



Guiding Principles

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If you're curious about the perspective I bring to therapy, these principles offer a glimpse into how I think about healing, growth, and the therapeutic process.

Awareness and Inner Work

1. Awareness is the master key of inner work. As our awareness deepens—of thoughts, emotions, patterns, and bodily experience—we gain new ways of relating to ourselves and the world. This is one of the most meaningful and rewarding aspects of the journey.
2. There really is no such thing as working on the past—we work with how the past lives in us now: the images, beliefs, emotions, and bodily imprints that are still active today.
3. Memory rescripting and reconsolidation work. While we can't change what happened in the past, we can change how those experiences influence us in the present by transforming the implicit memories and schemas that arose from them.
4. Therapy is about more than healing wounds and resolving inner conflicts. It's also about connecting to our innate strengths and capacity to derive pleasure and meaning in life. Time spent acknowledging, appreciating, savoring, and celebrating our strengths and positive experiences is time well spent.
5. Humans are marvelously complex, with multiple overlapping dimensions—including the physical, emotional, environmental, social, and spiritual. An integrative view that accounts for this complexity brings depth and coherence to the work.

Inner Parts and Inner Compassion

6. One of the gifts of parts work is learning—through direct experience—that even our most troubling patterns arise from efforts to protect us or from parts of us that are carrying pain. This recognition fosters a deep, earned form of self-compassion that can be profoundly healing.
7. The ability to “unblend” or “defuse” from strong emotions and rigid thoughts and beliefs is an invaluable skill. It involves learning to be present with our experience, rather than absorbed in or identified with it.

8. As we turn towards parts of ourselves burdened by the past and begin relating to them, a space opens up. Within that space, as our habitual ways of being soften, we can better sense and explore our deeper, more essential dimensions. This is one way psychotherapy can be understood and approached as a spiritual practice.

Embodiment and Emotional Depth

9. Many of us carry conditioning that dulls or disrupts our connection to the body. Yet the body's felt sense is a powerful doorway to implicit memory and an essential resource in healing. As we more fully inhabit the body, we often discover a deeper sense of vitality—and a richer, more immediate connection to the magical, beautiful world around us.

10. The old adage “we need to feel to heal” is mostly correct. While strong emotions aren't always necessary, we do need to feel what is true for us—whatever that may be. Often, this includes discomfort. So, a key part of therapy is building affect tolerance: the ability and willingness to be with our feelings. Fortunately, this can be done in ways that honor our natural need for safety and protection.

Acceptance, Change, and Action

11. Life calls for a balance between acceptance and change. Therapy often focuses on change—but sometimes the most profound shift comes from learning what to accept. Paradoxically, compassionate acceptance often opens the door to meaningful change. And when it doesn't, it can still free us to live more fully in our imperfect lives.

12. When we want to feel better (i.e., have emotional change goals), it usually helps to develop at least some behavior change goals or else we can get stuck in the idea that we need to feel differently before we can act and live differently. Sometimes we need to start acting differently in order to start feeling differently.

13. Effective psychotherapy is flexible, dynamic, and tailored to the needs of each individual. Still, a framework that works for many people might look something like this:

- Clarify how you want to show up in life
- Create a vision for living and some concrete goals
- Build needed skills and inner resources
- Savor successes — Celebrate growth and progress
- Work through obstacles as they arise

Each step is important—but in practice, most of the therapeutic work centers on addressing obstacles, most of which arise from conditioned patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior rooted in our implicit memory.

The Therapeutic Relationship

14. At the heart of effective therapy is a relationship grounded in safety, trust, connection, and collaboration—and made resilient through the process of repair and reconnection when misattunements arise.

15. Even when therapist and client share a broader cultural background, our lived experiences often differ across dimensions like race, gender, age, sexual orientation, health status, and socioeconomic background. Naming and exploring these differences, when relevant, can be an important part of building a trusting relationship.

The Process of Therapy

16. When we turn toward difficult experiences, we begin to digest and metabolize them. This allows us to learn, integrate, and move on. But when we habitually turn away—through distraction, numbing, or avoidance—those unprocessed experiences tend to accumulate and weigh us down.

17. Therapy may unfold slowly at times, but ideally it remains dynamic and engaging. When clients arrive at their sessions with a sense of expectancy—that something meaningful might happen—the work tends to stay alive. If sessions start to feel flat or routine, it's worth pausing to explore what's changed.

18. When a client isn't making the progress they want, it's important to explore what might be limiting movement. Addressing an impasse directly can often open the way forward. When it doesn't, a referral to another therapist may be the best next step. Many of us benefit from exposure to different perspectives and styles along the journey.

Closing Reflections

19. At its core, therapy is often about healing disconnection—within ourselves, with others, and with the living world. The journey of therapy is a journey of reconnection.

20. Life isn't easy—and neither is change. But therapy can support growth, deepen connection, and be a meaningful part of a life well lived.