

Charles H. Kramer "Therapeutic Mastery"

p.xi Ralph Waldo Emerson "To believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all... is genius".

Our humanity is essential for therapeutic chemistry.

p.xvi Buddhism recommends "beginner's mind" – wise naivete, open to everything. A good way to meet each day and each session.

p.xix In describing therapy, I compare it to a 90-mile sail across Lake Michigan from Chicago to Saugatuck. We'll be out of sight of land. I can't predict how long it will take, the weather, the route, the surprises. But the boat is prepared and sound, the crew knowledgeable, I have made it safely before, and I have faith we will get there. *Reasoned*, not blind, faith. Proof is the voyage itself.

p.3 Sometimes he had more trust and confidence in me than I had in myself. That helped me with confidence in myself. By the time I finally got that confidence, I was ready to quit. (Apie terapeuto darba).

p.4 The most common complaints apie therapy surasyti.

Emotional connectedness and truth go together. For patients to feel safe enough to see truth about themselves, the therapist must begin by being truthful.

p.5 ego-dystonic ir ego-syntonic.

p.7 Yet if therapy never jars with a painful truth, it has not gone very deep. The truth we need to hear often is the hardest to hear.

What we know may turn out to be true, but if they are not yet ready to hear it, we do more harm than good – as in all learning.

Still, our task is to lead people to truth about themselves and their effect on others without getting so upset that they run from therapy or bury truth even deeper.

Finding a way to tell someone a painful truth is central to our art.

p.8 We should be on the side of better mental health for all the family, even when seeing just one member.

p.9 Of course, there is a way to avoid criticism – feel nothing, think nothing, do nothing. I can't tell you how always to succeed, but I know a sure way to fail – try to please everyone.

p.10 Style is organic, as much a part of us as our hair, or lack thereof. **The therapist who either inflates or diminishes self loses uniqueness. We have only ourselves to offer. We are the only species able to interfere with our own growth.**

Be yourself. Fundamental and hard to do. Even experienced therapists have trouble with two things that seem incompatible: be relaxed and be confident.

Successful therapy is more artistic than scientific.

p.11 Knowing oneself is a sure path to maturity, autonomy, authenticity, and full humanness. Freud said "To be completely honest with oneself is the very best effort a human being can make".

p.12 Personal limitations of the therapist are precise therapeutic limitations.

p.16 Therapy is a metaphor for life. Good therapy promotes a good life, and vice versa. Ideally, therapy functions as a starter-upper, getting people to the point of taking charge of their own evolution.

So what is *therapy*? Therapy is a relationship between two or more persons who identify themselves as therapists and one or more persons who want some kind of change.

p.21 Because the most influential element in therapy is the therapist, our presence, attitude, attention, peace of mind, self-acceptance, level of consciousness, and stage of personality evolution are what count.

I am more in need of direction and synthesis than analysis, of inspiration than moralizing.

p.22 Release the attachment to control, not control itself. Stay composed when everything seems hopelessly out of control. We don't need to know *what* to do so much as we need to learn how to behave effectively when we *don't* know what to do.

p.24 Feeling understood is feeling loved, and our patients – as ourselves need love above all else. Out of love come some of the most important qualities: humanity and warmth and honesty.

p.25 Lao-tzu:

A good traveler has no fixed plans

And is not intent upon arriving.

A good artist lets his intuition

Lead him wherever it wants.

A good scientist has freed himself of concepts

And keeps his mind open to what is.

p.26 You can even learn from bad therapists what *not* to do. How to recognize good from bad? Simple. If watching or reading or hearing about a therapist makes you wish you could be in therapy with him or her, that would be a person to learn from.

Good therapy has aliveness that keeps all parties working from session to session.

