

BE YOUR OWN SHRINK

*Use the Techniques Therapists Use to
Enhance Your Mental Well Being*



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CHAPTER ONE - WHY GO THROUGH THERAPY?

...When you can “do therapy” on yourself?

Going to a therapist today can cost you anywhere from \$40 (individual therapy) to \$150 (family therapy) for an hour with a therapist. Indeed it is so costly that one wonders why on earth you'd go there in the first place.

Wait. Why exactly are you considering going to a therapist? Are you suffering from depression? Do you have issues you believe you can't handle yourself? Are you in so much stress that you can't think straight and even a vacation can't cure it? Are you in relationship woes that happen over and over in cycles?

Well, if you truly believe that you need someone else to process your issues, by all means, go ahead; see a therapist. I myself, though, am a big fan of self-help. But if you hear voices arguing with each other in your head, or just plain talking to you, I believe it is best that you call a local therapist right now. No kidding.

But if you're like any other person who can normally function well, but who just can't cope with life *for the moment*, let me tell you, there are ways to get out of your cesspit. Indeed, it may take so much education to become a psychotherapist, and truly, going through all those levels of schooling at least makes them worthy of what you pay them. However, you can use therapeutic techniques that they use *on your own*.

Sure, you may need a little practice, and the techniques may need some getting used to, but with constant use, and with observation and analysis, you *can* help yourself overcome your issues, live life to the fullest, and be the person you want yourself to be. Heck, you can even help others. Just get the right licenses and certifications. You don't want legal messes to add to your problems.

So, all set to learn more? Read on.

What the Shrinks Don't Want You to Know

Ever since Psychology was consolidated as a discipline in the late 1890's, numerous techniques have been employed to promote wellness in people. When physicians had gone past slicing or marring people's brains in the name of "curing" them, numerous ways to treat people with emotional and mental problems had been developed. But you know what? If you know how to think, and if you know how to communicate, then congratulations, you have touched upon the heart of psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy operates on communication, basically. Freud, the most influential psychotherapist since the birth of Psychology, started his career and even cured himself through *introspection*. What's that? Oh, that's just a fancy name for thinking and thinking and following your thoughts and ideas, writing them down, analyzing them, and thinking some more.

Introspection is the basis of mental health. With introspection, you can explore who you are. You learn how to note which parts of you have to change. You learn how to keep yourself in check when you're going over the top. You actually *get to know yourself more* when you introspect.

Then, another foundation of psychotherapy and its applications to promoting mental health and overall well-being is *having healthy relationships*. If you notice, highly isolated people are rarely functional. People who burn bridges often also have a poor inner climate.

Here is a short list of the importance of having healthy relationships:

- Having healthy relationships promotes physical health.
- Relationships create a social network that is essential when tough times come. Studies show that people who have a healthy and highly supportive social network tend to bounce back more quickly and completely from duress in their lives.

- Don't you feel good having so many friends?

Permit me to say this again: psychotherapy works on *communication*. With yourself, and with others. It works on creating, maintaining, and *nurturing* ties. Whatever therapeutic style you choose, if it works for you, it's great. Just remember that without healthy dialogues with yourself, and healthy communication with others, whatever therapeutic style you may want to use, with or without a therapist to help you, will fail.

For therapy to work, you have to be *open to criticism*. You have to be open to new ideas. You have to stop denying you have a problem and *admit that yes, you do have a problem and you need help*. Be it with a therapist, or through *self-help*, you need to work on your issues. Do not push them to the back of your mind in hopes of them going away. Help yourself. Deal with them. Read on.

The Most Effective and Most Used Treatments Today

Though "most used" doesn't necessarily mean "most effective," these two tend to go hand-in-hand. Therapeutic techniques become more used often when they work on quite a lot of people. When the efficacy of a therapeutic technique is proven on a significant number of clients, therapists are more likely to use them on other clients.

There is also a tendency that as these therapies are used, they will be perpetuated, and through time, their efficacy is proven more. In consequence, the methods used in the specific therapies are perfected through constant practice. So in effect, there is a sort of direct relationship between "most effective" and "most used."

There are five main schools of therapy known today. According to Dr. Richard Sharf, Ph.D., they are the:

- Psychodynamic
- Cognitive

- Behavioral
- Humanistic
- Eclectic

The most-used method today is in the Eclectic school. According to Dr. Sharf's article, 40% of American therapists consider their approach Eclectic. This means that they combine different methods, tailoring them to their patients. The most-combined methods are Cognitive and Behavioral, as they produce the fastest change. In fact, the combination of the two has resulted in Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy.

On a side note: in Freud's time, his baby, Psychoanalysis, a form of Psychodynamic therapy, was the main treatment available. Most psychiatrists then used that therapy on patients. Today, though psychoanalysis has been modified and is still used by a number of therapists, most patients find it much too expensive. And since a "complete" psychoanalysis takes anywhere from 3-7 years, people who undergo it often drop out before the treatment is complete.

The most effective method, however... Depends on you. The numbers say it clearly, Eclecticism wins, hands down. This simply means that you can "mix and match" the other established schools of psychotherapy, and manipulate them to help yourself heal.

Choosing the Right Treatment for You

Choosing the right treatment for you is like buying a car. You can actually shop around first, read up about them, then pick the one that sounds the best. Or you can test drive each and every therapy technique you fancy, then modify, combine, or scrap altogether as you go along.

There is no "right way" to go about choosing a therapeutic technique. Even the therapists learned as they went along. Thus, you can go ahead and experiment with the methods that I am going to talk about in the next chapters. Personally, however, I am a big fan of Psychodynamic and

Cognitive Therapy, especially the cognitive therapy called “Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy.” What are they? We will cover each therapy in detail; each therapy will have its own chapter and you will learn how to apply it in your life.

But before you go skip off to reading the therapies, let me just give you a tip on how to choose. You should be comfortable with the therapy you intend to use on yourself. You must also be able to make sure that you will be able to commit to healing yourself, no matter what method you may want to use.

Therapy is a process that needs one's full commitment. Yes, you may modify what techniques you choose to use as you go along, but you have to make a commitment to yourself that you will change, improve, move on... to a better you. Be patient with yourself, and persevere. A great prize awaits people who persevere.

So, take a deep breath, and let's move on to the therapies.