

SEEING A THERAPIST COULD BENEFIT YOU

"I do not need to see a therapist.

You are the crazy one in this family."

Being crazy is probably one of the least important reasons to see a therapist. So, what should you see a therapist for if not for being crazy? For your consideration, here is a list of reasons to see a therapist you should pay attention to before you end up being the crazy one.

1. If When you sleep, it is not restful.

You wake up sometimes more tired than you were when you went to sleep. You can do this by allowing your body to become tense throughout the day. For example, your shoulder starts creeping up to your ears. This constant state of muscle tension becomes the norm for your body, and you are not even aware of it. As a result, as you go to sleep, your body stays tense throughout the night, and when you wake up in the morning, you are more tired than when you went to bed because your muscles never got a chance to rest.

Have you ever had a dream of falling? Dreams of falling are one of the first signs that you are not allowing your body to relax at the end of the day. The old wives' tale that you will die if you hit the ground in your dream is just so much malarkey. You dream of falling when your muscles relax. However, if you wake up and re-tense the muscles in your body, you will be able to be more tired than you were when you went to bed.

A trap that many people use is using alcohol or drugs to get the muscles in your body to relax. But unfortunately, one of the problems with alcohol is that it has a boomerang effect on the body. While alcohol will release muscle tension, at the same time, it increases stress and anxiety. The higher the stress and anxiety, the tighter the muscle. This tension-

anxiety cycle is why you see a seriously impaired alcoholic start a fight in a bar.

2. **You have a general lack of energy, both physically and mentally.** A general lack of energy is a symptom. It is not a disease! There are numerous causes of lack of energy. Some are physical, and some are emotional.

Depression is one of the most common sources of fatigue and general lack of energy. 84% of depression comes from emotional problems. In contrast, 16% of depression comes from physical and organic issues.

In the 16% category you can include chemical imbalances caused by Seasonal Affective Disorder, SAD, the lack of sunlight can raise havoc in people's bodies. In addition, certain medications have the side effect of sapping your energy both physically and mentally. Marijuana would fit into this category of sapping energy while giving the illusion of reducing your anxiety.

Other medical conditions that can sap your energy are underactive thyroid, adrenal insufficiency, anemia, diabetes, endocarditis, and sleep apnea. Again, a medical doctor would be the person you would need to determine these conditions and their treatments.

Under the 84% causes of depression. Sigmund Freud observed that "depression is anger turned inward." As long as the therapist you choose is comfortable with their own anger and other people's anger. Then a psychotherapist can help you with your feelings of powerlessness and anger.

3. **Negative thinking** is another reason you might want to see a therapist. Negative thinking is a sense that something will likely go wrong, nothing will turn out okay, and an irrational sense of impending doom. "If I do not do it correctly, something terrible is going to happen." For some,

negative thinking leads to learned helplessness and a self-fulfilling prophecy that bad things actually happen.

Negative thinking is a type of magical thinking. "If I can think of all the terrible things that could go wrong, then somehow I can prevent them from happening." Negative thinkers see themselves as powerless victims. When I think of all the things that could go wrong, and nothing does, then I can tell myself, "See, negative thinking does work!"

Do you have to be perfect to be acceptable? Is it okay for you to be not okay and be acceptable at the same time?

The alternative to negative thinking is to trust yourself. For example, "Yes, things are going to go wrong from time to time, and when they do, I will figure out what to do." Can you trust yourself?

4. **You find yourself feeling angry and on edge most of the time.** This is because you have a "hair trigger." Hair triggers are often the result of not recognizing anger when you are feeling the anger. Anger comes in degrees, irritation, frustration, upset, pissed-off, hurt (personalized anger), disgusted, mad, etc.

Anger Ranges From Frustration, Irritation, Upset to Hate, Fury, And Rage.

Hundreds of years ago, Confucius put his finger on it when he said, "To repress a feeling is to give it unlimited power." One upset, then I am irritated. The next thing I know, I am frustrated, pissed-off, mad, and screaming angry. **Not having an acceptable outlet for my feelings allows them to build up and then blow up.** Do you find yourself becoming silent when you are feeling angry? Some therapists know how to teach you how to express your anger and positive, loving ways.

