

DR. KENNETH MARTZ

COUNSELOR

TRICKS FOR BLOSSOMING FROM
GOOD TO GREAT



Best Selling Author

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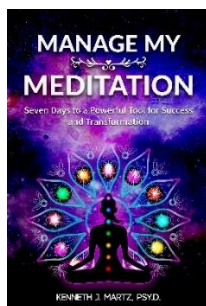
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*To the Roses,
as well as the Thorns in my life*

*Thanks for your support
throughout this journey
toward balance.*





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INTRODUCTION

“Thank you for taking the time to meet with me every week for all these months.” It seemed odd for the client to say at the last session. This client has made so much progress in so many areas. There were many ways in which the individual has grown. However, of all the things to give thanks for, why thank me for taking time for the meetings? Why not give thanks for the brilliant technique, clever tools, or profound insight discovered about the individual's mother? What is it about meeting regularly that was so valuable to this individual?

Through the years, I have heard everything from “This was the worst experience in the world, I learned never to use alcohol again, so I never have to do therapy again” to “Thanks for taking the time to meet with me” to “Thanks for saving my life!” It made me wonder, what would I have to have done for this individual to transform into their best selves, exceeding all their expectations?

Sometimes what we learn in school is not what is most valued by the client and may not be the prime element of change. Those new to the field may wonder what is useful, how to improve their abilities, and what is most beneficial for them to alter and grow. It is not always as we believe. The appropriate partnership may be therapeutic at times. What if our abilities were used to handle the relationship rather than the "issue," and the safe relationship we build became a catalyst for change?

If you're new to the field, this book is for you. This book will walk through things that I have trained new counselors on for decades, based on decades of clinical practice, personal insights, self-reflection, research, as well as shared joys, tears, and accomplishments.

Many of the best things I learned were in practice, not in school.

If you want to grow your existing practice, this book is for you. If you have practiced for years and have gotten into a "rut," this book is for you and are uncertain about managing and prioritizing your limited resources.

We understand where we are with our beliefs about change, and ongoing growth is an excellent way to build our way out of a rut and prioritize our precious time.

There are those, however, that this book is not for. If you are looking for a list of research articles to put you to sleep, this is not the book for you. This is not your book if you want a magical tool to transform all clients. If you're looking for the newest evidence-based technique to allow you to throw away all your other outdated methods, this book is not for you. This is not a book of theory or therapy technique, but rather of creating an environment and healing relationship. Finally, this is not your book if you think you already know it all (or more than I).

If, like me, you are committed to lifelong learning and personal growth to serve better the clients we work with, this book is indeed for you. And I welcome you as you join me as we explore these issues together.

Throughout this book, we will examine our role in the therapy process, including our biases, strengths, and weaknesses. We'll discuss the

client's part to consider the goals, the paths, and the motivation to succeed in these directions.

We'll consider the relationship. What are the client's role and our role in helping them say, "Thank you for your time with me."

We'll consider breaking down situations into their parts, defining the value within, and changing those parts that are no longer serving.

We'll consider what structure is valuable and why even something as simple as the structure can get someone to thank us for meeting every week for so many months.

We know this is a process, not a destination, as we learn all these things. So we'll consider the importance of ongoing professional development. This book is for the lifelong learner and fellow travelers who went into this area to make a difference because we are driven and passionate about this work.

This book is a guide so that you do not travel this path alone.

How To Approach This Book?

This book is organized in a particular order. The lessons build upon one another, so reading straight through this book is best. Most topics are written independently, so if there is a topic of most interest to you, it is OK to skip to that area. However, please be sure to go back to the other sites if you do so. It is sort of like picking one petal off of a flower. You need to understand that its beauty lives in the context of the entire flower, not just in the one petal you were looking for. Like a flower, you are already beautiful, but we continue to grow and evolve, blossoming over time and experience.

These materials are all here whether you read them in a day, five minutes at a time, or pick a page randomly. Whatever works for you, it's here for you as we continue on this journey.

We begin this practice of counseling.

CHAPTER 1

IT'S ALL ABOUT ME

Know thyself
Oracle at Delphi

You may wonder, "I got into this field to help other people, so why does this book begin with a chapter about myself?" I thought I was in the field to learn about the clients also. Remembering that we are the change tools in the treatment setting is valuable.

We may learn many fancy tools and theories in school, but we must implement them. For example, a carpenter knows about hammers, saws, screwdrivers, and wrenches. They learn how to build tables, repair furniture, or refurnish floors. In just the same way, we know tools and theories in psychology.

No matter how "evidence-based" a hammer is, it is only as good as the carpenter who uses it. So, we begin here with an examination of ourselves.

One of my supervisors used to say it is not that he is an excellent therapist but instead that he is a

more experienced patient. This statement puzzled me for a while, but I quickly understood this wisdom.

Some of our most potent skill comes from our ability to know ourselves and how our personal growth influences the treatment process. So, we begin with ourselves. But first, we learn to understand our individual biases.

The Oracle At Delphi

The Oracle of Delphi's famous injunction, "Know thyself," has been interpreted in many different ways throughout history. Still, at its core, it is a call to self-awareness and self-knowledge. The ancient Greeks believed that self-knowledge was essential for leading a good life, and the Delphic oracle was considered to be one of the wisest and most authoritative sources of guidance in matters of personal and moral significance.

One of the critical lessons of "Know thyself" is that before we can understand the world around us, we must first understand ourselves. This involves developing a deep awareness of our strengths, weaknesses, values, beliefs, and

motivations. By understanding ourselves more fully, we are better equipped to navigate the complexities of life, make wise decisions, and pursue our goals with purpose and conviction.

Another lesson of "Know thyself" is that self-knowledge is an ongoing process that requires reflection, introspection, and self-examination. We cannot simply assume that we know ourselves fully based on our past experiences or our current circumstances. Instead, we must be willing to question our assumptions, challenge our beliefs, and explore new perspectives to deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

"Know thyself" reminds us that self-knowledge is not just a matter of intellectual inquiry but also of emotional and spiritual growth. Through practices such as meditation, mindfulness, and self-reflection, we can learn to quiet our minds, connect with our inner selves, and tap into a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in our lives. We can better understand inner peace, resilience, and fulfillment by cultivating compassion, empathy, and self-acceptance.

This guidance to "Know thyself" is a powerful reminder of the importance of self-awareness and self-knowledge in leading a fulfilling and meaningful life. By understanding ourselves more fully, we can navigate life's challenges with greater wisdom, insight, compassion, and live more deeply satisfying lives, and help lead our clients there more effectively.

Do I Believe Clients Can Get Well Or Not?

At first, this may seem a simple question. Of course, I believe they can get well. That's why I got into this field. I'm here with the mission of healing clients. So, why would this be the first thing addressed in this book?

Certain things can be changed, but do we have perceptions that certain items cannot be changed? For example, do we believe that:

- Our work situation cannot be changed
- Relationships cannot be changed
- Personalities are entrenched and, therefore, cannot be changed

- An individual may have intellectual disabilities that they could never grow beyond
- Individuals may have cognitive deficits as a result of trauma or substance use that cannot be changed
- A physical illness cannot be changed

One thing is for sure; if I believe that a client cannot change, I will never be able to help them to do so.

How Do I Know That A Client Can Change?

Often, we have not experienced many of those situations if I have experienced them and grown beyond them.

Through my therapy work, I learned that change is possible since I changed. I immediately become credible through the process of that change.

Although what worked for me may not work for you, once I know that change is possible, the only question becomes how to do it rather than whether or not to change.

As counselors, we sometimes consider whether we need to raise the bar and invite more growth. Or lower the bar to meet the client where they're at.

This is another subtle way our beliefs can influence the treatment process. If we feel that the customer can change but that it will take years, we will not strive to move them any quicker. If we feel that change may occur through significant changes, this option remains open to the customer.

For example, in working with substance use recovery, one view is that as a chronic condition. We may expect that they will likely be used for many years. We anticipate that their healing is not possible.

Perhaps we believe that they have had so much brain damage from their prior substance use that they can never get well, and we'll need to cycle through the system for many years. Or perhaps, like 24 million Americans, one day will be their last drug use, and life will transform rapidly after that.

Our Beliefs About Change

Our beliefs about what is possible for the people we serve dramatically influence the direction of the treatment process.

If I believe that change is possible, there will be materials to help facilitate these changes in the later chapters of this book.

If I do not believe change is possible, I should perhaps begin by exploring why I think of these limitations and consider whether or not they are, in fact, true.

Sometimes I believe change is impossible because I have not yet done so. I imagine this is true of everyone, even though it is my limitation, not theirs.

For these reasons, our personal growth is essential. The more things we have overcome in life and the more paths we have traveled, we will have a stronger sense of what works or does not.

We can lead others to the same destination as we get well and flourish.

Do I Believe In Free Will Or Determinism?

These two concepts are opposites. One suggests that I make every choice based on my personal decisions and freedom. The notion of free will posits that individuals can make choices based on their own volition, free from external or predetermined factors. It emphasizes the individual's ability to act as an autonomous agent, with the freedom to choose from various alternatives without any external force dictating the decision-making process.

On the other hand, some believe in psychic determinism, which suggests that what appear to be choices are actually predetermined based on the prior experiences that we've had.

This view of determinism suggests that every action, including human behavior, is causally determined by previous events and experiences. According to this perspective, every decision we make is predetermined, and there is no absolute freedom of choice. In this framework, our choices result from factors beyond our control, such as our genetics, upbringing, and environmental factors.

While the debate between free will and determinism is complex, many believe that a combination of the two concepts is at play in human behavior. For instance, our genetics and early life experiences may shape certain tendencies, but we still have the ability to make choices and shape our lives to a certain extent. Additionally, societal structures and external factors may limit our choices in certain circumstances, such as in the case of poverty or oppression. However, individuals can still exercise agency within those constraints.

It is also worth noting that the concept of free will and determinism has implications beyond philosophy and extends into fields such as psychology, neuroscience, and law. For instance, the debate over free will and determinism in neuroscience has led to discussions about the role of brain activity in decision-making and the extent to which our neural processes predetermine our choices.

The debate over free will and determinism is an ongoing philosophical discourse with implications that extend far beyond its philosophical roots. While both concepts have

their merits, a nuanced approach that recognizes the interplay between internal and external factors and individual choice may provide a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior. It may also dramatically change our personal theoretical approach to treatment.

Which Do You Believe?

Notice how this question ties closely to whether or not change is possible. If we have free will, perhaps more adaptation is possible. If we have less free will, maybe change is not possible.

However, this discussion is not black and white either/or. It is instead a spectrum between these two concepts.

Where do you fall in the spectrum?

Let's consider this further with a simple example. Think for a moment: It is dinner time. What will you eat for dinner?

You may think, “Yes, I have free will.” Why, of course, you can choose to eat or not to eat. You can choose what to eat. You can decide how

much to eat. So many choices are possible here. Free will is apparent.

On the other hand, upon closer examination, maybe choice is an illusion. What if you don't have a particular food in the house? What you choose to shop for at the store changes. What are your

"The belief that we can change is vital in personal growth and development."

options today? What if you have been unemployed recently? How much money is in your bank account? What food choices are available in your rural neighborhood? All these things predetermine the playing field of what I could choose to eat.

The belief that we can change is vital in personal growth and development. Research has shown that individuals with a growth mindset, which believes that abilities and traits can be developed through dedication and hard work, are more likely to persevere through challenges and achieve success. A study conducted by Yeager et al. (2021) found that students who were taught to have a growth mindset experienced more

outstanding academic achievement and a reduction in depressive symptoms compared to a control group. This highlights the importance of fostering a belief in our ability to change and improve, as it can positively impact our mental health and overall well-being.

What Choices Can You Make Today?

What if you got salmonella poisoning from a particular food ten years ago, and now you're afraid ever to eat it again? In theory, this is a free choice, but now it is unconscious, hidden away from us.

With all the many choices I could eat, this avoidance could continue. As you'll soon discover, choosing what to eat for lunch today was influenced by many small issues from my past. These influence what I intend to eat tonight as well as the following day.

The same is true in psychology. While I make decisions today, often, they're shaped (subconsciously) by influences from my near and distant past.

Ask yourself:

- Where am I on the spectrum of believing in free will versus psychic determinism (these learned unconscious rules control our actions)?
- How far do I fall on one side or the other of the spectrum?
- How will this affect my choice of treatment approach for a client?

The more you fall on the spectrum of psychic determinism, the more critical it is that we intervene to help the client grow. If they cannot control these internal drives, they are unable to change from within.

In contrast, the more we believe in free will, the more our role is to bring these choices to awareness. Once these choices are conscious, the client can make these choices freely.

The former may respond well to a cognitive-behavioral, directive approach. The latter may respond well to a client-centered or psychodynamic exploratory approach to self-discovery.

The philosophical questions we ask ourselves and the theoretical principles we adhere to when working with clients help shape the techniques we use in our counseling interventions. For this reason, we must understand our policy to life and change to best support the clients we work with.

Do I Believe That Humans Are Inherently Good Or Evil?

Freud's theory suggests that humans have basic sexual and aggressive impulses. Left unchecked, this human nature would run rampant. From this perspective, the work of therapy is to contain these destructive impulses. It is a never-ending effort to control our evil spirit. We are caught in a constant struggle to overcome our human nature.

In a contrasting view, humanistic psychology, such as the work of Carl Rogers, would suggest that humans are inherently good. We will grow if we learn the proper skills and have the appropriate encouragement to get out of our way. We blossom as healthier, whole human beings. Just like a flower grows if it's given the proper fertilizer, water, and sunlight, the gardener's

work is to provide valuable resources and perhaps remove some barriers that get in the way.

So, where do you fall in the spectrum, believing that humans are inherently good or evil?

You can see how this dramatically changes our theoretical approach. For example, if I have a client who is depressed, is our work about helping them control their angry impulses at themselves and others? Or is our work about assisting them in finding fulfillment and joy in life, growing beyond where they have become stagnant?

This question raises other issues of moral theology, family experiences, cultural influences, and more.

Mental filters and expectations that we bring to our treatment approach must be considered. Our clients' needs can be taken into account in this way. Let's say we have the misguided notion that people are inherently evil. To help us deal with our issues for a long time, we may need more cages, structures, and ways to keep them contained. (It was said that Freud recommended seven years of daily psychoanalysis).

