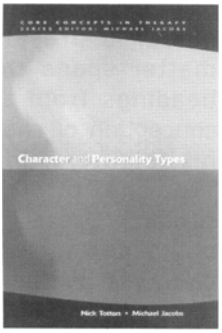
Character and Personality Types

(from the *Core Concepts in Therapy* series)

by Nick Totton & Michael Jacobs.



Open University Press, 2000, £14.99

Nick Totton and Michael Jacobs are to be congratulated on taking such a wide-ranging and controversial area of psychotherapeutic theory and exploring it at considerable depth in such a concise format (137 pages including index).

The issue of classification has always been a controversial one in any of the human sciences. Human beings are hard to please in this as in many other areas of life. On the one hand we hate being reduced to a stereotype by somebody else, particularly when that person draws conclusions about us which we do not (want to?) recognise. On the other, we have an intense desire to know where we fit into the grand scheme of things and to find explanations for why we are the way we are. We are fascinated by questionnaires in magazines which will tell us what kind of lover we are, what sort of job we should be doing, whether we are compatible with our partner etc. etc.

As therapists and counsellors, we are certainly not immune from this ambivalent relationship with typology (classification). Indeed, the fascination with explaining ourselves to ourselves is often a major component in the motivation for embarking on a training in the first place. I remember that the first thing I did, on buying a copy of Lowen's *Language of the Body* when I was training, was to look up the character structure I thought I had and read it in great detail!

Applying typology, in this case character and personality type, to our clients has considerable advantages. However, like many psychotherapeutic techniques, it can also be used abusively, that is to say, not in the client's best interest.

Chapter one of *Character and Personality Types* sets the scene. It gives a comprehensive overview of the different kinds of classification and the implications of the very notion of character in psychotherapy. Its breadth embraces diametrically opposed and historically separated approaches such as Ayurvedic medicine (circa 3000 BCE) and evolutionary psychology (circa 1990 AD). These contrasts are handled sensitively, as one might expect from two psychotherapists, making space for the contradictions rather than trying to resolve them.

The chapters which follow each give an account of how character and personality type is used (or not) within the principal traditions of psychotherapy. The definitions are necessarily broad, but a full spectrum of the different subdivisions of each model is presented. The subject matter spans though the chapter headings from the psychoanalytic conception of character to Reich and his followers, followed by Jungian Typology, through humanistic and research-based typologies and right up to and including transpersonal discourse on character types.

The chapters are well researched and present an approachable, yet thorough, explanation of the use of character and typology in the major schools of psychotherapeutic thought. As a practitioner and trainer, I also found the chapters extremely useful in summarising the development and beliefs of each particular model; a change from the Dryden approach where the model is summarised by a practitioner.

I was puzzled, at first, by the juxtaposition of humanistic and research based typologies. However, it became clear that the authors see the humanistic therapists as having tended to adopt both the idea of character and personality type and research based terminology in order to be accepted by the establishment. There is also an understated implication that the borrowing of typologies from other disciplines is not just for political reasons. The other reason is the impossibility of generating a typology from within a model, one of whose tenets is a denial of typology! For this and other reasons, I imagine that this chapter might present difficulties to some humanistic readers. For instance, the authors ask some pointed questions about TA:

'As so often with TA, these approaches to personality typing raise the question: Is this a system, or simply a set of brilliant and plausible epigrams shoehorned into a formal structure?'

The authors end the chapter with a challenge to humanistic practitioners to think more deeply about the typologies they adopt and why. It would be interesting to hear a response from some TA, Person Centred or Gestalt therapists to this challenge.

The conclusion is a *tour de force*. As well as outlining the possibilities and pitfalls of integrating typologies, it also includes a thought provoking section on state and process. The seamlessness of both authors' contributions is a positive feature of this book. However, the section on state and process is pure Nick Totton, drawing on such diverse disciplines as electronics and chaos theory. Its inclusion illuminates the preceding work on character and personality type whilst at the same time making a powerful statement about the purpose and practice of psychotherapy.

I can thoroughly recommend this book to all readers, from trainee to experienced therapist, and look forward to reading the other titles in this series.

