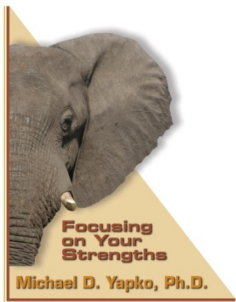


# TOPICAL PANEL 06: The Initial Interview

With: Otto Kernberg and William Miller

December 15, 2017

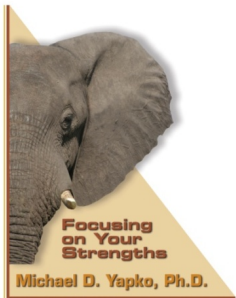


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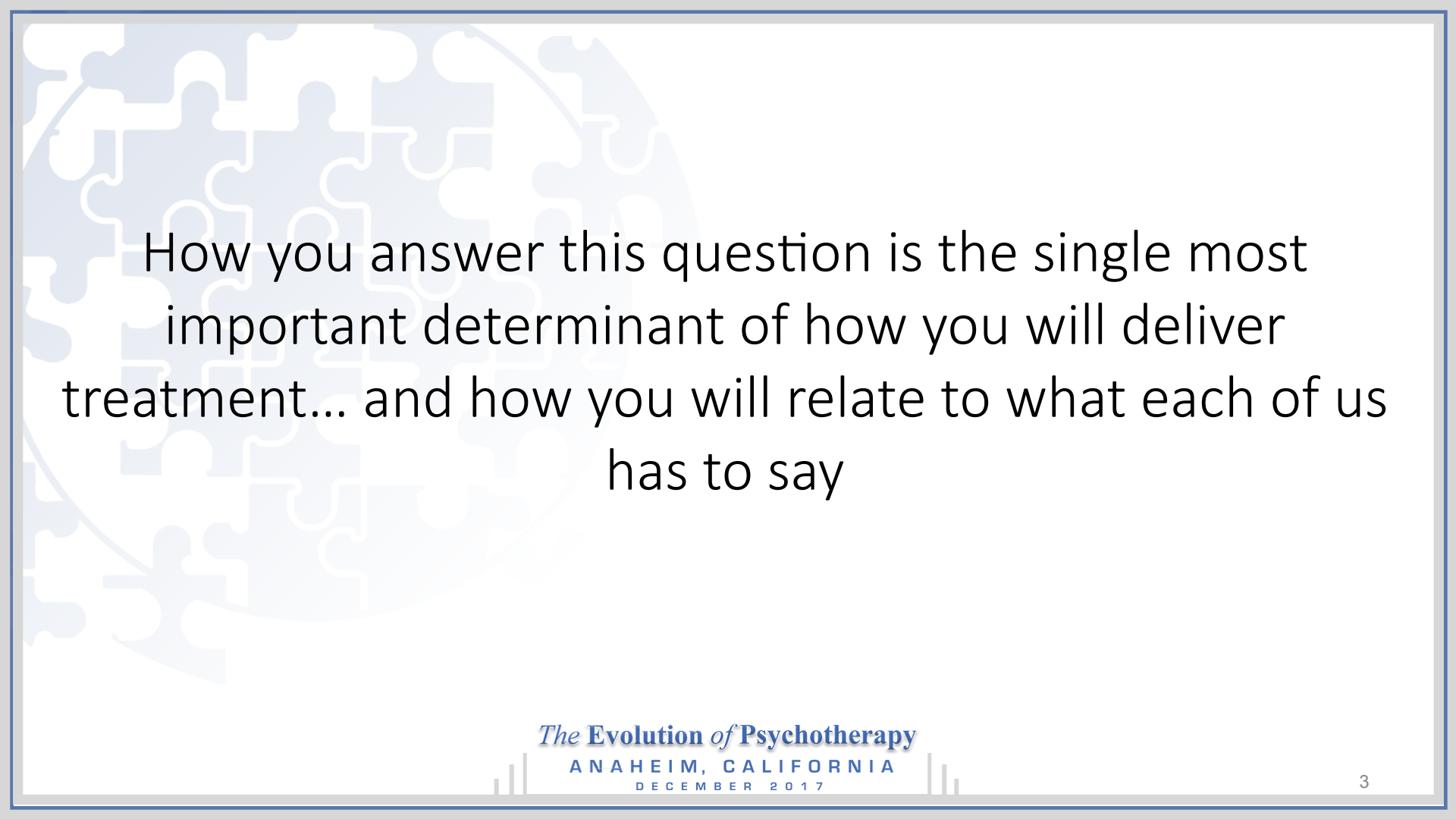
# What causes peoples' problems?