If we believe that humans are inherently good, our role turns to an emphasis on nourishment and pruning issues that have become barriers for us in the present. We may help to prune beliefs developed from our past that have limited our lives.

Once the client learns these skills, they can continue independently like the bird that learns to fly from the nest and does not need the treatment role further.

Of course, there is a third option to consider. There may be times when the negativity has been so engrained that we cannot control ourselves but have not yet learned how to live healthily. Consider the teenager who runs away from home and learns to survive through illegal means or has become addicted to substance use such as alcohol or other drugs. In these situations, often, these patterns become deeply entrenched before one enters treatment.

In such cases, there may be the need for more intensive treatment to provide external control initially while they unlearn these behaviors and develop new skills for success. From this perspective, humans are inherently good, even

though there may be a need for temporary, intensive support, as seen in the model of believing we are intrinsically evil.

It is noteworthy that even among major religious traditions with concepts of “original sin,” there are also atonement, reconciliation, karma resolution, and other related approaches to resolve these imperfections and restore us to our role as imperfect but inherently “good.”

Know My Core Strength

In addition to knowing my biases, it is essential to know my core strength. But, again, this is unique to everyone.

What is it that people count on you for? What would you be if we were to ask five of your closest friends to list your three best personality characteristics?

As you ask individuals these questions, you may find themes. Perhaps your friends count on you for your drive and determination. Maybe others like your sense of humor or appreciate your partnership. Some may understand your compassionate heart, while others appreciate how you respect them unconditionally.

There are no right or wrong answers.

How you find these answers is essential. Take a few moments to write down your answers. Consider asking a few friends to see what theme develops.

For example, I have done exercises like this to find some of my core strengths. It helped me develop a clear personal commitment that no matter where I am, no matter what, life will show up with human perseverance.

If you are looking for a jokester, that is not me. I have no sense of humor. You may have already noticed from my tone in the book so far. However, if you were friends with a comedian such as Robin Williams, that style may come quickly for him.

However, with me, whatever the problem is, we will solve it together. We will find new solutions until we get to the other side. This doesn't require any effort on my part. It's just who I am, my personality, and my outlook on life. I wasn't the one who came up with this idea; rather, it was a reaction to the feedback I received from others.

We each have the core strength that will help us to guide our practice. Know your core strength and lead with your strengths. For some, this may be perseverance. For others, this gift may be drive and vision. Some have a warm and compassionate hearts. In contrast, others have a relaxed but precise ability to find the diamonds buried within, releasing all the rest.

To the clients that we are working with, each strength varies as well. Therefore, part of our work in counseling is to help identify and free these strengths. For example, Michelangelo once claimed he did not carve David from marble stone. Instead, David was already there, and Michelangelo merely removed the external stone to express David fully.

No matter what strength you bring to the table, it is an essential tool, and it's also necessary to know who has which tools.

We want to know who is the best with that particular tool as the center of their work. For example, a hammer is an excellent tool. However, it is not the only tool though in the toolbox. Even if that is not your tool, knowing

who has a hammer, a wrench, and a screwdriver in our community is valuable.

As we continue through this discussion, you may realize that you specialize in treating anxiety disorders. Or you may find that you have a specialty in treating older adults.

We each have areas of specialty expertise.

What are the strengths that we bring to the table?
Our niche that those skills serve well?

The more I understand my strengths, the better I can choose an approach and population to specialize in my practice.

Where Can I Be Most Effective?

Once you know your primary strength, consider how that has diverse applications. Then, whatever your direct power is, there are ways to apply it.

For example, I may be an expert with a hammer. However, there may be different types of hammers, different weights, and subtle variations of those hammers.

Once we know our core strength, over time, we can diversify. For example, suppose my specialty is in the treatment of anxiety disorders. If that's the case, I could use that knowledge to help with anxiety disorder and its treatment, such as stress management techniques, meditation, or depression.

Learning how my skill interacts with others can help me diversify my repertoire of hammers. There are many other tools that hammers can be used for, such as nails and screws. How does counseling relate to physical medicine, psychiatry, social work, forensic psychology, health psychology, acupuncture, hypnosis, or other allied disciplines?

As I develop this understanding, I begin to be better able to treat the whole person rather than just one element of anxiety.

Know What Issues I Work Well With

Knowing our strengths will immediately suggest areas that I work well with. First, consider what areas you enjoy working with. Next, consider what areas in which you are effective. Finally, consider areas in which you have experience

working with others. Often our pleasure, effectiveness, and expertise combine to create our specialty.

The more experience I gain, the more my abilities improve, the more my abilities improve, and the more I feel rewarded, the more I am interested in that topic.

These three areas work together. So as we find our interests, abilities, and experience, we can hone this skill.

There are many different types of assessments, such as the Myers-Briggs, occupational assessment tools, and emotional intelligence tools. These are excellent resources to help you consider these strengths and to define these strengths in yourself.

Know What Issues To Refer To Others

Consider areas in that you have experience working with yourself in these ways. Our personal experience helps us to grow and to be more effective. Once we know that we have overcome an issue (even if we do not share our knowledge), we see a path to recovery and will be

able to resist the client's belief that they are unable to change.

However, there may be issues we have not addressed in our personal life. In this case, we can be harmful to clients by avoiding or expecting their failure. For these issues, it is best to refer to another clinician.

Sometimes beginning our careers, we may think that we should be able to treat anyone. We may quickly realize that that's not possible due to inexperience.

Even as we become experienced, just as we have people with whom we will work best, there will often be people we do not work well with. Therefore, it is essential to know the difference.

As we get further in our personal skill experience and personal growth, there will be fewer and fewer of those we cannot treat.

There will always be people that are not in our specialty. It is an important skill to know when to refer to someone else rather than work with them ourselves.

As a simple example, it is tough to work with both victims of sexual abuse and perpetrators of sexual abuse. Our feelings and attitudes will guide us when dealing with these two distinct groups. We may work very well with one or the other, but probably not both since these issues are so emotionally charged.

Suppose we've encountered this problem before. If so, how far have we come regarding personal development and recovery?

Consider how our experience of sexual abuse or lack of lived experience having been sexually abused can influence our ability to work with one or the other of these populations.

Notice that there is no value judgment here.

Personal exploration is about understanding what is best for ourselves and our clients and learning how to work as a team with other professionals in the field.

In this way, I give specific clients to more appropriate colleagues for the individual. They refer other clients to me who are more effective for me.

My wife is also a counselor. There was a time when we worked at a program together. We quickly realized that, just like our differences in our marriage, our professional skills complemented each other. I enjoyed working with individuals that she found challenging to work with, and I enjoyed working with. In contrast, she was effective with individuals I found challenging to work with.

The more we know our strengths and weaknesses, the more we learn what issues to refer to and to whom.

Making The Unconscious Conscious

Imagine that at age five, you put on a pair of sunglasses. These are valuable tools. They protect us from the blinding light of the sun.

However, while I'm wearing sunglasses, everything looks darker. When I move out of the sunny area, the glasses go with me, and the interior looks darker.

Sometimes I can have enough self-awareness to take the sunglasses off. But what if I left those sunglasses on all the time?

Some people wear reading glasses. Some people wear glasses all day long. Glasses become filters of the world so that we no longer see the world as it is but instead, as we see it through our lenses.

Many times these filters become unconscious. We forget why we started it and just continue. We may begin so long ago that we don't remember why we started or even realize that we are wearing glasses.

For some of us, these filters may be rosy-colored glasses so that everything is covered in rosy-pink paint everywhere we look. It's hard for some of us to see clearly because our glasses are tinted black.

The world we live in and the way we perceive it are both shaped by our filters. The problem is that our preconceived notions of the world are frequently misguided.

This is a core work of therapy: to help make the unconscious conscious.

We begin with ourselves. We start with our filters. Then, we examine our attitudes and beliefs that drive our approach to clients and life.

At some point, our philosophy is personal, not just professional.

The more we move from unconscious to conscious, the more we can move from psychic determinism to free will.

The more we move from unconscious to conscious, the more we believe that our clients and we can change.

The more we move from unconscious to conscious, as we clear away those tinted glasses, the more we find that underneath it all, we are good.

Sarah's Story

Sarah had been struggling with anxiety and depression for years. She had tried therapy before, but nothing seemed to work. One day, she decided to see a counselor named Dr. Thompson.

Dr. Thompson was a kind and empathetic person who listened to Sarah with patience and understanding. She encouraged Sarah to share her thoughts and feelings without judgment, and over time, Sarah began to trust her.

As they worked together, Dr. Thompson helped Sarah identify the negative thought patterns that were causing her anxiety and depression. They considered how some of these beliefs started in childhood and continued on “autopilot” for years. They discussed ways to reframe those thoughts and focus on her life's positive aspects.

At first, Sarah was skeptical that she could change her way of thinking, but as she continued to work with Dr. Thompson, she began to see small improvements. She started to challenge her negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones. She began to practice self-care and focus on what brought her joy.

As Sarah continued progressing, Dr. Thompson celebrated each success with her and encouraged her to keep going. Over time, Sarah began to realize that she had the power to change her thoughts and, ultimately, her life. She felt more confident, more resilient, and more in control.

One day, Sarah thanked Dr. Thompson for helping her to see that change was possible. She said that she had never believed in herself before, but now she knew that she was capable of making positive changes in her life. Dr. Thompson

smiled and told Sarah that she had been the one to do the hard work; she had just been there to guide her.

Sarah continued to work on herself and make progress. She knew she would have ups and downs along the way, but she was confident she could handle them. She had discovered her ability to change and knew it was the key to living a happy and fulfilling life.

Key Takeaways

- The debate between free will and determinism posits that individuals can make choices based on their own volition or that every decision we make is predetermined based on previous events and experiences.
- A combination of the two concepts is at play in human behavior.
- Individuals can exercise agency within societal structures and external factors that may limit their choices.
- The concept of free will and determinism has implications beyond philosophy and

extends into fields such as psychology, neuroscience, and law.

- The belief that we can change is vital in personal growth and development.
- The choices we make today are often shaped by influences from our past.
- The more we believe in free will, the more our role is to bring these choices to awareness. Once these choices are conscious, the client can make these choices freely.

Apply it Now

- 1) On a scale of 1 to 10, where are you in your beliefs that:
 - a. Can clients get well or not?
 - b. Free will or determinism?
 - c. Humans are inherently good or evil.
- 2) Know your strengths
 - a. Identify three core strengths that you know of in yourself.

- b. Approach four friends and ask them to list your three most valuable personality characteristics.
- c. As you develop themes from these answers, write that down as your core strength.
- d. Know that some of the other solutions will be your supportive strengths.

3) Bring awareness

- a. Just for a moment, observe your breath.
- b. Take one deep breath, as deep and as slow as possible.
- c. Notice what just happened here in this simple moment. Your breath, controlled unconsciously was transferred to conscious movement.
- d. Moving things from unconscious to conscious is not tricky with this simple awareness practice. It simply

takes the willingness and a guide to do so.

- 4) Engage in philosophical discussions with peers or professionals to explore different perspectives on free will and determinism.
- 5) Practice a growth mindset by fostering a belief in your ability to change and improve through dedication and hard work.
- 6) Reflect on your past experiences and how they have shaped your current choices and behaviors.
- 7) Help clients become aware of the choices they make by exploring the influences from their past and bringing them to consciousness.
- 8) Encourage clients to identify and challenge limiting beliefs that may stem from past experiences or societal structures.
- 9) Complete each of these practices
 - a. If you have read through these exercises and skipped doing them, take a moment to complete them.

You will want to make the changes and participate in the suggested exercises to get the most out of this book. The more you actively participate in the activities, the more you will get out of them.

Our personal beliefs about the world, our approach to treatment, our theoretical orientation, and the tools used in the treatment are grounded in my beliefs about free will, inherent worth, and goodness.

The more I learn about myself, the better I can use my strengths effectively.

The more I learn about myself, the better I can support clients with whom I would be ineffective.

The more I learn about myself, the more I can fully become aware and blossom into life.

CHAPTER 2

IT STARTS WITH THE GOAL

The greatest danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark.

Michelangelo

Goals are the compass that guides us to our true north.

Simon Sinek

Understanding the goals and values of the individual we're working with is essential. This seems simple, but it is also often not as clear. Some of the plans that appear on the surface often are not the same as the hidden drives, which we may or may not have articulated yet.

In the introduction, we discussed a client who was thankful for the time spent in sessions. Although that is the stated value, something was likely appreciated even more underneath. For example, the feeling of respect

conveys a sense of partnership, being heard, or perhaps something else.

In this chapter, we'll explore the identification of the core goals for the client. As we understand these priorities, it's easier to help find a path to get there.

Once we understand the path, it is easier to help find support or reduce barriers to that specific path.

The Three Bricklayers

The three bricklayer story is a famous parable that teaches us the importance of having a clear vision and purpose. The story goes like this:

One day, a man was walking down a street and came across three bricklayers working on a construction site. Curious, he asked the first bricklayer, "What are you doing?"

The first bricklayer replied, "I'm laying bricks."

The man then asked the second bricklayer the same question. The second bricklayer replied, "I'm building a wall."

Finally, the man asked the third bricklayer, "What are you doing?" The third bricklayer replied, "I'm building a cathedral."

This story teaches us several important lessons:

- Clear vision leads to purposeful action: The third bricklayer had a clear vision of what he was building, and that vision gave him a sense of purpose. He knew he was not just laying bricks but building something much more significant. As a result, he was more focused and motivated in his work.
- Perspective matters: The first bricklayer had a very narrow perspective. He was focused only on the task at hand and did not see the bigger picture. The second bricklayer had a slightly broader perspective but still did not fully grasp the significance of his work. The third bricklayer had the broadest perspective of all, and saw the importance of his work in the context of a larger project.
- Mindset is important: The third bricklayer had a growth mindset. He saw his work as

an opportunity to grow and contribute to something greater than himself. The first and second bricklayers had more of a fixed mindset. They saw their work as just a job with no room for growth or development.

Overall, the three bricklayer story teaches us that having a clear vision and purpose is crucial for success and fulfillment in life. It also reminds us that perspective and mindset are essential factors affecting our performance and happiness.

