

A Self-attachment workshop for psychotherapy, increasing emotional and social intelligence, and creativity

(Part 1)

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November 2018

A new approach to psychological disorders

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The methods for self-attachment are based on previously published articles in:

<http://humandevelopment.doc.ic.ac.uk/>

Headings

- Critical prevalence of psychological disorders and the decline of religious/traditional societies
- Shortcomings of scientific reductionism in psychotherapy and psychiatry
- Critical conditions of life around the world, and the need for social/emotional intelligence and creativity
- Man as a self-organizing being with purposeful behavior
- Artificial intelligence and holistic algorithmic human development
- Holistic Freudian psychoanalysis and the unfinished work of Bowlby in attachment theory
- Ideal goals for today's materialistic society: joyous laughter, compassion, and creativity
- A reevaluation of long held beliefs about trauma and the Bayesian brain
- Psychological disorders and creativity
- Principles of algorithmic development in human beings

The critical global prevalence of psychological disorders

- The Lancet medical journal recently warned that by 2030 the global annual cost of psychological disorders will reach 16 trillion dollars.
- The percentage of psychological disorders like depression and anxiety, which can also lead to physical disorders, has increased drastically all around the world.
- Nonetheless, in comparison to other medical fields the science of psychiatry and psychotherapy has not made considerable advancements in recent decades.
- At the best, psychiatric medications help relieve psychic pain and make the continuation of life possible, without addressing the roots of the problem or creating a joy for life, and without preventing the recurrence of the disorder.
- The effectiveness of different methods of psychotherapy is also on par with medication therapy, with only a limited fundamental change following long-term psychotherapy.
- Lancet Journal: All countries are in the category of “developing countries” in terms of psychotherapy.

The result of the decline of religious/traditional societies in our era

- In traditional/religious society whether in the West or the East, there exists a deep relationship between individuals and God that plays a significant role in their lives.
- The belief that good deeds will bring about God's blessings is a holistic belief that protects individuals from the ups and downs of their relationships with other people, because these (earthly) relationships are eclipsed by the internal dialogue between the individual and God.
- In such societies spiritual rehabilitation could take place through a holistic internal dialogue with God.
- With the prevalence of secular societies the relationship between human beings replaced their relationship with God. Without an internal dialogue they are exposed to intense ups and downs in their day-to-day relations with other people.
- At the same time, the decline of holistic religious beliefs in secular societies has led to an absence in spiritual rehabilitation; a void that has not been filled by scientific advancements.

The shortcomings of scientific reductionism in psychotherapy

- In the 20th and 21st centuries, scientific reductionism as present in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), has not had the same level of success in psychiatry and psychology as it has in other sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology and other fields of medicine.
- Reductionism may work for “simple” systems, but it has not been an effective method when dealing with psychiatric disorders and the human brain, which has more than 100 billion neurons and is considered one of the most complicated machines in the universe.
- Despite many years of research and use of latest medical technologies, faith and holistic religious beliefs are still more effective than the scientific reductionism of psychotherapy and psychiatry when it comes to the prevention and treatment of psychiatric disorders.

The current critical condition of human life

- The United Nations recently warned that if by 2030 there is not a 45% decrease in greenhouse gasses compared to 2010, 100 million people will be in fatal danger.
- However, despite warnings by climate scientists, greenhouse gasses have continued to increase due to our insatiable desire for making a profit.
- According to recent research and a report by Guardian newspaper, from 1970 until the present time, human beings have been responsible for the extinction of 40% of all living beings.
- In these critical conditions, companies and governments are spending billions of dollars every year and using the best scientific minds to develop artificial intelligence.
- But artificial intelligence and self-controlled robots can be a threat to human beings, who continue to be ruled by their animal instincts, greed, and a desire for domination.

The need for social and emotional intelligence, and creativity

- Every person has the capacity for social and emotional growth and true creativity.
- The only effective way to confront the various issues faced by humanity today, and the critical impact of artificial intelligence, is to increase social and emotional intelligence and creativity, which are characteristics that set human beings apart from animals.
- In developing countries and regions such as ours that have been victims of history, there is even a greater need for increasing social and emotional intelligence and creativity.
- By further developing our emotional intelligence and creativity, we will be able to curb our unquenchable desire for materialism and profit, and will also be able to use artificial intelligence for our wellbeing.
- Motivated by material gains, human beings currently spend billions of dollars each year, globally working together to make lifeless machines intelligent.
- In comparison, we make very little effort toward finding ways for increasing emotional intelligence and creativity in human beings.

