

We want...

Letters to the Editor

We hope these articles begin to stimulate questions, comments, and even controversies.

There is so much happening in this world of burgeoning discovery, and your perspective can add zest to the conversation!

We look forward to hearing from you at BonnieB@centerforhopeandhealing.org

Editorial Staff

Bonnie Badenoch, PhD, LMFT
Lauren Culp, MA, LMFT
Carol Landsberg, MS

Contributors

Jeffrey Anderson, RN, MS
Bonnie Badenoch, PhD, LMFT
Thomas W. Burton, Esq
Joyce Catlett, MA
Lauren Culp, MA, LMFT
Lisa A. Firestone, PhD
Robert W. Firestone, PhD
Noah Hass-Cohen, MA, ATR-BC, LMFT
Kirke Olson, PsyD

Do-It-Yourself Integration Workout: Applying the Principles

Last month we published this IPNB brain teaser. Here's one possible answer.

Gray has been noticing in the last few months that when his mind goes toward judgment and the attendant hyperarousal—"What a stupid thing she did!"—some of the time, another thought presents itself right next door—"Perhaps she was having a particularly tough day because her child is sick." This thought is given in kindness rather than criticism, and smoothes the arousal, too. There is no conscious attempt to generate that thought or to calm himself. The words simply arise in his mind, and ride like a lily on a pond.

He reports that one of his central struggles in adulthood has been with dreams in which he has done something wrong and can't fix it. He knows this sense of being ashamed of himself comes from a deep early place and contributes to his mind's grasping onto judgments about others in an effort to take the heat off himself. Gray rarely voices these judgments, but just the inner activity provides a cognitive and emotional distraction protecting the pain inside. However, the residue is another layer of shame since he feels like an ugly person for being judgmental. Not a good recursive cycle, but its rigidity is clearly loosening.

So what might be happening in Gray's body/brain as this self-reinforcing pattern of judgment and shame appears to be spontaneously changing?

One reader writes, "It seems like Gray is more compassionate and has more ability to think flexibly. It sounds like he's more self-regulated, and that as his thoughts change, his self-image is improving. He can make a different narrative of the other (NOTO) now. He isn't forcing these new thoughts, so that would indicate to me that the changes are coming from a different way his brain is structured. All of these new abilities could come from middle prefrontal integration—flexible responses, empathy, and body and emotion regulation. All of these lead to more well-being which is an outcome of increasing integration."