Knowing Our Goals And Values

If I asked you, “Why did you pick this book?” You might respond with something like, “Well, I liked the cover. Well, I appreciated your degree and experience. I was interested in what was said in the description. I didn't like what was said in some other book's description,” other similar explanations. These are natural but surface reasons for choosing the book.

Sometimes we choose due to deeper values. Perhaps you weren't actively looking for a book on how to be a better counselor. Perhaps this is

something you're interested in? Do you think it's important to grow as a person? Do you think getting training from the best people you can find is important? What's the purpose of this?

Just like peeling an onion, there may be multiple values hidden below the surface. For example, as a new counselor, were you feeling nervous about your ability to handle a client, leading you to seek more confidence?

If you think of these as layers of an onion, what if there is yet another layer? For example, did you learn a fundamental belief that you are worthy/deserving/competent in childhood? Or did you learn that you were lacking and seeking to compensate for these secret fears?

There are often surface reasons that we are immediately aware of and contributing or underlying goals and values with all of us. You can call these unconscious, but they're not immediately apparent.

Unconscious goals are those we are unaware of, yet they influence our behavior and decision-making. A study by Hassin, Shushan, and Hibert (2021) found that unconscious goals can impact

our perception of time. In their study, participants were asked to estimate the duration of a visual stimulus while being presented with subliminal messages related to either achievement or affiliation goals. The results showed that participants who were primed with achievement goals perceived the visual stimulus as lasting longer than those primed with affiliation goals. This suggests that our unconscious goals can influence our behavior and our perception of time. The findings from this study highlight the importance of understanding the impact of unconscious goals in our daily lives.

Our Unconscious Mind And Goals: Peeling The Onion

It is said that about 95% of what the brain does is in the unconscious mind. Our brain is designed to process thousands of bits of information a minute. So, it constantly processes all of the experiences, memories, and other filters from our past to make decisions today.

It is as though this past collection of memories is the computer operating system that we function under. It will continue to operate until

we actively engage in a treatment process to recognize and upgrade our operating system. This allows us to create new values and directions and question old values and principles to begin or grow our counseling career. Therefore, we are changing that operating system from our before the future.

Let's see how this works with a client.

Imagine we begin to work with James, a 42-year-old Caucasian male who is presented with an alcohol use disorder. It's possible that the first question we ask is, *"Why are you here?"* *"It's because of my parole officer that I'm here,"* he confidently responds. This is a powerful source of inspiration. Even though this is a significant factor, it is only the tip of the motivational iceberg.

So we continue peeling back the layers with our questions. *"What would you like to be different?"* *"I want to get my parole agent off my back. I want to have him stop harassing me."*

Here we begin to see the emotional content and drive hidden underneath the labeled behavior.

Perhaps there is yet another layer. *“How does alcohol use relate to getting your probation officer off your back?” “I was driving and had a little too much to drink. That’s why they caught me. There was a checkpoint, and I couldn’t get around it. I thought I was OK....”*

As the layers of motivations deepen, the treatment pathway begins to change. The goal of treatment is no longer about the probation officer but now about the alcohol leads to these impacts.

We could reflect, *“So if you continue to drive and never drink again, would that keep your probation officer off your back?” “Yeah, then I could at least get to work. I gotta feed my family somehow.”*

You begin to see how these layers help us understand the individual's motivation in front of us. The deeper the reason we can articulate, the better we can use it to leverage change and growth.

Everyone is already motivated when they arrive at our doorstep. It is up to us to find out the source of that motivation.

Understanding what drives motivation helps them persevere and accomplish their daily goals

is valuable. However, a discovery session can take an hour or more (and sometimes multiple sessions) to move beneath the layers of awareness and motivation.

As we continue into the layers of motivation, we could ask, *“How would life be different when you're no longer drinking and driving and are now free from parole supervision?”* *“Well, I'd have a lot less stress.”*

“And as you're free from all this stress, what would you like to do with all that newfound energy instead of stressing over the parole agent?”

“I'd like to spend more time with my wife and kids. Maybe they wouldn't be so mad at me all the time. When I'm drinking, she's always yelling at me to stop. She's just not getting it. Because the more she yells at me, the more I need a drink.”

As we moved to deeper layers, we have moved from identifying what he does not want to placing some primary motivation goals that he likes.

This could be traced further by asking, *“Is this a familiar feeling? When was the first time in your life or other times when you've had this feeling of wanting to spend time with family?”*

Our questions can help move through specific layers of motivation from superficial to underlying, from behavioral to emotional, and from the present moment to experience.

You, of course, cannot move more than one layer at a time since only one layer of the onion is revealed at the surface at a time. If you move too fast, the question won't make sense.

For example, if I started the session by asking him, *“Do you want to forgive your mother for the time she beat you because of that mistake you made in front of your friends when you were seven years old?”*

The question would be so far out of the individual's experience that it would be useless and lead to a rupture in the relationship even if it were accurate as a primary cause of the drinking.

Perhaps you knew it occurred based on the clinical history, some prior police assessment reports, or others. If the individual doesn't share this and doesn't understand how it connects to the current discussion, it can be damaging, or the client will simply reject the insight.

It was Freud's advice to wait for the individual to come to their own conclusions before

commenting on them. The current motivational theory also suggests that what we can help the individual say out of their mouth is much more potent than what we say. Today motivational interviewing also encourages this approach.

As we understand the layers of motivation, we can help the individual move towards more powerful reasons, more widespread in their influence.

I could treat an individual at the layer or the surface motivation, such as “Getting the parole agent off my back.” However, fixing that current problem does not solve any other present or future issues because of the specificity of that motivation.

However, if I can move more deeply, we can establish life changes that are more impactful and lasting.

To identify this, individuals need to feel heard, be competent and need a sense of stability.

These drives will likely influence many of life’s decisions for years.

It is possible to do treatment entirely on the superficial problem focus level. However, to the extent that we can guide individuals to their more pervasive and driving values, we can help them make a more pervasive and lasting change.

Brainstorming And Mind Mapping

Commit to spending time on this exercise to get the most out of this activity. Block a period of time when you will not be interrupted, and you can work for about an hour. If you do this exercise fully, it will not only benefit you, but you will better understand how to guide clients with it effectively. The first thing in the morning is an excellent time to do this activity, or immediately following a time of meditation or physical exercise, so that your mind can be clear and focused.

This is a brainstorming exercise, so the purpose is to write down as many things as possible without judgment. They can be big or small, very important or minimally important. You can edit them later. For now, the purpose is to find as many of your puzzle pieces as possible to get started.

Part 1: Brainstorming Major Goals

What are the major goal areas in my life?

What are four contributing elements for each of these?

What are four things that contributed to each of these?

By the time you complete these, you will have 64 causes. While it is OK to repeat some, make an effort to find as many as possible. If you think of extras, feel free to add them as well. If you can't immediately think of 4 in one area, move on to another and come back. Working on another area may trigger new ideas and memories. Don't fill in repeats simply to fill out your list. The goal is to learn the connections, not to make an extensive list.

There are three ways I suggest doing this. The simplest way is to take four sheets of paper, which become the first four causes, space out the four secondary causes across the paper, and then add the last four contributing causes. Another easy way is to use an outline feature in your word

processor. This process allows you to easily add items at these three levels/groups of causes.

There are free programs on the internet that can assist, or you can draw on a large paper or poster board. My favorite way to do this is called mind mapping. Begin with a circle: Goals. Next, draw four lines away from that circle, and create four circles at the end of each. Write in your first four causes here. Continue. This process lets you see the connections and quickly fill in ideas in any area. You can download Mind mapping format and list format examples from my website on the resources tab at www.DrKenMartz.com. These are intended as a visual tool, not to simply copy. You want your list to be as personal as possible.

Brainstorm many options of what is possible.

If you get stuck, some areas to consider are:

- Relationship with Myself
 - Sleep
 - Exercise
 - Diet
 - Beliefs
 - Memories
 - Values

- Relationships with others
 - Partner
 - Child
 - Parents
 - Friends
- Relationship with my vocation
 - Time spent
 - The financial balance of income/expense
 - Personal fulfillment from the work
- Relationship with values/spirituality
 - Awareness of my personal values
 - Relationship with a higher purpose
 - Sense of meaning in my life

Hint: If you get very stuck, you can use this list as a list format of your first four causes and specific causes and personalize it with more contributing causes/values. As an example, here is one branch that has further expanded.

- Relationship with Myself
 - Sleep
 - I want to sleep at least 8 hours per night
 - Exercise
 - Yoga once per week
 - Running twice per week
 - Weight lifting once per week

- Diet
 - Drink six glasses of water daily
 - Eat one green food daily
 - Limit caffeine and alcohol
 - No food after 7pm

Consider how this will work with a client. One may be depressed. When I am depressed, I may have disturbances in sleeping, eating, and physical lethargy. This may cause me to withdraw from relationships, be unproductive at work, and lose my sense of purpose in life.

This life mapping exercise can help to create a clear vision of some of the basic areas of how I want my life to look. It can also be shaped by certain beliefs or values that I want to grow in my life. As we can help to clarify a more precise vision of a successful life and the values that drive it, clients can more easily know what direction to follow.

Mind mapping is a valuable tool for visualizing and organizing complex information. It has also been effective in psychotherapy, particularly cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). Mind maps can help clients identify and organize their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and identify

patterns and connections between them. A study (Khalili & Sharifi, 2020) investigated the use of mind mapping in CBT for individuals with anxiety disorders. The study found that using mind maps in therapy helped clients organize their thoughts and feelings, identify negative thought patterns, and develop more balanced and rational thinking. Additionally, the study found that using mind maps in therapy improved the client's engagement and satisfaction with the therapy process. This study highlights the potential benefits of incorporating mind mapping into psychotherapy, particularly for clients with anxiety disorders.

Values Focusing Exercise

Another method of exploring our values involves narrowing our values. Begin by reading over the following list of values. Identify your top five values that guide your life.

Money	Happiness	Success
Giving	Forgiveness	Respect
Role Model	Diversity	Ethics
Optimism	Achievement	Humor

Relationships	Challenge	Health
Confidence	Partnership	Gentleness
Strength	Leadership	Humor
Joy	Kindness	Self-discipline
Hope	Pride	Risk-taking
Safety	Stability	Consistency
Authenticity	Compassion	Honesty
Equality	Fairness	Hope
Faith	Learning	Growth
Status	Kindness	Adventure
Other: _____	Other: _____	Other: _____

Next, narrow your list to the top three.

Next, label those three in order of priority.

As you do this, consider not what you want your values to be but what you decide based on. Then, if they are different, you can also assume that discrepancy to determine what you want your future to be.

Sometimes the results may surprise you. However, as we can identify these values precisely, it is easy to see how they drive filters shaping our lives, not just the situation at hand.

The better you understand yourself, the better you can use these tools with a client.

Have this conversation with a colleague or a loved one for bonus points. Guide them through the exercises in this chapter by explaining what you've learned so far. In this way, you learn how to safely and effectively use these tools in your life.

Values clarification is a process that helps individuals identify and prioritize their most important values in life, providing direction and purpose to their decision-making. In psychotherapy, value clarification can be a powerful tool to help clients gain insight into their core beliefs and desires and to align their behaviors with these values. One study conducted by Cooper et al. (2021) explored the impact of value clarification in a group psychotherapy setting for individuals with depression and anxiety. The results showed that value clarification was associated with significant

improvements in psychological distress, quality of life, and value-consistent behaviors. The authors suggest that value clarification can be an effective intervention for individuals struggling with mental health issues by promoting a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. Overall, value clarification can be an essential component of psychotherapy, helping us guide clients to live more fulfilling and meaningful lives according to their values.

Goals And Paths

As we clarify the deeper goals and values, finding the proper path to achieve them becomes much more accessible.

Notice how the more we become clear of our individual values and goals, the easier it becomes to create a treatment plan. Steps that can be taken to fix this problem become more apparent.

*"As we clarify
the deeper goals
and values,
finding the
proper path to
achieve them
becomes much
more accessible."*

For example, if I'm dissatisfied with my current situation, I may be motivated to leave the garbage dump of problems I've built around myself. However, if our simple goal is to get away from the probation officer (out of the garbage dump), we could jump out of the mess and into a worse nearby problem (such as killing someone while driving).

Instead, knowing where we want to get to is much more valuable based on our deeper motives. For example, by learning that I don't want to be surrounded by garbage, I can begin to identify deeper goals such as *"I'd like to be on a beautiful beach in Hawaii, surrounded by my family who loves me, making enough money that I can work or not work, and spend my time with them in this beautiful place for as long as I choose."*

Notice how having a precise vision moves towards specific paths of intervention that become a part of the treatment plan. For example, once I know I want to get to Hawaii, the steps to achieving it are relatively simple (get some money, buy a ticket, and get on the plane).

Similarly, once we have a precise goal, the others are easier. For example, how do you build that

trusting relationship with your family again? Honesty, apologies, long-term consistency, and other trustworthy behaviors should be the foundation of any relationship.

We can set similar action steps for clearing your record, finding a job, and developing financial stability.

Once we have goals and action steps, it becomes easier to determine if any single action I take will help with that goal.

Just as it is essential to understand our fundamental beliefs about life and counseling, the more we can understand our client's guiding principles, the better we can assist them. Then, whether we work with them for an hour, a week, or a year, we can identify goals and appropriate pathways.

Managing Barriers

Once I know my goal is to live on a beach in Hawaii, finding many barriers to success will be easier. Our doubts and fears can emerge once we take that first step.

If we believe that the individual is inherently good and growth is the norm, part of our work is to help identify these barriers. Some barriers may include skill/resource deficits, blind spots, self-protection, and fear of success. We can then help find solutions to move them out of the way.

Skills Deficits

For example, the goal is to clear the individual's record to obtain a job to become financially stable. In this case, there is a range of deficits, barriers, or skills to learn along that path.

A common problem is a lack of information. Getting a criminal record expunged can be difficult for some people. They may not know how to write a resume or effectively engage in a job interview.

Everyone should learn these skills. It's possible, but not guaranteed, that the customer in front of us already has some familiarity with these topics. At times, it becomes our role to give fundamental knowledge. At other times, that role can be fulfilled by helping understand who another trained professional is so that we can

refer the individual to obtain that skill. For example, legal aid, career services, and other skills may not be our specialty.

