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Culture Change: Conversations Concerning Political and Religious Differences¹

With brief comments by Judith Brown, Philip Brownell,
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Gestalt therapy's dialogic approach to therapy and organizations can be effectively extended to the wider social world. By using the approach of gestalt therapy to "ordinary" everyday conversations, the author provides an approach to effect the kind of social change implicit in his model of gestalt therapy

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At its core, gestalt therapy embodies commitment to democratic and egalitarian functioning of persons in relation, not only in the therapy room or in organizations that employ us, but also in the everyday life that makes for our culture. If we are in the background in this culture, confined to our professional roles, and even there a minority voice, we nonetheless represent an orientation that is vitally needed in the various societies of our time. The pulse of democratic, egalitarian functioning is weak, indeed, and nowhere is it heard more faintly than in conversations among family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers in everyday life. My purpose in this article is to suggest what these everyday conversations might look like and how we may begin to address strengthening of democracy and egalitarianism, as gestalt therapists.

One year before the appearance of Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman's, *Gestalt Therapy*, in 1951, another sophisticated and profound work was published that was directed to promoting a democratic world. This massive psychoanalytic work of Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford,

¹ Neil Harris edited this essay. It will appear in a forthcoming book edited by Tali Levine Bar-Yoseph, who has agreed for it to be published here first.