The only way to learn therapy is to *do* therapy.

p.27 My practice review of 1964-1974 (following) shows that I turned down more requests for treatment than in the ten years before 1964, and the number who withdrew decreased by the same number. (Iš karto pajausti, kai nieko gero nesigaus..)

p.28 Those doing growth-oriented education-for-life, long-term therapy must also be expert in problem solving or they can't take people beyond a crisis.

p.29 Life is less a problem to be solved and more an experience to be lived and savored.

p.30 Good therapy doesn't come automatically or without thought. If you find therapy hard work, it's because it *is* hard, one of the hardest things people do. By "hardest" I mean that becoming a good therapist demands a long period of learning, examining and appreciating mistakes, finding correctives, making new ones, and evolving our own style.

p.34 Life generates its own emotions. Patients are experts on the facts of their lives – the content. Let them take care of content; your responsibility is for the process. Don't get lost in content. When you forget facts of their lives, they can remind you.

p.36 Asked late in life how his trumpet playing changed over the years, jazz great Louis Armstrong rasped, "Now, I play fewer notes." He was too modest to say "fewer and better."

p.40 Keep your focus on what will be more transformative.

p.41 Liberate yourself from having to fulfill expectations of others that are not right for you. Succeed and fail in your own terms.

You have to *want* to do therapy better. You need commitment. You must really care.

p.42 When a spouse, say, wants therapy for the marriage and the partner refuses to come, that says more about the marriage than it does about me or about couple therapy. It usually means that deepening their intimacy is not likely.

p.44 Freud practiced psychoanalysis for more than 40 years before writing about termination.

p.45 Effective therapists know when and how to stop. A good termination may accomplish more than all the preceding sessions.

p.49 (pabaigoje) "We have done good work together and are familiar with each other. Not hearing from you will be good news that you are getting along okay. It will also be good news if I *do* hear from you because you are wise enough to realize you need help again."

When therapy goes beyond first phase, the focus steadily shifts from symptoms to relationships, from "how we are doing now" to "how we are doing in life", from treatment to psychoeducation.

p.50 (ilgos terapijos pavojus) The pitfall: let the habit of meeting bog down without clear mutual goals. The most common negative of my 500 observed family sessions with referring therapists was lack of aliveness. Therapy is dead; participants have slipped into a stalemate, neither progressing nor quitting.

p.55 A.Maslow "The ideal therapist... ought to be at least a fairly healthy human being. This explains why training in aesthetic perceiving and creating could be a very desirable aspect of clinical training."

John Updike "The older you get, the stranger your earlier selves seem, until you can hardly remember having made their acquaintance at all."

p.57 But we are not a single person. We are many.

p.59 Our personality is not a monolith. It is a coalition of five to ten competing and cooperating selves who differ in age and gender, size and appearance, perhaps not speaking the same language.

People who come to therapy, not to mention the masses who do not, usually are overusing one or a few characters.

p.62 The goal of therapy is to mellow the overactive and build up the weak ones, getting them into balance so as to use all assets in harmony.

p.70 But therapists are more accurately compared to a concert violinists. None are self-taught. Native talent must be there, but guiding, shaping and encouraging it are also essential.

p.71 Effective therapists are realistic optimists. They know the worst that can happen, yet believe that things will get better or they wouldn't be in this business.

They are nonthreatening persons who create a safe place where patients feel cared for and protected, knowing they will not be exploited.

A good therapist is well along in personal evolution, moving towards Maslows ideal of self-actualization, authenticity, autonomy.

p.72 There is something about an overdeveloped, overeducated intellect that interferes with human-to-human contact.

p.73 We may not see oversensitivity camouflaging insecurity. Caring too much is the way the oversensitive person knows to be valued. And being valued is important.

p.79 Sometimes the matchups are startling. In child welfare, the history of a couple placing a child in a foster home is often similar to that of a couple becoming foster parents; some families try to solve problems by getting rid of a child, others by taking a child.

Experience is not what happens to us, it is *what we do about what happens.*

p.90 Before you tell the whole story, tell the bottom line in one sentence; I'm getting lost. Maybe you're telling me more than we need.

The point is finding the point. Then I am free to let the story wash over me, not straining to remember, and trusting intuition to alert me to the significant. This also applies to supervision and consultation. Hearing the point before the story eases getting to what is important.

p.92 (assignment) Identify early decisions fueling your entry into this field.

p.93 Being gentle, supportive, and emphatic with self doesn't come easily to therapists – "Easy on patients, hard on self". Living by this motto does an injustice to both parties.
The vast majority of us (therapists) are harder on ourselves than on our patients.

p.94 We are best prepared for empathy when there is nothing at all going on with us, when we are free of mental clutter with no strong feelings, no expectations, no concepts to validate, no restlessness, no aim other than simply to be present.

p.95 *Kinesthetic* empathy has been shown experimentally. Observers, unable to hear, can tell that two people are in tune when their postures and movements are in synch.

We can deliberately mimic the posture and movement of another to get a sense of what the other is feeling.

Cognitive empathy is interesting. The longer we work with someone, the easier it becomes to complete their sentences mentally, which is another way to monitor empathic growth.

p.97 When we are overemphatic we are weak on setting limits, letting treatment structure deteriorate – usually by not setting clear boundaries early on.

It is useful to define early how you work best regarding appointments, fees, and so on and then see how those limits are tested.

p.98 **The child creates trouble to elicit (išsiaiškinti) limits.** Similarly, the too-compliant child makes life easy for parents and teachers, as well as for child therapists. Yet this child may have unrecognized internal stalemates (aklavietės) that limit flexibility and creativity.

Step 1. *Get them to fall in love with you.*

Step 2. *Steadily apply clearer, firmer limits.*

Step 3. *Handle your reactions to their reactions.*

p.100 Step 3 is hardest for the overemphatic person who wishes to please, wants things nice, shuns conflict and violence. These people are natural creators of loving bonds, narrowly defined as showing support, caring, affection. **They are not good at fostering independence and autonomy, which are equally loving and necessary.**

To stand by while a young adult takes risks and makes mistakes is anguishing. Yet this is precisely what parents must do for a child – therapists for patients.

p.102 The underemphatic has no opportunity to implement step 2 (setting limits) and step 3 (dealing with reactivity) because step 1 is never established. Patients never develop a loving attachment.

p.108 Schizophrenics, manic depressives, and borderlines can hardly tolerate a silent therapist who does not actively engage them. And when a crisis involves family violence, child abuse, acting out, or suicide, an inactive style just feeds the turmoil.

p.112 Of course, our personal life affects our professional life. How could it be otherwise?

p.114 Living is an art.

p.116 The therapist would do well to examine and develop his or her *personal philosophy or belief system*. All our actions come from our philosophy, whether we examine it or not.

p.118 I could not prove she was wrong; she could not prove she was right. I later learned that is true for all beliefs.

Allan Watts says, "The art of life is more like navigation than warfare, for what is important is to understand the winds, the tides, the currents, the seasons, and the principles of growth and decay, so that one's actions may use them and not fight them."

p.121 Yet I wonder whether, in some families, the child's symptoms might be the glue that holds the parents together? Is it ethical to help the child and dissolve the family?

p.127 Paul Tillich "When you become creative in any field, your creativity is released in all other fields".

p.138 I have learned much from therapists, supervisors, colleagues, reading, conferences, writing. Yet patient dilemmas stimulate creativity the most.

p.139 (užrašuose) She puts down the gist of what happened, themes and feelings that strike her, and a summary of what she said and did.

A thought for readers who plan to grow older: Notes are invaluable as we struggle to recall names, dates, and content.

p.141 (užrašai toliau) Too tired? Fatigue weakens defenses and useful, less conscious material comes up. Even a few words are valuable. Worried about remembering? Freud listened all day, wrote all evening.

We discover, for example, that dreams become more numerous and revealing when we record them. This is also true for intuitions.

p.142 M.H.Worse advises, "The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair".

p.144 Growing more daring, I decided that when an idea or feeling comes back three times, it's okay to voice it. As I learned to trust hunches, I put them into words after they came up once or twice.

p.150 Abraham Lincoln said "I don't like the man, I have to get to know him better".

There is wisdom in Sufi prayer, "May your troubles increase." When we accept what is desirable and suppress the undesirable, the latter do not vanish; they become unconscious and press for expression. We see it outside ourselves, and then attack it with vengeance. Pogo said, "We have found the enemy, and it is us".

p.151 Humans are the only animals who make excuses, or need to.

The simple fact is that we can make time for what really matters. If we give ourselves to something that does not matter in the long run, we waste what is most precious – our life. Pious precepts of duty, hard work, responsibility, and doing what is expected override acting upon whatever the deeper psyche is trying to tell us about our direction and purpose.

p.152 Lao-tzu

We join spokes together in a wheel,
But it is the center hole
That makes the wagon move.