Blind Spots

One of the most common barriers is blind spots. Just as we began this discussion with the individual saying that the goal was to get the parole agent off his back, we all have unconscious blind spots. One can often quickly bring these to their attention with a little focused attention.

When working with a patient, counselors can see things that the patient can't see from an outside perspective. They may be too close to the situation to observe that objectively.

Blind spots may be as simple as a lack of awareness or education on the topic.

Self Protection

Another significant barrier is our fears. Fear is a core emotion that is intended to protect us from danger. It guides us subtly in the background, scanning our environment for potential risks.

Understanding these deep fears can help to explain other barriers. For example, some people are afraid of failure and decide never to try because they will never fail if they don't try.

Perhaps they may have loved a partner and been rejected. They then decided never to love again, fearing failing in another relationship.

These fears protect us from harm and prevent us from achieving any success.

Fear Of Success

Beyond the fear of failure, some individuals also experience the fear of success. Achieving success may evoke feelings of unworthiness, leading to the belief that we are undeserving of positive outcomes. This mindset can stem from past experiences or internalized negative beliefs about oneself. Furthermore, the notion of success can also expose one's imperfections and shortcomings, which can be uncomfortable for some individuals. This fear of being vulnerable and imperfect can make it challenging for them to take on leadership roles, as they may feel inadequate or incapable of leading others. On the other hand, some individuals may believe that

their failures are a form of punishment for their perceived inadequacies, leading to a self-blaming mentality. These attitudes can lead to self-sabotage and prevent individuals from reaching their full potential.

One study by Hinterlong, Fisher, and Robertson (2021) explored the relationship between college students' fear of success and self-esteem. The study found that those with a high fear of success had lower self-esteem than those with a low fear of success. The results highlight the importance of addressing the fear of success in therapy to help individuals build a healthy self-concept and increase their chances of achieving success. By identifying and addressing these underlying fears and beliefs, individuals can work towards overcoming them and reaching their goals.

Coping Skills

There is a wide range of coping skills. We learn denial, repression, reaction formation, and projection in school. Many other responses and behaviors are used to manage our emotions in life. Some examples include emotional eating, drinking alcohol, social media, watching television, and many other behaviors which

could be effective coping if they were done once. However, these behaviors become labeled as psychological disorders if we do them regularly, as they become excessive and pathological.

Even something as simple as “feeling depressed.” is an effective coping style when we are fatigued. The thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors that are associated cause us to withdraw and take a time of rest at a time when we need it. Strength, not limitation, is what it is in this situation. It becomes problematic, however, when this reluctance to engage in social activities is widespread.

Similarly, I could have a glass of wine or beer if I had a bad day. In and of itself, that is not a bad thing compared to using that as our coping strategy every night.

Moving Forward

Identifying the goals makes it easier to understand the path and the barriers that may intervene and create a practical approach to achieving change.

The most common path to recognizing these motives, goals, and ways to success is talking in a counseling discussion.

This process is central to the client's compliance with the treatment plan and success. It is also one of our primary areas of focus as counselors. Still, no medicine will take the place of this process of goal clarification and treatment planning. In contrast, an individual may still need complementary medical interventions, medications, or a host of other interventions.

We've explored a range of elements of goal clarification. There are other approaches as well. Many exercises can help us to identify our goals and values.

Key Tools

- Values/Goals
 - ✓ Values Focusing: Clarify primary drives
 - ✓ Peeling the Onion: Understand underlying goals
 - ✓ Mind Mapping: Visualize the larger field of values

- Creating the Path to the Goals: Connect the dots from where I am today to where I want to be.
- Managing Barriers
 - ✓ Skills Deficits: What do I need to learn?
 - ✓ Fear of Failure: How do I find the courage to succeed?
 - ✓ Fear of Success: What will help me to know I am worthy?

Apply It Now

Take some time to review the following questions and write out the answer in your journal or workbook.

- Values
 - ✓ What are my values?
 - ✓ What is my core personal value?
 - ✓ How does that shape my actions and “to do” list for the rest of today?
- Goals
 - ✓ What are my primary long-term goals?
 - ✓ What are the three superficial and three deep motivators of these long-term goals?

- ✓ What is one small step I can achieve today toward each of these goals?
- The Path to Success
 - ✓ What are interim goals that I can complete within the next month?
- Barriers
 - ✓ What are the top three obstacles to these goals?
 - ✓ In the next month, what are steps to add to my approach to help manage these barriers?

CHAPTER 3

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP

*The most important thing in life is to learn how to
give out love, and to let it come in.*

Morrie Schwartz

*The quality of your life is the quality of your
relationships.*

Tony Robbins

Treatment happens in the context of
relationships.

The therapeutic relationship is the holding environment, whether safe or not, that an individual learns—a space to be vulnerable and explore vulnerable emotions and beliefs which may not even be acknowledged to oneself. For example, there are certain things that you would never say:

- To the person that you met at a go grocery store
- To your parent
- To one of your friends
- To your child
- To your boss, etc.

Relationships matter. Each of these areas that we censor are frozen, unable to be changed. While this is appropriate, we must find a safe place to unpack, explore, and change forbidden feelings. It is easy to understand why the relationship is vital to the treatment process.

The Story Of The Farmer And His Lazy Sons

There was an old farmer who had three lazy and quarrelsome sons. The farmer was worried that his sons were not hardworking enough and could not take care of the farm after he passed away. So, he decided to teach them a lesson.

One day, the farmer called his three sons and asked them to break a bundle of sticks. The sons tried their best to break the sticks, but they could not do so. The farmer then untied the bundle and

gave each of his sons a single stick. He asked them to break it, and they did so with ease.

The farmer then explained the meaning behind the lesson. He told his sons that they were like the bundle of sticks. Individually, they were weak and could not accomplish much. But together, they were strong and could accomplish anything they set their minds to. He emphasized that relationships and unity were the keys to success.

The story of the farmer and his three lazy sons teaches us the importance of working together and building strong relationships. It emphasizes that no one can accomplish great things alone, but we can achieve anything by working together. The power of relationships is also shown in the fact that the farmer was able to teach his sons a valuable lesson and inspire them to work together, despite their previous laziness.

The lesson of the story can be applied to many areas of life, including family, work, and friendships. It shows that building strong relationships is essential for success and happiness and that working together towards a common goal can lead to great accomplishments.

In therapy, we first build a safe and trusting relationship with the client. Over time, once they believe that this is possible, they learn how to create this safe and respectful relationship with important people in their life. In this way, the treatment gains become stabilized in the new relationships.

What Is It About Relationships That Are Healing?

There are several characteristics in relationships that have been tested through the years. As we help foster these attitudes and ways of interacting with each other, we can build that relationship and deepen the relationship with the client more helpfully.

Empathy

Empathy is an often misunderstood element. You can easily envision a Saturday Night Live skit or others who would mock the counseling

"Empathy is not about repeating your words back to you; empathy is about understanding your experience and communicating that I understood that experience."

profession with parodies of a counselor, simply parroting what was said to them.

Empathy is not about repeating your words back to you; empathy is about understanding your experience and communicating that I understood that experience. Sometimes that may or may not be spoken.

In this field, Carl Rogers was a pioneer. Many of his original books and videos are still available on the internet today. When you look at these examples, you'll notice that he's speaking softly, as if he's trying to reassure you that your plan matters most. If a client says, I don't know what to talk about. He says, "I'm here to listen to whatever you want to talk about." The subtle inference throughout the conversation and tone is about communicating, "I am listening to you so that you can feel heard or seen in a relationship." This is very powerful, particularly for some individuals who may have been neglected, frightened, or wounded.

Empathy is not just repeating the words but also listening to understand the feelings and emotions that underlie those words. So when we reflect on

something to the client, we are helping them know that we felt their experience with them.

This is also important because some individuals may not be able to articulate their experiences. So our reflections become a tool for them to learn to recognize their experience more. Conversations often run very smoothly when using this tool, and the individual will continue talking. Someone who doesn't understand what you're reflecting might say "no," if you do not accurately understand what they are saying.

Our understanding must be clarified for us to remain part of the alliance. We may think our interpretation is correct, but the client may not see it yet. We do not reflect something so deep that they did not yet see it, even if we are correct in that interpretation. If they do not understand it yet, it is not yet helpful. But this is also helpful information as we work to peel back only one layer of the onion at a time.

Empathy is a tool that can be applied in the counseling situation and our businesses and relationships.

When our boss assigns a project, it helps us summarize the task steps out loud to clarify that we understood the instructions.

Similarly, consider when our spouse describes how they have had a difficult day. Connecting with the emotional experience helps heal the difficult day and improve the relationship. The process of empathy, by its nature, begins to convey a deep respect for the other. Even if I disagree with something, I understand you.

Sometimes, we are in conflict. We feel like the individual did not hear or understand because they did not convey empathy for our position. In contrast, it is easier to accept disagreement even when there is disagreement once we feel heard and understood.

Respect

Respect is another essential quality of the relationship known as positive regard. Positive regard is a reflection of my respect for you. Positive regard begins with a worldview that we are inherently good. As much as you feel hurt, angry, or scared, I believe you did everything

possible to improve yourself and achieve your goals with tenacity.

This also applies to challenging situations. For example, some believe that when someone develops a substance use disorder and commits a crime. As a result, they are a bad person and deserve punishment. This can be seen in cases where an individual is imprisoned for the rest of their life due to their actions. However, others see such an individual as deeply wounded, possibly due to past experiences, and in need of rehabilitation to break the cycle of addiction and self-hatred.

At times, this perspective may be confused with a strengths-based approach. In a strengths-based approach, the focus is on identifying and using an individual's strengths to overcome their challenges. On the other hand, respect is a slightly different approach, as it recognizes that individuals are inherently good, regardless of any flaws or imperfections they may possess.

For instance, if a flower has a blemish or has been damaged by insects, it is still considered inherently good at its core. Similarly, individuals are considered inherently good and deserving of

positive regard, regardless of past mistakes or flaws. Therefore, the approach of respect recognizes an individual's inherent worth and focuses on helping them cultivate their strengths and overcome their challenges.

Positive Regard

Positive regard involves recognizing and appreciating a person's inherent goodness, despite any flaws or challenges they may have. This perspective was echoed by Mother Teresa, who saw each person as a physical embodiment of God. When we let go of our judgments and approach others positively, we can help them become more aware and empowered. Our expectations of others can also influence their performance, as evidenced by social experiments where teachers treat students differently based on labels of intelligence.

However, there is a risk to positive regard. Some people fear that focusing on strengths alone may overlook the real issues and struggles that a person is facing. It is vital to strike a balance between acknowledging and addressing these

challenges and recognizing each person's inherent goodness and potential.

Positive regard can significantly impact the outcome of psychotherapy. According to a study by Swami et al. (2021), clients who experience positive regard from their therapist report better treatment outcomes and higher levels of satisfaction with therapy. Positive regard involves the therapist's genuine care and non-judgmental acceptance of the client's thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

This approach encourages the client to feel safe and comfortable in the therapeutic setting, allowing them to express themselves more freely and honestly. The study by Swami et al. (2021) suggests that incorporating positive regard into psychotherapy can help improve the client's self-esteem, increase their motivation for change, and foster a deeper sense of trust in the therapist. Therefore, positive regard is critical to the therapeutic relationship and can facilitate the client's progress toward their treatment goals.

Genuineness

The quality of sincerity is at the core of the next characteristic of positive relationships: genuineness. Being genuine means respecting the person you're interacting with, understanding them, and acknowledging both their positive and negative qualities and their strengths and wounds. This is often seen in romantic relationships, where people may initially put on a facade to appear more attractive but eventually learn to accept each other's imperfections and weaknesses.

When practicing genuineness, it's important to communicate that you see the person's flaws and are there to support them in overcoming them. It would help if you also acknowledged that their flaws do not define them as a person. Over time, as you practice these principles, trust develops. Trust is the foundation of a positive relationship, where you feel safe and secure, knowing you can talk to the other person about vulnerable topics without fear of judgment, attack, or abandonment.

Trust

As we implement these principles, trust begins to develop in the relationship. Trust is the quality of

a relationship where one feels safe and knows that one can share their vulnerabilities without fear of judgment, attack, or abandonment. Trust reflects the bond that gradually forms in a relationship over time. In the children's book *"The Little Prince,"* the fox shares how to build such a relationship of trust. Consistently showing up and being present, such as in a therapy relationship, helps develop trust. A stable and consistent relationship conveys that it is precious and prioritized, allowing individuals to take the next step in vulnerability. In the context of a trusting relationship, individuals feel safe to share their deepest fears of inadequacy, success, self-loathing, trauma, and shame. These vulnerable layers are often not revealed immediately, and trust may take time to build before individuals feel comfortable sharing them. However, these vulnerable areas are the core of the treatment process.

The Core Of Treatment

The core work of treatment involves identifying and modifying vulnerable areas. Without addressing these core elements, we will only work on surface issues, leading to short-term changes that do not address underlying patterns.

These vulnerabilities reflect our deepest secrets, making them difficult to change. However, sharing these secrets can help us realize we are not alone.

Universality comes into play when we share our secrets, allowing us to feel an empathic connection with others who may have similar experiences. This realization gives us the freedom to understand that our feelings are common and not unique to us.

When we are scared, we often feel we are the only ones experiencing it. But when we share, we realize these feelings are part of the human experience. The intensity of these feelings diminishes as we realize that we are not alone in our struggles.

Once these areas are identified, we can use a range of tools to modify the specific belief or wound.

Range Of Therapeutic Qualities And Stages Of Development

These qualities have been discussed in layers, although they are interconnected. It's also helpful to begin to think about the stages of the

relationship since these attitudes will build through different stages of the relationship stages of relationships.

Phase One

Phase one is when meeting a new person. It is common to begin to assess that individual. We are assessing the client for their treatment practice. They're assessing us to determine whether we are trustworthy. They're assessing us to determine if we are correct. They're trying to figure out if this strange person can help me. Perhaps asking themselves, *"Is this person capable of comprehending me at this stage?"* It is possible for people to share their own assessments and fears, but it takes courage at this vulnerable stage when the therapeutic alliance is forming.

Phase Two

In the second phase, start with less sensitive information. As soon as a person has decided to stay in a relationship and decides that we are trustworthy, the work of treatment begins in the context of this trusting relationship. We work together through difficult issues. We identify, explore, and change the most relevant areas. This

is the major work of therapy where we manage the beliefs, emotions, motivation, history, culture, and life goals. Our stance is in close partnership with the client.