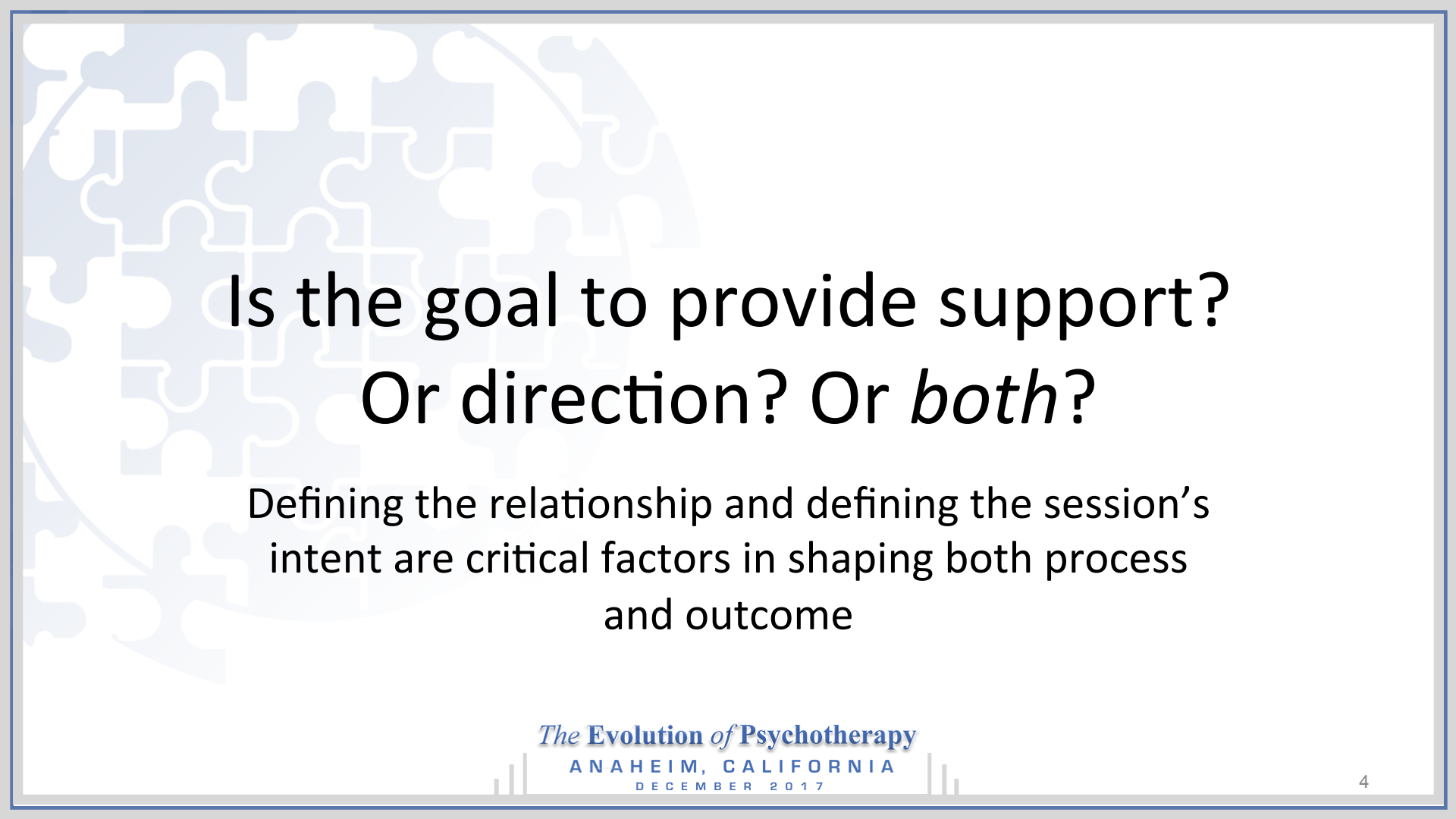
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How you answer this question is the single most important determinant of how you will deliver treatment... and how you will relate to what each of us has to say



# Is the goal to provide support? Or direction? Or *both*?

Defining the relationship and defining the session's  
intent are critical factors in shaping both process  
and outcome

