

## Chapter 3.12 Resentment

This chapter is long, and has many examples of interventions. I talk about the brain and its evolution. I discuss theories about how I see the brain operating, and how this way of thinking gives us tools for having control of our emotional lives. I explain how anger and the resulting resentment have a positive purpose. These two emotions are instinctual and therefore based at a brain level that is below the threshold of our awareness. Resentment is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. I explain how to keep the positive effects, while getting rid of the bitterness that poisons so many relationships and families.

I am puzzled about why resentment plays such a pervasive role in so many lives. The Oxford dictionary defines resentment as “bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly.” The World Book defines it as “The feeling one has at being injured or insulted: indignation: the act of showing this feeling by action or speech.” The initial reaction to being insulted or injured is to feel anger. Anger is useful if one needs to defend oneself physically. But the physiological response can be detrimental—hypertension, muscular tension, and a score of stress-related illnesses. Resentment is left even when anger fades away.

What is the function of resentment? It serves to keep alive the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys, the animosity between the Greeks and the Turks on Cyprus, the religious battles in Ireland and the Middle East. In our society we don't usually physically attack people toward whom we feel resentment. So what purpose does it serve? Children believe in magic and as we grow up and mature, we like to think we stop believing in magic. But do we? Many of us believe that somehow holding the resentment is going to punish magically the other person for the insult or injury done to us.

Fear is useful to avoid danger, has survival value, and does not operate at the level of the cerebral cortex but at a more primitive brain level. I suggest that resentment likewise operates at a more primitive brain level and is not altered by reasoning or logic. I will use game theory to show how resentment plays a prominent role in human evolution. In his book *Nonzero, The Logic of Human Destiny*, Robert Wright (2000) discusses game theory and how it relates to evolution. Game theorists describe human interaction as a game and evaluate the game depending on how much each player wins or loses.

The founders of game theory, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern made a basic distinction between zero-sum and nonzero-sum games (Pages 4-5). In zero-sum games, the fortunes of the players are inversely related. In tennis, in chess, in boxing, one contestant's gain is the other's loss. In nonzero-sum games, one player's gain needn't be bad news for the other(s). Indeed in highly nonzero-sum games, the players' interests overlap entirely. A merchant and a customer, two members of a legislature, two childhood friends sometimes, but

not always, find their interests overlapping. To the extent that their interests do overlap, their relationship is nonzero-sum or sum-positive. Alternately, negative (lose-lose) nonzero-sum games can be played as well.

There is reason for altruism (or the playing of sum-positive games) to survive and be passed on in the genes. If a hunter who kills a large animal shares his kill with his neighbor and his neighbor reciprocates, this is a sum positive game and both benefit. One chronicler of Eskimo life has observed, “the best place for (an Eskimo) to store his surplus is in someone else’s stomach”.

Wright (page 24) also states that one problem with altruism is that of cheating or parasitism. People may accept your generosity and never repay it. (Game theorists call this “free riding”---contributing nothing to the pie of positive sums created by collective action, yet cheerfully eating a piece.) Moral indignation (or resentment) works well as an anti-cheating technology. It leads you to withhold generosity from past non-reciprocators, thus insulating yourself from future exploitation; and all the grumbling you and others do about these cheaters leads people in general to give them the cold shoulder, so chronic cheating becomes a tough way to make a living.

Over millions of years of biological evolution, people everywhere have developed an innate tendency to monitor the contributions of others, whether consciously or unconsciously. In all cultures, workplaces feature gossip about who is a slouch and who is a team player. People scan the landscape for the lazy and the ungrateful and then rein in generosity accordingly.

Wright (Page 57) describes how a village will unite to fight off an attacking group. One great way for a village to fend off assault, or to conduct assault, is to ally with another village. Once this alliance exists, any enemies have good cause to find their own allies. An “arms race” of organization that expands the social web outward, weaving more and more villages together. What enables these villages to act together is a common resentment, anger, and hatred of the enemy. This is another explanation of the powerful force that resentment has played in human evolution.

