

SELF EXAMINATION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS & PSYCHOTHERAPY COUNTERTRANSFERENCE & SUBJECTIVITY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

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BOOK NOTES

Introduction

Understanding the Context & Implications of the Psychotherapy Process.

Psychotherapy requires an interest in learning about ourselves.

Psychotherapy requires deeply personal working relationships that seek to develop one's capacities for self-scrutiny and emotional maturation. We look for and enter the troubles of mind and body.

Areas of trouble can be seen as areas of greatest potential for growth. They are impasses to be resolved, often in areas of our lives many of us would least like to look at. We venture into these areas with curiosity, respect, a sense of exploration – as lying in wait will be areas of trouble in need of thoughtful attention and interest.

In psychotherapy, an understanding is established that the therapist will eventually be invited into the most troubled and vulnerable areas of the client's life. Psychotherapy is a process that requires the willingness for risk and uncertainty – for the client and therapist both.

It is within these areas of trouble and difficulty that some of our most important learnings about ourselves will take place.

A psychotherapist seeks to provide a unique space and relationship within which we can finally explore aspects of our lives that we have often overlooked or avoided – *trouble in mind*.

Welcoming these troubled places within one's self is no easy task, but it can be deeply intimate and rewarding.

The conversations that take place in psychotherapy are unique. They authorize a person to speak to areas of life that have often been put on hold, and held in silence. These silences have often been necessary to protect ourselves as we face life's difficulties – and the subsequent disappointment, shame, and sense of failure that life too often brings.

This protection comes at a cost to our individuality and vitality. The vitality of the self is often muted and suffocated over the course of a lifetime; it requires *self-scrutiny, the interest of others, and acts of courage*.

- *The restoration of the vitality of the self is at the heart of psychotherapy.*

A long-term, in-depth psychotherapy provides the vital base of a working relationship that is challenging, unpredictable, honest, and lively.

At some point in psychotherapy, a client has to choose between the uncertainties and vulnerabilities of living life more fully, or receding into the more familiar and deadening security of life-long habits and defenses.

Psychotherapy is a process that requires facing, and bearing, what those who have gone before us had found unbearable and unspeakable.

The benefits and outcome of a successful psychotherapy is not simply that of symptom relief but much more of a process of psychic growth, and developing the capacity to remain engaged in life in the face of all of life's vicissitudes, uncertainties, loves, and losses.