Geoff Lamb

Geoff Lamb is a Reichian psychotherapist and counselling trainer with more than 15 years experience. He also holds an MSc in Health Psychology and a BSc in neuroscience. See www.g.c.lamb.btinternet.co.uk for further details.

Handbook of Psychotherapy Supervision

Edited by C Edward Watkins

John Wiley & Sons, 1997, £81.50 hb,

This is an update of the excellent book which came out under the editorship of Allen Hess in 1980. But hardly anything is the same. It has been updated and extended in many ways, and is virtually a completely new book.

It is divided into seven parts: 1. Conceptual and methodological foundations; 2. Approaches to psychotherapy supervision; 3. Training models for psychotherapy supervision; 4. Specialized forms and modes; 5. Researching psychotherapy supervision; 6. Professional, ethical and legal issues; and 7. Endnotes.

Chapter 1 is by Watkins himself, and is full, detailed and a bit dogmatic. Chapter 2 is by Bruce Wampold and Elizabeth Holloway, which I found boring, overly technical and jargon-ridden.

Coming on to Part 2, we start with a chapter on supervision in psychoanalysis by Paul Dewald, which is really a model of what such things should be. A good number of meaningful points are made which are relevant to all of us. The next chapter, slightly confusingly for me, is on supervision of psychodynamic psychotherapies, by Jeffrey Binder and Hans Strupp. This attempts to be comprehensive, with the result that there is considerable information overload and virtual unreadability. Chapter 5 is by Allen Hess himself, on the interpersonal approach. He obviously felt it necessary to explain all about this way of working, but it is a good effort, and some very nice points are made. The next chapter, by Alan Fruzzetti, Jennifer Waltz and Marsha Linehan, is on dialectical behaviour therapy. Again the attempt is made to explain the approach, but this time the result is a chapter which comes across as specialised and somewhat weird. Then comes a chapter by Paul Woods and Albert Ellis on rational emotive behaviour therapy - brief, dogmatic and again quite specialised. Chapter 8, by Bruce Liese and Judith Beck, is on cognitive therapy, and again the authors feel the need to explain it all from start to finish. I found it a confusing chapter, which seemed to say at one point that therapy should be mechanistic, and at another point that it should not. The next chapter is on client-centred supervision, by C H Patterson, which I found surprisingly directive and dogmatic. Chapter 10, on gestalt therapy by Gary Yontef, is a very different kettle of fish, offering a good model of a humanistic approach to supervision, which would be relevant to all those therapists who read *Self & Society*. The next chapter, on 'The Experiential Model of On-the-Job Teaching', by Alvin Mahrer and Donald Boulet, I found quite weird and highly specialized. Chapter 12, on the developmental perspective, by Cal Stoltenberg and Brian McNeill, seems far too external, and is also quite

specialised. The chapter following is on integrative approaches, by John Norcross and Richard Halgin, and is actually rather disintegrated, coming across as bitty and disjointed. Also it assumes that supervision is only about trainees, which seems a pity. The final chapter in this section is by Sandra Rigazio-Diligio, Thomas Daniels and Allen Ivey and rejoices in the title 'Systemic Cognitive-Developmental Supervision: A Developmental-Integrative Approach to Psychotherapy Supervision'. It seemed to me much too complicated, elaborate and unusable.

Part Three starts off with a chapter by Elizabeth Holloway on structures, which looked to me like a potted version of her well-known book. Like the book, it has no mention of either counter-transference nor ethics, which I should have thought were pretty basic matters to be covered. Chapter 16 is on microcounselling, by Thomas Daniels, Sandra Rigazio-Diligio and Allen Ivey. This is brief and not explicit enough for me, so fairly useless, and in any case limited to an instrumental approach. The next chapter, by Henya Kagan (Klein) and Norman Kagan, was on the interpersonal process recall technique, and not about supervision at all. The following chapter, on the discrimination model by Janine Bernard, seemed eccentric to me, but made some useful points. The final chapter in this section is by Rodney Goodyear and Mary Lee Nelson on the major formats of supervision, and is everything a chapter like this should be. It is in my opinion the best chapter to start on for anyone getting hold of this book.

