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Editorial Musings

Therapist resonations in wholistic healing

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Psychotherapy can be far more than a process in which the therapist 'fixes' the careseeker. In many cases, people in distress come for help with expectations that the therapist will tell them exactly what to do in order to rid them of their symptoms. Some therapists do this, as in behavioral approaches that are prescriptive or hypnotherapy with therapists implanting suggestions. The more wholistic therapists work hard to teach and empower people to address their own problems, on every level of their being.

Within the wholistic spectrum there are therapists who go further yet, viewing the therapy encounter as a healing experience that often includes the therapist as a healee. Many traditional therapists are aware of counter-transference, the projection (in thought or actions) onto the client of a therapist's psychological memories, beliefs and emotions. When this occurs, the therapist misperceives the client in the light of the therapist's past experiences. Thus, a client might present personality characteristics, behaviors or emotions that resonate with people, relationships and experiences in the therapist's past, and the therapist might respond towards the client from the therapist's unconscious recollections of the past issues. When therapists catch themselves or when this is pointed out to them in the course of case supervision, there are often helpful insights for the therapists about issues in their lives that are inviting healing.

Some of the more common issues that arise in this way involve early life traumas and unresolved grief in the therapist's life. These are the sorts of memories and feelings often get buried and forgotten. To put them away, outside of conscious awareness, is often a helpful defense against pain and suffering – at times when the therapists may not have had enough resources to cope with the intensity of their experiences.

As the therapists empathize and resonate with their clients' experiences and emotions, the buried issues are stirred from their inner closets and filing cabinets where they had been locked away. In some cases they rise to full consciousness and can then be addressed by the therapists – either on their own or with professional help.

In other instances they are only partially released or partially perceived on a conscious level. In such cases they may make the therapists uncomfortable without their being aware of why this is happening. This may sometimes lead therapists to avoid dealing with the clients' issues that are stirring the therapists to be uncomfortable. Without being consciously aware of this, therapists may lead clients to discussion other issues, so that the therapists are not made more uncomfortable. This is why it is really helpful for therapists to engage in mentoring or peer supervision – so that subtle

clues to the therapists' avoidances of particular topics can be identified. Once they are aware of the issues that are making them uncomfortable, therapists can clear these overlooked and neglected layers of residual buried emotions and memories from the past.

Energy Psychology (EP), which includes the group of self-treatment methods such as WHEE, EFT, TFT, HBLU and others, offers varieties of ways in which therapists can clear their issues rapidly and deeply while they are helping clients. These therapies involve the use of affirmations combined with diverse forms of tapping on the body. Because EP approaches easily facilitate rapid and deep releases of buried issues, therapists can tap on themselves synchronously with their clients' tapping, and the therapists can thus release some of their own emotional dross while the clients are doing the same.

This principle is commonly used when EP therapists are teaching or supervising groups of students. It is called 'borrowing benefits.' In these cases, the whole group can be benefitting from tapping along with a single person who has volunteered to demonstrate how the EP works for a given problem. There are many reports of significant improvements in those who are borrowing benefits in such settings. Therapists are now also reporting such benefits when they resonate with clients' issues during therapy sessions.

Of course, discernment must be used by the therapists to assure that they do not get distracted away from their therapeutic focus on their clients when doing such clearings on themselves. If therapists know themselves to be distractible to a degree that this could be problematic, they may nevertheless make note of the clients' issues with which they resonate, and then clear them for themselves following the therapy session.

There is also the option of sharing the therapist's processing with clients when such resonations occur. This can help clients to find new perspectives, while normalizing the clients' perceptions of their problems. This is particularly helpful when clients are self-critical or find themselves criticized by others for having emotional problems.

Personal spiritual awareness is an important aspect of wholistic healing. As therapists grow increasingly aware of the lessons that clients can stir in the therapists, it soon becomes apparent that almost every client can stimulate healing resonations within the therapists at some point in their course of therapy. Skeptics may feel this is just the normal process of cross-references that may occur purely by chance in any human encounter. Those who are open to spiritual awarenesses often find that such cross-correspondences have the quality of synchronicities (meaningful coincidences that connect us to awarenesses of participating in a transpersonal reality/ collective consciousness). My own sense of such 'coincidences' is that there is indeed a meta-level of awareness evoked as these unfold.

The more we connect with body, emotions, mind, relationships and spirit, the more these interconnections occur.

I wish you good wholistic healings in this new year!

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