

HYPNOTHERAPY

A Client-Centered Approach

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Mary Lee LaBay

Foreword by Patti McCormick



PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
Gretna 2003

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

LaBay, Mary Lee.

Hypnotherapy : a client-centered approach / Mary Lee LaBay ; foreword
by Patti McCormick.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-58980-052-4 (hbk. : alk. paper)

1. Hypnotism—Therapeutic use. I. Title.

RC495 .L25 2003

615.8'512—dc21

2002008383



Printed in the United States of America

Published by Pelican Publishing Company, Inc.

1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

*To my parents,
Maurice and Margery LaBay,
with love and appreciation*

Acknowledgments

I give my heartfelt gratitude to my clients for the honor of facilitating and witnessing your healing and growth. I trust that our work together has enriched your lives as greatly as it has mine.

To my life partner, Scott: Your love and support have allowed me to realize my dreams in so many ways. I give you my love and appreciation.

I value the opportunities, encouragement, and assistance that I have received from Pelican Publishing Company. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Milburn Calhoun, president and publisher; Nina Kooij, editor in chief; Kathleen Calhoun Nettleton, promotion director; Rachel Carner, promotion assistant; and Sally Boitnott, executive secretary.

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Foreword

It is always with great pride that I watch a former student and now fellow colleague continue to move forward with their greatness. As I reviewed this manuscript, I became increasingly aware of how Mary Lee LaBay is truly following her journey of touching many lives with the power of knowledge. Her willingness to create a text that encompasses a self-directed approach to client care is a gift to the hypnotherapy profession.

As a registered nurse in the late 1970s, I worked in a cardiac unit of a major hospital. What that situation afforded me was the opportunity to compare a patient's clinical status with their emotional status. In many situations, I would see two patients who, in the nurse's station, looked identical. The blips on the cardiac monitor would be almost the same, and the laboratory results would match. As I would walk into each patient's room, I would many times see a totally different situation. Each patient's relationship with the disease process was entirely different, therefore greatly altering each experience of health. This would fortify my belief that a patient's attitude, family values, and general emotional state can greatly affect the outcome of an illness as well as continued quality of life.

We all experience this situation almost every day. Don't we all know a co-worker who has to take six weeks off for the "sniffles" while another co-worker goes to the opposite extreme and comes in to work with chest pain? Our attitude about health greatly affects our experience.

My curiosity about this phenomenon led me to search for ways in which we can affect the mind-body process. I was continuously looking for techniques to help patients learn how beliefs and past programming were influencing them. I also sought techniques that would help patients

evaluate these core beliefs and change them if they so desired. My journey of exploration led me to learn of the clinical value of hypnotherapy.

Hypnotherapy is now recognized as a valuable tool that addresses the true components of mind-body healing. It also provides an opportunity for clients to create the change they desire and to discover the life they thought was only a fantasy. Research is continuing on the value of hypnotherapy in the medical and mental-health fields. According to a July 2001 feature article in *Scientific American*, the National Institutes of Health technology assessment panel judged hypnosis to be effective in alleviating pain from cancer and other chronic conditions. This article also stated that, in eighteen separate studies, patients who received cognitive behavior therapy plus hypnosis for disorders of obesity, insomnia, anxiety, and hypertension showed greater improvement than 70 percent of the patients who received psychotherapy alone. The American Psychological Association validated hypnosis as an adjunct procedure for the treatment of obesity.

With the increased substantiation of hypnotherapy's effectiveness, more highly trained hypnotherapy professionals are needed. Comprehensive texts such as this provide an excellent resource for individuals seeking training as well as current hypnotherapists seeking continuing education. Ms. LaBay's book presents solid hypnotherapeutic techniques from a client-centered perspective. When the hypnotherapist is wise enough to function from this parameter, client compliance increases tremendously.

I encourage everyone reading this text to be willing to explore the use of the techniques and concepts presented. Through them, they will find the core of mind-body-spirit healing.

Patti McCormick, R.N., Ph.D.
founder and president of Ohio Academy of Holistic Health, Inc.