Human beings as self-organizing creatures with purposeful behavior

- Cybernetics or “the scientific study of control and communication in the animal and the machine” was established by the mathematician Norbert Wiener in the 20th century.
- During the mid-20th century, the Ratio Club, which included psychiatrists, psychologists, physiologists, mathematicians and engineers (including Alan Turing one of the founders of modern computers), met to discuss issues in cybernetics.
- Turing’s experiment for testing artificial intelligence was first discussed in the Ratio Club (1950).
- Based on the computational structure of the human brain we have been able to build different algorithms in order to increase computational intelligence in computers.
- Another challenge is to discover protocols or holistic algorithms based on emotional/social intelligence and creativity in human beings as cybernetic creatures, in order to increase these qualities in all people, and also for the purpose of using them as effective psychotherapies.
- The concept of Algorithmic Human Development is rooted in this double challenge.

Holistic analytical psychotherapy

- Sigmund Freud founded the study and understanding of the human psyche.
- After abandoning his Seduction Theory about childhood sexual molestation revealing itself through the interpretation of dreams, Freud presented theories on psychic energy, libido, infantile sexuality, Oedipus complex, internalization, the unconscious mind, and interpretation of dreams, ultimately leading to the foundation of psychoanalysis.
- Psychoanalysis is a holistic theory and method for the understanding of the psyche. It is a form of psychotherapy based on the recreation of the past and the internal/hidden life of the individual. This method ultimately had a great influence on psychiatry and culture.
- Many of the observations and discoveries made by Freud and his followers (Klein, Kohut, etc.) especially in Object Relations theory, have been invaluable in different areas such as defense mechanisms and trauma, and continue to be used in analytical psychology today.

The limitations of psychoanalysis

- However theories like the pleasure principle, death drive, and the Oedipus complex are irrefutable, and therefore, unscientific. Some experts believe these theories have lead to the creation of a new form of secular religion.
- It is impossible to scientifically evaluate psychoanalysis or to apply it in a widespread manner.
- In addition to its unscientific assumptions, the greatest weakness of psychoanalysis is the framework of power between the therapist and patient, and the great dependence of the patient on the therapist.
- The patient assumes the therapist to have power over him and to be in control of the therapy, which is in direct opposition to the patient's self-regulation and inherently in contradiction with his treatment.
- From the point of view of self-attachment theory, the greatest weakness of psychoanalysis is its failure to teach laughter in a theoretical and practical way.

The unfinished work of Bowlby's attachment theory

- Bowlby was trained in psychoanalysis by Melanie Klein. In the mid-20th century he witnessed many instances of separation anxiety in children who were separated from their mothers, and later reexamined these observations by studying the behavior of monkeys with the help of Harry Harlow.
- Klein however never accepted that many children's imaginations were not rooted in their Freudian desires, but in their actual context and type of relationship with their parents.
- When Bowlby realized that psychoanalysis could not explain his findings, he abandoned much of his psychoanalytic training and turned to cybernetics and ethology to explain his theories, and established the attachment theory.
- Later with the help of Mary Ainsworth, who designed the "strange situation" experiment, attachment theory became a serious scientific theory in developmental psychology.
- But Bowlby and his followers continued to work within older frameworks, which lacked the teaching of laughter and continued therapist-centered treatment models. Despite evidence on the importance of self-attachment protocols for the purpose of self-regulation, psychotherapy did not change significantly with the establishment of attachment theory.

Three goals for contemporary man as a self-organizing being

- The model of psychotherapy and the increasing of human intelligence should fit within the contemporary context and be based on the person's goals and life priorities as a self-organizing being.
- The western economic system and the power of monopolistic capitalism, which encourages the prevalence of a materialistic culture and society in order to increase profits, has atomized individuals using the powerful tools of media, separating them from their true purpose and turning them into cogs in the machine.
- In this situation as long as the true purpose of the individual remains unclear, psychotherapy can only act as a superficial treatment that allows the person to adapt to the existing system that is threatening both nature and human life.
- Today all evidence points to the fact that human beings will only be able to live better lives for themselves and their surroundings if they follow these goals:
- 1) Smile joyfully, 2) Be compassionate toward others and nature, 3) Be creative.
- Psychotherapy or algorithmic development must direct people toward these goals.