Anger, for most people, is a negative emotion that hurts people and relationships. As a result, people will often lie about their being angry. I

often hear "I never get angry" or "I am not an angry person." These are just two of the lies we tell ourselves. What does your lie sound like? For example, "**I AM NOT ANGRY I AM JUST UPSET.**" Another example of lying is, "What is wrong, honey?" **NOTHING! I AM FINE!** Have you ever lied about being angry? What is the purpose of lying about your anger? Will you feel unaccepted if you speak your truth? Do you fear abandonment, rejection?

Anger is not a good or bad emotion. It is just an emotion. It is what you do or say with your anger that will get you in trouble. No one has ever gone to jail for being angry. It is what you did with the anger that landed you in jail. The opposite of love is not hate or even anger. It is indifference, not caring. You may notice that you get angry most at the people you love the most!

A therapist who knows communication skills can teach you how to express your anger in positive ways. For example, What if you raised your voice with anger and said, "Honey, I am angry with you because I love you and care about you, and if you want so important to me, I would not feel so upset. . . ."

Feelings are not good or bad; they just are.

5. **You feel that you are blocked from achieving your goals**, you feel frustrated (anger). At times like these, you will usually blame others for doing it to you. Some examples, "If my wife was only more supportive, I could be successful." "If it was not for the repressive government policies on poor people." "The boss has it set up, so only his favorites get promoted." "The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. That is just the way life is." It is not what others are doing to you. It is what you are choosing to think and believe that is making you miserable.

You have power over your mind – not outside events.

Realize this, and you will find strength.

Marcus Aurelius 121 A.D.

If taken to the extreme, this blaming others can lead to paranoia. "Other people are out to get me." If someone else is doing it to you, then you will be powerless for the rest of your life. You will get to be the victim.

Sometimes you will blame your body, "If only I had better eyesight, I could be a pilot." The "if only" are just your unrealistic expectations. Since they are **your** expectations, you can change them.

The alternative to feeling frustrated and blocked is to take responsibility for Everything in your life! For example, "Everything is my fault! If it is my fault. . . . then I can fix it." I can get a new job. I can choose to save until I can afford to buy what I need (not what I want).

**If you are pained by external things,
it is not they that disturb you but your own judgment of them.
And it is your power to wipe out that judgment now.**

Marcus Aurelius 121 A.D.

- 6. You feel misunderstood and unaccepted; communication feels difficult.** Feeling isolated, alone, and not accepted often starts with you judging others and being critical of other people. If you find yourself criticizing other people, what do you assume other people are doing towards you? The reverse is also true; the more you judge yourself, the more you will believe others are judging you.

I had a client who worked in a cotton ginning mill. He had gotten his arm caught in a piece of machinery, and it had ripped off a lot of skin and muscle so that his arm was not smooth and was now that arm was much weaker than his other arm. He came in complaining he could not find an attractive woman anymore. Finally, after several sessions, he recognized what he was doing. He had been a womanizer who had

judged women on a scale of 1 to 10. Now, he saw himself as unattractive and assumed women would see him as ugly.

Criticizing, the effect of judging others is not a new concept is repeated several times in the Bible "Judge not that ye be not judged, for in judging another you condemn yourself."

7. **When you have trouble concentrating and reading, and your mind jumps** from one thing to another, it is time to look for a therapist who understands what your mind is doing. The human mind is designed to finish a Gestalt. For example, In music, consider what the mind does with an incomplete musical phrase. For instance, Yankee Doodle went to town riding. . . . Notice how your mind wants to complete the sentence.

Have you ever had a song or melody going over and over in your head? Would you like to get rid of it? You cannot seem to get rid of it because you are not finishing the Gestalt. You finish the Gestalt by singing the song out loud where your ears can hear it, and then the music will disappear and not bother you.

Trying to finish the Gestalt is what your mind does when you lay in bed and ruminate. Your mind jumps from thought to thought, then back again, never completing the Gestalt.