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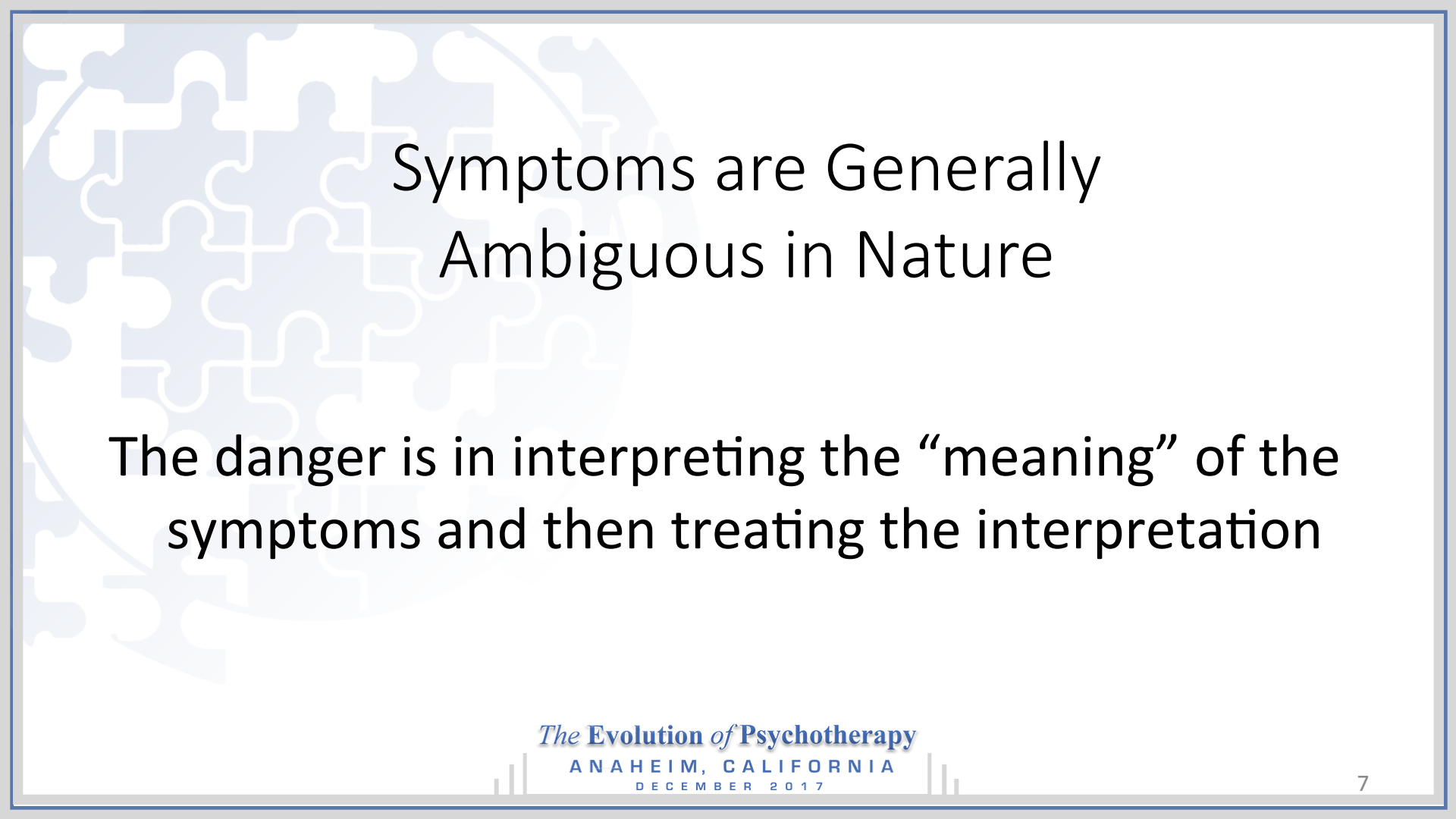
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# Factors to Consider

- How is the therapy relationship defined?
- How are the goals of treatment defined?
- How is the client introduced to the therapy process?
- How are realistic expectations established to avoid disappointment?
- Who is included in the treatment process?

