



NYC Psychotherapist

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"How the heck can therapy help me?"

If you are suffering from Depression or anxiety you want to know how to relieve the symptoms of fatigue, sadness, hopelessness or the feelings of panic, fear and insecurity. Often people will say go to a therapist so what is the most effective therapy?

*Well my first venture into therapy was lying on a couch, staring up at the ceiling and babbling. My entertainment was listening to the therapist's pen scratching on the paper. That was it, my voice and the scratching of a pen. I started figuring out what to say just to create sound in the room because she never said a word! I imagined that some things I said were very interesting because she would scratch furiously, others times not so much. When I finally said I thought it would be good idea if she actually spoke to me, I got back the proverbial, "**And what would it do for you if I spoke to you?**"*

I did that until I asked myself, "Why I am doing this?" This taught me what not to do. Don't let a person amble around in their brain too long, and don't answer a question with a question (Freud must be turning over in his grave). I think it gets you nowhere fast. What gets you somewhere?

Feelings - You made me angry!

Ever say that to anyone? Go on, fess up. You have said it sometime somewhere. What if it didn't really happen that way? What if there was a moment when you chose to be angry? I am not suggesting that people don't do things that are awful. They certainly do. But what if you could tell when a strong emotion was coming and you could decide whether to be in the grip of it and for how long. We often think of emotions as just happening as if we're being swept away by them but that isn't true. Before the wave hits, there is a moment when you can see it clearly and you can make a call about how you are going to respond to it. It's called taking responsibility for yourself. But I mean the ultimate responsibility.

When you do have the feelings, you don't fight it, you let the feeling go through you and wait; you make no decisions; you just feel and breathe! Too many times we make a decision and take an action when we are scared or upset and we regret it. Have the feeling; take no action. It's a river flowing through you. Wait till you get to the other side.

Does that mean you never feel angry or scared? No, it means that you have the feeling and when it stops you can make decisions. If you practice it long enough, the feelings can be very strong and then it's over.

People talk about living in the present but the examples are usually about enjoying what is going on. People are walking through fields telling you to notice how your foot hits the ground. When you really are in the present moment you can also be having a difficult time. When I am late for work running to the subway in rush hour that is my “present” and you know what? I have to deal with it. And I deal with it by noticing it and allowing it without acting on it. I don’t start pushing or getting evil. Does that mean I’m having a feeling, a feeling on a subway? Yes I do and I can let it go. But first I notice what I am feeling and I trained myself how to track it and really experience it. I just covered anger. Happiness, joy and love hit me in full Technicolor!

By pushing down your feelings you can make it worse. It can lead to [depression](#), [anxiety](#), ulcers, you name it. This way you know what you are feeling, you feel it, it’s been felt and when you know that, you can breathe again you think. I am not saying you walk around like an automaton. You don’t have to wait until you have no feelings and you are neutral. You wait until you can think again. You still have feelings but the **feelings** aren’t **deciding** what you do next with your life and relationships.

The other side is when you’re thinking clearly. It’s when you can take any situation and come up with several options to deal with it. If you can do that you are being flexible in your thinking and creative. We often trip ourselves up because we decide there’s only one way to do something or only one perspective. When you are stuck in being right you are being one dimensional in your thinking. If you cannot come up with a few alternatives you are still having strong feelings. You need to backtrack and notice yourself! Sometimes our thoughts are like a whirlwind or we just can’t seem to get them in gear at all. If therapy is working, you see how you trip yourself up and you begin to take things easier and lighter because you have any number of ways you can go with it.

If you are in a tornado of thoughts it is because you are trying to get control of your emotions by pushing everything down. It doesn’t work. You need to walk through it slowly and really examine your thoughts to get to what are you feeling that is getting in the way of your thinking. (Whew! read that a couple times; it really does make sense!).

If everything is blah or you don’t know what you are feeling, the way out is in. You actually need to look at what the experience of not knowing is. In this case the blah feeling is not knowing what you want, losing interest in life. When you can accept that and know this is what is happening and relax into it, you will find you get curious. When you are more relaxed and curious you can walk through things with the therapist. As you become more curious you explore and things start to get interesting again. Then you have the ability to look at what you want.

When you begin to want things again, life gets more interesting. You are not just feelings and thought; you are also a body. And whether you notice it or not, your body is giving out and sending all kinds of messages to you and to the world.

Some people can read themselves and others very well. You think of them as empathetic or sensitive. What I know to be true in therapy is, a good therapist can teach you how to be aware of your signals and how to sense others' signals.

When I talked about feelings before I said that there was a moment right before when you can see the wave coming at you. When that moment happens, it is because your body is sending you a signal. It is saying “hey look up; there is a Tsunami out there!!” Your body speaks to you all the time about what is going on around you. You just may not be aware of it. You can learn how to hear your body talk.

So lemme hear your body talk.

We covered the heart, the mind and the body. Is anyone out there asking about the soul? Are you asking that question in your head? Go ahead have a conversation; talk amongst yourselves. Now can some of you do that? I mean it, really where you can have an argument about something you are going to do. And it can go around and around.

Is there a listener and answerer?

Who is answering? What is that voice that talks back to you? Don't worry you don't have multiple personalities. But there is something inside us. You can call it intuition or whatever you like, but when you learn how to listen to it regularly, life gets a lot easier.

This is when you learn to be still. The noise and the clamor take a break and it's just you. That is what happens at the end of therapy. When your mind, body, heart and soul get equal play, you get to be you.