Resentment eats at you and poisons your physiology. Is the answer forgiveness? The Oxford American Dictionary defines forgive, “stop feeling angry or resentful toward (someone) for an offense, flaw or mistake. Roget Thesaurus list of synonyms is, 1) she would not forgive him: PARDON, excuse, exonerate, absolve: make allowances for, feel no resentment toward, feel no malice toward, harbor no grudge against, bury the hatchet with: let bygones be bygones: let off the hook; 2) you must forgive his rude conduct: EXCUSE, overlook, disregard, ignore, pass over, make allowances for, allow: turn a blind eye to, turn a deaf ear to, wink at, indulge, tolerate.

Resentment is the emotion that drives the monitoring of another’s contributions. Many of the synonyms listed above imply that forgiveness involves ignoring the

offense or injury and not altering one's behavior. For this reason I usually speak of getting rid of resentment rather than forgiving. Before I ask the client to make the change that would eliminate the feeling of resentment, I ask if there is any part of the person that has any objection to the change. Another way of getting similar information would be to ask, "What does the resentment accomplish for you?" One of the presuppositions of neurolinguistic programming (NLP) is that every action or emotion has a positive intent.

There are three categories of objections: 1) Getting rid of the resentment would mean condoning the harmful behavior. A frequent response is that the person doesn't deserve it. "I'm not going to let him off the hook. He deserves all the ill feelings I have towards him." 2) The resentment serves a useful function such as protection against further harm. Clients have said, "I've been hurt too many times, and I am not going to let it happen again. I need the resentment to protect me from being harmed by this person." 3) The resentment is needed for the person's self esteem. She might say, "I'm not going to allow myself to be beat up like my mother did. If I put up with this, I will be a wimp."

Through explanations and reasoning I can usually deal with the objections. However, the resentment itself appears to be unaffected by cerebral processes, such as reasoning or will power or a conscious decision. Resentment has survival value and operates lower in the brain and at an unconscious level.

I answer objections with, "You can defend yourself just as well if not better without the resentment. Resentment limits you to attacking the other or withdrawing. Without the resentment you have more freedom in how you respond. You can see the interaction from differing viewpoints and perhaps even with humor. You can keep all your information, judgments and evaluations of the other person intact. Your thinking process, your judgments and decisions are separate from your emotions. The resentment eats at you and affects your blood pressure and your immune system. You are better off without it.

"You think of yourself as a person who can stand up for herself. It is important that you keep that value, and to plan how to prevent a recurrence of the harm. You don't need the resentment to do that. You can keep all your information and judgment about the person. You can decide in what way you can trust the person and in what way you cannot. Perhaps he has hit you and you can't trust him to control his temper, but you can trust him to play ball with your kids." I point out that getting rid of resentment does not mean that you are more vulnerable in the future. For quite a while I wondered why the person being apologized to was more uncomfortable than the person apologizing. I finally realized that there was a presupposition in the apology, which was, "If you forgive me, then you must treat me as if I never did it."

Holding on to the slights and grudges plays a destructive role in on-going relationships. It is bad enough having resentment towards people that you can ignore and keep out of your life. However, what if the person you resent is your

neighbor or fellow worker or even worse –your boss. We often think that we can hide our emotions and that it doesn't affect how we interact with others. Some clients have felt sure that they were not allowing the resentment to influence their behavior; yet when they got rid of the resentment, the relationship with the other person changed. Resentment operates at an unconscious as well as conscious level. When you give up your resentment toward someone, your relationship with that person changes even though you may not be aware of changing anything. The major portion of the change is at an unconscious level and is non-verbal. Examples are posture, tone of voice, pitch of voice, rhythm of speech, expressions, and gestures.

What if the resentment is directed at a family member? You are discussing something really important with your husband, and he turns to watch the football game. You clam up and feel belittled and resentful. This is the first whammy. After the game is over, he wants to talk about his day or may even refer back to what you were discussing. By this time you are in no mood to be pacified and you give him the cold shoulder. This is the second whammy. He then reacts by thinking of what has annoyed him and begins to criticize the amount of money you spend on clothes. This is the third whammy and this can go on and on.

