

# Psychotherapy as a Transformative Process

**The word psychotherapy** comes from two Greek words, "psyche" and "therapia." The meaning of psyche is soul or spirit essence, and therapia has as its root meaning "doing the work of the gods. " Psychotherapy is a process of self-discovery, healing, and transformation, and the basic work of the psychotherapist is to become a fully functioning human being and to teach and inspire others to become equally full human beings able to live, work, and love with ease.

Each person enters the world as essence, primed to strive for growth to his highest potential. Yet each person receives from her personal and cultural experiences a particular set of challenging (often painful) situations and relationships with which to deal. Your feelings, perceptions, and your actions are continuously influenced by the core experiences you have internalized around such major themes as safety and belonging, approval and love, freedom and responsibility, power and control, sexuality, work, and your experiences in family and culture. Such themes are the grist of therapeutic work.

Psychotherapy, in its highest expression, is designed to help you to reconnect to your wholeness in these areas. In the therapeutic relationship, the therapist comes to the moments as teacher, healer, and witness to your truths. The therapist, by maintaining an attitude of authenticity, warmth, and positive regard, creates a safe environment for healing and growth. In therapy, according to Ron Kurtz, "the highest skill is to know each moment for what it can be." And at its simplest level, that skill is based in the art of noticing and naming. "Each true naming infuses its particular moment with possibilities," according to Kurtz, and "the noticing and naming over time brings forth the hidden and wounded parts of the self in such a way that healing can occur." Energies that were once invested in hiding and limiting the self are freed to support change and growth.

If we see psychotherapy in this way, we will know, embody and teach the healthiness of incorporating the emotional and the spiritual back into human life. In this process, we come into alignment with inner truth and authority, transform our images of ourselves, connect with inner and outer resources that liberate, and we make life-affirming changes in our world.

1 Small, Jacquelyn. "Transformers: The Therapists of the Future." Marina del Rey, Calif.

2 Kurtz, R. "Hakomi Therapy." Boulder, Colo: Hakomi Institute.

Dr. Joyce M. Gayles is a clinical psychologist and success coach practicing in Houston, Texas. Part of her life purpose is to teach people the art and skills of living a transformed life and to support individuals and couples to reach their highest potential.

Visit her website at [www.transformationworks.com](http://www.transformationworks.com). Or click to email us about [therapies at TransformationWorks](#).