Introduction

Hypnosis is an exciting field of study. Why? Because it provides us with tools to create change within ourselves, which, in turn, allows us to shape the lives that we choose to live. By altering our perceptions of the world, installing more resourceful behaviors, and aligning our emotional responses with the experiences that we have in the present, unencumbered by traumas of the past, we can become the masters of our own destinies. We can regain control of our lives. We can expect health and happiness and have viable techniques for achieving them.

We engage in a form of hypnosis daily, whether by choice or by default. We continually move in and out of our trance states about our identities and the reality of the world around us. What we consider our truth, or our reality, is simply a collection of ideas, perceptions, assumptions, expectations, and opinions that we have come to accept regarding the world around us and ourselves. Rarely are these estimations entirely accurate; generally, they are far from the truth.

It may be easier to recognize this as a fair statement if we turn our attention away from ourselves and look at the people around us. What do you notice about them? Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are they operating with clarity?
- Are they balanced?
- Do they function with a perfect view and understanding of the world around them?
- Are they free of habits, personality quirks, mood swings, or delusion?
- Do they exhibit full self-esteem?
- Are their reactions perfectly attuned to the events they experience?

- Are they aware of the unseen as well as the visible?

We could certainly generate more questions along this line. The point is, if we cannot find one person who can achieve a perfect and resounding “yes” response to all the above questions, chances are we, too, may fail on a few of those points.

In whatever area of our lives that we are not operating at the full glory and potential of our being, where our perceptions of our universe and of ourselves are skewed in some way, there we find the evidence of our trance states.

These may include negative self-talk, low self-opinions, hypocrisy, incongruity, violence, and self-destruction. These trance states may also include factors that may be considered positive attributes yet are equally removed from a balanced and clear connection with reality. Trance states may include altruism, a “Pollyanna” perspective, overconfidence, the schools of thought that expound such concepts as surrounding yourself in white light as protection from all evil, and so forth.

Mathematics principles teach us that $A = A$. Reality is only what it is—nothing more and nothing less. It just doesn’t get any clearer than that. Any deviation from that axiom, in our perceptions, actions, and thoughts, constitutes a trance state.

You may be curious how we came to be so filled with illusion and delusion. Many factors contribute to our present mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual states. They may include a number of individual variations of a central theme: fear. There is fear of being:

- Different—That which makes you special makes you threatening to others. Being different frequently leads to being rejected, tortured, or killed. History is filled with horror stories of what has happened to people who tried the path of perfection. Furthermore, our personal histories include episodes of being teased, ridiculed, pointed at, and gossiped about, which support the terror of being different.
- Responsible—It has been said that with greatness comes responsibility. Many people find it uncomfortable to be culpable for themselves and those around them. Being responsible requires being conscientious and conscious, which, in turn, implies vision, decisions, and awareness of and accountability for consequences.
- Perfect—If we are to be perfect, we have no more excuses for shortcomings. There is a difference between a mistake and a sin. A mistake occurs when one did the best they could and the result was not as intended. A sin indicates that one knew better and proceeded anyway.

- Virtuous—When we see reality clearly, we cannot hide from our values. Being virtuous requires that we recognize our value system and then have the courage and conviction to uphold it.

We attain the above fears through subjective perspectives derived from:

- Conditioning
- Cultural norms, laws, and philosophy
- Religious teachings
- Life experiences
- Choice

Does this last one surprise you? We all have infinite choice. We can even acquire fear through a series of choices. So when clients come seeking assistance, they are exercising their choice to change whatever it is within them that no longer serves their life and ambitions.

A response I have been known to use when encountering those who justify things in their lives is: “How is it working for you so far?”

This question is meant to stimulate thinking outside the patterns and habits within which the person is circling. If a person continues to do the same thing over and over again, with the expectation that somehow the result will be different, perhaps they need to review basic principles of mathematics, which are an extension of logic, or vice versa. Remember $A = A$?

People come to practitioners of hypnotherapy in search of the catalyst to break their patterns. They seek the courage and conviction to overcome their fear and hesitation of fully regaining their true, powerful nature.

Through the techniques of hypnotherapy, rapid change can be attained. Encouragement, support, and movement along the path of healing and growth are, in themselves, further catalysts to continue the work. Many other, slower methods can lead to loss of faith in the possibility of attaining the goal. Disgruntled, bored, or financially and emotionally bankrupt men and women may lose the focus and energy to follow through with their objectives.

