

BOOK SECTION



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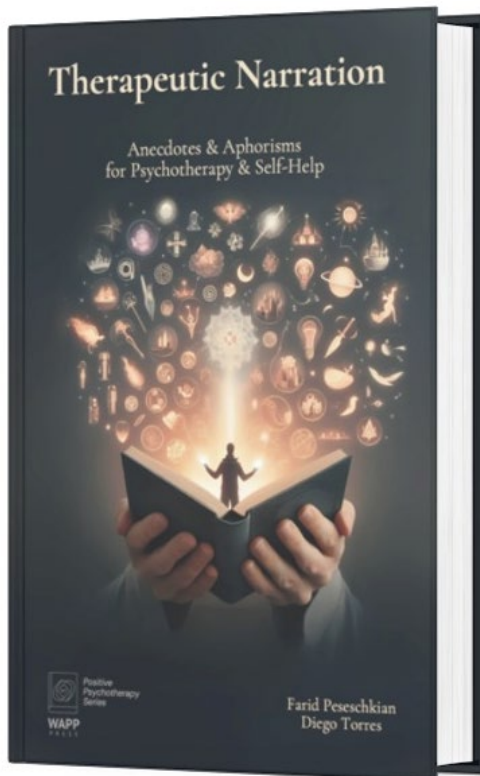
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Farid Peseschkian (M.Sc.) & Diego Torres (M.Sc.)
Therapeutic Narration. Anecdotes & Aphorisms for Psychotherapy & Self-help.
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Introduction

Throughout history, stories have been used to pass on ideas, to engender enthusiasm and solidarity, and to birth the great theoretical constructs of our civilization such as nation states, revolutions and money. They are perhaps our most powerful invention.

In the field of psychotherapy, the power of storytelling cannot be overstated either. In Positive Psychotherapy (PPT), storytelling has been a pivotal tool, frequently employed for its diverse therapeutic benefits. Above others, they strengthen the therapeutic alliance (Guterman & Martin, 2015; Larkin, 2014), reduce defensiveness in patients (De La Torre, 1972; Krause & Revenstorf, 1997; Guterman & Martin, 2015), facilitate problem-solving (Parker & Wampler, 2006; Larkin & Zabourek, 1988), enable resource identification (Burns, 2015, Yapko, 1997; Krause & Revenstorf, 1997; Krause & Revenstorf, 1998), and – perhaps most importantly – enhance regression and association capacities (Peseschkian & Remmers, 2013).

While studying psychology, we discovered our mutual enthusiasm for stories and their power to open up new perspectives. We often discussed our favorite short stories or how certain characters in our favorite TV series must feel and experience life. This shared interest led us to explore the application of narration in psychotherapy. Our research revealed that, although there were many narrative therapeutic approaches utilizing the power of stories, and several excellent books on storytelling, there was no comprehensive encyclopedia that could serve as a reference for practitioners. Thus, we decided to create one.

Our goal was to compile a collection of stories and quotes from all over the world that therapists can use to find suitable narratives to share with their patients. Each anecdote and aphorism is linked to the themes and

symptoms it addresses (or, in other words, the symptoms that patients need to have to benefit from the stories). At the end of the book, all themes and symptoms are listed, allowing for symptom-specific and client-specific searches. In addition to a list of anecdotes and aphorisms, the book begins with a theoretical background on storytelling in psychotherapy and its effects according to scientific literature. We also collected advice from clinicians on how to tell and use stories effectively.

Practical Application

Let's consider an example. Imagine you are a therapist working with a patient suffering from social anxiety. Although it's already the tenth session, it doesn't feel like you're making any progress. The patient spends the whole hour ruminating and you have the feeling that she still hasn't been able to trust you. You wonder how to adapt your sessions and think about using a story. However, you may not immediately recall a suitable story. This is where our storybook comes in. You go to the end of the book, look at the topics, and think about which ones might best address your patient's current situation. You stop at the chapter "Insecurity" with 25 entries, which you can now read thinking about your patient. Likely, you will find a story that mirrors the patient's emotional journey or current situation, hoping to bring some relief to her burdensome self. Let's say you choose story no. 7, which you can now share with your patient.

Sample Story

The Small Wave (no. 7 in the book)

A small wave swam about on the surface of the sea, rising and falling with the swell of the ocean and having a carefree time. She was enjoying the sunshine and salt-sea air until she noticed a group of waves in front of her. The other waves moved toward the shore and crashed upon the beach.

This turn of events scared her. "Oh my God, how terrible, what is about to happen," lamented the little wave.

At that moment, a larger wave came up from behind and surprised her, asking, "Why are you scared?"

The little wave replied, "You don't understand what's going on! We are crashing on the shore! All the waves crash in the surf and dissolve in foam on the beach! Don't you realize that?!"

The large wave smiled reassuringly and said, "The problem is, you believe you're a wave! In truth, you are part of the ocean."

Source: Unknown

Tags: Insecurity, loss of a loved one

We hope that this book can help therapists around the world utilize the power of storytelling in their work. Like

any collection of knowledge, this one is far from complete. If you have more stories or aphorisms that you use, please share them with us. If they are copyright-free, we would be happy to include them in future editions of the book.

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