The next time you find yourself laying in bed ruminating and unable to sleep, look at what you think. Is it about things you said and did during the day, or is it about things you need to do in the future?

If it is about what you need to do in the future to stop ruminating, you must start making a list. It is the same principle you would use when you make a grocery list not to forget something at the store.

If it is about the past, what you should could or should have done or said. Then it would help if you did what you did with making the

repetitive song go away, saying the words out loud that you "should of" or "could of" said so that your ears can hear it.

- 8. If you cannot find pleasure in being with others.** You need to see a therapist if people's behaviors are irritating you and driving you to distraction. Your lack of joy being around others has nothing to do with other people. That is your good news because now you can change the problem, you!

Having a belief that people should do what I think they should do, not what they do, is one of the significant sources of finding no pleasure in being around people.

Another problem in this area is your lack of assertiveness and fear of asking for what you want. People are not going to read your mind. Unless you can be assertive, you will end up feeling walked on and used. Assertiveness is very different than aggression. Being assertive supports confidence in yourself. Being comfortable with being assertive is an important skill to learn.

Being assertive might sound like, "Would you be willing to take the dog to the vet this time?" The assertive person then is willing to accept any one of three answers. "Yes, I will." "No, I will not." Or, "Yes, I will take the dog under these conditions. . . ."

I knew an older man who lived in a lovely cabin at Shaver Lake whose children and grandchildren loved to come up and stay the weekend with him. When he got tired, he would announce in a loud voice, "I am tired, and I am going to bed. It is time to turn off the music, and the last person up needs to shut and lock the doors." He loved seeing the family, and the family loved coming to see him because he was unequivocal with his boundaries and limits.

- 9. You are having scary repetitive dreams and nightmares.** For example, your dreams contain monsters, or you dream that you are falling, or you cannot breathe and wake up so very scared.

Hopefully, you agree that you create your dreams, not some alien transmission from another universe. You are the author/playwright of your dream. As such, Everything that is in the dream is from you. You are you, and you are the dream. You are the monster. You are the door. You are the road. You are the window. You are the car, etc.

If you would like your dream to go away and never come back and at the same time give you a direction in your life towards peace, there is a technique that works for most people. It is called Gestalt Dream Therapy. You can find a Gestalt therapist who can walk you through the process. Or, you will find many examples of it in the last two-thirds of the book by Fritz Perls called GESTALT THERAPY FOR VERBATIM.

10. I cannot trust people.

"I have been hurt very badly, not just once but several times in relationships. So now, I find it impossible for me to trust anyone!" A good therapist could undoubtedly help you by pointing out that your trust issue is your issue, not the other person's problem. Listen to what you are saying, "**I cannot trust**. . . . you."

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You can trust! The issue is not your inability to trust but your fear of being hurt if you choose to trust. It is your fear of emotional pain that keeps you from having relationships!

Working with a therapist will help you recognize that emotional pain is not terminal. And what you protect you will make weak. You will also need to look at the importance of accepting the other person where they are. And acceptance does not mean approval. The other person is where they are until they are someplace else. The only person you can change is yourself.

You are absolutely totally powerless to change someone else.

You are absolutely totally powerful to change yourself

If you are really crazy, seeing a run-of-the-mill therapist probably will not help you because they will not know what to do with you. A psychiatrist (medical doctor) would have the knowledge and medication to help most crazy people.

A psychiatrist can untangle your symptoms and determine which are caused by emotional (mental) issues and which are caused by organic issues. However, if your problems are emotional, then you need to see a therapist.

Unfortunately, most psychiatrists are not good at talk therapy. However, if you are experiencing some of the symptoms mentioned above and want to get your life back on track, you might consider seeing a therapist.

So, if you are not the crazy one in this family, maybe you are the one who needs that see a `therapist.

You can contact Dr. Downing at:

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PS: **I need your help**. I only mentioned nine issues you might see a therapist for out of a much longer list. If you have seen a therapist for other reasons, would you be so kind as to email them to me and continue expanding my inventory?

I am looking forward to sharing the new list when I have added your suggestions. docdowning103@gmail.com