A reevaluation of long held beliefs about trauma

- The main issue with the three goals of smiling joyfully, compassion, and creativity is that given the various personal, economic, social, political, and ecological problems we face today, how is it possible to be joyous?
- Aren't sorrow, sadness, anxiety, and depression the natural consequence of life's tragedies such as accidents, earthquakes, violence, psychiatric disorders, and addiction to drugs and alcohol?
- Negative emotions are our natural and immediate reaction to tragedies but this can change relatively quickly, and over time we can come to see tragedies as challenges that help us grow. This can allow us to overcome our negative emotions and celebrate new opportunities in life.
- This approach can be found in different cultures and religious teachings.
- But why isn't this approach common in the reaction of most people toward tragedies?

The general belief about psychological disorders

- The general belief about psychotherapy and psychiatry is that psychological disorders are to the detriment of the individual and society, and must be overcome as soon as possible and in any manner possible. This generally held belief is also very profitable for drug companies.
- Human beings have failed to understand the reasons behind these disorders for thousands of years; at times believing the person suffering from a psychological disorder was possessed by the devil.
- The result of these worn beliefs is that even today, people suffering from psychological disorders, and their families, consider it a source of shame and sometimes hide them, which increases the suffering of the patient.
- Today there is definite scientific fact that shows not only are some psychological disorders not detrimental, but they are in fact a main source of creativity in human society and have played a significant role in the development of science, culture, and civilization.
- Psychological disorders can be painful, but by effectively combating them the person suffering from the disorder can reach great creativity.

The Bayesian Brain

- By processing a small percentage of our sensory input our brain interprets the outside world based on mental and behavioral patterns that have been repeated over and over again in our memories. This can be an utter misinterpretation.
- For thousands of years human beings were convinced that the sun rotated around the earth, and astronomers studied the motion of planets based on wrong mathematical principles.
- These mistaken ideas were used as the basis of many religious beliefs, and also led to the prosecution of Galileo. It was through scientific experiments that we finally set aside our worn beliefs and accepted that the earth rotates around the sun.

The Bayesian Brain

- Today we reject the idea that the sun rotates around the earth.
- But we continue to live within old patterns of a materialistic and comfort-seeking society, where drug makers recommend a prescription for any disorder.
- We have forgotten that in the past, all cultures recommended perseverance in the face of different difficulties, which could help make the person stronger.
- In such a situation it is difficult to believe tragedies can be celebrated as opportunities.
- In self-attachment our role models are people who are able to face any difficulty with positive energy, accepting new challenges as new opportunities.

Creativity as man's unique characteristic

- Consistent with our biology, creativity can be considered a unique intrinsic characteristic of human beings.
- The fact that a three-year-old child can express an unlimited number of concepts using a few words is a sign of human creativity.
- According to Noam Chomsky human language is different from animal communication, and was developed 40,000 years ago and quickly became an integral part of human culture.
- The first remnants from religions, burial rituals, art, and artifacts that are considered signs of modern man's creativity are also from this era (when language was developed).
- As such, we can conclude that all children have the potential for creativity, which begins with language.

Three main principles of creativity

- Great creativity is the result of three main principles:
 1. A creative character
 2. Thinking and working creatively
 3. Wide knowledge in the area of creativity
- Creativity is possible when all three principles appear together.
- Children naturally possess the first two characteristics

The similarities between extremely creative adults and children

- Many experts believe that creative adults are like children.
- Creative adults and children have some things in common in their behavior and thinking, such as:
- Spontaneity, fluidity of thought, playfulness, curiosity, motivation, stubbornness, an independence in understanding phenomenon, imagination, long-term imaginative play, and a great love and perseverance for developing their capabilities.
- The strong experience of all emotions (happiness, sorrow, fear, anger, surprise, hate) is one of the most important similarities between children and creative adults.
- Extremely creative people experience strong contradictory emotions, but they are able to manage them.
- Another quality of creative individuals is their contradictory characteristics.
- For instance they can be gullible and suspicious, conservative and revolutionary, focused and distracted...