This book serves as a guide for that journey to attainment, whether the reader is anticipating taking up hypnotherapy as a career, adding it to their present work as a counselor or bodyworker, studying it out of curiosity, or desiring more knowledge for personal healing, growth, and path working.

As an introduction to the topic, it is well worth researching the colorful history of hypnosis, particularly in the context of the political and social settings of the day, to discover the legacy that has been given to us by many bright and bold forerunners.

Many indications of the use of trance are found in most indigenous

cultural groups from ancient Egypt, to Greece, Africa, South America, the Pacific Islands, Asia, North America, and beyond. Trance states are associated with the works of medicine men, witch doctors, soothsayers, and religious orders. More recently, trance states have been associated with extraordinary feats of strength, with sports performance, and as alternatives to medical anesthesia.

Although mesmerism and hypnotism have frequently been linked, it may be surprising to learn that Anton Mesmer, in fact, did not intentionally use hypnosis, even though his experiments eventually led to the development of hypnosis and its applications. There were elements of hypnosis included in his methods, but these were not based on deliberate attempts or understanding.

Based on earlier writings that linked magnetism to the movements of planets, Mesmer (1734-1815) believed, as did others of his time, that he practiced an elaborate and unorthodox treatment of illness. His method was a system of smoke and mirrors. As we know, drama can play a profound role in the healing process, and drama was what Mesmer provided.

The stage for healing included a large tub (or *baquet*), which contained water, magnets, and iron filings. Patients would hold iron rods immersed in the tub. Sometimes the circle of patients grew so large that they would merely be touching each other or holding on to a rope that was reputed to connect them together. Mesmer would enter the scene dramatically, making “passes” in the air with his hands. Patients would have previously been instructed that these passes were supposed to direct to them a stream of the magnetic fluid from the tub. He would touch one of his patients, who would go into convulsions and then claim to be cured. Many subjects reported hallucinations, such as streams of dust or flames emanating from Dr. Mesmer’s hands or from the magnets. It is no wonder that his greatest successes involved the remission of diseases considered hysterical in nature or origin. This is much the same way that cures are effected by faith healers. Notice the use of suggestibility, beliefs, drama, props, and the practitioner’s confident attitude.

Mesmer’s work received extensive criticism from the orthodox medical world in Vienna and Paris. He soon came under the investigation of a commission of inquiry ordered by King Louis XVI. The commission, whose president was Benjamin Franklin, included such well-known scientists as chemist Antoine Lavoisier (1743-94), who was beheaded by the guillotine, and the famous Dr. Joseph Guillotine. The commission carried on its investigation using the scientific methods available to it at that time.

It concluded that imagination without magnetism could still produce convulsions, and magnetism without imagination produced nothing. It was unanimously agreed that the magnetic fluid had no use whatsoever. In fact, it was determined that it did not exist.

Although the commission refuted any claims of success concerning Mesmer's magnets, their findings gave substantial support for the use of imagination in healing illnesses.

Although many believers in Mesmer's work continued their own experimentation, most documents erroneously attribute their success to magnets. In hindsight, we can see that the curative elements were more aligned with the techniques of modern-day hypnosis.

A contemporary of Mesmer, Fr. Joseph Gassner was a Catholic priest who created the trance phenomenon through religious ritual. Again, the drama combined with belief created substantial results. His place in history was assured when he created a trance so deep in a woman that two physicians pronounced her dead, whereupon he revived her.

Marquis Chastenet De Puysegur played his own small part in the history of hypnosis. As a student of Mesmer, he magnetized an elm tree in his hometown of Buzancy, France. Although misguided in his proposal to make diagnoses using extrasensory communication with the stomach, he is nevertheless credited with being the first person to induce somnambulism and to use hypnotic technique in the diagnosis of disease.

By the mid-1800s, Dr. James Esdaile published records of surgical operations in India using "mesmeric anesthesia." Other doctors and dentists were reporting similar successes. It is curious that the medical profession of that era received these studies with such ridicule and negation when, at that time, there was no chemical anesthesia available. Perhaps it has to do with the way that certain papers were written. There were exaggerated claims and lack of substantiation, perhaps creating more harm than support for the art.

