



MEANINGFUL LIVING

PSYCHOLOGY, LIFE COACHING & TRAINING

Meaningful Living Newsletter

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What do I want?? By Karina Stell



Often in therapy, clients come knowing what they **don't** want. Harder for them is what they **do** want.

I know in my own experience with emotional discomfort, my main focus in years before I understood this kind of work, was to be rid of the circumstances/pain/people. It's natural, even if un-useful. And it keeps us focused on what we **don't** want.

It's something to notice. What **do** I want? Often the pain we are experiencing is more about this than it is about what has stepped in to take this vacant place of not knowing.

Spend some time noticing what warms you, what calms you, what inspires you, what engages you, what saddens you. Make this your beginning core in the exploration of you!

My experience through life is that I want people to **get** me. To be interested in what matters to me and to want to share with me from their own place of being got.

My first encounter with this left me feeling shocked that I didn't know who I was and what I needed out of life nor what mattered to me outside what I wanted to reject. It would seem simple to think what I want is the converse to the not wanting – but sadly it takes a lot more investment.

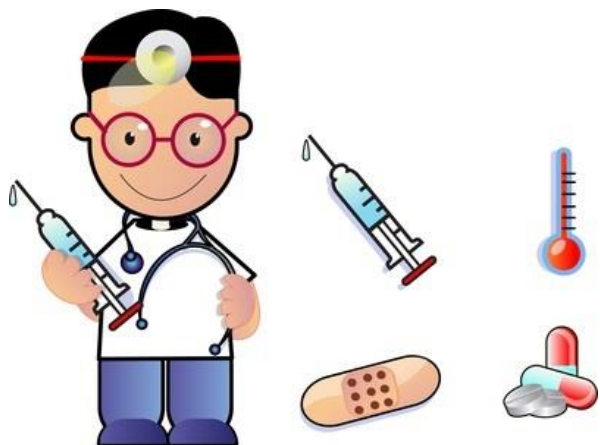
Give yourself what you so readily give others. Time to get to know them. Time to

get to know **you**. Mindfulness is such a gift to start this journey. Sitting with the you that is authentic. Sitting with the truth of what sits comfortably and what does not.

From this springs knowledge about who you are and what you care about.... from this valued living evolves. From this you learn what you want and what makes for a meaningful life in your own special way.

Understanding is deeper than knowledge. There are many people who know you, but there are very few who understand you.

I Can Cure You! - By Michael Cohn



Looking for a therapist and have anxiety?

I can cure you!

Have depression?

I can cure you too!

In fact, I can cure all sorts of mental disorders.

You see, I have a Master's degree in Counselling, awarded by a reputable university (and awarded with distinction to boot).

I have studied Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy and Reality Therapy and Positive Psychology and a host of other therapies, all of which have made me an authority in my field.

As well, I have studied the DSM V and am an expert diagnostician and can therefore recognise and classify all the known Mental Disorders. I also am highly knowledgeable in areas of psychotropic medications

So, if you are struggling with any psychological problem, I want to give you some very good advice.

STAY AWAY FROM ME.

If all I have to offer are my academic credentials plus a list of 'clinical' accomplishments, I am a dangerous therapist.

Stay away from me at all costs.

For the more I tout my expertise, the more skeptical you ought to be. Fear my intruding ego, avoid my certainty, flee my pretentiousness, bolt from my posturing, run from my affectation.

Find someone else.

For as long as I come from a place of certainty, of diagnosis, from over-reliance of preconceptions, from the certitude of my ability, I will never cure you. In fact, I will never cure anyone, least of all, myself, remaining as I must, a sterile, fossilized, stunted being.

Find a therapist who knows that they are just as human as you are, who truly believes that clients and therapists are all in the same boat together.

One of the best quotes I hold dear was offered by a wonderful therapist, Philip Flores who writes: "Therapy can be described as a relationship between two people where one person has fewer problems than the other, and that person, one hopes, is the therapist".

Find a therapist who knows that you are already free and OK, as you walk into their room. Ram Dass, in discussion with Mark Epstein, two great luminaries in their field, noted: "People come to me seeking something, and I have to know that they are already free. They are souls seeking God and the game is to pretend with them that they are lost and (merely) help them rediscover their freedom."

I imagine that anyone who struggle with depression or anxiety etc. and who reads this might experience anger – all they want is to get rid of their affliction.