Part 4 starts with a chapter on child and adolescent psychotherapy supervision, by Thomas Kratochwill, Kathleen Lepage and Julia MacGivern, which I found quite hideous. The next chapter is on older clients, by Michael Duffy and Pamilla Morales, which I didn't find very helpful or revealing. Chapter 22 deals with an experiential group model for group psychotherapy supervision, and is by David Altfeld and Harold Bernard. This features an interesting and unusual approach, which is fully explained with a case example, which I enjoyed reading. The final chapter in this section is on family therapy supervision, by Howard Liddle, Dana Becker and Gary Diamond, which seemed good.

Part 5 is all about research, and is really quite funny. The first chapter is by Michael Lambert and Benjamin Ogles, on the effectiveness of psychotherapy supervision, and one's first impression is one of admiration at its thoroughness, almost to the point of being overwhelming. But then we get the chapter by Michael Ellis and Nicholas Ladany, which consists of a devastating attack on all the research done in this field. It is immensely detailed and critical, and leaves virtually nothing left standing. It is one of the longest chapters in the whole book, and continually says things like: 'In summary, very little can be inferred from the findings of studies investigating supervisee needs. The general lack of conceptual and methodological rigour seems pernicious.' (p.473) In the final section, they say things like: 'Perhaps foremost, the overall quality of research during the past 15 years was substandard. This cannot be taken lightly.' (p.492) I don't know what Lambert and Ogles felt like when they read all this. And the final chapter in this section, by Susan Neufeldt, Larry Beutler and Robert Banchero, contains more bad news on the research front.

Part 6 is about professional, ethical and legal issues. The first chapter, by Paul Rodenhauser, makes some very good general points, including the identification of eight 'trouble spots' in psychotherapy supervision. I found this more optimistic but in the end equally devastating. Chapter 28, by Carlton Munson on gender questions in supervision, is good, having some very helpful things to say. The following chapter is on cultural competence, by Steven Lopez, and again is good, raising some very important issues. The last chapter in this section is by Samuel Knapp and Leon Vandecreek, and is really only of interest to those living in the United States.

Part 7 is by the editor. It is very brief and does not really say very much.

All in all, this is a very impressive volume, and anyone who is seriously interested in psychotherapy supervision will have to have it. Those who normally wait for the paperback to come out may be disappointed. Wiley don't do much in the way of paperbacks.

POSTSCRIPT

After I had written the above review, I suddenly realised that there was something missing. Nowhere in the book is there any mention of transpersonal supervision. Words like 'transpersonal' or 'spirituality' do not occur in the index, and none of the people who have written well about transpersonal supervision are mentioned. These include: Beebe (1995); Brookes (1995); Clarkson (1998); Cobb (1997); Corbett (1995); Fukuyama & Sevig (1999); Henderson, J L (1995); Henderson, D (1998); Maclagan (1997); Samuels (1997); West (2000); and Whitmore (1999). It seems remarkable to me that at this late date, thirty years after the founding of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, there is such ignorance and such closed minds on the supervisory scene.

John Rowan

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The Making of Them - The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System

by Nick Duffel

Lone Arrow Press, 2000, £20.00

Sending one's children to boarding school has often been perceived as a mark of privilege and the best preparation for high office or worldly success - particularly in Britain. Whereas in recent years there's been some amelioration of this widely perceived notion, it is still prevalent.

While not disputing that there are distinct benefits to those graduating from our public school system, the psychological costs - and their physical, relational and social concomitants - are rarely acknowledged. Nick Duffell argues from his research and specialised psychotherapy practice that this very silence about one's own personal suffering is part of the legacy of what he calls being a boarding school survivor.

Therefore, adults who had been sent away - particularly at an early age - to boarding school from their family homes have often learned (or been conditioned) both to endure unacceptably brutal interpersonal practices such as humiliation, sexual violation, bullying and to keep silent about it.

When these kinds of trauma emerge in adulthood in the form of stress-related disease, inability to sustain meaningful intimate sexual relationships and mental and emotional breakdowns, adults who have had such experiences often don't even know how to begin to acknowledge their long-hidden pain to themselves - what more talk to someone else (such as their medical practitioners) about their suffering.

This, as we know from the psychological research evidence, often leads to further psycho-somatic difficulties in terms of overworking to burnout point, multiple serious health problems as well as drug and/or alcohol abuse.

