

Wise as a Serpent, Harmless as a Dove

Written by Davanzo, M.A.

Dedication:

This writing is dedicated to Jack Rosberg, the man who in my eyes, almost single handedly advocated for the least able minded to have an opportunity, through psychotherapeutic treatment, to live lives with the most amount of dignity, love and excellent professional care available for any human being struggling with the disorder of schizophrenia.

His personal outrage at the professional apathy surrounding the treatment of schizophrenia; the misguided and dangerous notion that psychotherapy has lost its place in treatment for schizophrenia, has fueled the fire for me to learn from him how to use the basic tenets of psychotherapy, as the first measure of intervention into the lives of those terrified souls, who have lost the hope of ever being reached or being able to reach back, of ever knowing what it is to receive love and care, or ever believing they could care enough to love back.

Is it not apathy, when we, as clinicians, have watched silently as the large, economically-biased arm of the field of psychopharmacology has reached into the lives of our clients, robbing them of their full human potential and dignity by merely medicating them into a mode of 'treatment convenience and passivity,' for the clinicians who have lost hope or patience or who lack proper training?

Is it not apathy, behind the pathogenic hopelessness of my colleagues that makes me, as a beginning psychotherapist, disheartened to enter a career in psychotherapy; where I see and hear so many clinicians lose faith in their greatest tool and not advocate for its rightful place in treatment? Is not psychotherapy, the bedrock upon which we can comfortably add all other necessary modes of treatment; behavioral, psychosocial, medical? Are we not in danger of reversing the order and missing our greatest human advantage of making a difference in another's life?

Is it not deluded apathy when a clinician, like Jack Rosberg, is coined 'the last of a dying breed' because he valiantly and unapologetically continues to practice psychotherapy with his clients while refusing to accept the belief that schizophrenics can be most significantly helped by being medicated? Have we lost sight of treating the schizophrenic as a whole person with a past and a present and an important future?

It is our internalized and now unconscious professional apathy, that has us forgetting that inside each schizophrenic lies the seeds to learn again to love and be loved as the unique individual that they are? Do we cast aside the immense importance of the treatment alliance, where the client can again begin to meet the world and face their terrors of letting go of their defense of madness, within the safe and sacred container of the psychotherapeutic relationship?

Psychosis is the last of the psyche's defenses left after the ego collapses in on itself. The ensuing manifestations and variety of symptoms, seen in psychotics, is the

metaphorical ambulance speeding to the emergency room whose address has long ago been lost.

The brilliance, albeit distorted behaviorally, of the well defended psychotic, is that they, who possessed even a last shred of strength, attempted to catch the last rung on the ladder (through psychotic behavior and thought) in an attempt to not perish into a list of not being, into the abyss (existential or not) of having no life, no hope, no meaning and no trust, or belief that anyone could help them understand or help heal the original terror that brought them to madness.

It is to these desperate human beings and their desperate attempts to find an answer to their way of being in the world, that will be met with interventions of hope of change and commitment to professional excellence, that I ask 'What does our professionals apathy cost the vast population of schizophrenics who come to us expecting treatment?'

When I use the term professional apathy, I am not attempting to judge ourselves as trained clinicians but more directly, I am asking ourselves to soberly critique the possible outcomes for our clients, if we abandon our belief in active psychotherapy as a primary tool of treatment? Can we, or our clients, run the risk of the practice of psychotherapy being relegated to a position of near clinical extinction, by our own lost hope of its effectiveness as a powerful tool to addressing and ameliorating an abundance of the psychological and behavioral symptoms that concretize around the disorder of schizophrenia?

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