

# The Use of Metaphors in Psychotherapy

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**ABSTRACT:** Metaphors are used in everyday language and play a role in the therapeutic domain. "This paper: 1) Examines the linguistic structure of metaphors for its therapeutic relevance. 2) Introduces the concept and use of metaphoric kernel statements. 3) Describes strategic and tactical applications of metaphor in guided metaphoric: imagery work, storytelling and metaphoric tasks. 4) Demonstrates the efficacy of metaphor in treatment of cases of traumatic and highly anxiety-provoking issues.

While metaphors have long been part of traditional healing methods, clinicians of diverse orientations are rediscovering their use in therapy. Erickson (1935; 1944) and Kopp (1971; 1972) made significant contributions to the acceptance of this therapeutic technique. While psychoanalysts tend to interpret patient metaphors within an analytic framework (Sharpe, 1940; Sledge, 1977), some analysts have reported novel uses of patient metaphors (Aleksandrowicz, 1962; Caruth & Ekstein, 1966; Ekstein & Wallerstein, 1956; Ekstein & Wright, 1952; Reider, 1972).

In this paper we examine the linguistic structure of metaphors and provide some conceptual clarity regarding their content, construction and clinical use. Hopefully this will open new and effective therapeutic avenues for clinicians by providing useful tools for planning, describing and analyzing their therapeutic work with metaphors. Secondly, we describe and analyze strategic and tactical approaches to the therapeutic use of metaphors.

Strategic approaches utilize a single metaphor throughout the course of treatment. "Tactical applications use metaphors for more limited purposes within a wider treatment frame. In both tactical and strategic uses, we examine the characteristics of metaphoric imagery work, metaphoric stories and metaphoric statements generated by the therapist and the patient.

Orthony, Reynolds and Arter (1978) remark: "Although metaphors occur . . . at the level of individual sentences, the really crucial role they play is in systems. We may call them extended metaphors or analogies, or even metaphorical models." These are common in psychotherapy. Individual metaphoric sentences such as metaphoric kernel statements (Fernandez, 1977) also play a significant role in forming the point of departure for extended metaphors.

## Terminology: Linguistic Views on Metaphors

According to Richards (1936), simple metaphors ("George is a lion.") consist of two terms and the relationship between them. Richards calls the subject terms "George," the tonic or tenor, while "lion," the term used metaphorically, is the vehicle. The relationship, or what the two have in common, Richard labels the grounds. Fernandez (1977) notes that tenor and vehicle belong to different domains, i.e., the literal domain and the metaphoric domain. The tenor, commonly a human being, has an abstract quality made more specific by the vehicle. In therapy, the tenor is most often the patient himself. "I am allergic to this world," a patient proclaims, wearing four sweaters in the middle of summer.

Ferrine (1971) classifies simple metaphors according to whether their tenors and vehicles are explicit or implicit. A complete presentation and discussion of these categories is beyond the scope of this paper; however, clinicians can utilize this notion by an awareness that the vehicle and the metaphoric domain are implicitly stated, and by noticing to what degree. The patient or therapist can fill in what is implicit through guided imagery work or metaphoric stories in ways that optimally facilitate change.

# Metaphor In Psychotherapy

**Dennis Tay**



## **Metaphor In Psychotherapy:**

**Using Metaphors In Psychotherapy** Philip Barker,2013-10-28 Published in the year 1982 Using Metaphors in Psychotherapy is a valuable contribution to the field of Psychotherapy *Psychotherapeutic Metaphors: A Guide To Theory And Practice* Philip Barker,2013-10-28 Provides a theoretical and practical introduction to the use of metaphors in therapy outlining which clinical situations lend themselves to the use of metaphorical strategies and how to use metaphors to develop rapport between therapist and client *Metaphor Therapy* Richard R. Kopp,2013-06-17 First published in 1995 Routledge is an imprint of Taylor Francis an informa company *Metaphor and Meaning in Psychotherapy* Ellen Y.

