

Taking Yourself Back to You

Dr. Ron Kaiser January 23, 2014 No Comments

Taking Yourself Back to You (Transcription)

Hi everybody this is Dr. Ron Kaiser with November 2011 podcast from The Mental Health Gym. This podcast is starting out little bit late in the month, partly it's general inefficiency on my part and part of it is still the fact that I'm getting over a cold and finally got to the point of trying to risk getting through an entire podcast without coughing or getting my voice sounding funny. I don't know if it'll work but let's give it a try.

I thought that today it might be appropriate to share a little bit of some of what happens when I work with patients in therapy. As you know my emphasis is on the future and setting goals, getting into the next phase of our lives in very positive and proactive manner. But one of the things I share are some of the more traditional approaches to psychotherapy is the fact that I do consider the history taking process to be quite important. Many approaches to psychotherapy emphasize getting a picture of the patient's history, particularly looking at some of the origins of problems that bring a person into therapy. I certainly look at that but I also like to ask a particular question that not everybody does.

One of the questions that I ask is when was the best time in your life, when was the happiest time in your life, when did things really seem to fit together and everything seemed to work for whatever period of time and it might've been days or weeks or months or years. But most people if they are challenged in this regards can identify a time that they would really like to get back to, a time when they were particularly happy and when things worked for them. So that even though they may be coming to therapy due to generalize unhappiness at this point or because of specific problem to solve at this point, they do have a history of some success and some

happiness. In general, we often find that the happiest times were the best times in the person's lives, were not sustained because of some change that took place.

The change may have been as the result of a loss, a death in the family, a divorce, the loss of a job, moving and as a child and losing friendships and things of that nature, in some cases the change may have occurred because of some trauma, whether it be an accident or abuse of some type, in some cases those changes occurred because of a risk that we may have taken that just didn't work out, a job that didn't pan out the way that we hoped it would, going to a college and really falling flat on our face graded wise was the first time in our lives and so on.

Generally something happened in essence changed the rules on us so that whatever we experienced did not sustain itself in a positive and happy way. What we do know however is once we've gone through that process, once we've gone through the process of being happy, once we've gone through the process of having things work for us or feeling successful, feeling confident, we have that in our history. Just as we may have some negative things that we are working to overcome in our history, we also have positive things that we can call upon and consult on in the future. So if we recognize and that's one of the things that I try to emphasize in my work with patients that if recognize that we have those capabilities and if we've proven it to ourselves then it becomes a matter of utilizing that to overcome whatever problem that we're dealing with at this point.

All of us are capable of being resilient by utilizing our strengths and one of the places where we can get those strengths is from our backgrounds. We also get strengths by some of the work that we do and try to develop new goals, new attitudes, new skills and goal achievement so on, but our histories are very important factors, not

just in causing problems or causing us to recognize where problems had their origin but also in recognizing that things weren't always problematic.

It's rare that I find somebody who can't find a best time in their lives. That doesn't mean that we don't aspire to make the best time occur yet in the future but it does mean that we call upon our skill, our successes and so on to once again see ourselves in the way that we saw ourselves during the best times in our lives. For many of us we may have been more popular particular time, we may have been more successful, we may have had more friends, then, if we recognize this then it becomes a matter of looking at what did we do differently. For many of us it becomes a matter of being able to learn how to overcome the negative thoughts and feelings and ideas that we may have had when we stopped being as happy or successful.

In other words, many of us if we set out to do something, fell short, then we began to become more self-critical, or as in the past we may have been more carefree, we may have had more balance in our lives, we may have expected to have fun, and we may have been more confident about our abilities to achieve success. Now one of the problems that I run into with many patients with whom I've worked at the headache centre is the fact that they can't really tie it to any particular problem that they did to make things bad for themselves, they may have reached a point where their biochemistry caused them to start having lots of headaches and in some cases quite debilitating ones and even disabling ones. So one of the major tasks that I have to deal in working with them is to help them recall that that isn't really them, that the basic you of that patient is not one who is experiencing an impairment from a medical stand point, but the basic you for that type of patient is the one that was happy, successful, capable of doing things in the past, that they may be having some difficulty doing now.

Now whether we're talking about a headache, patient, a victim of trauma, somebody who's had some bad luck, somebody who's had financial reversals. Somebody who's experienced significant losses in their family, and whatever the reason may be, we're talking about somebody who has had something intervene to take them away from being them or as I speak to the patient talking about the basic you. So, much of the work that I do entails getting the patient to take yourself back to you. In other words to look at your past, look at not just the problems but the strengths that got you to this point and get yourself back to that basic personality pattern that makes you successful and begin to implement it so that the headache, the trauma, the financial reversal, the bad luck, whatever it may be, is recognized for what it is but it's not a part of your basic personality and that's what we have to work on, taking yourself back to you, means getting yourself back to that basic personality that operated at the best time of your life.

Our goal is to make the future the best time of your lives, but to get to that point let's consult with that part of you that made the best time in your life occur in the past. I hope this gives you some food for thought and certainly if you have questions and comments I'd like to hear from you.

I think I've been successful in getting through the entire podcast without my voice going on me so hopefully that means that the worst is behind me and I'm gonna work on trying to get me back to me for the next few days. Anyway this was Dr. Ron Kaiser with the November 2011 podcast from The Mental Health gym. Look forward to speaking with you again next month.