James Braid, a Scottish doctor, coined the term "hypnosis" around the year 1842. Originally, the discipline was referred to as "neurypnology," meaning nervous sleep. His work was an attempt at making hypnosis respectable, bringing it out of the arena of assumptions, myths, and speculation that had been attributed to mesmerism.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Braid created an atmosphere for hypnosis to emerge as a reputable science. By carefully gaining the attention and respect of the medical community concerning this issue, he was able to step them through the logic and functioning of hypnosis. He

replaced the word “mesmerism” with “hypnotism.” His successes were based on his simple method of having his patients stare at a fixed point long enough to create eye fatigue. Although some of Braid’s claims were not completely accurate, they also were not as absurd as those of the Mesmerists.

An important aspect was that he based his claims on the facts of anatomy and physiology known at the time. He brought to light the need in hypnosis for eye fatigue, willingness, and expectation.

Braid’s work eventually came to the attention of Prof. Jean Martin Charcot, whose colleagues included Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud, and Alfred Binet. Charcot noticed that hypnosis and hysteria shared many attributes. Later, Dr. Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) would also use these studies for the basis of his experimentation. Charcot’s theories would ultimately reveal half-truths and error. He held a fundamental belief that hypnosis could be produced mechanically, without the elements of expectation and suggestibility, elements that Braid’s later findings determined to be critical. Further, he failed to experiment with hypnosis in normal people and thereby claimed erroneously that hypnosis could only be induced in those who were hysterical. He maintained that women were more susceptible to hypnosis than men were, basing that opinion on the traditional assumption that hysteria was the domain of women.

Meanwhile, two professors at the University of Nancy, Ambroise Liebau and Hippolite Bernheim, were developing this art along another path. They held that their subjects could go to sleep simply by the suggestion of the hypnotist. Their approach to hypnosis aligned with psychology as opposed to neurology and would eventually contribute greatly to the future of psychiatry. Liebau is considered by many to be the true “Father of Hypnosis,” having recognized that hypnosis can be achieved by suggestion alone, without the added benefit of eye fatigue.

Charcot’s pupil, Pierre Janet, furthered the intelligent use of hypnosis. He considered hypnosis to be a state of “dissociation”—a condition when one part of the mind operates independently from other parts. He found that information could be brought to light or be hidden from the conscious mind of his subjects. Repressed memories, for instance, could be regained. With an understanding of the times in which he was working, we can assume that many patients had not truly forgotten the information. Rather, out of shame or social convention, they may have simply refused, previously, to discuss these matters with their psychiatrists. Hypnotism may simply have served the purpose of allowing the subject to disclose

information previously suppressed or secreted. At the same time, inexperienced hypnotists, along with devious or unwitting patients, were running the risk of creating false memories of experiences that never took place.

Along with Janet's theory of dissociation, which could be produced by hypnosis, or occur naturally during hysteria, there was the opportunity to study the phenomenon of multiple personalities and alternating personalities with "fugue states."

Although hypnosis inspired interest in these disorders, it was not to gain popularity at that time. In fact, over time interest in hypnosis waned, and it never really gained the respect from the medical community that it deserved. A small breakthrough occurred in 1892, when the British Medical Association's committee, which was appointed to investigate hypnosis, returned a favorable report. It stated that hypnosis was, in fact, helpful in inducing sleep, relieving pain, and altering several functional disorders. They advised that only qualified medical personnel should facilitate hypnosis, and they further mandated that a female could only be hypnotized when accompanied by another female.

It is an interesting historical note that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) studied under both Charcot and Bernheim and worked with Janet. He was well versed in the art and science of hypnosis as it was practiced in that day. Because at that time he was unable to determine in advance when a patient would prove to be a good hypnosis subject, he eventually chose to discard the entire field.

The difficulty may have rested in Freud's own personality, which may have railed against the idea of the occasional failure. Because hypnotherapy, as we know it today, is dependent on the willingness and susceptibility of the client, it is not necessarily the failure of the therapist when hypnosis is not achieved. Not understanding that, Freud went on to develop psychoanalysis, which had no implicit dangers of failure. Because psychoanalysts are enduring listeners, commentators, and interpreters of the words and experiences of their patients, there is no threat of failure to harm the therapists' reputations. Although psychoanalysis was an ingenious development, the method typically requires a longer path to recovery and change.

