



Affective Center for Therapy

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WHAT I NOW ACCEPT

In one of the first psychology classes that I took in college, the old German professor came into the class the first day and said, “We are in the dark ages of psychology; we do not know what we are doing.” For three weeks after that class, I was depressed, “What am I taking psychology for when we do not know what we are doing?” Then I was able to change what I was thinking. “If we are in the dark ages of psychology, just imagine what there is left to be discovered! I can be a part of that.” That old professor was correct!

Psychology is an evolving science. For over 35 years, I have been watching this evolution of discovery. When I started doing therapy, we were taught that your feelings were your feelings and you were stuck with them until they somehow changed. We were told that PTSD was caused only by a trauma such as war or a major catastrophic event. Skinner, the behaviorist, taught us that feelings are a “black box” best ignored and left alone. Cognitive, Behavior Therapy, CBT, believed that mental problems were mainly the result of irrational beliefs and thoughts.

Today, we know that what you feel is a direct result of what you think; change what you think and you will change what you feel. PTSD is not caused by trauma, but by a shift in your thinking about the world and about your ability to handle this unsafe world.

The concept of patients with Multiple Personalities, MPD, was big for a while. In the Bay Area, back in the 1970’s, there was a 90 bed hospital just for patients with MPD. Today, the concept of MPD no longer exists in our DSM!

Back in the 1960’s and 70’s, one big “breakthrough” was Transactional Analysis. It was based on the Freudian concept of ego, id and superego, which was renamed, Parent, Child and Adult. It was a cognitive--insight oriented approach. Today, most new therapists have never even heard of it.

We now know that our brain has two parts and that they think in very different ways. Our left side is very logical and thinks in language and

numbers. Our right side processes life in pictures, images and smells. Effective therapy now deals with both sides (thinking processes) to achieve change. What used to take five years of going to an analyst twice a week, a therapist can now accomplish in a matter of months using both sides of your brain. The CBT approach to counseling is now adding an affective component. Now there is CABT, Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral Therapy.

What I accepted as “true” 35 years ago is no longer true today. I have watched fad psychology come and go. I have watched as our thinking has changed. Now, I accept many different concepts as true.

What I now accept:

*When I say, “I can’t trust you,” I now accept that it is about me not trusting myself. It is not about you.

*I now accept that it takes two to fight. That means every fight, verbal or physical that I get into is because I wanted to fight. If I don’t respond, there can be no fight! If I’m fighting, it is because I want to fight.

*Fighting is my response to feeling powerless and/or my fear of being abandoned by you. I now accept that fighting is my attempt to get someone to do what I want them to do or to prove that I am bigger, stronger, smarter than you. Fighting is my way of saying that I can take what I want and no one can stop me. (The rapist is the one who feels powerless.)

*I accept that whatever I am doing is what I want to do. I have never done anything that I have not wanted to do. I realize that just because I am doing something, does not mean that I am enjoying it.

* I now accept that everything is my fault if I am lucky. I would rather that my screw ups be my fault because; if it is my fault then I can change it next time. If you are doing it to me, then I am powerless and get to be your victim.

*I accept that my being defensive with you is my fear of losing you, of being abandoned by you.

*My “I shoulds” are my attempt to manipulate myself into doing things that I do not want to do.

* I can accept that my guilt is an option and that I was born without any guilt. I create my feelings of guilt by the “I shoulds” that I put on myself.

* I accept that I create my feelings by what I think, believe, expect, and consider to be true.

* I accept that I can change how I feel by changing what I think, believe, expect and consider true.

* I accept that I cannot make you happy.

* I have accepted that the only person I can make happy is myself and then I can invite you into my happiness.

* I have accepted that it is not my job to give you answers or to fix your problems.

* I accept that to be listened to makes me feel more loved than I do when I get my way.

* I accept that the basic human need is to feel important or significant. Without it, people will self-destruct and/or die. (Victor Frankl)

* I have accepted that I have the right to ask you to make me feel important and significant AND it is my responsibility to make you feel important and significant when you ask.

* I have accepted that you are not OK, I am not OK and that is OK.

* I accept that until I can accept that I am not OK, I will never OK!

Hopefully, today we are a little less in the dark ages of psychology. In any case, I am even more excited about what remains to be discovered.

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