Therapy and the I Ching

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Thoughts

***If we wish to achieve an effect, we must first investigate the nature of the forces in question and ascertain their proper place. If we can bring these forces to bear in the right place, they will have the desired effect and completion will be achieved. But in order to handle external forces properly, we must above all arrive at the correct standpoint ourselves, for only from this vantage can we work correctly.***

* I CHING 64. BEFORE COMPLETION THE IMAGE

This is the essence of my approach to therapy – even opposing forces have value, and if these can be identified and then re-formulated to their proper place, the desired result can occur. Without this, the forces end up in conflict with each other and diminish the power and effectiveness of the whole. Rather than the energy all going towards the same directed end, some or much of the energy goes in different directions, which then takes even more energy to counter to keep things headed the right way.

Consider a boat with separate engines and separate rudders. When the engines are all running and the rudders are all aligned to act in coordination with each other, the boat can move in whatever direction it chooses and direct all its power towards getting there.

If instead the engines are all running but the rudders are all independent of each other, then movement in the chosen direction becomes erratic and a struggle. Things can change at any time: the helmsman must stay constantly alert. Progress towards the goal is made only by balancing out the different powers and different directions. None of the power sources gets to go in the direction it wants; all the power sources feel impinged upon by the others.

The overall speed is slowed. Sometimes it may even be reversed, if enough of the power is aimed the wrong way.

Elsewhere in the I Ching it says:

***Once ... opposing tendencies appear, conflict is inevitable. To avoid it, therefore, everything must be taken carefully into consideration in the very beginning. If rights and duties are exactly defined, or if, in a group, the spiritual trends of the individuals harmonize, the cause of conflict is removed in advance.***

* I CHING 6. CONFLICT

The “spiritual trends harmonizing” can be re-interpreted as the parties involved reaching agreement regarding the meaning that they desire their joint actions to achieve. This will often be true on the whole for sharing relationships, where progress depends upon joint action and duration (sustainability) is desired. In transaction relationships, where duration is not the goal, the process devolves down to the specific form, not the meaning, and thus the detailed specifics of that form are the crucial elements to be identified and defined.

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