As it would happen, it would take the First World War to revive the need for and interest in hypnosis. The medical community would turn to hypnosis to treat the wounded and those suffering trauma-related illnesses. Freud's influence and the prestige of psychoanalysis would nevertheless continue to deny hypnosis's rightful place in medicine.

J. G. Watkins once again restored interest and prestige to hypnosis with his 1949 book entitled *Hypnotherapy of War Neuroses*. Using regression to cause an abreaction of traumatic emotions, he successfully relieved symptoms for veterans of the war.

Through his work during the middle of the twentieth century, Dr. Milton Erickson (1901-80) may have single-handedly legitimized hypnosis in the eyes of the medical community and brought it to the attention of the public at large. As a psychiatrist, he had the respect of the medical establishment. This was furthered by his unmatched genius and ability to create innovative strategies for healing and change in his patients. It was largely a result of his work that both the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association at last endorsed hypnosis.

Highly respected Dave Elman (1900-1967) published the 1964 book *Hypnotherapy*. He contributed to hypnosis through his development of deep and rapid inductions and his indefatigable training of doctors and dentists in the techniques of hypnosis. Elman had an extraordinary life and made additional contributions to the American people that are worth further exploration.

Walter Sichort (1918-2000) was responsible for identifying and obtaining what he considered to be three depths of trance below somnambulism: coma, catatonic, and ultra depth. His colleagues have respectfully renamed the ultra-depth level the Sichort State.

John Grinder and Richard Bandler studied Milton Erickson and his techniques, which eventually led to their founding of the powerful field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

After many years of working together and writing books filled with their techniques and sessions, they have gone in separate career directions, continuing to produce leading-edge technology in this field.

An educator, publisher of works on hypnosis and hypnotherapy, and author of *Transforming Therapy: A New Approach to Hypnotherapy*, Gil Boyne is a political advocate who aids in the protection and validation of professional hypnotherapy.

Before his death, Charles Tebbetts was a revered hypnotherapist and trainer. Some refer to him as the “Grandfather of Modern Hypnosis.” Tebbetts is the author of *Miracles on Demand: The Radical Short-Term Hypnotherapy*.

Author of *Hypnotism and Mysticism of India* and *Encyclopedia of Stage Hypnotism*, Ormond McGill is considered the “Dean of American Hypnotists.” He has contributed decades of instruction, clinical work, and

showmanship and has been a leader in combining Eastern philosophy with trance work.

Many other present-day practitioners are contributing new material or creating a change in the public attitude or political policymaking regarding the field of hypnotherapy. My own original contributions include the Reverse Metaphor and Empowerment Symbol, appearing here for the first time in a text.

By choosing to investigate hypnosis, the reader is entering a field of study with a colorful past. The people listed above all have made their contributions to the art, forming it into what it is today. Their body of knowledge, skills, research, and experience are the foundation upon which we, as practitioners, carry hypnosis into the future. It will be important to preserve the respectability of this healing art, while furthering its technology towards holistic complementary medical and spiritual capabilities.

The techniques and tools presented will allow the practitioner to address most all of life's issues. These may include a full range of physical healing, emotional rebalancing, mental clarity and training, and spiritual awareness and connection. The reason that these tools are so universal and potent is because they are based on the premise that, at some level, the clients or subjects are fully capable of determining their needs and the solutions for satisfying them. The level where this knowledge and wisdom can be accessed is frequently in the subconscious mind.

The subconscious mind, as implied in the name, is a subset of the human consciousness. The prefix "sub" signifies the consciousness that is below the surface. The subconscious mind has infinite ability to perceive and communicate at all levels. Incidentally, any use in this book of the term "unconscious" indicates being "not conscious," which occurs when one is passed out, in a coma state, out of body, or under chemical anesthesia.

Our presence in life is marked by two fundamental, irreplaceable factors: existence and consciousness. Our spirit is that which exists. Our consciousness is that which allows us to be aware that we exist. Life requires both. Life's purpose, at its most basic, is the maintenance, nurturing, and growth of our existence and consciousness. Lack of attention to this purpose will cause atrophy and perhaps eventual loss.