In the Movie, *The Upside of Anger*, a woman believes that her husband, without saying a word to anyone, abandoned her and their four daughters. She assumed that he went to Sweden with his beautiful young secretary. She phoned the secretary in Sweden and heard a man's voice answer and was sure it was her husband. The younger daughter who narrates the film said her mother was the sweetest, nicest person in the world before this happened. The story is how her anger and resentment poisons her life and her relationship with her daughters. She justifies her drinking and unpredictable explosive outbursts and asks others to see what a victim she is. The odd twist at the end is finding the husband's body in an abandoned well on their property. He had not abandoned her.

It was a tragedy that this bitterness, which poisoned her life, was based on the false assumption that her husband had left her for another woman. However, if the basis for her anger and resentment had been true, does that make it any less of a tragedy? She changed and became a bitter, volatile, self-centered alcoholic. In the movie the bitterness was gone, and she softened when she found out that the feeling was not justified. But why let the anger and resentment ruin your life, whether it is justified or not?

The effect of resentment on success or failure of marriages has been documented by John Gottman (His work is discussed in *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell, pages 32-33), who has studied over three thousand couples in his "love lab." The couples' interactions were videotaped. He developed an elaborate coding system. If he analyzes an hour of a videotape of a husband and wife talking, he can predict with 95 % accuracy whether that couple will still be married fifteen years later. He has found that he can find out much of what he needs to know just by focusing on what he calls the Four Horsemen:

defensiveness, stonewalling, criticism and contempt. “You would think that criticism would be the worst,” Gottman says, “because criticism is a global condemnation of a person’s character. Yet contempt is qualitatively different from criticism because you are trying to put the person on a lower plane from you. It is hierarchical.” Resentment is probably the first step in those four patterns of interaction.

Resentment is usually not changed by a thinking process and has a lot in common with flashbacks. In a flashback the visual mental image of the original trauma follows a pathway in the brain to the emotions connected to the trauma. The mental image that you make the moment you have that anger is the image that comes to your mind whenever in the future you see or think of that person. There is a pathway in the brain from that image to the feelings of anger and resentment. A phobia is not cured by any reasoning or logic nor is resentment. Changing that pathway cures a phobia. Coupling the image with calm, relaxed emotions does the trick. Likewise, anger and resentment are gone when that pathway changes.

In the phobia cure, the new pathway used a calm, relaxed state. With resentment, what do you need to create a new pathway? You want to find an analogous situation in which you didn’t feel resentment or anger. What are the possibilities?

(1) Go back in time to when you were so much in love that it didn’t matter when he didn’t notice that you got a new hairdo. In general, go back to an earlier time when you had positive feelings and were not sensitive to things that bother you now.

(2) Someone caused you pain or harm, and you didn’t feel angry. A young child playfully hits you, it hurts but you don’t get angry. You are rushing to get somewhere and step around a corner and bump heads with someone.

(3) You have a friend who just blurts out whatever comes to her mind. That is just how she is. She says some critical things about you and you don’t get angry.

(4) Remember a time when you felt so good about yourself that nothing seemed to bother you.

The next step is to determine the specifics of the mental image that produce the resentment. The image of this person is not just any image of that person, but it is the specific image you made at the time you got angry or felt hurt. Most people are not aware of this, but the mental image you made has a specific location in space. Determine where you see it. How far away is it? Is it eyelevel or up or down? Is it in the center or to the left or the right? How big is the person? Is s/he life-sized or bigger than life or smaller than life? Position and size are usually the most important aspects. I will refer to this as picture #1.

Then make a mental image of the analogous situation in which you did not feel resentment. This is Picture #2. As with Picture #1, find the location of the image and its size.

The next step is to deal with any objections to getting rid of the resentment. The person may not be aware of the objections until he starts to move Picture #1 to the position of Picture #2. Any new objections need to be dealt with. Then continue to move Picture #1 to the position of Picture #2 and, if there was a difference in size, make the person in Picture #1 be the size of the person in Picture #2. Then test to make sure the resentment is gone. This procedure is called bridging over. I will give some examples of this procedure.

