

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THERAPY

The following are some aspects of therapy I have gleaned over 40 years of treating patients using psychotherapy and hypnosis.

In order to gain the most benefit from my list, I suggest you read it slowly as you would when savouring a special meal.

Maybe part of this meal requires time to digest and appreciate. Don't eat too fast as you will miss the flavour of the ingredients contained in each course.

Note what suggestions relate to you—your beliefs; the way you deal with difficulties; past experiences that may be relevant; what you are doing to maintain your problem.

Think about how you could put some of my suggestions into practice.

1. Patients who benefit from therapy have the following characteristics—
They are motivated to change; put in time and effort to do so; make “getting better” a priority; are “compliant “ to the therapists suggestions (homework), e.g. read what is suggested, take risks , face their fears and are brave about doing things that are difficult.
2. Most people that come to see me are “worriers”. There is part of their mind telling them to worry,---a Catastrophiser who says “What if?”. It is important to reduce or remove this voice; stay in the present and base thoughts and feelings on reality not emotional predictions about the future.
3. Learn about your “Inner World”---thoughts, feelings, self- talk (words you tell yourself) and pictures in your mind.
These are the powers that run your life, so it is important that they are supportive and helpful. Often they are critical and judgemental, causing problems rather than solutions.
If your car was not functioning properly--- stalling , leaking oil, brakes failing--- you would get a mechanic to look under the bonnet to find the problem, and fix it. You wouldn't just keep driving in the hope that all will be well.

4 Hypnosis is a tool to assist therapy. It allows the therapist to help the patient to learn more about their inner world—where the problems are. We hypnotise ourselves many times a day, for example on a long car journey we let our inner world drive the car while we ponder over a problem. That is why we may not remember parts of the journey. There is no cause for concern, the inner world is a very good driver, it is often called “The Wise Part” of the mind.

Hypnosis uses the imagination—relaxing/being not trying, and allowing whatever happens to happen.

The therapist is a guide, and like a mountain guide has climbed the mountain many times before and knows the landscape.

There is no need to be concerned about medical hypnosis; it is not like stage hypnosis which aims to entertain.

A comparison may be a driving instructor teaching clients to drive around the town, and a racing car driver on the formula one circuit. They are both car drivers but bear no resemblance to each other.

4. Praise yourself—say “well done” in your head. I hear so many reasons patients cannot do this—it is boasting, it would give me a swollen head, it is blowing my own trumpet etc.etc.

I am always amazed when I hear this—two little words that are so difficult to say—TO YOURSELF—(you may sense my frustration!). They would do so much good for your inner world. As if you are adding a few drops of oil to a stuck door lock. It could open the door to a better life.

5. Learning to know, accept, and like yourself, provides strength to overcome self-criticism and lack of self-esteem.

To be able to say to yourself “I am O.K.”—3 little words--- creates a powerful force to improve lack of confidence, guilt, anxiety and stress.

6. Having time for yourself—“QUIET TIME”, is not selfish, it is looking after yourself.

I believe everyone should have twenty minutes of quiet time a day.

Too many patients resist, saying “I can’t find time for myself. I am so busy with all the things I have to do.”

This “being too busy “is often a large part of the problem why they are seeking my help.

You cannot “FIND” quiet time; you have to “MAKE it!

7 When we have experiences, we are neither right nor wrong/ a success or failure/ good or bad. An experience gives us an opportunity TO LEARN. With

any experience, if we ask ourselves the question—“What can I learn from this?”, our lives will expand, our abilities improve and our choices increase .

8 Most “problems” are really nuisances in disguise.

When we tell ourselves we have a “problem”—the body, mind and emotion tense up, release adrenaline, and get ready for the “fight “ to overcome this “problem”.

By changing its title to “nuisance”, the body, mind and emotions relax. We tell ourselves-- It is only a nuisance, I can cope with that, I don’t like it but I can’t do much about it and it will go away sooner or later.”

In life, have many nuisances and few problems.

9 Therapy is a journey to help you overcome your symptoms.

For each of us the journey will be different, even if the outcome is the same.

My suggestion is to enjoy, and learn from your journey.

It will tell you a great deal about yourself, and you can apply that learning to future journeys in your life.

10 The majority of worries will be diminished by putting them in perspective.

For most of our “problems” the following sayings help---

“It really doesn’t matter.”

“It will pass.”

“In a years’ time I won’t even remember this.”

Perhaps you can add others of your own.

11 Be aware what you say to yourself about yourself.

What we tell ourselves is either part of the problem, or part of the solution.

Would you speak to a ten year old child the way to talk to yourself? If not, change your self-talk to be more helpful, encouraging, praising, and accepting of yourself.

12 Feelings are more powerful than thoughts.

Emotions often “hijack” reason, and that’s when trouble occurs.

Be aware of your feelings, learn from them and about them—what messages they are trying to give, and why.

Learn to connect your thoughts with your feelings so they work as a team—not as a tug of war.

13 Much of our response to the world is driven by our BELIEFS.

Beliefs are opinions that something exists without proof that this is so.

For a large majority of patients that consult me, their beliefs are about the future and are incorrect. They do not stand up to a challenge of reality and are often associated with “the worrier” in their inner world.

Learn about the beliefs you have, and check whether they are—positive, helpful, accurate. Check that they create good feelings not fear and concern “without proof that this is so!”.

14 STRESS is a major cause of symptoms—whether in the home, work or relationships.

Some of the ingredients that cause stress, or prevent its resolution are—

- a) Being a worrier
- b) Being a perfectionist
- c) Being too busy to have time for yourself (quiet time).
- d) Having unresolved experiences stored in your memory.
- e) Being directed by part of our inner world using restrictive words such as — should, have to, ought to, must, need to ,can’t, what will people think?
It is much better to use words such as—I wish to, I am going to, I want to, I will. These mean WE are deciding what we want to do.

15 Actions have outcomes, and we take responsibility for our actions.

Inaction is an action!

16 “Is a snail slow?”

The answer is “No”. A snail goes at its own pace, and that is the correct pace for a snail.

We heal at our own pace. Most patients want to be cured quickly. The mind and bod heal at their own pace. The aim of the therapist is to help the patient find ways; change attitudes; improve the Inner World so the patient CAN heal at his own pace.

I often hear patients say “I have had this problem for years, but I want it fixed in the next few weeks”. Sometimes this is possible, but more often it takes time, your own time, not time by the clock or calendar.

17 The word “Try” implies it probably will NOT happen.

I ask many patients to read a book or listen to a C.D.

When their reply is “I will try to do that”, I know it will not be done.

18 The reason we do things is that at some level in our mind we make it a PRIORITY.

We cannot do anything unless we make that thing a priority.

If we do not do something we wish to do, that also is because it is not a priority for us at that time.

Being aware of this may help you to make your health a priority.

19 There are “SYMPTOMS” and “PROBLEMS”.

Many patients come to see me saying “This is my problem”. For the majority of people the “Problem” is really the “Symptom”, and our task is to reduce the Problem so the Symptom is healed.

For example Panic Attacks—a very frightening experience—are the result of many Inner World processes relating to past experiences.

By resolving these memories, so their influence is reduced, the “problem and symptom” is removed.

20 We do the best with the choices that we use.

One aim of therapy is to learn more choices, so our abilities to overcome problems are improved.

EVERYTHING IS ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE