

T H E C L E A R I N G
Alter Your Life

4 WAYS TO ADD SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY TECHNIQUES TO YOUR PRACTICE



KEY CONCEPTS AND BASIC SKILLS

The Clearing SPC
Residential Treatment Care and Healing

The Clearing
alter your life

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Introduction

What This eBook Can Do For You

Welcome, and please read this first

Have you ever experienced something so great and profound that you just had to share it with others?

Well, if you have, then you'll understand what motivated us to tell this story, do our work, and to start The Clearing to help others. This eBook and our work at The Clearing is a labor of love.

Why this eBook is different

Plain and simply, everything you read here is real. We have first-hand experience with detox, Malibu treatment centers, 12 Steps, and many, many cases of individuals in trouble with alcohol, drugs, depression, anxiety, and other disorders. We have witnessed a spiritual approach to healing and its transformational effects in both our own lives and the lives of countless others. So if you read it here, you can be rest assured that these approaches have been tried and shown to work with authentic commitment.

We teach counseling skills, strategies and concepts based on the Principles of Spiritual Psychology. Using these simple but effective tools, our participants are able to identify and heal the deep mental and emotional issues that have been driving them to their limiting behavior (drugs, alcohol, self harm, etc).

In practice, these skills can re-energize a counseling relationship through their natural, intuitive, yet remarkably simple effectiveness. The confident and open-minded counselor may discover an intriguing new opportunity to explore the underlying core issues of the client, opening more direct and expedient channels to the client's Authentic Self level where true issue resolution can occur.

Key Concepts

Foundations to Heal Underlying Core Issues

While the counseling strategies and tools that will be described here are straightforward enough to stand on their own, their value and effectiveness is truly maximized when practiced in the context of several key concepts.

The Client Isn't Broken; The Past is the Past

In practicing this concept, a key factor is the counselor's conviction that a client is never considered 'broken' or in need of 'being fixed.' Equally important, you need to work with the client to change the belief that they are flawed, bad, or should be mired in shame and regret for their past behavior. The counselor understands and teaches the client that one's past may only be experienced in the present moment as a memory and no one can feel bad, ashamed or remorseful enough about their past to change it.

Shame, blame, anger and related emotions are well documented in their toxicity to human physiology and ultimately inhibit healing by holding the client in a circular loop of negative thinking. When this occurs, the client is wasting valuable present moments negatively ruminating on his past. To begin healing, we need to facilitate the client in using present moments to fully experience the present.

There is an Underlying Positive Purpose to All Events in Life

Using these basic counseling skills, counseling becomes primarily the facilitation of the client to observe and evaluate the events and beliefs of their life from a different perspective. Clients learn how experiences throughout their life have an underlying positive purpose, the understanding of which gracefully converts what was once experienced as a wholly negative event into an absolutely positive event.

Self Forgiveness

Authentic Self Forgiveness is transformative, and allows for direct healing of underlying core issues. For true healing, the client needs to forgive themselves for the judgments they hold against themselves and others associated with past events. This will allow them to view life through the lens of harmony, peace, acceptance, learning and resolution, concurrent with having a positive outlook in the present moment and in their considerations of their future.



Things Are As They Should Be

Through learning the underlying positive purpose, the client can release negative or inaccurate perceptions of themselves, others and events that keep them mired in anger, resentment, shame, blame, and feelings of victimhood. This reframing and acceptance that things are as they should be is the gateway to freedom and peace with the world as it is.

Evaluating a negative experience and discovering the underlying positive purpose is a process of spiritual growth. It's hard, but incredible things happen when you get the client to this place. In the spiritual context, we, as humans, learn our lessons through challenges; rarely do our thoughts turn to introspection and self improvement when all is well. It's common to identify patterns where the client has multiple experiences with a common theme, which over time seem to be increasing in intensity. An example would be a series of unique relationships with predictable outcomes. We can observe the pattern repeat and intensify because the underlying issue or behavior causing the pattern has not been addressed and resolved. In the spiritual sense, the Universe is calling our attention to an issue we are ready to heal.

Identifying the underlying positive purpose in seemingly negative events allows us to understand that we've misinterpreted the event as negative. Indeed, it is through ***perceiving the experience as negative that we are shown there is a lesson to be learned***. It is this dis-

covery that enables us to experience life in acceptance and peace. Far from being victims, we come to regard the experience as an opportunity for spiritual growth and may eventually become grateful for the challenges of our lives. From a spiritual standpoint, once the lesson from the experience is learned, there is no further purpose for this negative pattern to continue and one of two outcomes occurs:

1. We may encounter a similar experience yet find, though aware of it, the experience no longer upsets us, or
2. We may discover we cease having these experiences.

Each Individual has all the Tools Necessary to Deal With Their Situation Effectively for the Highest Good of All Concerned

Another key concept supporting these counseling tools is that each individual has all the tools necessary to deal with their situation. The counselor educates the client that, far from being helpless, they have untapped personal power and resources available to them and that these resources - for example, intuition, spiritual guidance, positive and expansive thinking and confidence - are used to arrive at unique solutions that they will conceive and implement themselves.

No Advice

When you facilitate the client in exploring their own solutions - in contrast to giving advice - their ultimate solution is within their realm of capability. The client has vastly more awareness of their capacity and resources, both inner and outer, than the facilitator and will arrive at a solution they can independently support within their own personal parameters. The client must chart the course themselves, though practical guidance - offered, not imposed - can be helpful. How many times have we witnessed someone trying to implement another's desires for their life, only to be miserable with a solution that didn't fit them personally?



We Are Always Doing Our Best

Using the Principles of Spiritual Psychology, we recognize that we are Spiritual Beings having a human experience and that we have this experience in each moment on four different levels:

1. Physical
2. Mental
3. Emotional
4. Spiritual

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	CONVENTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY
Physical	What we do	✓	✓
Mental	What we think and believe	✓	✓
Emotional	What we feel	✓	✓
Spiritual	Who we really are		✓

If we truly embrace this, we find that whatever we've done in the past, we've always been doing our best given where we were on all four levels at that point in time. We may think we didn't do our best because we know better (Mental Level). However, if we look at why we did whatever we did anyway, we'll see that it was the best we could do given where we were on all four levels at that time. We are holistic beings and need to look at our experiences holistically as well.

Once we realize that we've been doing our best all of the time, we then have to recognize that everyone else has also been doing their best as well. This realization opens us up to deeper levels of love, compassion and acceptance of ourselves and others.

Four Ways to Enhance Your Practice

Introduction to Spiritual Psychology Basic Skills

The Key Concepts of Spiritual Psychology provide context with which to use the following Basic Skills in a counseling setting. In this eBook, we'll cover 4 Basic Skills that we use in our practice. In future publications, we'll add to this list.

1. Heart-Centered Listening

The first Basic Skill is Heart-Centered Listening. Heart-Centered Listening is fundamental in the Spiritual Psychology approach. It is simply listening to your client from a place of love, compassion and acceptance. From this loving place, focus 100% of your attention on what the client is saying.



How to do Heart-Centered Listening

Invite your client to share an experience which recently upset them.

- As your client begins to speak, really focus on listening to what they're saying. Don't worry about what you are going to say when it is your turn to speak. It's OK if there is a pause in your conversation.
- You might repeat the following phrase inwardly as a way of staying centered: "I hear you, I hear what you are saying.."
- Trust that your client has all the inner resources they need to find their own solutions. Your part in the process is to hold a space for them as they go through this self discovery.

When we accept our client unconditionally they feel honored, respected, and able to express who they are. This creates an atmosphere for one to access deeper levels of authenticity within themselves.

2. Perception Checking

The second Basic Skill is called Perception Checking. As earnestly as we try, even using Heart-Centered Listening, often times the message sent is not the message received. Checking with your client to see if what you heard is what they were trying to communicate, can be enormously helpful in two ways:

1. It allows you to confirm you fully understand what your client is trying to share
2. Having your client listen as you restate their communication, in your own words, allows them to hear what they've said in a new way. It's an opportunity for them to hear, reflected back to them and free of judgment, what they've said so they can consider their own position from a different angle.

How to do Perception Checking

When there is an appropriate pause in the client's communication, repeat back, in your own words what you heard them say. Then ask for confirmation that your interpretation is accurate.

For example: "What I heard you say is _____.
Is that accurate?"

This is a simple skill and yet very profound. We have found over and over again, that Perception Checking has enhanced our sessions greatly.



3. Asking Open-Ended Questions

The third Basic Skill is Asking Open-Ended Questions. Open-Ended Questions assist another in accessing their feelings, their knowledge, and it helps build an intimate relationship. Open-Ended Questions invite communication and exploration. Open Ended Questions often start with who, what, where, when or how.

Other phrases that can assist in creating an Open-Ended Question are:

- "Can you tell me more about_____?"
- "Can you talk some more about _____?"
- "What are your thoughts about_____?"
- "What is present for you now?"

Any discussion of Open-Ended Questions in a counseling environment has to include the most popular Open-Ended Question, "How does this (that) make you feel?"

The reason it is so widely used is that it's very effective in getting to the emotional level of an issue. Many people are cut off from their emotions and get stuck in their head; Open Ended-Questions invite deeper conversation. Feelings are where healing takes place, we can't think our way out of emotional hurt.

4. Silence

The Fourth Basic Skill is Silence. Many counselors raise an eyebrow when we suggest that one of the most Basic Skills is to actually say nothing.

Working with a client in a counseling environment is a delicate thing. We know the client has all the tools they need to heal themselves and at the same time we want to help by contributing our experience and advice.

Often, when the counselor speaks, it pulls the client out of their thoughtful, introspective process. Holding in silence provides an extraordinary opportunity for healing. This skill alone can profoundly change your relationship with your client.

How to do Silence

1. As your client begins to speak, allow your client to completely explore their thoughts while you remain silent, trusting that your client will find their own solutions.
2. When your client ceases to speak, provide them a significant pause to see if any additional thoughts come forward for them.
3. When your client stops talking, if they are not making eye contact with you, hold in the silence and allow them the time to more deeply explore their thoughts and feelings. When they are complete they will make eye contact with you and you will know it is OK to make a comment.



The Session

Using these skills, as the session unfolds, observe closely what is happening. Your client is solving their own issue, but more importantly, solving it in a way they can absolutely support. While, as counselors, we may see another solution we may feel fits the situation, we can't possibly be aware of all that must be considered to create a solution the client can implement. These factors may include finances, timing, relationship dynamics in play, transportation, maturity, previous experiences, level of commitment, moral or social boundaries, ethnic or religious considerations. Your client however, is subtly weaving their solution in consideration of these factors known only to them, creating a unique solution they can implement and one of which they have ownership of by creating themselves.

Conclusion

Thanks for checking this out, we hope it was helpful to you. This eBook is the first in a series that we will continue to publish that shows the skills, strategies and concepts we use to successfully assist our participants in healing their underlying core issues.

If you have found this eBook helpful please drop us a message and let us know. We'd love to hear from you. Give us a call or drop us an email; we're here to help. (425) 275-8600.



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Appendix

Quick Background

In December 2011, the three founders began working together to create the program that has now become The Clearing.

We were all too familiar, from personal experience, with the rehab industry and its weaknesses. We observed that the success rates were very low. More troubling, we knew of many stories of people going to rehab and not experiencing a substantive program, in some cases coming out of treatment worse than they went in. Our research showed that many programs solely provide behavior modification and coping skills as their solution, which doesn't address the core mental and emotional issues present for people struggling with their personal situation.

We all have backgrounds in Spiritual Psychology, and together we said with absolute clarity, "we can do better." Each of us have the experience of healing profound issues which limited our lives through the Principles of Spiritual Psychology and we have been tremendously blessed to have worked with others and watched them do the same. Without a doubt, we knew it was the time in our lives to create and manifest this program.

"We started with a blank sheet of paper.... there is literally not a program like this in the country."

In designing our program, we started with a blank piece of paper. We didn't look at what insurance would pay for and we didn't look at what other programs were doing. We focused on creating a program that would provide the best opportunity for our participants to heal the underlying core issues that were limiting their lives. We'd all been through an excellent program at the University of Santa Monica and we drew heavily on our experience there.

The result is the program we offer you today. Together we have spent over 18 months designing and implementing the best program we know how to create, in the best facility we could find. The result is a highly effective program, in a loving, healing and safe environ-

ment, located in a beautiful location in the San Juan Islands of Washington State. There is literally not another program like us in the country. This program was designed from the ground up to provide our participants with a set of life altering tools they will use both in their present circumstance, and also in their unfolding life going forward.

We are excited and confident that we have created an unparalleled program for those who participate honestly and authentically.



Mission Statement

When we came together to create The Clearing, one of the first things we did was form our Mission Statement. We did this so that we would have a compass, a document that reminded us each day what we were doing and why we were doing it.

We dedicate our lives to loving service.

With joined purpose, we have created a loving environment dedicated to teaching and modeling the Principles of Spiritual Psychology. Guided by Spirit, we are facilitating those entrusted to our care, as they heal their issues for the Highest Good of All Concerned. In an honoring, loving, authentic and professional way, we are providing care at the highest standards of the mental health industry.