidity out of a local economy overnight if it decides that's what's supposed to happen.

Dr. Dave: Okay. I'm going to switch the focus a bit. It's probably not totally unrelated. Since you're involved with all of it, there's got to be a connective thread somewhere. I want to switch to your work with learning communities and your philosophy of learning and teaching. Can we go there?

Warmoth: Sure. And actually...

Dr. Dave: Maybe we can start with your... I know years ago, you took a sabbatical and you went up to Evergreen State University in -

Warmoth: The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, yeah.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Warmoth: And they do basically the whole curriculum in learning communities. We had a group of four faculty and slightly less than 100 students who were teaching a curriculum on human health and behavior. And we had a couple of psychologists and biologists and a political scientist who were the faculty team. And among other things, we decided to go whole-hog with student-initiated curriculum, and so we... And Evergreen is on the quarter system, so there are basically three quarters. So we used the first quarter to set up a faculty-designed curriculum based on addiction. But because a couple members of the team really were into organizational development, group planning, and so forth, we basically set it up so that the students took the first semester – first quarter – to plan the curriculum for the subsequent two quarters. And so we had this great Halloween party, where everybody came dressed as their favorite issue.

Dr. Dave: Hmm.

Warmoth: And so it was a wildly festive occasion. But the result of it was that the students brought together more relevant information in the course of two quarters than any other educational experience I've ever been in. And it wasn't just using the faculty. Actually, the main function that we ended up playing as faculty members was in running the seminars, where the students would come together to discuss their learnings and their experiences and process the information that they gathered in this guerrilla raid on the resources of Puget Sound.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Warmoth: Because they went all over Puget Sound and brought in guest speakers and resources and guest speakers. You know, I stripped down to my skivvies and had a massage by somebody who was demonstrating massage therapy, and it was incredibly dynamic. Incredibly fast-paced. And, I think, ultimately incredibly effective.

Dr. Dave: And you were so impressed by that model that you, when you came back to Sonoma State University after that, you created something here, a set of courses called The Learning Community. And you've taught in that mode now for the past, probably, 15 or 20 years, right?

Warmoth: Right. Well, and actually, The Learning Community at its most successful was a joint effort of Mac McCreary and myself. And then a number of students that got on board during the first few semesters and then became teaching assistants and co-facilitators. It includes, actually, Gisela Wendling who's now the OD Coordinator on the faculty, Wayne Downey, who is teaching psychology at the junior college in kind of a learning-community modality...

Dr. Dave: These are people who, former students who've gone on to get Ph.D.s...

Warmoth: ...former students who've gone on to get Ph.D.'s and are working with the same model. Sandy Stein, who was a lecturer here for a number of years before she moved to Alaska.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Warmoth: So, it's... For many students, it gets them in touch with their own motivation for learning. And once they get really in touch with a self-motivated agenda, they take over and create a much richer curriculum than can be pre-designed by the faculty.

Dr. Dave: Well, I've been an outsider to this process; looking in, more or less, from the outside. And personally I've not been able to tolerate the ambiguity.

Warmoth: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: (laughs) I think you have a much higher tolerance for ambiguity. There's a phase there – right? – where they want you to provide the structure, but you believe so deeply that they've got what it takes that you just sit back and insist on it.

Warmoth: And there's always the possibility that it won't resolve itself during the course of the semester, and the class will be a total disaster, but that possibility hasn't yet been realized.

Dr. Dave: Uh-huh. And what I've seen – again, as an outsider – and that I marvel at, is how empowered the students are that come out of it; that they just, you know... You know, you kind of sit back and refuse to do many things that they expect you to do, and in the process, they end up doing them and learning that they can do stuff. And then they go out and they want to do all kinds of stuff.

Warmoth: Right. And the other part of it is that it's based on a concept of the essentially collaborative or cooperative basis of human nature, so that the things that are not done by the faculty get done by students in groups. And they get organized in groups and they have to meet outside of class and so forth. So they take on a lot of the responsibility within a group setting that they would otherwise expect to have spoon-fed for them from the faculty. And this actually has an epistemological basis. Kenneth Brophy (sp) is one of the authors that's really written extensively about this, and he takes kind of a post-modern epistemology which is characterized by Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigms and paradigm shifts, and the notion that really, our intellectual life is a collective affair; that people may be competing to be first to discover some new vaccine (?) or something like that, but the framework within which that happens is essentially a commons. It's a collective body of information that's been accumulated, stood the test of time, knowledge methodologies, and so forth, that are created by the academic profession – or a particular discipline within the academic profession – that's essentially cooperative, essentially cumulative, and essentially makes people smarter than they would be individually.

Dr. Dave: And do you think – I'm phrasing it as a question, but it's probably more of an assertion – that technology is playing an important accelerative role? Some years ago, you and I actually taught a course together that we made up and we called it – and correct me if I'm wrong – I think we called it Psychology and Economics and Technology and the Future...

Warmoth: Something like that.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) Something like that.

Warmoth: Yeah, that was the curriculum, anyway. I don't remember the title, but that was the curriculum. And I think, yeah, technology is accelerating the effective accumulation of knowledge, the accumulation of discipline-based databases and knowledge bases.

Dr. Dave: And students have access to all of this now.