The technical basis of creativity in childhood

- When they are three or four-years-old, children can quickly learn to imitate associative thinking and analogical reasoning, and grasp the beauty of phenomena.
- These techniques are unique to human beings and are considered the tools for creativity.
- Through imitation children learn one of the most important principles of creativity: imagining a situation.
- Through associative thinking the child learns to discover relationships between things, which is another principle of creativity.
- Through analogical reasoning the child compares similarities and differences between things, which is another principle of creativity.
- All children biologically possess the first two prerequisites for creativity (the creative character and tools for creativity). But later, influenced by social values and culture in the family structure and in school, these capabilities tend to decrease.
- Every adult has a creative, genius child within, who can be revitalized.

Intense psychological disorders and creativity

- There are a greater percentage of artists, authors, and poets among those suffering from bipolar disorder compared to the general population. Therefore from a biological point of view it seems their genes are consistent (with this condition).
- A great number of highly creative individuals in different fields possess schizotypal qualities, which some consider a characteristic:
 1. The experience of unusual emotions or cognitive disorders
 2. Introversion and a lack of awareness about one's excitements and an inability to enjoy socializing
 3. Arousal-provoking incongruity with environment (which is a feature of bipolar disorder)
- Those who suffer from schizophrenia, experience these characteristics to a greater degree in times of stress, which results in cerebral changes, breakdown and agitation
- A recent extensive research has shown that creative people with schizotypal characteristics, and those suffering from schizophrenia have two significant differences:
 1. The existence or lack of motivation
 2. The ability or inability to enjoy life

Psychological disorders as an opportunity and advantage

- Many historic figures have experienced different psychological disorders such as depression and extreme anxiety, as well as addiction.
- These people have been able to transform their disorders into opportunities and to release the nervous energy of their psychic pain in creative ways.
- Isaac Newton, who is one of the most important figures of the past thousand years in the area of modern science, suffered from severe psychological disorders (chronic anxiety and paranoia), which led to a long-term nervous breakdown in his fifties.
- Our role models in self-attachment are those who constantly combat their disorders, learn to see the world in a different way, and convert their stimuli into creative work, which can be a form of treatment.
- Converting psychological and spiritual disorders and pain into creativity will give people the motivation and hope necessary for wrestling with their issues, and give a new perspective to their treatment.

Development of Creativity: principles and hypothesis

- Working memory can influence creativity in children more than talent.
- Each person has the potential for creativity in one or more areas.
- Most people never realize their creative potential.
- In most creative people only a small portion of creativity is learned.
- The development of creativity improves the quality of life of the individual and those close to him.
- The development of creativity in individuals helps solve social issues.
- A significant amount of creativity is the result of the combination of positive and negative emotions in individuals.
- By balancing their pain and harnessing things that stimulate them, those who suffer from psychological disorders have a great opportunity for creativity.
- The roots of creativity are hidden deep inside the inner-child. Through neural flexibility and long-term strengthening it is possible to revive the inner-child and thus become creative.

Algorithmic development in human beings for joy, compassion, and creativity

- In computer science algorithms are based on mathematics and repetition, and their accuracy is also controlled in this way.
- It is expected that powerful computers can use these algorithms and reach results in a matter of seconds or minutes, or in some rare instances in a few hours or days.
- Algorithmic development in human beings is based on two concepts in neurology, which are similar to repetition in computer algorithms:
 1. Neural flexibility
 2. Long-term strengthening
- These algorithms take at least several weeks or months to show results.
- Using mathematics it is possible to design neural models for these algorithms.

Three principles of algorithmic development in human beings

- Algorithmic development in human beings is based on three principles:
 1. Neural flexibility in children is many times greater than adults.
 - Therefore development protocols will only be successful when they are based on the revival and activation of neural pathways that are active during childhood.
 - In other words the “inner-child” needs to be revived and activated through laughter, joy, and play.
 2. The most important element for emotional development and creativity is love and secure attachment, which can begin through “substitution” and by creating a passionate emotional connection with the inner-child.
 3. Emotional development gains stability through the repetition of positive acts.

“Substitution” is another thing in common between algorithmic development in humans and computer algorithms.