

# Clearing the mind weeds in a counselling profession

[Experience](#), [Anger](#)



Response-ability says Perls, is a misused word. It “ means the ability to respond: the ability to be alive, to feel, to be sensitive. ” (GTV, 100). It does not mean “ obligation. ” It doesn’t mean “ duty. ” Duty- what is that anyway? One way or another, it is something that I’ve been directed to do without asking why. I do it automatically, without accepting responsibility for my actions. This was the trait that saw me through the travails in my life where I moved from letting others be responsible for me to taking responsibility for myself. Perhaps this is what motivated me to pursue my goals without relying too much on my family resources.

I learned early on not to assign the cause of my behavior to my parents or my past or even the wealth of my family. In the process I learned this most important value of responsibility that kept me grounded and helped me in my studies and work. However, it was not an easy journey. I cannot consider my life as an extraordinary this world had ever had. Each person has a story to tell and I must say mine is not really something different. While some people spend their lives with lots of colors around them, some just do not – and as much as I hate to admit, I spent many years of my life belonging to the second group.

I go with flow and that has always been the case. It goes this way: I knew I need to attend school and so I did. I have to do well in school or else I will suffer from all the criticisms – the usual criticisms. It is never easy to live in other people’s expectations to the point that it is what they want that drives you. It is your body under their minds. I can now imagine how pathetic that was. All the while, though, I do not think I was as inspired as the rest of the

class was. I did not make lots of friends from school. No big deal! But there were times when I also deal with thinking of the reasons for the 'empty' life.

Those days would usually end with me getting no answer than 'It must be me...' Although I acknowledge the fact that each of us has our own set of preferences and all the while, I lived in the thought that I just prefer to live my life like this - lonely, detached, alone. It was tiring when you care for no one and more when no one cares for you. In a way, my opinions have been changed because I have learned to create a balance in obeying orders. It was there where I learned that there is blind obedience that ignores all rationality and obedience based on freedom.

Those involved in a transaction are independent—they can walk away from the deal if they don't like what's happening. And just as they are free to leave, they are also free to stay. In fact, if one is not free to walk away, he is not free to choose to stay. Some of my own teachers then helped me develop a sense of competence and love of learning. Though some helped me find my own directions and make my own discoveries, others taught me to follow orders and not ask questions. If I had enough teachers who cared more about their authority than about my growth, I probably would have left school more a robot than when I entered.

I learned that to the degree that I've been conditioned in ways that block my process of growth, I act like a robot. Something happens near me and I respond. No time for choice, between the stimulus and the response. I'm reacting entirely to preprogrammed instructions in my memory. In examining the idea of obedience in the context of my schooling, I remember

the works of authors Darymple and Milgram who provided two points of views. In doing so, I got several insights especially when I began examining the idea of the authors in the execution of orders.

In the course of my study, I was able to see where the authors were coming from in their pursuit of obedience. I have learned that if I want to increase my power of authority, I can develop and cultivate my honor rather than seek honors, status, recognition and praise. Others will honor me when they know that not only do I have the capability to do what is necessary, I execute it in grace and honor. I started my career as an advocate of science and technology. Yes, my first degree was Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

I used to get fascinated with breakthroughs science gets to offer - all those inventions and advances in technology. Awesome! Hale great! Breath-taking! Fantastic! All those praises... Nothing can beat the feeling of having invented something out of nothing. Or the feeling of being the one to drastically improve the current state of something for the benefit of people around the globe - it is always satisfying! But who could tell it was not really a career of my own choice? I was one of those high school graduates who do not really know what they want to happen in their lives.

And so, without any particular basis, it was Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering that I ended up with. I was aware of the good future this field has to offer. I have known of lots of people who have succeeded in this career who took up this course. I, at least, had this driving force to continue with my study. Fair enough to push me to strive harder and harder. I just told

myself I need it or else I will end up with nothing. Looking at my Engineering career, I know that I took risks that I was willing to take. They were statements of who I am and who I am not.