I join other practitioners in asserting that our physical, emotional, and mental bodies—their behaviors, perceptions, reactions, habits, symptoms, and more—provide concise and exquisite communications from our subconscious aspects. They inform us, whether by a whisper or a scream, of

the needs required by our consciousness and existence and give indications of how and where we have strayed from the path of our soul.

The journey back to our connection and alignment with our essential nature is the goal of healing. Healing can take place through many methods. Hypnotherapy techniques are simply some of the options. They also happen to be viable, expeditious, and effective.

My personal journey began with an interest in philosophy, yoga, and meditation. Then, after years of pursuing avenues of personal growth and awareness, I decided to acquire a certification in clinical hypnotherapy. I chose the Ohio Academy of Holistic Health because of their extraordinarily comprehensive curriculum, which included psychology, anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and more. They are now one of the only schools of this field that are federally accredited. Achieving my certification as a clinical hypnotherapist in 1997, I moved to the Seattle area and went on to become a certified NLP practitioner through Kevin Hogan (Hypnosis Research and Training Center) and Wil Horton (National Federation of NLP). In 1999, I received a Hypnotherapy Instructor's Certification through the Hypnosis Research and Training Center. During 2000, Kevin and I went on to write two books together. Along the way, I also received certifications as Practitioner of Reiki and Applied Kinesiology. What is presented here is a distillation of much of my training, combined with my personal and professional experience.

My work as a practitioner of hypnotherapy and NLP means more than a simple source of revenue, a career choice. Each of my clients brings a unique presence, quality, energy, and set of experiences into my life. It is fascinating to learn about each individual and their path, and it is powerfully satisfying to be a part of the process that allows them to make healthier and happier choices in their lives.

The present condition of one's life represents the culmination of all the choices one has ever made. Therefore, everyone is fully successful in this moment. Each of us has achieved exactly what we have worked towards throughout our life.

That can be a frightening statement if we are not ready to be responsible for ourselves. However, when one is prepared to be honest, the truth and wisdom in that statement will become apparent. Given the condition of some people's lives, this concept may seem harsh. Yet, within the responsibility exists the freedom to change. If we take responsibility for the present condition of our life, through the collective choices we have made, we can then take control of the choice to create a better life, as it is

truly desired, through conscious awareness and selective experience.

Granted, some events appear to be out of our control. Yet, choice is still available. There is the choice to be a victim of circumstances or take an active role in overcoming obstacles, challenges, or setbacks.

Through these challenges, our morality—our virtues and values—is tested. Without choice there is no morality; without challenge there is no power; without struggle there is no self-esteem. Assist your clients in learning to embrace their trials. Victory is more than an easier life; it represents increased courage, conviction, and strength and is the evidence of self-love.

Recognition through rites of passage has always been an important step along the journey. These important ceremonies mark the initiation of the soul into higher levels of character. In their true essence, they are not given freely. They are awarded as a measure of a person's growth, through stringent trials. In many cultures, proof of strength, courage, valor, virtue, knowledge, or skill is required. When a person receives the rites, it is a prized representation of their new level of character, a new phase of their soul's growth.

In our modern society, we have all but lost our rites of passage. We graduate from high school or college and may not get another fragment of personal acknowledgment until the gold watch is received at the end of thirty years, simply marking the passage of time and representing the stamina of showing up every day for three decades. The human psyche needs more than that.

The human experience requires acknowledgment.

We require acknowledgment from others. We also require acknowledgment from ourselves. Although our parents may have led us to believe that we are lovable and worthy simply because we have been born into this world, as adults we come to realize that we need to earn respect, love, and self-love. Self-esteem cannot be given; it must be earned. How do we accomplish that? Self-esteem is earned by being righteous and victorious in our challenges.

My client files are filled with stories of challenges and victories. They are colorful stories of the making of private heroes. These are the people who love their life so much that they refuse to hide from it, suffer in it, or be a victim of it. They choose happiness. They choose to truly live.

My desire, in writing this book, is to offer tools that will aid many bright souls in their journey toward health and happiness.

My advice is to continuously pay attention to one's own healing and growth, humbly and honestly.

My promise is to do my part in aiding this healing and growth.

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A Client-Centered Approach