The following is a condensed version of a therapy session with Billy, which dealt mainly with resentment. In doing therapy I concentrated on the effects of the trauma inflicted by Dahmer. I had not fully appreciated the effects on Billy of the people who could have helped him but did not. He has resentment toward those in authority whom he told about his mistreatment by Dahmer. They did not help, and they even made fun of him. I wonder how often in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) this aspect of the treatment is gets overlooked. How often does the therapist miss the resentment that a daughter feels towards her mother who did not believe her, or did not protect her from the mother's boyfriends? What about the resentment that victims of a priest feel toward the parish that merely transferred the priest to another parish?

I said to Billy that the main issue we needed to deal with now was his resentment toward Paul (not his real name). Billy's facial expression changed, his complexion darkened and tears briefly came to his eyes. I said, "I see the tears." He said, "He hurt me. He hurt me a lot. It is hard to think about. It is hard to talk about. There is a lot to swallow. Paul found it all amusing. I'm sure he knew everything—the black eyes, the injuries. He made poor decisions. He didn't listen. Still when people do not listen, I get upset. I haven't gone into a rage like I used to before you taught me to see "blue". I felt he went behind my back. Dahmer would go into his room and I would hear them laughing and stuff. I think of Paul and Dahmer the same way. I feel the same way towards both. I hate it when people smile at me when I am in distress. He let me suffer and suffer and suffer. How the hell did he not hear me screaming? I know how it feels to be choked until you pass out. I know how it feels to be hit until you pass out. I got through it."

There was another person Billy resented who told him, "The next time you get hurt I am going to bring you up on charges." Billy explained that in the Army if you get drunk and break a leg you can be charged with damaging government property and in the military you lose all rights. You do not have the right to remain silent. You do not have the right to an attorney.

Billy thought that because Dahmer had kept him from getting mail, phone calls, and receiving assignments that there must have been others involved. He felt that they must have known what was going on, and he wondered why they went along with Dahmer.

I offered an explanation. I said that I had read an article about bullying in schools.

Mechthild Schafer (2005) in an essay called, "Stopping the Bullies," (See References) describes how school can be torture for children who are targeted by abusive students. Children who bully are often physically abused at home. They seek to enhance their position by humiliating a weaker student. He wrote that children can be very skilled in systematically using their social clout at the expense of weaker schoolmates, the goal being to enhance their own position. Mobbing thrives in hierarchical settings because it allows dominance and strength to reign as the measure of an individual's social value. It is therefore not surprising that prisons and military bases are often the scenes of mobbing. Over time other students tend to go along with the bully; if the student is an ally of the bully, he or she is less likely to be chosen as a victim. Many students join in the humiliation of the victim. I suggested that a similar scenario could have occurred with the people around Dahmer. At first the intent was to keep from being victims themselves, and after a while they began to join in as a way of enhancing their own position.

Billy could accept that Paul's intent in siding with Dahmer was to protect himself—to keep himself from becoming a victim.

Billy said that Paul acted gay—that he was effeminate, and that sometimes Dahmer had some effeminate mannerisms. Bill suspected that Paul was giving Dahmer blowjobs, but he said he had no evidence to support this.

Billy speculated, "If Paul had not been homosexual, I would have been dead. The right thing for him to have done was to pull me out of that situation immediately. But if Paul had pulled me out, there was the possibility that I would have died. Paul let Dahmer know that he could go on without fear of getting caught. If Dahmer hadn't known this, he would have killed me."

Billy said, "I never showed up for formation. I never showed up for work assignments and yet I get promoted. The crazy military was really screwed up. The Army had not recovered from Vietnam and most soldiers got drunk every night. Everyone there had been to Nam except for Dahmer and me."

He said a soldier from another barracks started going to Paul's room. Dahmer would go to Paul's door and knock and get no answer, and he went to his room repeatedly all night long. Dahmer seemed very upset which increased Billy's torture. Paul and Dahmer had a falling out; they didn't talk to each other. Soon after that, Billy said he was sent on an assignment to the field. He said, "When I came back that sorry SOB (Dahmer) was gone. I heard that they had to drag him out of there."

Billy began to free associate, "Dahmer had a moustache. He was trying to hide something. Everything seemed thought out so well. They knew. Everything seemed rehearsed. Was it supposed to be that way? Dahmer had a job to do—to molest---to beat---to rape--- and to scar me up. Paul had a job to ignore my cries for help. Paul didn't want to tell."

