

out to me in hesitation and fear, but I have been too afraid and too "professional" to reach back. Somehow it has been a lot safer for me to be an "expert" than to be a "person." I guess to be a person means to be unafraid of myself and unafraid of the other person as well; to be able to take some risks in relating, and to use careful judgment at the same time. I'm not sure yet what this is all about but believe that I'm learning gradually. The reaching out process probably differs somewhat from person to person, and it may be that it will never be described in detail. The complexity and richness and variability of the process would seem to defy adequate description. But it can be experienced and has tremendous potential for facilitating personal growth.

From this perspective, counselling may be viewed as a process in which a deep and meaningful contact is established between client and counsellor. It involves a deepening experience of trust and closeness—a sort of "model relationship"—in which the concerns of the client are explored deeply and possible solutions evaluated and tried out. The relationship provides a facilitative climate within which the client can grow. It is like sunshine and warmth to a plant in that it provides the necessary climatic conditions for the raw materials to be taken in and properly digested and assimilated.

This view of counselling places the emphasis on "being with" clients rather than "doing things to" them. I have often been thrilled as I've watched the processes of growth take place in clients—growth from distrust in self and others to a healthy and realistic development of trust, resulting in courage to reach out for contact. Obviously the counsellor cannot meet the contact needs of his client on a continuing basis, but he can help to have the experience of having some of his contact needs of the moment met, and help him to have the courage to reach out for greater need fulfillment through relationships that are available to him on a continuing basis. If the counsellor accomplishes this, he may well be helping to prevent the nagging psychological hunger or even starvation so destructive to the person.

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EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE AND ITS TREATMENT IN A NUTSHELL

I have long been convinced that people become and remain "emotionally disturbed" largely because they (and we, their counselors) do not clearly and operationally define exactly what their "disturbance" is and precisely what they can do to minimize or eliminate it. I have done my best, in expositions of my own system of Rational-Emotive Therapy, to put its theories and practices into simple and easily understood English, so that they can be more readily applied and tested (Ellis, 1962, 1971; Ellis and Harper, 1970). But I keep looking for even more elegant methods of quickly explaining to in-

dividuals what they do to disturb themselves and how to change this so that (1) they are no longer upset and (2) they finally become much less upsettable. My latest and simplest formulations in this respect may be put into a therapeutic capsule or nutshell.

First of all. I define practically all "emotional disturbance" as being the product of *demanding* as opposed to *desiring*. The individual who feels disturbed (or feels the psychosomatic results—such as high blood pressure—of emotional disorder or who experiences defensive reactions—such as rationalization or repression—that mask his underlying malfunctioning) doesn't merely *want* or *prefer* something, but also *demand*s, *insists*, *dictates* that he have what he desires. Typically, he *demand*s that he be outstandingly achieving and/or greatly approved by others; and he thereby *make*s himself anxious, ashamed, or depressed when he fails to achieve these demands. Or he *insists* that other people treat him considerately, fairly, or well; and he consequently *create*s feelings of severe anger, hostility, and sometimes overt expressions of violence when they do not. Or he *dictate*s that life and the world be easy, quickly enjoyable, and unfrustrating; and he *manufacture*s feelings of over-rebelliousness, self-pity, and inertia when conditions are difficult and onerous.

Stated somewhat differently, just about every single time an individual feels extremely disturbed or upset (rather than merely displeased, frustrated, or disappointed) he is stoutly convincing himself that something is *awful* instead of concluding that it is *inconvenient* or *disadvantageous*. Thus, he is devoutly believing (1) "*It is awful* that I have imperfections and a disapprovable for having them!" (2) "*It is terrible* that you are treating me less than ideally!" or (3) "*It is horrible* that the world is difficult and ungratifying!"

When the individual *awfulizes* or *catastrophizes* about reality, he is invariably setting up an unverifiable, magical, unempirical hypothesis. For to contend that anything in the universe is *awful*, *terrible*, or *horrible* (rather than merely highly unfortunate, unpleasant, or painful) is to contend (1) It is *more than* inconvenient and disadvantageous; (2) Because it is unpleasant and unbeneficial, it *should not*, *ought not*, *must not* exist; (3) One *cannot stand* its existing; (4) One *has to be* utterly miserable, distraught, and even completely destroyed while it exists; and (5) One is a *worthless individual*, a *totally inadequate person* if one cannot immediately change oneself, others, and the universe so that this *awful* thing no longer exists. All of these hypotheses are purely definitional or tautological and can not possibly be factually proven; nor can most of them be disproven. They essentially represent demons which the individual invents and then runs his life by. But once he devoutly believes in them, they will inevitably lead to the dysfunctional emotional results that we call anxiety, guilt feelings of worthlessness, depression, and hostility.

The simple, quick, and highly effective solution to the problem of virtually all human disturbance? Obviously: exorcise the demons. Give up the demandingness and return to healthy desiring and preferring. Undefine the "awfulness," the "horror," and the "terribleness," of noxious stimuli and fully acknowledge that nothing, nothing in the whole universe, can ever be more than inconvenient and disadvantageous; and, moreover, that there is,

nor ever will be, any reason why inconveniences and disadvantages *should not, must not* exist.

Human beings, in other words, can quickly eliminate their usual feelings of disturbance and upsetness (and retain their appropriate feelings of disappointment and annoyance) if they will truly join the human race, give up all—and I mean *all*—pretensions of ever being superhuman, of encountering god or devils, or of living in a perfectly easy, immediately gratifying world. What is more, if they practice and practice remaining rigorously in empirical reality, strongly desiring and actively working to improve that reality, but not grandiosely *dictating* that it be other than it indubitably is, they will eventually reach a point where they automatically rarely upset themselves in the first place and therefore rarely have to counteract their *awfulizing* in the second place.

From the standpoint of the counselor, he can capsulize the client's disturbance by first teaching the client (and himself) that emotional disorder stems from some form of two simple words: "It's awful!" or "How horrible!" or "It's terrible!" As long as the client rigidly holds these hypotheses about *anything* he will be basically upsettable and often upset. If he wants to truly eliminate his disturbed feelings and the needlessly dysfunctional behaviors to which they lead, he can effectively substitute two other simple words: "Tough luck!" or "Too bad!" or "How unfortunate!" As long as he really thinks through and believes—and does not merely parrot—the empirically ascertainable meaning behind these words (namely, that it *is* too bad that people and the world are imperfect but that's tough, that's the way it is, and that's the way it will probably always continue to be), he will not only be less disturbed, but will eventually become largely undisturbable. Is this promising your clients too much? Don't take my word for it. Try it with yourself and your clients—and see!

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COUNSELLORS AND TEACHER EDUCATION

It is generally accepted that members of the helping professions should be directing their efforts more and more towards prevention. (Mauer 1966; Dreikurs 1957; Berlin 1963). We agree and feel that it is important for us as counsellors to move out of our offices in an effort to find areas where our background and training in counselling can have a greater impact.