Siegelman,1993-08-01 When therapists hear patients talk of feeling imprisoned burning with rage trapped or unequipped they are witnessing manifestations of the symbolic attitude the hallmark of all depth psychology Most clinicians naturally respond to and use metaphors but they often fail to understand the full potential of metaphoric images This volume in addressing the transforming power of metaphor demonstrates how clinicians can deepen the therapeutic encounter

*Metaphor in Psychotherapy* Dennis Tay,2013-07-25 This book represents a bold attempt to address contemporary issues in both metaphor and psychotherapy research On one hand metaphor research is increasingly concerned not just with describing metaphors in discourse but how they could be used more adroitly in purposive real world contexts such as psychotherapy On the other hand while a growing number of mental health professionals believe that metaphors contribute in some way to the psychotherapy process their ability and willingness to use metaphors might be compromised by a relative unfamiliarity with the various nuanced aspects of metaphor theory The present analysis of metaphors in authentic psychotherapeutic talk brings these theoretical aspects to the forefront and suggests how they can be applied to enhance the use of communication of metaphors in psychotherapy It should be of interest to metaphor researchers mental health professionals and discourse analysts in general **Metaphor: Its Therapeutic Use and Construction** Martin

Cohen,2018-02-19 This book helps counselors therapists in all treatment modalities effectively use the extended metaphor as a therapeutic tool It is a needed addition to every therapist s tool kit The book will show you how to create a personalized and carefully constructed metaphor to reach a resistant client This is especially important when we consider that each client is an individual and requires treatment specific to his or her needs You will find a detailed description of the components used to create original therapeutic metaphors in a step by step fashion along with a rich and varied collection of metaphor examples Two full length annotated metaphors are provided to help you effect positive change in your clients This book is a must for all mental health professionals **Metaphors in Psychotherapy** Kevin William Grant,2020-01-28 Kevin William Grant examines the cognitive processes that produce metaphors in psychotherapy The I Ching Task is the measure of metaphor production applied in this research inquiry Two cognitive processes are hypothesized to be necessary for the production of a metaphor The first hypothesized cognitive process is sensory imaginal processing where attention is concentrated into one s

internal experiencing and sensory awareness to form sensory impressions or sensory images The second type of processing is called integration synthesis processing and this is hypothesized to work in parallel with sensory imaginal processing Integration synthesis processing functions to combine conflicting or contradictory elements into an integrated whole Metaphor is the meeting point of these processes and all of them are important in the production of metaphor in psychotherapy Revised and updated from the first edition published in 1991 **The Role of Metaphor in Art Therapy**

Bruce Moon,2007 Pragmatic and poetic this book is a tribute to the complexities and mysteries of working with people who are suffering and striving to tell their stories through expressive artistic processes Its roots lay deep in encounters with children adolescents and adults who have come to the author for help over the last three decades It is grounded in interactions with graduate art therapy students and encounters with important themes in life This book makes no effort to affix particular meanings to the metaphors discussed in the clinical vignettes but rather suggests ways to listen and respond

Navigating the Realities of Metaphor and Psychotherapy Research Dennis Tay,2022-12-01 The real world commitment of cognitive linguistics is demonstrated by increasingly extensive collaboration between researchers and industry partners Yet there has been little critical reflection on the lessons learnt from these collaborative efforts Beginning researchers may benefit from in depth discussion of how various practical realities inform constrain or otherwise shape important methodological and or analytic decisions This Element reflects on long term collaborative work between a metaphor researcher and psychotherapists offering practical advice on navigating the latent realities of this type of research The three foundational components of psychotherapy the therapist the client and the interactional setting itself are discussed in turn covering issues like ethically engaging therapists in research design and data analysis dealing with underexplored variabilities in client responses and managing the inherent tension between spontaneity and control in an interactional setting like psychotherapy Some thoughts on how the lessons are transferable to other research contexts are offered

*Metaphoria* Rubin Battino,2005-01-27 This is the comprehensive guide for all those wishing to explore the fascinating potential of metaphor Containing sample scripts and suggestions for basic and advanced metaphors and a history of the use of metaphor Rubin s freshness and honesty is unparalleled his grasp of the subject is uncanny **Metaphor in**

**Psychotherapy** Henry T. Close,1998 Readers gain a dose of a creative collection of stories and allegories in Henry T Close s book showing how to use them as teaching tools in psychotherapy This comprehensive guidebook is written by a highly respected Ericksonian therapist with over 30 years of experience in the mental health field Metaphor Use in