Now the challenge was to lessen the resentment in Billy. This resentment affected any interchange in which Billy felt he was not being listened to. Since he tends to be very talkative, this was a fairly frequent problem. I said I thought resentment in certain contexts was useful. If someone had injured you in battle, then the resentment might prepare you to be ready to defend yourself when you met that person again. I explained that getting rid of resentment and forgiving were not the same thing. Forgiving the person usually implies that you act as if the behavior did not occur. Getting rid of resentment does not mean that you excuse the other person, alter your opinions, or in any way make yourself more vulnerable. Feeling resentment usually means that you have two choices—to attack or to withdraw. Without the resentment there is the possibility of humor, of seeing the situation from different viewpoints and responding in a calm manner. Resentment changes the way you come across to another person. Those changes are usually out of your awareness—changes in voice tone and rhythm, gestures, expressions and body language.

Reason, logic and the religious belief that one should forgive do not usually get rid of the resentment. I used a procedure called bridging over. The first mental image that you ask the client to make is of the person that creates the feeling of resentment. The second mental image is of an analogous situation but is one in which the client does not feel resentment.

I recalled a situation Billy told me about. He was three years old and he had not had breakfast. While he was with his mother and older sister shopping, he got hungry and felt desperate for food, but his mother did not listen to him and continued shopping. When they got home he got something to eat. He did not feel resentment towards his mother.

Billy's mental image of Paul that created the resentment was of Paul living a normal life, he was drinking with a boyfriend. There were lots of plants there but no color or flowers. The image was of Paul having suffered no consequences from the experience with Dahmer, while Billy had suffered so much. I asked him to describe the image and where he saw it. The mental picture was arm's length away, and to the right. It was in color and there was movement like in a movie.

The second mental image was of his mother in a red dress and wearing red lipstick. He saw the three-year-old Billy holding her hand. It was also arm's length away, and in color, and a movie. He could hear her voice. The differences between the two images were that Paul was smaller than life-size and his mother was life-sized. Her image was in front and Paul was off to the right. The tone of voice was different.

I asked him if he had any objection to making the picture of Paul like the picture of his mother. When he said, "No", I asked him to make the image of Paul life-size, move it to the center, and to change his laughing tone of voice to be like his mother's tone of voice.

As he followed my suggestions, his facial features softened indicating a change in his feelings. I asked him to imagine a situation when this new feeling would have made a difference, to feel the difference it would have made, and see the freedom it would have given him. I had him repeat this for two more situations. He had his eyes closed doing this and appeared to be in a trance. He came out of the trance, smiling and remarked how different that would have been. \_After the Emotional Management Suggestions, I have added several examples of treatment of clients who had problems with resentment.

### ***Emotional Management Suggestions***

You may want to get rid of resentment. The suggested procedure is the same as described earlier in this chapter as bridging over. The first picture is the mental image you have of the person as you feel the resentment towards him or her. Be aware of the location of the image—how close—eye level or above or below—center or to the right or the left. How big is the person—life-size or smaller or larger than life? The second picture is an analogous situation in which you didn't feel any bitterness. The picture may be of a time when you had positive feelings towards this person. It may be of a time when a person harmed you or slighted you and you did not feel resentment. Examples are listed earlier in the chapter. Find out all the details about the second picture that you did for Picture #1. Except in rare instances, the mental images will be in different locations. As you start to move Picture #1 to the location of Picture #2 be aware of any objections that you feel. If you have trouble moving the picture, stop and figure out what objection you have. Then move Picture #1 to the location of Picture #2 and if there was a difference in size, change that. Give yourself a few minutes and then check the results by remembering the person you used to resent. Be delighted at the power you now have over your emotions. Feel the difference this is making in your future and see the freedom that it is giving you.

