“Cognitive vs. Experiential Emphases”
Stephen Gilligan, Ph.D.

In conversation with
Don Meichenbaum, Ph.D.
• Which is more important, cognitive or experiential emphases?

• Beggars can’t be choosy: We need to creatively utilize all relevant dimensions of a client’s reality—cognitions, affects, behaviors, images, positive and negative values, relationship connections, etc.

• The question is how can these different parts fit together into a generative whole?
• The central process of effective therapy is *creativity*.

• Reality is constructed, and each person is an active contributor to that creative process.

• We can create positive or negative realities. Good therapy supports a client in constructing positive realities, which often includes transforming negative realities.
A COACH state upgrades creative performance capacities:

1. Underlying sense of unity allows different dimensions to be interconnected

2. Homeo-stat to Rheo-stat: Each performance dimension is fluid, responding to ongoing feedback

3. Allows sustained connection to positive connections: goal, somatic “center”, positive resources.
Reality is constructed at 2 levels:

1. **FILTERS**: Somatic, Cognitive, Field

2. **RELATIONSHIP TO FILTERS**: CRASH VS. COACH
The CRASH State
The Underlying Context of Symptoms

- Contracted
- Reactive
- Analysis Paralysis
- Separated (isolated)
- Hurting/Hating/Hitting
CRASH as “neuromuscular lock”

The Four F’s of Neuromuscular Lock

Fight

Freeze

Flight

Fold
The **COACH** State

The Basis for Creative Change

- **C**entered
- **O**pen
- **A**ware
- **C**onnected
- **H**ospitable
Two examples of therapeutic COACH-connection

1. Neil Young: “The guy who writes and sings the songs”
2. Woman with “black wall” blocking close relationships
6 Steps in Generative Psychotherapy

1. Open a COACH field
2. Set Intention/Goals
3. Develop a generative state
4. Take action
5. Transform Obstacles
6. Deepening the Changes
Thank You.....
And May the Force be with you!

Stephen Gilligan, Ph.D.
www.StephenGilligan.com