# If the map doesn’t agree with the ground, the map is wrong

Evaluate and adjust your behaviour, don’t stick to wrong models/beliefs.

Evaluate people based on traits that like kindness

# We are what we do

Past behavior is the most reliable predictor of future behaviour

In general we get, not what we deserve, but what we expect

The three components of happiness are something useful to do, someone to love, and something to look forward to.

We love someone when the importance of his or her needs and desires rises to the level of our own.

The point is that love is demonstrated behaviorally.

# It is difficult to remove by logic an idea not placed there by logic in the first place

If most of our behavior is driven by our feelings, however unclear they may be, it follows that to change ourselves we must be able to identify our emotional needs and find ways of satisfying them that do not offend those upon whom our happiness depends. If we wish, as most of us do, to be treated with kindness and forbearance, we need to cultivate those qualities in ourselves.

# Any relationship is under the control of the person who cares the least

# The perfect is the enemy of the good.

The problem with perfectionists and their preoccupation with control is that the qualities that make them effective in their work can render them insufferable in their personal lives. I treat a lot of engineers and accountants and computer programmers. To be less controlling in their jobs would render them ineffective. The best one can hope for is to introduce them to the paradox of perfection: in some settings, notably in our intimate relationships, we gain control only by relinquishing it.

# Life’s two most important questions are “Why?” and “Why not?” The trick is knowing which one to ask.

To take the risks necessary to achieve this goal (find love) is an act of courage. To refuse to take them, to protect our hearts against all loss, is an act of despair.

# Our greatest strengths are our greatest weaknesses.

One theme that is played out in many marriages is the coming together of someone with strong obsessive characteristics (usually a man) with someone else who has a more impulsive and theatrical personality (usually a woman). These people are initially drawn to each other because of complementary needs. The man is in need of more entertainment in his life and he values the woman as less inhibited, more spontaneous than he. The woman sees the well-organized and meticulous man as promising a measure of restraint that will balance her impulsive tendencies. It’s easy to see why such a relationship often contains the seeds of disappointment and frustration. (He: “Why can’t you be more responsible?” She: “You just don’t know how to have fun.”)

People with compulsive character structures are vulnerable to depression, as is anyone who seeks perfection in an imperfect world. It is often puzzling to such people that approaches that make them successful in their work are so poorly received by those they live with. Obsessive people put a strong emphasis on control. Anything that threatens this sense of being in charge induces anxiety. This leads inevitably to efforts to reassert control, in effect redoubling the behaviors that produced the problem in the first place. The resultant conflict produces feelings of frustration and discouragement that further reinforce a sense of failure.

Practically any human characteristic—competitiveness, orderliness, even kindness—when indulged to an extreme can produce undesirable results. Perhaps this is just another argument for moderation in all things. But we need to acknowledge that those qualities of which we are most proud can prove our undoing.

# Happiness is the ultimate risk

There might be advantages to their being depressed.

One of the benefits is that it is a safe position. The same, of course, could be said of chronic pessimism, which is often both a precursor and manifestation of depression. It is hard to disillusion pessimists; they are already discouraged and therefore immune to unhappy surprise. Because their expectations are chronically low, pessimists (who invariably see themselves as realists) are seldom disappointed.

**To be happy is to take the risk of losing that happiness. All significant accomplishments require taking risks: the risk of failure in invention, in exploration, or in love.**

**what is psychotherapy? It is goal-directed conversation in the service of change.**

It is not so much what occurs, but how we define events and respond that determines how we feel. The thing that characterizes those who struggle emotionally is that they have lost, or believe they have lost, their ability to choose those behaviors that will make them happy.

# True love is the apple of Eden

It seems ironic that when people fall in love, no justification for their attachment is necessary. It is accepted that the process by which we are drawn to another is mysterious and beyond explanation.

The people around them accept this and go ahead with the elaborate and expensive ceremony that will celebrate the beginning of their lives together. When, on the other hand, people fall out of love, the demands for an explanation are insistent: What happened? Who’s at fault? Why couldn’t you work it out? “We didn’t love each other anymore” is not, in most cases, a sufficient response.

# Only bad things happen quickly

One of the common fantasies entertained by those seeking change in their lives is that it can be rapidly achieved. Once we “know” what to do it appears that we ought to be able simply to do it. That these sudden transformations are rare is a source of puzzlement to many.

The process of building has always been slower and more complicated than that of destruction.

So here’s to the role of time, patience, and reflection in our lives. If we believe it is better to build than destroy, better to live and let live, better to be than to be seen, then we might have a chance, slowly, to find a satisfying way through life, this flicker of consciousness between two great silences.

# Don’t do the same thing and expect different results

Because going to the dentist is for most of us an unpleasant experience. It is common, therefore, for people to “forget” their appointments. When we forget other things: birthdays, anniversaries, names, promises, it is also possible to discern underlying attitudes that may be hard for us to acknowledge openly.

So it is with our choice of people to be with. Nearly every human action is in some way an expression of how we think about ourselves.

# The major advantage of illness is that it provides relief from responsibility

One of the basic rules of animal psychology is that any behavior that is reinforced will continue; behavior that is not will extinguish. A monkey will pull a lever for a long time if he is rewarded by food, even at intermittent and unpredictable intervals. If the food stops completely, the lever-pulling will, over time, cease. So it is with people. We do those things repetitively that produce some reward. It is just hard sometimes to discern what that reinforcement might be.

177