The following are several clinical examples of clients with resentment problems. I remember a mother who was having problems with her teenage daughter. Her daughter got up in her face and screamed at her. This pushed the mother's buttons and she screamed back. She had a mental picture of her daughter above her a few inches away as she put it, "up in her face". She had a good relationship with her daughter when she was a preteen. In the mental image of her daughter as a preteen, she saw her daughter at eye level and arm's-length away. She objected, saying that if she didn't get angry, she would not have any control. I said, "Don't you think that you would be more effective if you gave consequences in a calm tone of voice instead of screaming at her?" After dealing with her objections, she did change the mental image of her teenage daughter to be like the preteen image --at eye level and arm's-length away. She also changed her daughter's tone of voice. Two weeks later I saw her and asked, "How are things with your daughter?" She said, "Oh she's changed completely. She comes in my room and tells me about school and everything that is going on." I am sure the mother changed in ways that she was not aware of and that her change made a change in the daughter.

I would like to relate a session with a woman I will call Karen. I had been seeing her for some time and she had made remarkable changes in her life. She had a business relationship in which the other party whom I will call Marge was not fulfilling her part of the contract. She had resentment and anger towards Marge and was aware of how the resentment would affect her ability to negotiate with her. Resentment can affect the way you relate to the other person, largely in ways out of your awareness. It affects your tone of voice, your gestures, your expressions, and your posture without your having made a conscious decision to change anything. The changes occur automatically.

I used the bridging over procedure described earlier. The first mental image I asked Karen to make was of Marge when she feels the resentment. The second picture I asked her to make was of someone who had promised to do something and had not done it but she did NOT resent this person. These two situations are analogous except she felt resentment in one and not in the other. She thought of a friend whom I will call Joella who promised to do things and sometimes did and sometimes did not. That friend has a drinking problem, and Karen excused her on that basis and did not feel resentment.

I asked her to tell me about the mental picture she made of Marge. She saw her off to her left side a little more than arm's length away. She was quite small with her mouth was going up and down and jabbering.

The second picture of Joella was different in that it was off to the right and closer—an arm's-length away. She was life-sized. Her mouth was also going.

I then asked her if any part of her had any objection to making the picture of Marge to the right instead of to the left and to move her closer and to make her life-sized. She said that what came to mind was that she wanted to punish her. I said that this was another example of how people believe in magic—that somehow her having that resentment eating at her was going to punish Marge. I asked her what the part that wanted to punish Marge hoped to gain from punishing her. She said, "For her to acknowledge that she treated me badly. Or for me to tell her that she is not such a great person."

I asked her again whether she had any objection now to moving the picture and changing it. She said that she had the visual picture of Marge floating off in the distance. She said, speaking to the imagined Marge, "I can keep you floating up there or I can let you into my world. I feel power over these images. Like in a fairy tale, I can say that you're banished, or off with your head. I can be the wicked queen or a nice queen. I can allow you in my presence or not. Or I could have you peeling potatoes for the rest of your life." We discussed that what she now had control over was not Marge but her mental image of Marge. That mental image was within her and she could control that image. She went on to say, "Nobody has the right to be in my life unless they are useful to me. If they besmirch me, I will send them into the distance."

She extended these ideas further. She said, “I can do this with my parents. I can shrink them down to nothing or I can bring them back at my will. I am the queen of my own life. I can banish anyone or bring them back. I can turn them into a frog, give them donkey ears, and blow them up like a balloon. Or like the witch in the cartoon I can go zap and have the person disappear in the distance.

“We can give ourselves a magic baton and make anything happen that we want. We act as if our view of reality is solid. It is only our perception of reality, it is not reality. Our perception of the world is not the world. Therefore, we can change any of our perceptions.”

She began to wonder how to apply this ability to emotions and relationships. She thought that in physically abusive relationships, the victim is seen as smaller and lower down. The aggressor is seen as large and on top –heavy –weighting the victim down. She said, “You could topple the abuser down and see the two side by side.” Continuing her discussion of relationships she said, “You could see relationships as the two people moving closer or moving farther apart. You could see one moving towards and the other moving away. You could see one circling the other. You could make them like holograms in space and then you could do anything with them.”

She said that as a child she learned the only way to deal with an abusive relationship was to tolerate it as long as you could and then leave. She said, “Before if someone was a problem, for instance, an alcoholic, then I would pretend the person didn’t exist. The people you hate don’t go away. If you deny they exist, you give them power. It is better to keep the person at a distance and keep an eye on him or her.”

