

# Corrective Emotional Experience in the Therapy Sessions

Excerpted from: Hartman, D., & Zimberoff, D. (2004). Corrective Emotional Experience in the Therapeutic Process. *Journal of Heart-Centered Therapies*, 7(2), 3-84.

Healing unresolved traumas from early life requires accessing the events that produced the trauma, re-experiencing them cathartically in the original ego state, and reframing the meaning of the experience through corrective emotional experiences. Essentially all of these forms of correction provide the means for an individual to open up to what has been suppressed, oppressed and repressed; and to retrieve and circulate the psychical energy that has been unfocused, bound up and disconnected from.

The following types of corrective experiences fit into one of three categories, related to the three primary existential themes of worthiness, personal power, and identity (Zimberoff and Hartman, 2001):

- (1) building ego strength through release of shame and reclaiming worthiness;
- (2) building agency through release of helplessness and reclaiming personal power; and
- (3) building authenticity through release of dissociation and identification and reclaiming self-reflective identity.

## Forms of Corrective Experience

Release of shame (reclaiming worthiness)

1. abreacting feelings - overcoming early inhibitions
2. "informed child" process, self-awareness, acknowledgement and compassion for oneself
3. legitimizing experience (reducing self-blame through retrieving memories)
4. learning appropriate and realistic self-expectation
5. affect attunement in interpersonal relatedness
6. re-nurturing and re-parenting the inner child

Release of helplessness (reclaiming personal power)

7. learning to discriminate between past and present
8. unlearning helplessness, achieving mastery
9. accepting healthy support
10. reforming and repatterning experience
11. mourning the losses, incorporating the lessons

Release of dissociation and identification (reclaiming self-reflective identity)

12. embracing compassionate self-acceptance
13. increasing ego resiliency
14. learning to discriminate between self-definition and introjection
15. giving meaning to past events that were experienced as bewildering
16. reconnecting memories and emotions to events
17. practicing being in the "here and now"
18. increasing the capacity to be self-reflective
19. reframing the early erroneous conclusions/ decisions
20. reclaiming "lost" parts of the self - reclaiming inner resources and soul retrieval
21. expanding into the transpersonal realm

Zimberoff, D., & Hartman, D. (2001). Existential issues in Heart-Centered therapies: A developmental approach. *Journal of Heart-Centered Therapies*, 4(1), 3-55.

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