

Hypnotherapy and the Inner Judge - Relevance, Methods and Spiritual Aspects

(Der innere Richter in der Hypnotherapie - Bedeutung, Methoden und spirituelle Aspekte)

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Aus dem Inhalt

Introduction

The subject of the metaphor of the Inner Judge, based on Freud's concept of the superego, as well as its meaning in the field of hypnotherapy, is introduced. Some fundamentals that the author considers of importance for such work are described: To find simple but adequate solutions without oversimplifying things. The author's presupposed idea of man as the essential focus for psychotherapeutic work is represented. Spiritual approaches, humanistic idea of man and factors that determine health are the most important aspects of these presuppositions. The author espouses a holistic attitude which, aside from these presuppositions, includes a holographic and cybernetic perception of the universe.

The Inner Judge

The metaphor of the Inner Judge is described and defined in detail in keeping with the Freudian concept of the superego. This implies the psychoanalytic structural model of the id, the ego and the superego, the development of ego structures, as well as the various forms in which the superego manifests itself in daily life.

As the superego is often experienced in the form of critical internal voices that very much resemble a living judging instance, the term Inner Judge is introduced as a helpful and easy to understand metaphor. The implications the Inner Judge has on our daily life are discussed in detail, for instance, the restriction on our aliveness and choice of possibilities, the filtering of our perception by generalization, distortion and deletion, and judging ourselves, as well as others, on the basis of outdated, not very helpful standards that were incorporated during childhood. Although the Inner Judge was once necessary and helpful during childhood, its standards and the way the Judge claims its prerogatives is no longer needed by and supportive of adult people.

Various psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches that include a concept about the superego/Inner Judge, or elements of it, are described and compared. Transactional analysis (Berne), gestalt therapy (Perls) and the spiritual approaches of the Ridhwan-School (Almaas) deal with concepts that are similar to or more or less the equivalent of the Freudian superego. Approaches that deal with elements of the superego or Inner Judge, such as negative beliefs and negative thinking, cognitive behavioral therapy, Positive Thinking, autogenic training, hypnotherapy, NLP and Time Line Therapy, are cited and described.

How to deal with the Inner Judge

This chapter describes the fundamental aspects and possibilities (with the exception of hypnotherapeutic interventions and concerns) of dealing with the Inner Judge with the aim of freeing oneself from its attacks and restricting influences in one's life. The basic steps, which were mainly derived and modified from Byron Brown (1999), are: 1. Recognition of the Inner Judge, 2. Exploring its effect, 3. Disengaging, 4. Exploring the origin, 5. Defending oneself against the authority through visualization, and 6. Dealing with attacks from other people.

Inner Judge and Hypnotherapy

This chapter provides a set of 38 hypnotherapeutic methods for dealing with the Inner Judge, following the steps that were introduced in the previous chapter. In the introduction of this chapter problems that may frequently arise in therapy and hypnotherapy due to the Inner Judge's activity are described. Some of them are well known in hypnosis as the critical factor (Krasner) or the critical faculty (Elman), the vital instance that often hampers or prevents trance induction and effective trance work. One of the main goals of trance induction is to bypass this inner intellectual instance, which makes hypnotherapeutic interventions so useful when working on the Inner Judge. Trance makes it easier to enter the unconscious realm and mind, activate resources and to explore things from the past and present which are usually blocked by resistance.

It is demonstrated how the Inner Judge himself works as a smart hypnotist by applying hypnotic language patterns.

The presented hypnotherapeutic methods consist of various approaches for recognizing and exploring the Inner Judge's activities and strategies on how to disengage oneself from it and defend oneself against it in trance. Improving awareness, revealing unconscious activities, working with especially strong identifications and interpersonal relationships that are driven by unconscious standards and attacks of the Judge, are taken particularly into consideration and dealt with. The methods are based on various common methods that have been modified and applied to the specific subject, some of which were derived from related fields such as psychodrama, gestalt therapy and NLP; others may be rather unfamiliar for many hypnotherapists. Most of the methods are based on the active cooperation of the client. Various trance phenomena are utilized, such as hallucination, revivification/age regression, ideodynamicism, hypermnesia and others.

The underlying fundamental methods are: Reframing, age regression with the affect-bridge, changes in perspectives, including several different kinds of observer perspectives, exchanging the protagonists, modeling after other people (representative experience), association and dissociation (including conscious-unconscious dissociation), pretending as if, use of metaphors, search instructions and posthypnotic suggestions.

Discussion

The presented concepts and methods are evaluated, in as far as this has not already been done so in the corresponding chapters and sections. Hypnotherapy and the applied methods are compared with similar approaches, and the advantages of hypnotherapeutic interventions and trance are demonstrated.

The limits of approaches such as psychoanalysis, bodywork and spiritual practices, which do not consider and effectively work on the superego, the Inner Judge's activity, are discussed. It is demonstrated that neglecting this activity and function will restrict growth and change and often cause issues to recur or become aggravated.

A further section discusses the possibilities and consequences of displacing negative beliefs with positive ones or counteracting them with the usual methods of cognitive approaches.

Some widespread misunderstandings and myths in therapy and changework are further discussed: The myth that only positive suggestions can work, that of perfect human beings and that of unlimited power. The author demonstrates the contradiction of teaching that only positive suggestions work (in keeping with the example “Don’t imagine a pink elephant!”) and the actual practice and experience in hypnotherapy and the function of the Inner Judge. It is obvious that negative suggestions may not be the most effective method in therapy but they do sometimes work and are not without value.

As to “perfect human beings” and “unlimited power”, the author outlines the consequences of such thinking and perception and demonstrates in which way they are unjustified myths.

In keeping with the title of the thesis the author discusses the spiritual aspects of the Inner Judge’s activity in detail, including a discussion about conscience and misunderstandings concerning it.

The importance of the Inner Judge and success in daily life, as well as the author’s final conclusions, complete the study.