We began talking about emotions, and I told her that I would ask questions about emotions such as “Where in your body do you feel it? How big is it? How heavy? Does it stay the same size or does it radiate? What is the temperature? Is it hot or cold? Give it a color.”

She said that she felt emotions outside herself—like she was bathed in the emotion. If she felt happy, it was like she was in warm water; if she were sad, the water would feel cold. I said that temperature depended on the movement of the molecules and that she could picture the molecules moving faster, thereby giving herself a mechanism for feeling warmer.

She said that she feels like some people don’t want to take responsibility for their lives. If they felt in control of their lives and they still felt bad, they would have to admit something was wrong. They would rather blame someone else or give the responsibility to God. She said at one time in her life, she had felt that it was more important to blame someone for the pain than it was to eliminate it. It was more important to blame someone else than it was not to suffer.

I think that when Karen felt she didn’t have any control over her emotions she did

not take responsibility for her moods and blamed someone else. Once she had some tools for making a change in her emotional state, then she took responsibility for her emotional states. This is generally true. When we feel we can't do anything about something, we tend to want to blame someone else. The more control we have over ourselves, the less we feel the need to control others.

An example of this is a pedophile I treated. He described how he could spot a needy girl a block away. He told me details of the trust game he would play with her so she would allow him to do more and more intimate things with her. He said that more than 95 percent of his thinking time was invested in this. He expressed no guilt. He was controlling his behavior because he didn't want to go to jail, or at least he told me he was controlling it. The success rate of psychotherapy with pedophiles is very low, and as far as I know there is no evidence that it works. I felt I was not having any success. The only success has been when drugs are given to reduce the testosterone level. I elicited the help of a drug company to provide the free medication and I started him on a large dose of provera orally, which reduced his testosterone level. The amount of time he spent thinking about little girls decreased, and for the first time he felt he had some ability to control his behavior. Only then did he express guilt and regret for what he had done. Unfortunately, after a few months of drug therapy, he dropped out of treatment and I lost contact with him.

In my experience, the reason that clients have not been successful in changing their lives is not because they haven't tried as hard as they could; it is because what they were doing was not working. I often say to clients, "If at first you don't succeed, then try, try again. Then do something else. You know that is not working. Anything else you do has a better chance of success than what you have been doing." When something doesn't work, the natural tendency is to try harder, do more of the same thing, and do it more intensely. I am tempted to use a political example here like Vietnam, but I will resist the temptation. One of the main goals of this written work is to give the reader some simple ways to have control over emotions and behavior. This is done at the end of most of the chapters.

One of my main goals with clients is to give them tools that they can use outside of the formal therapy setting. I asked several clients who had had previous therapy how this therapy was different. There were several common themes. Clients felt that with this therapy they developed tools which they could use to give them control over their lives. Several mentioned that I gave personal examples, which were particularly helpful.

However, many professionals believe that a therapist should not talk about himself. The American Psychiatric Society publishes *Psychiatric Annals*. A recent issue was devoted to medical ethics, particularly boundary violations in therapy. A boundary violation is when the therapist uses his position of authority to exploit the patient. The therapist uses the relationship to meet his personal needs rather than put the needs of the patient first. One of the listed violations was talking to

the patient about personal information, particularly problems. I think it is appropriate to talk about personal problems that I have successfully dealt with. I want to give clients the feeling that we are all in this together. We all try to do the best we can do to live life as fully and completely as possible and to have close relationships with family and friends. I think it is inappropriate for a therapist to talk about problems that he or she has not successfully dealt with. If a therapist has negative feelings that he or she needs to talk about, then it is the therapist's responsibility to find someone to talk with other than patients.

After I have successfully dealt with a personal issue, then I think it is often useful to tell my clients about it. For example: I believe that my immune system protects me from my prostate cancer. To keep my immune system functioning, I need to deal with any internal conflicts. The first sign is usually a physical symptom, and I go to my wife to help me work it out. She's great and I can really rely on her. After the internal conflict has been resolved and the physical symptom has gone away, then I can tell my clients about the process I went through when it is relevant to his or her situation.