Phase Three

In phase three, we move towards the transition of the relationship. At some point, the counseling relationship ends. The work of the treatment has been achieved. And the individual is ready to return to their life. It's useful to understand this process since termination can raise additional concerns and issues such as abandonment, concerns about competence, and related concerns. This time is a critical element in the relationship.

Monitoring And Improvement

It is important to be aware of these patterns of relationship building and avoid assumptions. This allows us to examine what is working well or needs improvement periodically.

There was a program that I was working with inside a prison. The program was six months long, and there were several individuals discharged from the program. So we began a

detailed study of patterns and themes to understand why. We found two different issues, one in Phase One and one in Phase Three. Notably, there were no significant discharges during Phase Two when individuals were actively engaged.

In Phase One, it was determined to be an issue of engagement. Individuals lacked motivation, lacked structure, and lacked relationship with their counselors. In this case, some of the interventions would be to help foster the initial relationships and trust-building.

In Phase Three, it was discovered that many people were being discharged for fighting or some such problem. These were often within two weeks of their release; this is a deep reflection of this third phase of the relationship. It is important to help people to identify what progress they have made. They must internalize the gains they've made in treatment, feel confident they can carry them forward, and no longer be dependent on me as a counselor.

By Phase Three, as a counselor, I am loosening my guidance. I am listening more as a consultant to them as they apply their learned skills.

However, I may be supporting them. To genuinely identify the new feelings of grief, loss, and fear around termination. Depending upon this phase of the relationship, there are different emotions to be identified and managed by emotional management. Just as we can judge that a person is “bad.”

Managing Emotions

In the center of treatment is the safe space to explore our emotional landscape. Once we offer a safe holding environment, we can further explore fears, anger, self-worth, and other vulnerable emotions.

Sometimes individuals judge that emotions are bad, such as the one who says, “I never get angry,” as though anger is bad. “I never feel sad. I never feel.” Using fear as an example, the goal of treatment is not to eliminate fear. Courage is not the absence of fear but acting despite my fears. The emotion, the fear, is the juice, the gasoline that helps drive my actions.

If I have excessive fear, it's like a deer in headlights where I can become frozen and risk being harmed by the oncoming threat. In

contrast, if I genuinely had no fears, I would be in danger of impulsively doing something that kills me since I don't have that protective fear of danger. I would walk in front of cars without fear. Or jump off buildings or walk too close to the edge of any other risky situation

That emotional memory or behavior pattern can become locked in, repeated, or carried with me by the gentle nurturing of a therapeutic relationship. It's not our job to deny these feelings when we're trying to understand them. Instead, assisting the individual in identifying and letting go of judgment while regaining emotional equilibrium is vital.

Bringing these traits full circle, empathy, in some ways, is about reflecting and helping the individual see and understand and experience emotions they are feeling, which were otherwise denied, and helping to strengthen that balance of emotion.

Since these categories are all related, remember that overall, treatment happens in the context of relationships, which is a primary focus of the treatment process. Empathy, positive regard, genuineness, trust, vulnerability, and universality

are qualities we strive to cultivate in our relationships. Each client goes through a unique process in the relationship. We can help build and foster emotional management within the relationship context by safely exploring these experiences.

Key Takeaways

Relationships matter, and the quality of your life is directly related to the quality of your relationships.

Treatment happens in the context of relationships, and the therapeutic relationship is the holding environment that allows individuals to explore their emotions and beliefs, leading to their growth.

The story of the farmer and his three lazy sons teaches us the importance of building strong relationships and working together toward a common goal.

Empathy is an important characteristic of relationships and is about understanding the

other person's experience and emotions, not just repeating their words.

Empathy is a tool that can be applied in counseling situations, businesses, and personal relationships to improve communication and build stronger relationships.

Apply It Now

- Identify one relationship in your life. Ask yourself on a scale of one to 10 to rate how you convey empathy, positive regard, genuineness, trust, vulnerability, universality, and emotion. Next, ask yourself how much this individual, on a scale of one to 10 conveys each of those areas to you. This practice can help identify areas of growth and continued balance within the relationship. You may do this again with an individual you are challenged with and notice how many of the scores drop.
- Reflect on your relationships: Take some time to think about your relationships with your family, friends, and colleagues. How

strong are these relationships? Are there any relationships that need improvement?

- Practice active listening: When you are having a conversation with someone, make an effort to listen to them actively. Pay attention to their words and body language, and try to understand their point of view.
- Express empathy: When someone shares their feelings with you, express empathy by acknowledging their emotions and showing that you understand how they feel.
- Build trust: Work on building trust in your relationships by being honest and reliable. Keep your promises and follow through on your commitments.
- Work on conflict resolution: Learn effective conflict resolution skills so that you can navigate disagreements and challenges in your relationships.
- Practice gratitude: Take time to express gratitude for the important people in your

life. Show them that you appreciate them and their contributions to your life.

- Practice forgiveness: Learn to forgive others and let go of grudges. This can help to strengthen relationships and improve your overall well-being.
- Be open-minded: Practice being open-minded and non-judgmental in your relationships. Try to see things from other people's perspectives and be willing to consider different viewpoints.
- Nurture your relationships: Make time for the important people in your life. Schedule regular check-ins and activities to nurture your relationships.
- Seek help when needed: If you are struggling with your relationships or need support, don't hesitate to seek help from a therapist or clinical supervisor. They can provide you with the tools and guidance you need to improve your relationships and overall well-being.

CHAPTER 4

IT'S ALL ABOUT DIGESTION

*To change ourselves effectively, we first had to change
our perceptions.*

Stephen Covey

The only journey is the journey within.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Digestion is about breaking down our food into its parts. We can then use what is valuable and discard the rest. In a similar manner, therapy is about breaking down situations, experiences, emotions, and beliefs. As we work through this process, it changes the individual, their perception of the world, and responses to the world, creating a new life free from the restrictions of the past, learning from our present to begin. It is helpful to start in the present moment.

Case management is a valuable principle where we complete an assessment. We consider significant areas of life functioning, such as

personal relationships, emotions, beliefs, finances, legal concerns, family history, locational, educational needs, trauma, medical, social support, and other related issues.

In this initial assessment phase, it's helpful to get a broad picture.

At this point, case management allows us to assist with referrals for discovered elements not in our area of expertise.

Since no one is an expert in all areas, this is an essential skill for us to develop. We begin to think about team approaches, even if we work in private practice in individual treatment.

The Six Blind Men

The parable of the six blind men is a well-known story that illustrates the importance of perspective and the dangers of relying solely on one's own limited understanding of a situation. In the parable, six blind men come across an elephant and attempt to understand what it is by touching different parts of the animal. One man touches the elephant's side and concludes that it must be a wall. Another man touches the elephant's tusk and thinks it must be a spear. A

third man touches the elephant's trunk and believes it must be a snake. The fourth man touches the elephant's leg and thinks it must be a tree. The fifth man touches the elephant's ear and concludes it must be a fan. Finally, the sixth man touches the elephant's tail and thinks it must be a rope.

Each of the blind men has a different interpretation of what the elephant is based on their limited understanding and experience of the animal. The parable highlights the importance of considering different perspectives and understanding that each individual's perspective is limited by their own experiences and biases. It encourages us to seek out multiple viewpoints to understand a situation completely. The parable is often used to illustrate the importance of collaboration, the need to see the full picture, as well as the dangers of relying on incomplete information.

Where Does It Hurt?

Knowing a more detailed assessment of their present understanding of their pain is helpful.

Just like the story of the six blind men, we want to know both the broader context and the specific details. What is their knowledge of the distress that caused them to seek treatment at this time in clinical terms? What is the presenting problem that led them to seek treatment? Sometimes it is internal distress. Often it is an external stressor, such as a spouse, employer, or legal entanglement.

Understand from their perspective what is the pain point. This insight makes it easier for us to understand what they're currently motivated for so that we can use this information to leverage the next steps.

What Brought You Here

Once we understand the pain point for this individual, it's also essential to understand the broader context of that pain point. How has it impacted their relationships? How has it impacted work? What problems or other challenges has this experience caused in life? Perhaps it is a sudden or new situation. However, often the pain has existed for some time. So it's essential to understand what has changed that has caused them to seek treatment for this

problem. For example, has the problem worsened recently?

Helping them articulate these details about the problem area can help their commitment to treatment. So they come back to session two and beyond, and helping them tell their pain point also helps us meet that concern with empathy. This also fosters a deepening relationship of trust by learning from our past roots.

Regarding the current pain point, it's essential to understand the origins of the current problem as we identify the emotion associated with this pain point and begin to explore where else they have experienced that issue? For example, if I'm experiencing fear at work, what other places in my life have I experienced fear, perhaps feeling vulnerable and out of control?

Similar behaviors and experiences can be traced all the way back to the earliest memories by identifying similar emotional patterns in other relationships. They may or may not be able to remember something from childhood. But understanding how the current behavior is something that they've experienced before can be helpful to build empathy and gain perspective on

the issue rather than being trapped and the emotional experience of this present moment.

As you can identify the roots of this behavior pattern, we can explore how emotions, beliefs, associated values, expectations, and behaviors commonly occur in similar situations. For example, if an individual responds to that fear with isolation, one can begin to see if there was isolation and withdrawal in prior relationships.

What beliefs were reinforced by continuing this pattern across multiple relationships and situations, and how the behaviors led to outcomes that they preferred or would rather be something different?

This allows the individual to comment that they might have liked a different outcome in the past. Which can help them quickly understand the parallel that they are on the path to sit and make the same mistake today. Suppose they don't make changes by recognizing these repetitive behaviors' parallel process. It could help with motivation and feeling empowered to make a change.

As we understand that these behaviors and ways of viewing the world have been repeated, we can see them as filters like sunglasses that we are wearing, creating similar expectations based on what we've learned from past experiences. However, one can quickly see that the experiences of today might be different. Then the past situation.

Listen For Themes

In the world of psychology, there is a diagnostic test called the thematic apperception test. In this assessment tool, individuals tell stories about the pictures they see in this test.

Across a series of stories, themes will emerge that are unique to that individual. This projective assessment helps to identify patterns of responding to specific relationship experiences. Even if you're not trained in this particular assessment tool, a similar practice will emerge as

the individual speaks about these different areas of his life. As stories are shared about mom, brother, dad, boss, and co-worker, themes may begin to emerge regarding attitudes toward authority, attitudes toward rules, attitudes toward siblings, and success. As we listen to the client's stories that the individual tells us; we can help identify themes.

“Themes may begin to emerge regarding attitudes toward authority, attitudes toward rules, attitudes toward siblings, and success.”

Empathic reflections can help the individual recognize these parallels. With the individual history, parallels will be drawn as well.

As they described their relationship with their parent, we may identify similar emotions they experienced concerning us. These parallels and themes are not perfect but complex. However, they are ways to begin to explore, understand, and build hypotheses, understand the situation, and plan for change.

Another tool for this process is familiar to cognitive theory. One way to deepen the situation is to build an awareness of a list of thoughts about the current situation, identify the associated feelings, and perhaps label them. A scale of one to 10 for intensity can then guide them to determine how these beliefs are inaccurate, which will immediately help them decide to keep some and let go of others. Then they can change other thoughts to more rational belief systems. Many other books describe this process in detail. For now, simply use this as another example of this therapy process.

We break down the problem areas into parts and digest them into valuable elements. That can be better used for personal growth credit, where credit is due. Although focus often includes our problem areas. It is also essential to take a moment in this digestion process to recognize the strengths. It is necessary to identify what challenges have been overcome. Are there similar situations where the individual has succeeded? And remember, what was it about those situations that helped the individual be successful so that we can find patterns of success that they can repeat?

Identifying success also lets the individual know they can build confidence and feel freer to act. It's easier to perform at that time because I've done it in the past. So that I know that I can notice how this exploration of successes and accomplishments and times of growth is a powerful way to overcome feelings and beliefs of helplessness and inadequacy.

By exploring situations with these emotions of empowerment, we are helping them to practice the emotion of strength, which is an antidote to feelings of powerlessness. So the more time and richness of experience we foster with these successful moments, the more accurate and ingrained that memory will become into the present moment. This will help someone understand the thoughts that went through their mind, the emotions in their body, the rush, and the quickened heart. They can identify, articulate, and steer towards feelings of joy and pride if they are linked to success.

Understanding details associated with success or failure can help us digest the situation to understand it and choose a clear path in the future. To be effective, we need to manage both

the big picture and break it down into smaller components.

Key Takeaways

Digestion and therapy are both about breaking down and processing something in order to use what is valuable and discard the rest.

Case management is important for assessing significant areas of life functioning and making referrals for issues outside of our expertise.

Understanding the pain point and broader context of the individual's problem is important for building empathy and trust.

Identifying the roots of behavior patterns and exploring beliefs, values, expectations, and behaviors can help an individual gain perspective on their current situation and feel empowered to make a change.

Listening for themes and patterns in the stories an individual tells can help identify attitudes and parallels in different areas of their life.

Apply At Now

- Practice deep breathing or meditation to increase awareness of the present moment.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of an individual's life functioning, including personal relationships, emotions, beliefs, finances, legal concerns, family history, locational, educational needs, trauma, medical, social support, and other related issues.
- Use empathy and active listening skills to understand an individual's pain point and the broader context of their problem.
- Identify the roots of behavior patterns and explore beliefs, values, expectations, and behaviors with the individual.
- Use cognitive therapy techniques such as identifying thoughts associated with the current situation and labeling associated feelings.
- Help the individual identify and express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment.

- Develop a plan of action with the individual that includes small steps they can take towards change.
- Use case management principles to make referrals for issues outside of your expertise.
- Practice active listening and reflection to help the individual recognize parallels and themes in their stories and attitudes towards relationships and authority figures.
- Collaborate with other professionals and build a team approach for comprehensive care.
- Self-exploration of emotion:
- Identify one stressful emotion in your life today.
- Identify three earlier times when you've had that stressful emotion.
- Identify when you have overcome the stressful feeling in your past, and identify the differences between the situations where you were ineffective versus those where you were effective. So that you can remember can learn how to repeat the problem by choice and take it away. It is

essential to begin in the present moment since the present moment, and the recent past is the client's current motivation throughout treatment. It's valuable to identify—past and present repetitions of these concerns and experiences. The treatment process involves examining these situations for thoughts, thinking errors, emotions, behaviors, and other helpful parts that lead to failure.