Psychotherapy Elizabeth Ann Letsch,1997 **Metaphors in Psychotherapy** Kevin William Grant,1991-10-22 Kevin William Grant examines the cognitive processes that produce metaphors in psychotherapy The I Ching Task is the measure of metaphor production applied in this research inquiry Two cognitive processes are hypothesized to be necessary for the production of a metaphor The first hypothesized cognitive process is sensory imaginal processing where attention is

concentrated into one's internal experiencing and sensory awareness to form sensory impressions or sensory images. The second type of processing is called integration/synthesis processing and this is hypothesized to work in parallel with sensory/imaginal processing. Integration/synthesis processing functions to combine conflicting or contradictory elements into an integrated whole. Metaphor is the meeting point of these processes and all of them are important in the production of metaphor in psychotherapy.

Revised and updated from the first edition published in 1991. Metaphor in Practice Niklas Törneke, 2017-08-01. The use of metaphor is central to the implementation of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and is a powerful tool for all practicing psychotherapists. In *Metaphor in Practice*, psychotherapist and international ACT trainer Niklas Törneke presents the first practical book to combine the most recent behavioral and linguistic sciences of metaphor and illustrates how and when to apply metaphors in practice for better treatment outcomes.

*Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy* Murray Cox, Alice Theilgaard, 1997. The authors look at how literary material can be incorporated into therapy and show that the value of associativeness as a complex cognitive function is not merely decorative.

101 Healing Stories George W. Burns, 2001-04-05. George W. Burns examines the healing value of using metaphors in therapy and provides 101 inspirational story ideas that therapists can adapt to share with clients for effecting change. He explains how to tell stories that engage the client, how to make them metaphoric, and where to find sources for such tales. Burns also shows readers how to build stories from personal experiences or their own imagination to use in session, making this thoughtful book an especially creative therapeutic tool.

BOOK JACKET *Therapeutic Metaphors for Children and the Child Within* Joyce Mills, Richard Crowley, 2001-02. Presents an effective method for creating and using metaphors that constellate a healing array of unconscious learnings and resources in child and family therapy.

Therapeutic Metaphors David Gordon, 1978. Symbol, Story, and Ceremony Gene Combs, Jill Freedman (M.S.W.), 1990. Describes the psychotherapeutic use of metaphor in its three basic forms: symbol, story, and ritual. Case studies are used to illustrate metaphorical strategies for facilitating new patterns of thought. Exercises are also offered to help therapists develop confidence in thinking metaphorically.

Therapeutic Metaphors for Children and the Child Within Joyce C. Mills, Richard J. Crowley, 2014-07-11. Winner of the 1988 Clark Vincent Award for an outstanding contribution to the profession through a literary work and translated into four languages, the original edition of *Therapeutic Metaphors for Children and the Child Within* was considered a groundbreaking addition to the field of child and adolescent psychotherapy. The 1986 edition was the first and to this day the only book that solely intertwines the extraordinary foundational teachings and philosophies of Milton H. Erickson and creative healing approaches for children and adolescents. With resiliency at its core, this revision now brings forward important topics related to neurobiology and the cultural value of metaphor and play along with fresh case examples and creative activities to a new generation of mental health education and coaching professionals.

## Whispering the Strategies of Language: An Mental Quest through **Metaphor In Psychotherapy**

In a digitally-driven earth wherever screens reign great and instant connection drowns out the subtleties of language, the profound strategies and emotional nuances hidden within phrases often get unheard. However, nestled within the pages of **Metaphor In Psychotherapy** a charming literary value sporting with fresh thoughts, lies an exceptional journey waiting to be undertaken. Written by an experienced wordsmith, this charming opus attracts viewers on an introspective trip, softly unraveling the veiled truths and profound affect resonating within the very cloth of every word. Within the psychological depths with this emotional evaluation, we will embark upon a heartfelt exploration of the book is key subjects, dissect its fascinating publishing type, and yield to the powerful resonance it evokes deep within the recesses of readers hearts.

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### **Metaphor In Psychotherapy Introduction**

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