Warmoth: Students have access to it. And the faculty has a hard time dealing with the fact that the students have so much access to this stuff, and with dealing with the fact that what we need to do now, as faculty, is help students figure out how to make sense of the somewhat historically unique information universe they find themselves in, and to be able to use the technology in ways that deal with historically unique situations that exist in the community, which can be the campus community or a community like Santa Rosa or Rohnert Park, Sonoma. These are all unique communities with unique sets of problems that have incredible access to discipline-based cumulative information on a scale that never before was possible. And I'm...the process of accumulating the information requires a lot less Ph.D.-level labor than it did in the old days, when we were in graduate school. I don't know if you remember those mechanical calculating machines...

Dr. Dave: Oh, yes, I do. (laughs)

Warmoth: You try to calculate the square root on a mechanical calculating machine, right? And the thing jumps all over the desk, and clunks and clunks and clunks...

Dr. Dave: Right.

Warmoth: ...for several minutes. Finally spits out a number, you know. And then as a graduate student, you have to pull all these numbers together and do something with it that your major professor says is what you should be doing, because you're learning about research; you're going to get a research degree. All of that stuff can be automated.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, so much of that...

Warmoth: So a professor needs half of a graduate, half-time graduate student to help with some of it, but he doesn't need 15 or 20 graduate students.

Dr. Dave: Right, and a lot of that, too, is after you did that mechanical calculation, then you had to draw the graphs, and you had to create those by hand. And you had an India rubber eraser and a t-square, and it was a – particularly if you weren't artistically inclined (laughs) – it was a terribly laborious process. And now all of that's really been automated with software, and so on.

Warmoth: Right. And I think what we need now – and I think this has some really fundamental implications for how to – we ought to be reorganizing the university as a system because we still need people who understand what the computer is doing and what the meaning of the results are. But what those people need to do is to be able to explain, people who are operating at the master's level that are dealing with the applications of the disciplines at particular local, existentially unique situations,

historically unique situations. So we need a lot more competent master's degree people in applied social sciences, humanities, sciences, and probably particularly in interdisciplinary applications.

Dr. Dave: So there were –

Warmoth: And across the disciplines.

Dr. Dave: And they'd be practitioners or out there working in the world –

Warmoth: They are practitioners or consultants or, you know, educators for younger students in the educational system...

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Warmoth: High-school teachers, middle-school teachers... But really, facilitators, consultants, planners...

Dr. Dave: Well, in a way, this goes back to, it seems to me a thrust of your work, really. I talked about empowerment before, and a lot of what you've done is sort of moved in the direction of "deprofessionalization" or scaling it down. So what you're saying right now is a lot of the stuff that we used to think, "Well, you need a Ph.D. to do this out in the world," you're saying, "Well, you could have a master's degree or even a bachelor's degree or, in some situations, even less..."

Warmoth: ...and actually make a difference.

Dr. Dave: And make important differences. Now, a lot of that attitude, I think, is rooted in Carl Rogers' work and Maslow's work, and you were actually a Maslow's graduate student...

Warmoth: Right, (inaudible) Maslow was my committee chairman...

Dr. Dave: So let's talk about Rogers' and Maslow's...

Warmoth: I knew Carl; I didn't know him well.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: But I was obviously... His writings on higher education were core to the curriculum at Brandeis, where I studied with Maslow. And the notion of person-centered education, person-centered values, learner-centered values, as well as the notion of the hierarchy of needs are two fundamental theoretical perspectives that have colored most of what I've done in various ways. And I think that both Maslow and Rogers tended to downplay the role of the therapist and rely too much on theories about human nature...

Dr. Dave: Hmm.

Warmoth: ..because I'm more inclined to agree with Rollo May that human nature is pretty much almost infinitely malleable, depending on what your... That's probably an (?) overstatement. But it's very malleable, depending on what conditioning you've experienced in the process of growing up...

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Warmoth: ...and so in terms of Rogers' system, you need to be paying as much attention to what needs to go on in the therapist to provide unconditional positive regard as you do to be paying attention to what goes on in the client when he experiences the context of unconditional positive regard. Because unconditional positive regard is not a universally accessible experience in – maybe particularly in the U.S. culture – if some of these things (inaudible) India or Bangladesh or whatnot, where there's a different attitude toward human relationships and a different score on the happiness index. There may be more unconditional positive regard building in those cultures, in certain ways, than there is in ours.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm.

Warmoth: But in order to get to the satisfaction of the higher needs and to realize the self-actualization that Maslow and Rogers were both interested in, you need to pay attention to what's going on in the environment.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So in other words, it's not just... It might be in the form of a therapist, but it might also be in the form of the system.

Warmoth: The system, yeah. It's basically a system, an educational system of various political, cultural and social systems. They're all environments within which basic attitudes get developed, shaped, and – you know, I was sort of saying earlier – gets back to economics. The fact that the economic system is designed to do, to create competitors and to create a climate within which competition is pretty fundamental, then leads to all kinds of consequences in terms of what us optimists would consider distortions in human relationships.

Dr. Dave: Okay (laughs), well, you know what? I think we're at a place where we need to wrap things up, so I think ending with the word "us optimists" is a good place for us to close it down.

Warmoth: Okay, well, good.

Dr. Dave: So, thanks very much, Art Warmoth, for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Warmoth: Thank you. It was a good chance to pull some thoughts together, and I hope people find them of some interest.