# Distinguishing Content From Process

- The client presents a story, including a description of symptoms, about **what** has happened – the **content**
- The therapist's task is to identify **how** the client generates symptoms- the **process**
- Changing the process (sequence or pattern) inevitably changes the content as well



# Symptoms are Generally Ambiguous in Nature

The danger is in interpreting the “meaning” of the symptoms and then treating the interpretation

# Lines of Interviewing

- How the person experiences the symptom patterns and how the person self-organizes to generate them
- Identifying resources the person has that may be organized and utilized therapeutically
- How the person maintains the symptom pattern



## How Does Someone Expend Effort in Staying the Same?

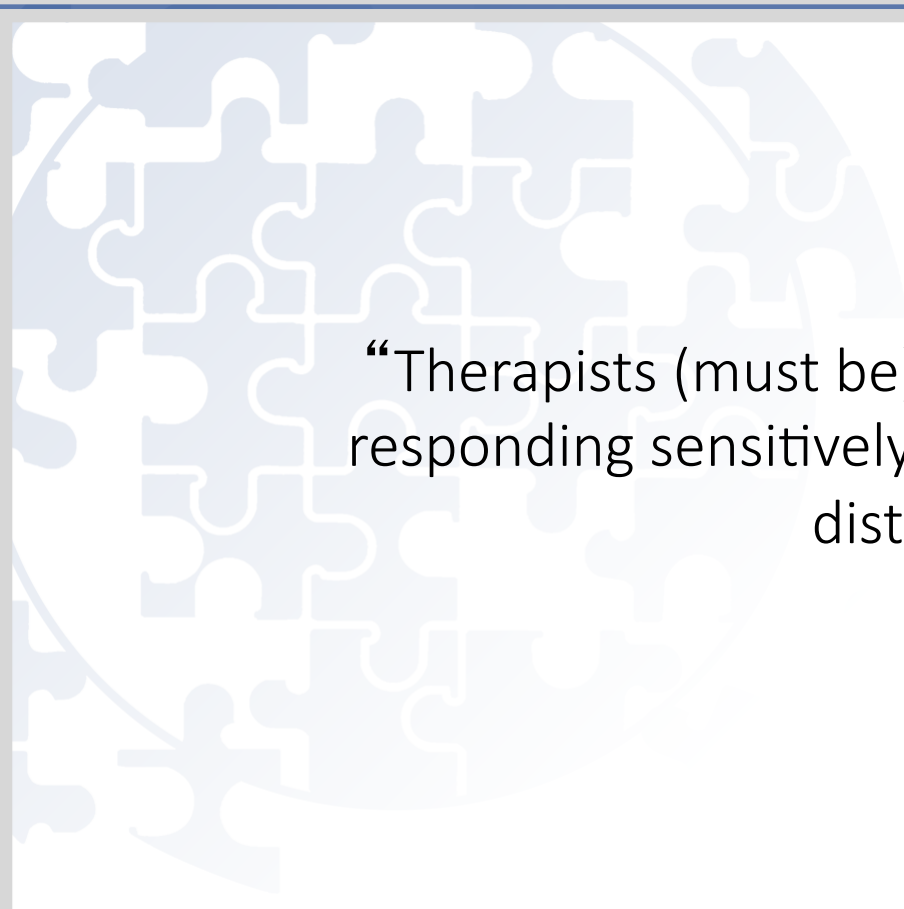
- Defining the problem in **unchangeable** terms (e.g., “it’s genetic”)
- Defining the problem in **global** (nonspecific) terms that obscure a starting point
- Defining oneself as **helpless** and **hopeless**
- Using a **past orientation** as the reference point

## How Does Someone Expend Effort in Staying the Same?

- Attributing the problem to **negative motivation** (e.g., secondary gains)
- Ruminating and avoidance as coping strategies
- Ignoring or not seeking either **objective** or **contradictory evidence**
- Justifying ideas about **how things “should” be**

# Motivation and Ability, Awareness and Action

What can a motivated or aware person accomplish without a defined series of steps to follow (action)? Motivation without ability is as empty as the reverse. **Both** are needed to succeed.



“Therapists (must be) skillful tacticians while responding sensitively to a client’s misery and distress.”

Jay Haley

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# Discovering and Creating Client Possibilities

- Identifying exceptions in the pattern
- Identifying possible solutions
- Identifying alternative framings
- Identifying dissociated client resources
- Encouraging experimentation
- Avoiding labeling
- Using presuppositions



# Communicating the need for action is critical in treatment

How do you communicate your expectation that the client will be active in treatment?



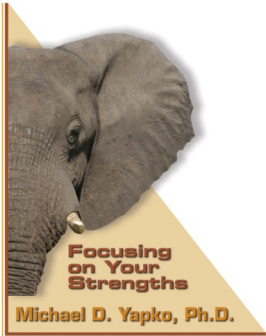
A goal without steps is merely a wish

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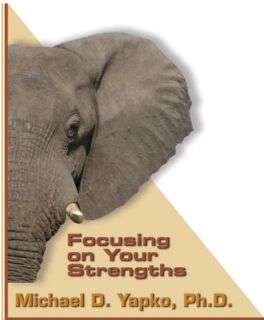
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