Considering that these men (and it is too often men who are debilitated in their life's functioning in this way) are often in positions of power and responsibility, it has very serious and pervasive consequences for the functioning of our society as a whole.

I have come across hundreds of these men in my clinical practice as well as in my personal and social life. To find the words to describe their conditions is difficult, sometimes being 'emotionally amputated' seems to fit. Sometimes the notion of post traumatic stress disorder seems to fit. Often, the notion of alexithymia seems to fit - a genuine inability to find words to express feelings or emotions. The emotion, social and relational consequences are delibilitating and appalling. In my opinion, they are profoundly important in terms of what has gone wrong between men and women in recent years and a significant

contributing factor in the gender war. This state of misunderstanding between men and women in our contemporary culture is seriously sad and at the same time I believe utterly corrigible - even in our time.

Nick Duffel, who is willing both to share his personal experiences and his professional expertise in this area, suggests that the most important first step in dealing with the negative psycho-somatic fall-out in adults of having been sent away to boarding school as children, is acknowledging that this problem exists.

For anyone personally or professionally involved with this issue, his book is a worthy and valuable aid in this direction, not only by analysing the psychological components, but also in pointing the way towards how these difficulties can be overcome.

It is well written, personally direct and based on extensive study of hundreds of so-called boarding school survivors with whom he and his collaborators have worked over some ten years. It is highly recommended reading for medical practitioners. I would think this book deserves a three star overall rating.

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The Therapeutic Environment - Core conditions for facilitating therapy

by Richard J Hazler & Nick Barwick

Open University Press, 2001, 148pp, £14.99 paperback

This short volume is one of a series edited by Michael Jacobs covering core concepts in therapy. The authors declare it as much an experiment in joint writing, from different sides of the Atlantic, as a textbook, given they come from such different perspectives. At strategic intervals they respond to each other's chapters, highlighting areas of agreement and difference as a sort of parallel process to the subject matter, clearly welcoming and celebrating diversity within therapeutic philosophies and practices.

The authors set out to address the question: what conditions hold client and therapist together in productive ways when so many factors promote the downfall of the relationship? They consider three broad traditions, set within the context of twentieth century development: psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural and existential-humanistic. They explain and review

the way each tradition deals with such fundamental issues as trust, relationship and boundaries, and they explore very incisively why each approach works within its own frame of reference. As Hazler remarks: 'All therapies attend to emotions. The difference is in the value placed on emotions and their role in therapy' (p9). Further on, the authors conclude: 'the difference between most contemporary therapies ... is not about whether they value immediacy but what they value it for' (p115).

The authors manage to distil the guts of the respective therapeutic traditions in a most concise way. For the psychodynamic, the tension between gratification and frustration is discussed as well as the essential differences between drive-discharge versus relationship-seeking approaches. For the existential-humanistic, there is a considered appreciation of client narrative and the imbedded contradictions found in client stories with their 'threads' and 'holes'. The cognitive-behavioural chapter, while comprehensive in its coverage of the history and philosophy of this strand, is perhaps the least lively to get through, although clinical cases help somewhat.

The book would make an ideal 'crammer' for those needing an overview of therapeutic development or wishing to understand or explain why therapists are all different. One of the great strengths of the book is its appreciation of the historical development of therapy over the last century, explaining why each of the philosophies and practices have changed with the times. This is best addressed in relation to changes within the psychodynamic tradition, away from the fully 'objective' therapist role to a more relational one. Another strength is the respect and appreciation given to each tradition, recognising the contribution each one makes to the overall field. As such, the authors try to see beyond the divisions and rivalries that have dogged the profession, yet manage not to minimise the impact of differences. As Barwick cautions: 'no school is an island and no therapist is immune to the beliefs and practices of orientations outside his or her chosen theoretical sphere' (p41).

While written in a comfortable, easy style, the weakness of the book is, arguably, its structure. There are too many headings and sub-headings, breaking down issues which are then treated in different spots throughout the book. Sometimes it is hard to see why the authors have chosen to address an issue in one place rather than another. Nevertheless, this should not detract significantly from the value of this book's openness, clarity and moderation.

Keith Silvester

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