CHAPTER 5

IT'S ALL ABOUT STRUCTURE

*Structure provides clarity and coherence, a framework
for innovation to flourish within.*

Angela Duckworth

*Structure gives us the space to be free. Within the
framework of structure, we can experiment, create,
and grow.*

Todd Henry

Throughout this book, we have identified structure characteristics through our relationships and process. Structure and function are so important that it deserves additional and detailed attention. A colleague of mine regularly says that structure is the most critical element in his practice. Clients know that they can trust us. Or not. It creates a safe space by creating predictability, producing a pattern for the “therapy zone” that an individual can quickly return to during the therapy hour.

The Story Of The Lost Carpenter

A carpenter sets out to build a house for a family. However, instead of taking the time to plan and measure, the carpenter simply starts building without any blueprint or foundation. As a result, the walls are crooked, the doors don't fit, and the roof leaks. When the family moves in, they realize that the house is unusable and ask the carpenter to fix it. The carpenter tries to make some adjustments, but the house continues to fall apart. Finally, the carpenter realizes he must start from scratch and build a proper foundation and structure. This time, he takes the time to plan and measure, resulting in a beautiful and functional house that the family can enjoy for years to come.

The fable of the lost carpenter reminds us of the importance of structure and planning in any endeavor, whether it's building a house or pursuing a goal. Without a solid foundation and structure, our efforts can quickly fall apart and leave us lost and directionless. It can also be more difficult to correct after the foundation has been improperly built. Consider how to build our counseling practice effectively for client success.

Scheduling

Consistent scheduling is a simple yet effective way to enhance the therapeutic process and promote positive outcomes. Consistent scheduling in psychotherapy has been found to have several benefits for both clients and therapists. One of the key benefits is improved treatment adherence, which can lead to better treatment outcomes. According to a recent study by Weisz et al. (2020), consistent scheduling can improve treatment adherence and increase the likelihood of positive treatment outcomes for children and adolescents with anxiety disorders. Additionally, consistent scheduling can help clients establish a routine and create a sense of predictability and stability in their lives, which can be particularly beneficial for those struggling with mental health issues. Consistent scheduling can help therapists manage their caseload and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Our lives have busy schedules. If we have ten clients, their lives have busy schedules; managing these varied schedules is complicated. There were times in my career when I was doing a lot of outpatients; I would notice that every time I

went on vacation, I was able to move sessions. We were skipping weeks, but shortly after that I would lose 10% of my clients. I spent time considering why this might be, how to manage it, and what changes to make.

While working with other counselors, I've noticed that their engagement and retention rates were consistently lower when they changed appointments frequently to accommodate their schedules. To be clear, I am not saying we should not go on vacation as counselors. Self-care is essential, and certain life situations are emergencies that must be addressed. However, we want to understand how our structure affects the development of the treatment relationship.

Scheduling Structure

Consider the example of the scheduling structure, where an appointment is set for Tuesday at 6:00pm every week. This schedule is repeated consistently. It is as though that hour of the week belongs to that client. It is much less work for me as the counselor to avoid various emails and conversations. Compared to scheduling a new appointment time every week helps me plan for my week with fewer emergency sessions for me

as a counselor. When an individual knows that they have a set time, they're often better able to contain their emotional reactions for that time and less likely to request varied schedules. It helps them to value the session.

As a counselor, having a structured schedule helps me to maintain organization and mental clarity. I've tried many different scheduling structures when I was a new counselor growing a practice, struggling to pay rent for the office. There were times when I was willing to drop everything and meet at any time or place in order to get that extra session and a few pennies from insurance.

Over time, I moved towards having office hours containing that variability to a more limited time segment, for example, 9am to 1pm on Monday to Friday. Over time, I've continued to move towards the structure of having these individual slots for individual patients. This is not to say I will never change a time for an individual in my work structure that regular time is generally committed to them. From the client's perspective, the value of structured time helps with the consistency of a safe relationship.

Imagine your current life schedule. Consider your regular dentist appointments, hairdressing, medical appointments, home maintenance, or other such meetings, often at different days and times. They require additional mental energy and thought to find time in the schedule, take time off of work, and rearrange other things in your plan. We must also remember if the appointment time is at five o'clock, 5:15, or 5:30.

The simple structure of regular timings helps to establish ease which helps in several ways. First, consistency helps to establish trust. Regularity helps to develop a feeling of relationship and a sense of being valued as a person.

I know of clients who scheduled other areas of their life around, for example, there is a 6:00pm Tuesday counseling time. Consider how this helps the client understand the priority and value of this time and commitment to this time and, by extension, dedication to the therapy process. It helps ease the client's efforts and reduce stress levels so that they do not have to juggle various other tasks to arrive at the session.

For new clients, routine helps to establish stability and trust. For consistent clients, it helps to establish a holding environment to help contain the emotional work they're engaged in for

“For new clients, routine helps to establish stability and trust.”

clients transitioning out of treatment. In addition, consistency helps to remind them of safety.

Consistency is maintained throughout the treatment process as they begin to stretch their wings. The repetitive behavior week by week helps in memory formation and helps them structure a routine. The more routine the behavior pattern, the more likely someone will continue and proceed. For example, in January, many people joined a gym. It takes three weeks of daily attendance for them to develop a pattern of regularity in their approach to health care, but as soon as they miss a day, they stop going. This can help us understand why clients may disappear when we break that consistency from a habit-forming perspective.

From an emotional standpoint, what is the emotion regarding those changes when the times

change regularly? Even if the emotional reactions are mild or ignored, these feelings of frustration, annoyance, confusion, or abandonment are slight wounds to the treatment process. If we are late or reschedule the meeting, what message does that convey to the client? And what does it mean when it occurs more than once (which can happen in long-term therapy)

Some clients may have experienced a long history of abandonment or fears that they are not as important as the other emergency. Some clients may experience sibling rivalry, which can trigger issues when they imagine you were late because you were with another patient. Perhaps at its deepest level, these delays convey lower respect in the relationship. It could even signal our own personal resistance or dislike of a client.

Remember the client who, with nothing else, might say at the end of treatment, “Thank you for spending this time with me for all those weeks.” The holding environment alone is profoundly valuable in the relationship and space for further work. Both time within the sessions and the structure of scheduling our therapy hour are essential within the therapy process.

Session Structure

When it comes to counseling sessions, structure is an essential aspect that can significantly impact the effectiveness of the therapy. Apart from the scheduling and timing of sessions, the general inner structure of each session can play a vital role in achieving the desired outcomes.

Every therapy session typically consists of multiple important parts, including opening up, discussing concerns, setting goals, working through issues, and providing feedback. These segments need to be managed consistently to support the therapy process and create a safe space for the client to feel heard and supported.

By establishing and adhering to a clear inner structure for each session, the therapist can help the client feel more comfortable and confident, leading to more productive and positive outcomes. Therefore, the inner structure of a counseling session is a crucial component that requires careful consideration and management to facilitate effective therapy.

Greeting

It's common in social interactions to set the stage upon meeting someone to say hello, smile, perhaps shake hands, offer a cup of water, comment on the weather, and other social nuances. Sometimes these occur as we walk from the waiting room to the office. For example, depending on your office protocols, there may be a colleague who would often offer tea.

The warm tea would slowly cool over the source time of the session, giving a subtle cue to clients about the passage of time. Similarly, a cold glass of water does the same in the next stage.

These simple greeting rituals vary across clients. Some may ask how we are doing, others may comment on the weather, and some may jump straight into the discussion of an issue.

Check-in

At this stage, one may take a moment to check in about how the week has gone and the completion of any between-session assignments. If you use between-session assignments, it is essential to follow up on them. Doing so conveys the value

of these assignments and helps engage the clients further into compliance with the practice. This is critical to extending the in-session work since they spend more time outside of the session than within the session.

Treatment Content

My general treatment hour has centered on the work of treatment, whatever the content is for that day. Sometimes this is an extension of the work from the prior week or something revealed by the between-session practice. At other times, something completely new occurred this week, such as a conflict with a coworker or spouse.

This time in session opens the layers of the situation, considering one's culture, past, beliefs, motivation, and emotions. We may also explore specific tools or coping strategies to help manage the identified concern. Sometimes an emotionally charged situation may require longer time to manage or multiple sessions.

Closure

The fourth element of the session is closure—taking a moment to reflect on what gains were

made in the hours. Consider what insights were identified and perhaps plan a between-session assignment to practice and establish those gains. This allows the client to think further about progress and also helps cue the client to mentally return from the intense emotional content.

Having a moment to “wrap up,” helps to reduce the shock of being told, “Time's up.”

This within-session structure has parallels to the overall treatment process where there is engagement, deeper work, and closure.

Between-Session Practice

Activities are essential treatment extenders that can help practice and establish the treatment gains. Some individuals call this “homework.” However, some clients will negatively associate the term “homework” related to school, stress, and guilt. By calling it practice, the subtle shift can help to ease some of these historical associations.

Many types of practices can be recommended. These can emphasize different parts of the

experience, such as behaviors, beliefs, or emotions. Some examples include:

- **Journaling:** Encourage the client to journal about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the session topic. This can help them process their emotions further and provide insight for the next session.
- **Mindfulness Exercises:** Assign mindfulness exercises for the client to practice in their daily life, such as meditation, deep breathing, or body scan. This can help them learn to manage their stress and anxiety.
- **Behavioral Experiments:** Assign behavioral experiments for the client to try out in their daily life, such as facing a fear or trying a new social activity. This can help them challenge negative beliefs and learn new coping skills.
- **Gratitude Journaling:** Assign the client to keep a gratitude journal and write down three things they are grateful for each day. This can help them focus on the positive in their life and improve their mood.

- **Communication Exercises:** Assign communication exercises for the client to practice in their relationships, such as active listening or assertiveness. This can help them improve their communication skills and strengthen their relationships.
- **Self-Care Plan:** Assign the client to create a self-care plan and practice self-care activities daily, such as exercise, healthy eating, or engaging in a hobby. This can help them improve their overall well-being and reduce stress.
- **Role Play:** Assign the client to practice a difficult conversation with a friend or family member through role play. This can help them build confidence and learn new communication skills.
- **Thought Records:** Assign the client to complete thought records throughout the week, recording negative thoughts and replacing them with more positive or realistic ones. This can help them challenge negative thinking patterns and improve their mood.
- **Visualization Exercises:** Assign visualization exercises for the client to

practice, such as imagining a peaceful scene or visualizing a positive outcome. This can help them reduce anxiety and build confidence.

- **Graded Exposure:** Assign graded exposure exercises for the client to gradually face a fear or phobia. This can help them overcome their fears and develop new coping strategies.

Notes

There are often varied opinions about taking notes during the session. There are those who believe that taking notes during a session shows that I am not focused on the individual.

Others feel that taking notes is critical and conveys to the client that I understand what you're saying is valuable. Perhaps most importantly, taking notes helps me accurately remember the stories being told so that I can properly reflect on these stories in later sessions. If you choose to take notes, it is not taking notes like a stenographer, but rather taking notes of key points such as names, ages, key phrases, core

beliefs, etc. Over time, you'll be able to make minimal notes to remember important details and phrases the client has used many times.

When an individual experiences a trauma or primary challenge, that scenario can be burned into memory and replayed in a theme. After this kind of experience, finding their unique language is a powerful way to help connect in the relationship, show respect, and convey empathy so they know they are heard. Our notes can help us to capture these key phrases. For example, If a client says, "I'm disgusted with myself" that may carry a similar meaning to "I hate myself." However, this alternative phrase may miss the way the client's mother called him "disgusting" following an event in childhood. The specific words matter. Our notes help us to leverage this precision.

In addition to in-session notes, we need time for more detailed notes between sessions while it is fresh in our memory. It's important that the individuals understand that there is a 50-minute hour since we need a moment to review our notes, check messages, use the restroom, and other such needs. This also helps prevent running

late in a session from causing another session being late.

This break allows us to take notes on the session and review notes of the upcoming session. If you took good notes during the session, you could write them later, but where possible, it is very valuable to make session notes immediately after each session while the stories are fresh in our minds. These notes can be reviewed before the following session to remember the between-session assignment and follow up on critical issues. This also helps to identify details before they become entangled with the other therapy stories from the day.

We also need to keep good records in order to protect ourselves. This may be needed to apply for additional funding (for example, insurance reimbursement) or documentation that certain interventions were provided in a risk management situation.

Samantha's Story

Consider the story of Samantha. She had been seeing her therapist, Dr. J., for a few months to work through her anxiety and depression.

Initially, their sessions were scattered, and there was no clear structure to their conversations. Samantha often found herself repeating the same stories and not feeling like she was making progress.

One day, Dr. J. suggested implementing a more structured approach to their sessions. She suggested that they start each session with a check-in, where Samantha would rate her anxiety and depression levels on a scale of 1-10. Then, they would set a clear goal for the session and work towards achieving it together. Sessions ended with agreed-upon practices to continue between sessions.

At first, Samantha was resistant to the idea of structure. She had always rebelled against the idea of routine and felt like it would stifle her creativity. However, as they began to implement the new approach, Samantha noticed a significant shift in her progress. She felt more focused and motivated during their sessions, and the structure helped her to identify specific areas that needed attention.

As they continued to work together, Samantha began to appreciate the importance of structure in

the therapeutic process. The clear boundaries and expectations helped her to feel more in control of her healing journey and allowed her to make significant progress in managing her anxiety and depression.

Self Care Structure

In creating the structure for clients, I must also value myself. Just as we give care to others, it may be helpful to structure personal care time.

Practicing this priority helps to maintain our stress management and reduces the blurring of scheduling times. This may include 10-minute breaks between sessions or longer scheduled breaks to check messages and other related tasks. Some counselors schedule sessions back-to-back to maximize out-of-office times. Others schedule breaks between clients to allow time to take personal care, such as a brief walk or a bite to eat.

In addition to brief breaks, it is important to have “time off.” For example, in many religious traditions, there's the concept of the Sabbath as a day of rest. By having a known day set aside for this practice, we have a scheduled time for

ourselves to recharge from the emotionally draining work.

