

「苦與樂」研討會

「苦與樂」專題討論第六節

The therapeutic impact of sufferings and joy

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From the very early days of our lives, we have strived our very best to steer away from sufferings in pursuit of joy and personal gratification. However, it is often at the time when individuals feel they can no longer stand their sufferings that breakthroughs in personal growth and resilience are evidenced. It is by going through with this “second wind” of tolerance that new peaks of personal triumph and forbearance are brought about, bringing along with it increased understanding of one’s personal strengths which were not even realized before. There is some truth to the saying: “Jump into the middle of things, get your hands dirty, fall flat on your face, and then reach for the stars”. Reaching for the star of joys can never be straightforward. Experiences of sufferings and joys are inevitable issues brought up in psychotherapeutic sessions. Sufferings and joys are relative and has to be seen as such before positive transformation comes about. The Persians has the saying “I murmured because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet”. The very psychotherapeutic process is not a stoical exercise. Rather, psychotherapy attempts to enhance the quality of human existence through a realistic appraisal of the constants of the predicaments embedded in each human life. Psychotherapy strives to enhance a person’s spontaneity and receptiveness of the joys of living and the joys of possessing what are already in hand. At the end of the therapeutic process, contentment and acceptance often brings joy and fulfillment, as well as increasing freedom from fearfulness, increase sense of security and well-being. Joy comes by when we are able to savour what is, instead of longing for what might be, or regretting what might have been. To be conscious that we are perceiving and thinking and to be conscious of our modes of perceiving and thinking often transforms sufferings into joy and cherishment. The pursuit of joy and happiness is often indirect and comes as a by-product of life. Through sufferings, personal reflections, understanding and insight, human beings stand a better chance of transcendence to rise to a higher and more noble way of existence. Joy is a way of travel, not a destination. Suffering, likewise, is often a sage and a messenger of change for the better.