Solutions with Difficult Clients

Blending Aikido with Solution
Focused Approaches

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Aikido: the way of blending with energy
合 = ai = to harmonize, unite
気 = ki = the life force of the universe (energy)
道 = do = the way

SF Application (SFA):
When you have blended with clients, what worked?
When you think of blending, what metaphors come to mind?
What advantages to you see in blending with clients?
What is the source of your ‘energy’ in SF? How do you utilize it?

MM/FNT: Major SF Assumptions

1. Nonpathology: avoiding judgment; looking for positive openings (“exceptions”) in the client’s experiences; not blaming clients or becoming defensive if they don’t like SF, don’t answer the Miracle Question correctly, ask you to stop asking questions (!), etc.

2. Curiosity: keeping genuine interest in the other, which requires a quiet “center” (controlling one’s anxiety); benevolent desire to know more about the person’s experiences and imagined futures

3. Remaining Tentative (“Not-Knowing”): no certainty about how something will/should work; remaining fluid, adaptive

4. Respect: focusing on the other, not to be strategic (“make SF work”) but to stay in relationship; believing the client is the expert in her/his experience both historically and in-session
Aikido: Four Principles

1. Keep Weight Underside/Move from Your Center
   a. SF Application: acting from your SF assumptions
   b. Confidence in your approach
   c. Nonthreatening approach = respect, curiosity
   d. SFA: What is your favorite/best way to approach clients in difficult circumstances?
      When have you been successful in re-creating a positive direction in sessions when things
      become highly charged or unproductive?

2. Relax Completely
   a. “Non-Anxious Presence”
   b. Aikido/SFA: infinitely adaptive
   c. SFA:
      i. What would your clients, colleagues, co-therapists, or supervisors say you do
      when you are successful in collaborating with clients?
      ii. How do you currently manage your anxiety in session during moments of stress,
      confrontation, or high emotion?
      iii. What are ways you “lead from one step behind” when the situation pulls you
      toward “solution-forced” therapy? What will you tell yourself to relax during
      sessions?
      iv. What might your clients say you could tell yourself to relax?
      v. What would Steve or Insoo say to tell yourself to relax?

3. Keep Your One-Point (Awareness of One’s Center)
   a. SFA: continuous awareness of your assumptions
   b. FNT & MM: nonpathology, curiosity, always being tentative (“not-knowing”), respect
   c. MM & FNT: awareness of breathing = awareness of contextual effect
   d. SFA: How do you keep aware of your “center”?

4. Extend Energy (ki)
   a. Extending love towards connection
   b. SFA: What do you tell yourself to stay connected in challenging relational moments?
      What do you do to stay connected in these moments?

Final Question
What small thing from aikido will you do differently that might help you in a difficult session?

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REFERENCES/RESOURCES

The Art of Aikido


Applying the Art of Aikido


Frager, Robert (2011). Aikido demonstration. Retrieved October 31, 2011 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9XNdXh1IQ (One of the founders of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology demonstrates aikido, which is required of all residential students at ITP.)


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Aikido Practitioners in the Field of Psychotherapy

Stephen Gilligan, PhD:  http://www.goodtherapy.org/famous-psychologists/stephen-gilligan.html


Stephen Lankton, MA:  http://lankton.com/personal.htm

David Lukoff, PhD:  http://www.itp.edu/academics/faculty/lukoff.php


Frank Thomas, PhD:  http://www.mizuaikido.com/instructors.html (check out videos); http://www.coe.tcu.edu/216.asp

Phillip Ziegler, PhD:  http://books.google.com/books/about/The_way_of_Aikido.html?id=WwfhNwAACAAJ; http://www.amazon.com/Recreating-Partnership-Solution-Oriented-Collaborative-Approach/dp/0393703495/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1320077414&sr=8-1