For some people, this may be a spiritual day of rest for others, this may be a Friday evening social event for others, this may be a daily 20-minute physical workout routine. As we schedule these times for self-care, we can genuinely convey these values to clients as well. Whatever structure we create for ourselves, we understand that we are valuable.

Consider also that by structuring positive activities into our schedule, we are also scheduling unproductive activities out of the schedule. For example, if I have a free hour, I can schedule that for exercise or fail to schedule it and instead watch TV. The same is true for clients. As we schedule between sessions positive practices, we limit their free time for worry and guilt.

Letting Go

Structure cuts both ways. We have been discussing how the design limits the time to that therapy hour. However, the system also is part of the process of letting go of other tasks from

outside of the session as a counselor, we let go of external tasks to focus on the client. It's essential to let go of external tasks so we can focus on the discussion during the session.

This skill of holding on and letting go is also a life lesson in treatment. As we digest the memories, certain losses will need to be released, and replaced with new positive relationships. In a parallel manner, just like the treatment hour is valuable, it is helpful to practice the skill of saying goodbye at the end of the hour. Letting go at the end of the hour helps to convey confidence in the relationship that it continues into the next and that the client can manage successfully until then. This is the same emotional experience of termination of the therapy process, where we internalize that therapeutic relationship.

The act of processing and releasing one's emotions can be observed in clients who have suffered from traumatic experiences. For instance, an individual who has been assaulted may struggle with self-doubt and guilt over their actions during the emergency. By working through these memories, the feelings of guilt, shame, and self-judgment associated with the

experience may gradually diminish. This process also helps to maintain a cohesive sense of self.

However, some clients may fear losing a part of themselves when therapy comes to an end. To address this, we explore the gains and progress made in therapy to ensure that the individual has a stable sense of self when they leave. It's essential to begin the termination process well in advance to allow for emotional detachment and management. This phase can be effective when practiced regularly, even without a fixed schedule.

Personal Attitudes About Structure

It's worth examining your own attitudes toward the structure. Our individual experiences with discipline and punishment may shape our feelings towards it, so it's important to recognize and release biases that do not serve the therapeutic relationship and optimal functioning. If we have negative attitudes or rebel against structure, our treatment work may lose structure and the associated core elements.

Consistent scheduling benefits both the counselor and the client by providing a sense of respect,

empathy, and value in the relationship. Similarly, having a structured approach to note-taking during and after sessions can help organize time, support memory, and provide the necessary documentation. By creating boundaries around a particular issue, the structure allows for the exclusion of extraneous factors. Overall, it's important to acknowledge our personal attitudes towards structure and use them in a way that supports the therapeutic process.

This process of letting go of things that no longer serve occurs within a session, as we let go of judgments, and within the session structure and treatment process, as we let go of our time with a therapist to return to daily life.

Key Takeaways

The structure is essential in therapy, creating predictability, safety, and trust.

Scheduling structure is critical in managing busy lives and maintaining consistency in therapy sessions.

Consistency in therapy sessions helps establish routine, trust, and a holding environment for clients.

Breaking consistency can cause emotional reactions in clients and affect the treatment process.

Apply It Now

- Create a structure for your therapy sessions, including scheduling, note-taking, and follow-up tasks.
- Set specific times for therapy sessions and avoid changing them frequently.
- Discuss with clients the benefits of having a structured therapy session and how it can help them achieve their goals.
- Use a planner or scheduling app to manage your time and avoid double-booking sessions.
- Provide clients with a list of resources they can use outside of therapy to manage their symptoms or continue their progress.

- Incorporate mindfulness and relaxation techniques into your therapy sessions to help clients manage stress and anxiety between sessions.
- Offer clients a consistent routine of activities to do between therapy sessions to reinforce learning and skills.
- Use goal-setting and tracking tools to help clients measure their progress and stay motivated.
- Encourage clients to establish a routine for self-care activities like exercise, healthy eating, and relaxation.
- Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of your therapy structure and make adjustments as needed.

CHAPTER 6

IT'S ALL ABOUT ME AGAIN

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

W.B. Yeats

The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change.

Carl Rogers

We've examined a range of conditions and principles in therapy. For example, one of the standards in education is the scholar-practitioner model. This model includes education, continuing education, and research. In the scholar-practitioner model, it is essential to maintain the scholarship. This learning involves clinical practice and assessment, treatment, and other clinical practice methods with clients to deepen our knowledge. This may also include my use of clinical supervision and personal therapy so that we can understand and lead clients into

the depths. To be effective, we need both the basic information and the skill of application.

The Piano Tuner

The tale of the piano tuner is a story about the importance of attention to detail and the value of experience. Once, there was a young man who was a skilled piano tuner. He was sent to tune a piano in a grand concert hall that was known for its impeccable acoustics. The young man arrived and started tuning the piano. However, something did not feel right to him, and he could not quite get the sound he was looking for. After several hours of work, he stepped back and listened to the piano. It still did not sound right, and he was unsure of what to do next.

Suddenly, an elderly man appeared beside him and asked what was wrong. The young man explained the problem and his inability to solve it. The elderly man introduced himself as the hall's chief piano tuner and offered to help. The chief tuner asked the young man to listen to a specific note and describe what he heard. The young man described a sour, discordant sound. The chief tuner nodded and said, "The problem

is not with the piano but the room. It is a common issue here, and I know how to fix it."

The chief tuner then pulled out a small hammer from his toolkit and struck a specific spot on the wall, causing a small piece of plaster to fall to the ground. Suddenly, the piano's sound transformed, filling the hall with beautiful, harmonious music. The young man was amazed and grateful, and the chief tuner explained that he had spent many years working in the hall and had learned how the sound waves interacted with the walls and ceiling.

The tale of the piano tuner highlights the importance of both knowledge and applied skill. The young man was skilled in tuning pianos but lacked the experience and understanding of how the concert hall's acoustics could affect the sound. The chief tuner had years of experience in the same space and was able to diagnose and solve the problem quickly. It emphasizes the value of learning from experienced mentors and the importance of attention to detail in any craft or profession.

Practicing Skills That Are Learned Through Education

In the scholar-practitioner model, some individuals can work entirely with research only. For example, consider researchers of memory in mice. Who may function effectively in a lab while never regularly treating patients? In contrast, individuals can practice full-time therapy without staying abreast of the literature. Maintaining both is essential for the highest functioning.

Suppose the researcher does not understand the applications in practice. The research study may appear correct and yet devoid of practical application. Many studies have shown this to be true.

Statistical significance is found and often heralded as a “gold standard.” However, this is not the same as clinical significance. Sometimes, the difference is hardly more than in the placebo-controlled group. The difference, although statistically significant, may not be clinically significant. For example. Consider a 5% change in depression. This may be statistically significant but does not substantially change the

experience of the individual suffering from severe depression.

Monitoring Of Research

Many hone their skills effectively. But are not able to manage variations in all applications. In addition, there is an increasing diversity of skills typically learned through research and continuing education long after one begins as a counselor. This book strives to balance these issues with a deep grounding in clinical practice and a research base to continue our professional development expertise and round our skills and approach to clients.

At some point, we reach the end of the book. This must be an ongoing journey, and I encourage you to seek continued opportunities for personal growth and professional growth grounded in research and science.

Continuing Education

There are several purposes for continuing education, Such as deepening knowledge and enjoying the subject matter. Some

books, research articles, and training deepen understanding in specific areas. For example, the use of EMDR for trauma.

Depth of knowledge is essential, particularly in the areas you have identified as your primary skill. Exercise such as this deepens a particular skill set. This allows us to stay abreast of current trends in that specialty area.

Depth of knowledge is not sufficient. In addition to depth, having diverse expertise is essential once you have established a specialty area of interest. Therefore, it is also valuable to deepen those skills.

There are several ways to broaden our skills as therapists, such as learning new treatment models, theories, and techniques, or learning about other disciplines that complement our own, such as counseling, social work, and psychology. It is also helpful to consider complementary approaches in a broader circle, such as massage, chiropractic, medicine, pharmacology, and other licensed disciplines. As we continue to expand our knowledge base, we are able to better serve the people who come to us for help. This is due in part to the fact that we will

be familiar with the other abilities. We'll notice commonalities among these disciplines, such as the commonalities found in this book.

Some of these themes will help demonstrate the value of those principles since they have been researched across different disciplines. For example, one method of validation of research is that a finding has been tested across diverse populations and approaches. Just the same, as we understand our clinical skills and tools in the context of multiple other disciplines, we can become more effective in case coordination.

In addition to knowledge, it is essential to engage in the practice of skills. In some research or continuing education, it is possible to transfer knowledge. However, the knowledge that does not move into practice is limited. For example, after each chapter, there have been practice exercises to provide the opportunity to apply the principles that you've been learning throughout this book. Personalizing this practice creates a much richer experience and deeper understanding of the taught principles.

If you have skipped some of the exercises, I encourage you to go back and complete

them. Suppose you've completed all of the activities. After a while, I encourage you to go back and complete them again. One day I was flipping through one of my earlier books. I was looking for an answer to something. In rereading that chapter, I was struck with an insight that I had not had previously, even though I had written the book, reviewed it, edited it, and presented on the topic many times before. When we repeat our learning, it can reinforce and deepen our knowledge; insight will occur when we apply it to new situations. Certain books are valuable to read more than once due to how our practice deepens, and the material can be used with new knowledge, clients, and understanding.

Sometimes, additional research does not add much news when a phenomenon has been researched for decades. For example, Tylenol has been examined and used for decades. If it is not studied for the next five years, the prior research is not invalidated. However, new research is valuable to help understand interactions with new situations. For example, how does Tylenol Interact with COVID-19 and related symptoms?

Continued research may not be necessary to replicate the same findings but to continue to grow in new areas and applications. Similarly, as you select research material, consider ways to increase your skillset, building upon your prior knowledge and expanding it.

Models Of Continued Learning

Scholarly education: There are several steps that one can take to continue to grow their academic knowledge. The most common is continuing education seminars. For professionals, these are often required by state licensure. However, there are many other ways to develop ongoing knowledge development, for example, subscribing to mailing lists. In addition, consider the thought leaders and research professionals in your specialty area.

There are ways to subscribe to their email lists and follow their book lists. We remain aware of their new research as it is developed and released by following these professionals. For example, you could follow me on Amazon or subscribe to my mailing list from my website to stay abreast of new materials and tools.

Facebook groups: There is a wide range of Facebook groups and other social media. Consider joining groups of other professionals in your discipline and groups where individuals discuss the treatment issues you specialize in by subscribing to these groups. It helps to remain alert to current discussion strands in the field and related current concerns from the population we serve. For example, I am often engaged in groups where I am the mentee of another expert, a peer in a mastermind of colleagues, and a lay participant continuing to grow my experience in, for example, meditation, anxiety, or other personal growth discussion.

Daily or regular reading: Many executives and world leaders engage in the practice of reading daily or regularly. If you read a book a week, that would be approximately fifty books each year, 500 books in a decade, and 1,500 books throughout your career. If you read journals rather than books, those numbers grow exponentially.

Journals: Subscribe to journals, especially critical journals in your specialty area. Doing so

gives you monthly or regular information on diverse research topics published in your area.

Subscribe to keyword digests: Your library, Google Scholar, or other databases can be set up to search daily or weekly and send you a notice of all new literature using a specific keyword. This is an excellent way to monitor all new research on a given topic.

In a matter of seconds, you can see the article titles of current research and click through to read the full article if you have the time and desire. I have done this for years, and receive daily headlines of key specialty topics in the field.

Authorship: Writing in books, chapters, and journal articles requires extensive research, evaluative thought, and the development of clarity to communicate complex topics. This research and communication practice is a valuable tool for internalizing our learning.

Teaching: Educating others is another excellent way to remain aware of current literature and maintain critical thinking skills. With each new student, we'll be asked questions that will challenge our thinking, broaden our perceptions,

and help us understand recent worldview trends as they emerge within the professional community.

Practitioner application: The most common practitioner application is client treatment time. I've known counselors who “wing it” and approach clients and their needs based on their gut. It's important to have a well-balanced system in place to aid in the formulation and application of therapeutic principles. They're taking into account, for example, some of the ideas presented here. Do we regularly monitor an individual in their relationship development journey with us?

Do we monitor the depth of their emotional awareness and emotional management? Do we teach skills to identify to alter cognitive beliefs and emotional patterns of problematic situations? Again, this is a valuable way to approach this is during our documentation time. For example, it is possible to use tools in your notes, to help guide you where a client is in their process. These can be reviewed during our treatment planning process.

Supervision Of Counselors

Supervision of counselors involves our deep understanding of treatment principles and articulating these skills so that the supervisee can use them by providing leadership; it helps to reinforce and deepen our knowledge.

Personal Or Group Supervision

Seeking supervision in that specialty area is valuable when learning a new skill. For example. When I first began working in the criminal justice setting. I received care from an expert in that field. When I first learned the use of clinical hypnosis, I received supervision from individuals in that specialty field. As part of my development of a specialty for gambling treatment, I receive specialty supervision within that specialty field. This is valuable, particularly when learning new skills and as an ongoing or periodic consultation. Although not required, we can obtain certifications in these specialty areas to help communicate that expertise to those we serve.

Personal Therapy

Personal therapy is valuable for every counselor. The more I understand myself, the more I can rise above my own experiences and limitations. In doing so, I will be able to help to guide someone past those limitations. It's much easier for me to avoid those topics if I've already dealt with them or if I'm frightened of them. I'm going to make it clear that they can't be altered. They don't have this constraint; I do!

Journaling

Journaling is another excellent evidence-based practice. It helps to organize our thoughts and process our feelings about issues. Research has found that simply writing about traumatic events or stressful situations can bring about chemical changes in the body resulting in improved immune functioning and decreased visits to the medical office.

Personal Use Of Therapy Workbooks

The use of workbooks in psychotherapy has been shown to have many benefits. Personal use of psychotherapy workbooks is one such benefit. Psychotherapy workbooks provide a structured

and organized approach to self-help, allowing individuals to work through their concerns and issues at their own pace. In addition, they can serve as a complement to traditional therapy sessions, providing clients with additional tools and resources to manage their symptoms. A recent study by Johansson et al. (2021) found that the use of a self-help workbook for individuals with anxiety and depression led to significant improvements in both conditions. The workbook provided psychoeducation, cognitive restructuring exercises, and behavioral activation strategies. The authors concluded that the use of workbooks can be an effective and cost-efficient way to deliver psychological interventions. Our personal use of psychotherapy workbooks can be an effective tool improve our own wellbeing, as well as know how to guide our clients with these tools.

