

**REVELATIONS COUNSELING & CONSULTING, LLC**  
**THERAPEUTIC MOMENTS- Winter 2016**

***Strange Magic***

*Oh, I'm never gonna be the same again  
Now I've seen the way it's got to end  
Sweet dream, sweet dream—  
Electric Light Orchestra, 1975*

In our practice philosophy, it is important that we stay committed to a continuous critical review of evidence-based practices that engender positive therapeutic outcomes—and we closely follow findings in the research community that seek to advance psychological science. As practitioners, we also believe that incorporation of the educational component of therapy is a first and critical step in our process; subsequently, what we learn, we want to communicate to our clients so that they become experts and advocates for their own psychological health.

Our newsletter is one tool that we use for this purpose. We have entitled it *Therapeutic Moments* because it makes allusion to that significant turning point in therapy when individuals come to a new revelation about themselves, their relationships, and even a renewed sense of self-competency. These moments generate newfound knowledge which, in turn, result in healthier perspectives and behaviors to take on personal challenges with greater purpose and resolve.

On a not-too-infrequent basis, clients will ask, “How does someone just magically change from the person they have always been?” This is usually the question that one spouse asks about their partner following a crisis of trust in their relationship. It does, however, point to a more profound inquiry: How does psychotherapy actually work to heal from addictions, recover from post-traumatic stress, or overcome social anxiety? Indeed, it is probably the best question to confront for our inaugural newsletter!

We will try to provide the briefest of explanations from a theoretical basis, while also describing the counseling approaches that influence effective treatment. While we consider ourselves eclectic practitioners, the foundation of our therapeutic work is essentially derived from family systems theory. Within systems theory, therapists shift the focus from individual disorders to the dysfunctional patterns that may define their relationships (Nichols, 2004); rather than treat each client as an independent entity, diagnosis and treatment first considers their larger relational contexts (Kerr, 1988). With this theory as our foundation, we integrate compatible interventions from cognitive-behavioral theory, solutions-focused theory, attachment theory, existential theory, and even Gestalt. Each of these theories share some fundamental constructs on the motivations and process for change.

Because we are all behavioral beings, we are largely motivated by our diverse experiences throughout life with associated thoughts and emotions that have been partitioned in our conscious, pre-conscious and sub-conscious minds. These experiences have manifested themselves as an aggregated set of personal philosophies that we continuously, and

automatically, reference throughout the day (Murdock, 2009, p. 280). These philosophies can speak silent unhealthy messages to our inner self—the Soldier with PTSD who believes he is “at fault” for the loss of a close friend in combat; the woman who feels she is “irreparably damaged” due to sexual abuse as a child; or the young man who says “I’m not good enough” because of the negligence or bullying he suffered as a young boy. These automatic thoughts form the basis of how we see ourselves in every context in how we relate with the world—and they can severely limit the use of your hidden gifts and talents.

All these thoughts and behaviors are motivated by an intense need to engage the world around us relationally. Research has demonstrated that the parts of the brain that are essential to early attachment processes are “the most plastic areas of the cortex”, and have the capacity for “continuing reorganization throughout life” (Cassidy, 2001, p.139). You really can teach old dogs new tricks.

So, there’s nothing magic about it—although it is most certainly a transcendent experience, for both the therapist and the client. People often describe their new perspectives on life as ‘miraculous’ or ‘liberating’, or a feeling of simply being ‘blessed’. Therapeutic moments along that path of discovery represent the forks in the road that offer you a choice for a healthier philosophy and a healthier future.

When we come to a genuine point of surrender due to the consequences of unhealthy thinking, then we are prepared to make a choice to see the world and its diverse crises in a different way. Unfortunately, this isn’t a path you can usually walk on your own. A strong part of your inner self will fight hard to sustain the previous constitution that defines your current state! You need an advocate who will walk alongside to prod, push, and encourage you to “discover your best”.

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