We shape clay into a pot,
But it is the emptiness inside
That holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,
But it is the inner space
That makes it livable

We work with being,
But non-being is what we use.

Congenital dysautonomia is a condition in which babies are born unable to detect pain. They have no warning of appendicitis, fractures, etc. They die young of catastrophes that would have been prevented were they able to feel pain. Our mental pain serves a similar protective function and must be respected.

p.156 We can always change ourselves and how we respond. And when we handle ourselves with family, we can handle ourselves with anyone.

p.157 Bowen found in the 1960s that working *systemically* one-on-one with psychiatric residents is more manageable and more effective with disturbed families.

The best way to understand a relationship is to try to change it. The best way to change it is to change your part in it. When change endures, amid some turmoil, good things follow.

p.159 Dean Ornish's *Love and Survival* summarizes extensive research showing that a profound sense of loneliness, isolation, and alienation is a major cause of serious physical and mental disease, and that intimacy plays a powerful role in prevention.

p.160 Inventory your life. Are you seeing enough nontherapists to keep you sane?

p.162 Fr. Anthony de Mello advises, "To become creative, learn the art of wasting time".

p.164 Buddhists say that grasping (godumas) is the cause of suffering.

Lao-tzu again:

In the pursuit of knowledge

Every day something is added.

In the practice of Tao

Every day something is dropped.

Less and less do you need to force things,

Until finally you arrive at non-action.

When nothing is done,

Nothing is left undone.

p.165 It's shocking to read in Paul Pearsall's *The Heart's Code* that research shows that one's number of years of education is a more important risk factor for heart disease than are all other risk factors combined!

But time-wasting daydreaming reveals that the fantasy of knowing everything, of once and for all getting in control, is just that fantasy. It's an illusion of safety that invites obsession.

p.166 Obsessions, compulsions, addictions – these are today's slaveries. They take us down a road that starts with satisfaction and ends with disaster.

p.169 Life is a parade off starts and stops and yet we live as though only the starts matter.

p.173 The less self-disclosure there is, the greater is the patient transference.

p.174 In four-times-a-week, on-the-couch analysis, the analyst builds transference by minimizing personal information. The patient fills in gaps with fantasy, a transference neurosis that partially replicates the childhood neurosis. Analysis then may produce a resolution. This technique has been fine-tuned and standardized over many decades.

Posttherapy research confirms that the kind of people we are is the most important factor in a positive outcome.

p.175 The paradox is that when we make no attempt to be perfect or to tell patients how to be, by the end of therapy, they have taken in much of our thinking, feeling, and behaving – whether we like it or not.

p.176 The best therapists are authentic, fully present, and open to speaking about themselves, without sacrificing power or expertise.

At the same time, it is essential not to distract from patient concerns or be self-centered.

p.177 Therapy is more effective when we are seen as persons not as scientists, robotherapists, walking textbooks, acolytes, espousing someone's method.

p.180 The big self-disclosure questions are: Will I enhance therapy or interfere, not just in the near future, but over the whole course of therapy and after?

It feels appropriate to patients for me to begin with comments about how I experience them – what I see happening, how I feel and think about it, what being with them is like for me, and so on. My manner is nonconfrontational, neutral, curious, inquiring, not blaming.

p.182 Furthermore, a too-deep interpretation increases resistance.

When in doubt about speaking personally, it's better to wait.

If you don't know whether patients are interested, ask them early on. Some do not want to know, especially if they heard too much from another therapist. Jan or I may say, "We had a similar incident, but will tell you only if you want to hear."

p.183 The more disturbed the patient is, the greater is the need for openness. Schizophrenics, borderlines, the psychologically primitive, and the severely abused are exquisitely sensitive to nuances, evasions, and the unconscious of others.

Strong negative reactions are most difficult to disclose and, paradoxically, most important.

p.184 Timing is the essence. Early on, when patients are in pain, they are not in the mood to hear about our lives.

p.185 Some people harbor a hurt long after being asked. I make it clear early on that it is essential to let me know if my comments are hurtful.