Many books are designed to accompany therapy to practice and apply the learned tools. Using tools such as these help us to practice the specific skills we are studying, continue our personal growth, and become effective at using that workbook to recommend as a support and guide to our clients when we find practical workbooks.

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat.

Create a regular practice to continue these skills.

Choose an area that you want to grow in. Whatever issue you choose, identify the parts. For example, if you're growing in depression treatment, identify some functions of that specialty area. For example, there's a vast body of research on cognitive therapy for depression. Within that specialty, there are significant gender differences in depression that may be important to study. There are hormonal differences between depression and emotional experience within this specialty. Each of these subspecialties becomes more and more unique and precise.

As you identify the primary topic area and parts. Plan a practice to grow in those areas. Plan a practice of your choosing. From the list of options we've been discussing, for example, you could create or choose from the following action steps for a regular practice of learning about depression:

- Read one article on depression daily.

- Once weekly practice, the tools you've learned on a personal stressor from the week are another example.
- Sign up to the mailing list of a famous depression researcher
- You could develop a practice of gratitude to reverse the depressed mood by focusing on your awareness of things to be grateful for and holding attention to the experience of gratitude. You could, for example, Maintain a gratitude journal writing three things I am thankful for each night.
- Practice meditation on a gratitude statement.
- To be positive in your Facebook or social media feeds
- Place “gratitude” as a keyword search in your scholarly library databases.

When building a practice, it is helpful to include both education and experience components. It is beneficial to study that area in depth. If I learn five minutes a day on a topic, approximately 1,500 minutes of study will be at the end of the year. However, if I took 50 minutes a day. That would be 15,000 hours of study (Or some similar

range). Small practices done consistently rapidly build our expertise.

The scholar-practitioner model holds essential lessons for the balance of knowledge and practice. First, it is vital to maintain new knowledge to build on old scholarship, expand current applications, and grow our expertise.

It's essential to maintain a structure of methods (A practice) to understand the depth and real-world applications of knowledge. There are many ways to approach academic learning. Such as:

- Mailing lists
- Readings
- Journal subscriptions
- Keyword digests
- Writing
- Teaching

There are many ways to practice clinical applications, such as:

- Client treatment time
- Supervision of counselors
- Personal clinical supervision

- Personal therapy
- Personal use of other therapy workbooks

As we create a practice, we may want to choose elements from the menu of both scholarly and practice-based learning so that our skills can develop in a rounded manner.

And practice is essential to deepen our experience, expertise, and ability to apply this learning to be most successful with the clients we serve for many years to come and help our clients and all the people whose lives they touch.

Key Points

The scholar-practitioner model emphasizes the importance of maintaining scholarship through education, continuing education, and research.

Both maintaining depth of knowledge in a specialty area and broadening skills and knowledge across diverse areas are essential.

The practice of skills is essential to fully transfer knowledge into application.

Continued learning should be an ongoing journey for personal and professional growth.

Apply It Now

- Consider my personal experience.
 - Have I had more experience in academic learning or practice?
 - What are two ways I could begin to round that experience with my weaker skill in the coming month?
 - What is one area I would like to be the primary specialty that I commit to growing for the next year? What is a daily or regular practice that I commit to implementing? Starting now.
- Attend a professional development conference or workshop related to your specialty area.
- Read a book or research article on a topic outside of your specialty area to broaden your knowledge.
- Practice a new treatment technique or theory with a client under supervision.

- Participate in a peer consultation group to share knowledge and receive feedback from colleagues.
- Review your notes from past workshops and conferences to refresh your memory and deepen your understanding of previous learnings.
- Write a reflection on how you have applied a theory or technique from a past workshop to a recent client session.
- Research a complementary discipline and identify commonalities with your own practice.
- Attend a lecture or training on a new treatment model to expand your skills.
- Complete the practice exercises provided in this book, even if you have already done them before.
- Engage in personal therapy or clinical supervision to deepen your understanding and improve your practice.

CHAPTER 7

NEXT STEPS



*You can't start the next chapter in your life
If you are still reading the last one.*

- Anonymous

Where Have We Been?

We have explored the importance of self-awareness, goal-setting, relationship-building, listening, and personal growth in counseling. We have reflected on our beliefs about change, free will, and human nature. We have considered the importance of goal-setting and building a positive therapeutic relationship. This relationship allows us to break down the problems to underlying themes within the safety of structure in therapy sessions.

Remembering that we are the tools of change in the therapy setting, we remember the need for ongoing learning and professional development, including supervision, personal therapy, and

journaling, to continue practicing for a lifetime of growth.

It is said that we reach the finish line altogether, or not at all. As I grow, I bring others along with me. Some may try to hold me back in my old patterns, but just the same, our growth helps to pull them forward as well. We are imperfect together but moving progressively closer to a world with a little more ease, understanding, and connection.

Where To Go From Here?

We have joined together in this journey to explore our emotions, traveled through the change process, and applied these skills in critical spheres of life. Perhaps you skipped some exercises along the way. I encourage you to go back to experience them. Once we learn these new ways of being, it is time to practice.

Practice, Practice, Practice

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali say that mastery is developed from two key elements: practice and intensity of intention.

Practice

Just as the brain example teaches, skill grows over time through practice. How does one become an expert violinist? Practice, practice, practice. Just the same, how does one become an expert in identifying, navigating, and managing emotions? Practice, practice, practice.

This book is not a novel that you read once and are done. Instead, it is a guide with a range of tools. Please choose the best tools for you and practice them until you thoroughly learn their lessons and applications. Then try some others to diversify your skills.

It is said that every time we change jobs, even if we have transferrable skills, it takes about a year to know the job thoroughly, and it takes about ten years to master it. Since most of us plan on living another ten years, why not take on the learning of mastery of navigation of my emotions? I will have feelings anyway, so I might as well become better at mitigating the painful emotions and maximizing the joys.

Intensity Of Effort

Once you commit to practicing, you then decide on effort. For example, I could write one gratitude weekly or ten every day. I could tell my spouse I love them once a year or twenty times a day. Whatever practices and growth areas you identify, the intensity of the course affects the speed of our progress. The more we practice and the more effort we put into our practice, the sooner we reach our goal.

Taking Stock

As we near the end, consider what you have learned by answering the following questions.

- What are my core values and beliefs about human nature?
- What are my personal strengths and weaknesses in working with clients, and how can I leverage the former and improve the latter?
- What are my long-term and short-term goals, and how do they align with my values?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses when it comes to goal-setting, and how can

I improve my ability to set and achieve goals?

- What are my communication style and interpersonal skills, and how can I improve them to better connect with clients?
- What biases or assumptions do I bring to the therapeutic relationship, and how can I identify and address them?
- How do I handle my emotional reactions when working with clients who are dealing with difficult issues?
- How can I better manage my own stress and maintain self-care when working with challenging cases?
- What are my organizational and time management skills, and how can I improve them to better structure sessions with clients?
- How can I create a safe and welcoming environment for clients during sessions, and what strategies can I use to maintain that environment?
- How do I stay up-to-date with new developments and research in the field of therapy, and what resources can I use to continue my education?

- How can I manage my own personal issues and biases that might interfere with my ability to work effectively with clients?
- What strategies can I use to continue to improve my skills and develop as a therapist over time?
- How can I stay engaged and motivated in my work with clients, even when faced with difficult cases or setbacks?

You may begin to consider how your answers have changed—perhaps deepened. This book was an introductory overview, so maybe you learned some areas you want to continue your journey with your next book. But, hopefully, you have found all that you were seeking and more.

As We Continue...

In achieving our goals, we may find a new world that we had not known existed. It may not be accessible at times if I keep walking west, but eventually, I will find an ocean. Then I will need to learn how to apply my expert walking skills to learn to swim in this new environment.

As we near the end of this book, we are only beginning a fantastic journey. If I swim long

enough, I will find a whole new country to explore, and so forth. I can only imagine what I will learn in the coming weeks, years, and decades from where I am today.

Through our time together, we have looked at the therapy process, the relationship structure, tools and approaches to navigate the relationship, and how they apply across a series of everyday situations. Perhaps someday, these things will be taught in school so that the next generation can begin practicing earlier.

Thank you for traveling with me through this piece of your journey.

I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to continue your journey with me from my website, where you will find new resources and tools at www.DrKenMartz.com

Best wishes as you continue your practice to raise your awareness, improve your counseling skills, find fulfillment in life, and change the world.

RESOURCES



There are numerous resources to continue your journey.

These are just a few:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

National Alliance on the Mental Illness (NAMI)

- <https://www.nami.org/Home>

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

- <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>

American Psychological Association (APA)

- <https://www.apa.org/>

National Association of Alcohol and Drug Counselors (NAADAC)

- <https://www.naadac.org/>

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (Division of National Institute of Health)

- <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/atoz>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

- 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

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About The Author



Kenneth J. Martz, Psy.D., is a licensed psychologist working in treating and managing mental health and addiction for the past twenty-five years. He has specialty training in Chinese medicine, yoga, meditation, hypnosis, and supervision and management.

Dr. Martz has authored over a dozen publications, including serving on eight doctoral dissertation committees. In addition, he has offered over 100 local, national, and international presentations in the mental health and addiction treatment field. You can find earlier works on Amazon, including *Manage My Emotions* (which is also adapted for teens, children, and Spanish language), *Manage My Addiction*, and *Manage My Meditation*.

AUTHOR'S NOTE



First of all, thank you for purchasing this book. I know you could have picked many books to read, but you liked this book, and I am incredibly grateful for that.

This is a book that started decades ago. Yet, with all the stress and isolation of COVID-19 and beyond, I felt compelled to finish the work so it can be available to more people as we work together to pass through these difficult times.

I hope you were able to pause to use many of the exercises in this book, and they have helped to bring you more insight and ease in balancing your emotions. If you enjoyed this book, please take a moment to help someone else, by sharing it with friends, or take a moment to leave a review on [Amazon](#) or your preferred bookseller. Your feedback and support are needed to help improve future books and are deeply appreciated.

Feel free to continue your journey with me from my website, where you will find new resources, tools, and advance notice of new books at www.DrKenMartz.com

Meanwhile, I wish you all the best!

Free Gifts!

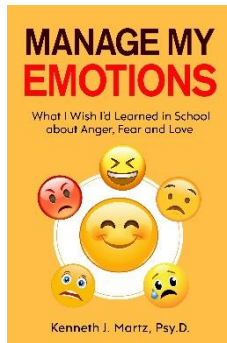


Check out my website at www.DrKenMartz.com for updates on free material, seminars, forthcoming books, etc.

You can download a range of free tools to support your journey, such as

- Emotion Circle
- How to Meditate
- Relaxation Techniques

Manage My Emotions Checklist



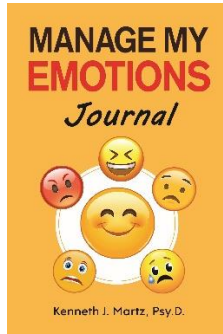
Manage My Emotions

One of my most asked questions has been for support in personalizing the Manage My Emotions journey.

You can now get a copy of the Manage My Emotions Journal. The journal is aligned with the exercises in this text. It will help you to:

- What emotions really are, how they become ingrained into your daily life
- Amazingly effective self-assessment exercises
- How to develop the ability to control your emotions and limit the effect of 'less comfortable emotions.'
- 8 powerful ways to conquer fear
- 14 thoughtful tools to manage anger
- 12 easy exercises to quiet our worry
- To find the motivation to succeed, passion for life, and learn to cherish positive relationships with spouses, children, and your friends

The MME is available in multiple formats to fit your needs.



Manage My Emotions Journal

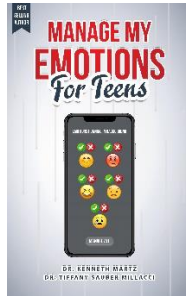
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- Personalize your experience
- Take notes
- Track progress
- Capture insights
- Manage your mood
- Articulate your thoughts and emotions

Journaling is one of the evidence-based tools discussed in this text.

The MME Journal is available in multiple formats to fit your needs. While I prefer paper copies for my journals, you can also get your copy in eBook format. You can make notes on the page in your eBook reader, or if you prefer, the eBook version comes with a link to download and print a PDF edition.

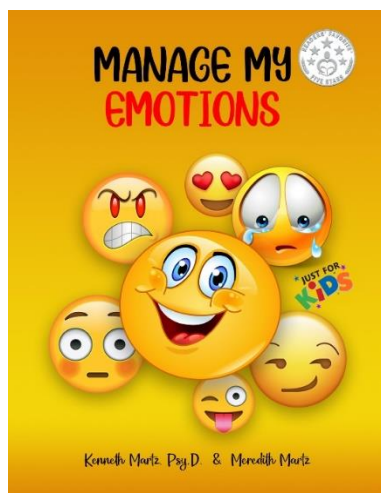


Manage My Emotions for Teens

The Manage My Emotions journey is based on the idea that I wish I had learned these things sooner. Many readers have also echoed this concern. If you have enjoyed this material, you can soon share this with your children.

Manage My Emotions for Kids is aligned with the exercises in this text. It will help you to:

- Reinforce your learning of these concepts
- Teach your children these lessons early
- Set your children on the right track
- Open meaningful conversations and communication.



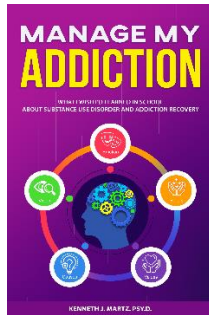
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Includes a downloadable Parent/Educator's Guide



Manage My Addiction

An estimated 24 million Americans are in recovery from Substance Use Disorder. Additionally, many more experience active substance use and other addictive processes such as gambling, eating, spending, and screentime.

- How the brain tricks us and how to take control of it
- The stages of addiction and the implications of each
- Understanding our "Why" and how to use it
- The five critical approaches to making lasting change in our insight, vision, emotions, beliefs, and values
- Special sections on trauma, goal-setting, and cross-addictions

Manage My Addiction expands on the Manage My Emotions journey with new tools and insights to guide lasting changes.