Well, another of the great truths of psychology is that neuroses are never cured. To paraphrase Ram Dass again, "In all the years of my psychotherapy, meditation, yoga etc., I have not gotten rid of a single neurosis. They are all still there. But instead of being scary monsters, they are delightful little 'shmoos'. I see one coming along and I say 'there you are you little bugger. I see you. Tricky little thing isn't you?'"

Truth is, you remain the unchanging you – the same you that you were when you were a child, but you have lost sight of the magnificent creature you were and will always be. In your clinging for answers, you forget so much and are blinded by the search.

Find a therapist who will gently explore your journey with you, just another soul on their own journey, willing to accompany you along the way. Revel in connection with that person, for therapeutic change is rarely carried by technique or reason, but chiefly by the emotional relationship between the client and therapist.

The personhood of the therapist is the key element of successful therapy. Find a therapist who has access to a wide range of human emotions – someone who has experienced life to the fullest – someone who knows fear, anxiety,

sadness, shame, courage, dependence and joy.

Find someone with the capacity for dynamic reasoning, who can see you not only as you are now, but also how you became as you are. And someone who can see the possibilities of whom you may become in the future.

Find a therapist with whom your journey may lead you to a space where you become grateful for your anxiety/depression, for it is these very painful emotions which ultimately lead you to a richer, fuller and more meaningful life.

Oh, did I forget?

Love yourself a little bit.

You matter.

Questions I've been asked



By Jonathan Back

Q. What is the 'white knight syndrome'? Is it unhealthy to help others?

A. It is of course important to point out that there is nothing 'wrong' with caring deeply for a loved one. What we are talking about is a deep seated need to be needed, to the point where a person avoids any actions which may hurt someone's feelings, even if it means not speaking their truth.

The white knight syndrome is defined as the compulsive need to rescue and protect others from their problems. It is the constant need to look out for others who need 'fixing'. Rescuers are prone to taking responsibility for fulfilling the needs of others - trying to make sure that things go right and smoothly for them, and are often unquestioningly loyal.

On the surface, the urge to 'help' others may seem commendable, and in many cases, society applauds those who are outstanding in their selflessness. However, in relationships, saving or fixing others can be hard on both partners, regardless of which side you are on. If you are the saviour, you are essentially saying to your partner that you see them as a project to be fixed. Rescuers simultaneously negate their own needs, and the irony is that they can end up feeling taken for granted, unappreciated, unfulfilled, resentful and ultimately worn out. Life for rescuers essentially becomes synonymous with martyrdom as increasingly, rather than being balanced, reciprocal and happy, their relationships are experienced as co-dependent, one-way and unfulfilling.

An interesting point to end on?

The helper syndrome dynamic can even prompt people to choose certain career paths. Individuals in helping professions (psychologists/therapists, teachers, nurses etc.) require supervision to make sure this dynamic is in check, and that we don't fall into the 'white knight' trap.



You can submit questions to Jonathan via
Jonathan@meaningful-living.com.au

Elixir Health Club Workshops

We had an amazing experience at Elixir early in February, presenting two Mindfulness Workshops. It doesn't matter how many times we present the fundamental principles of mindfulness, we find it exciting and worth sharing.

Approximately 160 and 70 people registered for each workshop in Bondi and the city respectively. It assured us that Mindfulness is something people are interested in learning about and embracing. Some knew a little about what this practice means and some were just curious.

Whilst not complex in reality, the real challenge with mindfulness is in the practice in daily life. Knowing about it

is not the key. Feeling, understanding and making it part of each day is what makes the shift and in our experience at least, enriches life.

Michael and I very much enjoyed meeting all those who attended our workshops, and those who came up to speak to us after, it really was a warm and touching experience to hear their feedback and meet them.

Finally, Michael and I would very much like to thank our treasured Group member Liz, for giving us the opportunity to share about Mindfulness with her workplace.

Karina ☺

Last month's puzzle solution:

- I. They are all drinkable liquids.
- II. 5-1-4-3-2
- III. They all have a tail. They are also all quadrupeds.
- IV. 5-4-3-1-2
- V. They start with a vowel: a, e, i, o, u
- VI. 4-2-1-5-3

Welcome to this month's puzzles!

You are a prisoner in a room with 2 doors and 2 guards. One of the doors will guide you to freedom and behind the other is a hangman - you don't know which is which.

One of the guards always tells the truth and the other always lies. You don't know which one is the truth-teller or the liar either.

You have to choose and open one of these doors, but you can only ask a single question to one of the guards.

What do you ask so you can pick the door to freedom?

Good Luck!

Michael Cohn and Team - Meaningful Living – Psychology, Life Coaching & Training