When you have never upset a patient, never had a break in empathy, the therapy has lacked power, was not transformative, was not deep enough. It has been unreal, not true to life. Life is full of mistakes and messes – we bounce from one to another no matter how many years we have been bumbling through.

p.188 Cautiousness kills liveliness.

Reticence signals that we are not free with thoughts and feelings, and yet we expect patients to be free with *theirs*.

Whether it is harder to keep your mouth shut or open depends on your personality ☺.

p.189 If you want a good, long practice, improve yourself. Word-of-mouth is the best advertising, effectiveness is the best marketing.

p.190 Well, much research shows that when an interviewer makes a self-revealing comment, the interviewee soon does so as well.

The most important benefit of self-disclosure is *diminished transference*.

Taking risks is sine qua non for an authentic therapist. In fact, risks are unavoidable, not only in therapy but in life.

p.192 A lifelong benefit of therapy, difficult to acquire in any other way, is an approach that few achieve, the skill to analyze thoughts, feelings and behavior – *to be therapist to oneself*.

p.196 "I think you are making a mistake, but I respect your autonomy and will be available no matter what happens".

p.199 Seeing patients as fragile, we discount their adaptive parts. *They always have strong parts. But our preoccupation with problems blinds us to them.*

Illness is the body's inescapable message to *stop!*

p.201 Freud put patients on a couch where they couldn't see him because he couldn't stand being watched all day.

p.204 Neglecting spirituality is a mistake. Serving others is a tenet of all religions, but therapists believe it is unnecessary for patients to give.

p.205 If mature parts did not exist, a better solution would be to take the patient home and raise the patient again.

p.207 How sick do you get before taking care of yourself?

p.216 As beginners, we feel more secure learning a single, internally consistent method. Nothing wrong, as long as we don't get stuck in it, a handicap to exploring other possibilities. You will do your best work when your method is consonant with your personality. Experiment and find ways that resonate positively. Invent a fit that feels right, at home, natural. You will save yourself from burnout and enjoy a long, productive career.

p.219 Tao Te Ching

If you want to be a leader,

You must learn to follow the Tao.

Stop trying to control.

Let go of fixed plans and concepts,

And the world will govern itself.

The more prohibitions you have,

The less virtuous people will be.

The more weapons you have,

The less secure people will be.

The more subsidies you have,

The less self-reliant people will be.

p.221 Therapists seek consultation for a host of reasons. The most important reason, usually unstated, is that the therapist is not in command of the therapy, is not the leader of the therapy.

p.222 Johnny Carson "The only absolute rule; *Never* lose control of the show".

p.223 Lao-tze

When the Master governs, the people

Are hardly aware that he exists.

Next best is a leader who is loved.

Next, one who is feared.

The worst is one who is despised.

p.224 We are fond of saying that we cannot *not* communicate; it's a question of how.

p.225 People with more education have difficulty asking for help. People with less education have difficulty taking charge.

p.234 Years of experience, especially on dissertation committees, convince me that the things that matter most – in therapy, in organizations, in life – cannot be logically explained or scientifically measured.

p.235 Letting go means being fully present to what is now, here, without preconceptions. It means being prepared for *whatever* presents itself, accepting results without rationalization, and without worrying whether the technique was "right" or fits a theory.

p.237 Daniel Burnham "Make no little plans, they have no power to stir men's souls".

Picasso "Everything you can imagine is real".

p.240 Therapists and patients look for breakthroughs, hoping for something big and positive just around the corner, a great *aha!* Until you have done it a few times, it is hard to realize that Goethe was right – simply taking action *is* a breakthrough. If nothing more, it breaks through resistance to taking action.

p.243 E.F.Schumacher "Second-class people have problems. First-class people don't". They have "opportunities".

p.247 Shakespeare "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so".

p.249 Mastery, like everything in life, has down sides. For example, when therapists truly "get" mastery, understand it in their bones, treatment is briefer. Their practices shrink, an economic concern for some successful therapists.

p.250 When mastery produces a brief result, brevity is a by-product, not the intention.

p.253 R.L.Stevenson "Life is not a matter of holding good cards, but of playing a poor hand well".
It takes two to make a marriage work, only one for divorce.