We can almost never know enough to be sure what is going to happen as a result of what we do. We can only guess, assume and expect, with varying degrees of certainty. At this moment, under these circumstances, with knowledge I have now, I make my choice. I live with its results. The conditions of my life today are the result of choices I made yesterday. Everyone “blows it” now and then. If I think clearly and act as honestly and wisely as I know how, that’s all I can do. We can’t help some of our suffering, but sometimes we ourselves create the rest.

Now, I have learned to take my failures and my half-successes as a normal part of life. My “errors” and “defeats” sometimes teach me more than my successes. In an important sense, they are not failures at all. In the process, I learned interdependence. Interdependence asks, “What can we do and be together?” Interdependence asks the synergy question. It is not external but the power that focuses internally. It relies on the capacity that people have within themselves to be tougher on themselves, to push themselves harder when they are subsuming what they want in the cause of something that’s greater.

Ultimately, that’s what sacrifice is all about – giving up what I want now for what I want the most. Giving up what does not matter as much, for what matters more. Sometimes the needs of the few are sacrificed for the needs of the many. Sometimes the sacrifice is just the reverse, and the needs of

the many can accommodate the needs of the few. The needs of the few are worth the sacrifice and commitment of the many. Self-control, demonstrated in a group setting, is very powerful. Each person essentially says, " I give myself to it, because it is the right thing to do. " Many enjoy learning but they do not always like being taught.

It requires humility. It requires recognition, first within and then to those who would teach you. It was at this phase of my life where I learned to be a true leader—one who is not afraid to learn new things and try out new ways of doing things. When a leader says one thing, the effect is intent listening and execution. The art of listening which I learned well at this point enabled me to come to the other person in terms that they understand, because I now approach them from their frame of reference, their desires, wants, and needs. Indeed, true leaders are able to connect with people well.

I started my career as an advocate of science and technology. Yes, my first degree was Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. I used to get fascinated with breakthroughs science gets to offer - all those inventions and advances in technology. Awesome! Hale great! Breath-taking! Fantastic! All those praises... Nothing can beat the feeling of having invented something out of nothing. Or the feeling of being the one to drastically improve the current state of something for the benefit of people around the globe - it is always satisfying! But who could tell it was not really a career of my own choice?

I was one of those high school graduates who do not really know what they want to happen in their lives. And so, without any particular basis, it was

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering that I ended up with. I was aware of the good future this field has to offer. I have known of lots of people who have succeeded in this career who took up this course. I, at least, had this driving force to continue with my study. Fair enough to push me to strive harder and harder. I just told myself I need it or else I will end up with nothing. Description of a Learning Event in Listening and Being Listened to

I remembered an incident that was the turning point in my career. When I read the book on Teach only Love, I knew that I wanted to shift my course. I wanted to go into Counselling. There was something about the book that touched the innermost being in me. I wanted to shift my profession from Mechanical Engineering to Counselling Studies. These are far apart degrees and, yes, I did not see myself engaging in counselling. No, not even in my wildest dream. But this is not a dream. Yes, I am living in reality and the reality is that this is the vocation of choice. This is where I find myself, my heart.

This is where I belong. It is true what the “magical” book says – that it is from your past where you draw your present. If not for the thousands of rejection, if not for the feeling of inferiority, if not for the lack of self-confidence, I do not really think this book would have as much effect on me as it had. I was so excited about it that I immediately told it to my best friend. I knew he would understand me more than anyone else. As I was telling him of my decision, I could see that he was getting listless. I saw him avoiding my eyes as soon as I uttered those words.

I could not blame him. We both dreamt that we would finish the course and here I was bowing out on him. After a while, I responded, " You're angry. " he says, " Why would I be angry? " I was sure that my friend was angry but resisted knowing his own anger because of his personal values in which anger is a wicked emotion. I knew that there was resistance to acknowledge this since he was terrified of losing control, unable to think of himself as angry because of our friendship. He seemed to be projecting his anger on me at that moment and I could feel it so strongly.

In a way, I was able to gently tell him how he looks and sounds which made him aware and he then began to talk about his anger. At that very moment I felt like a real professional counsellor. I was able to gently guide him about his feelings, even if I was unsure of what to say at all. I knew that if I uttered the wrong words, he will walk out on me. But I gently drew out his feelings then. I tried to help him break out of his sullen, angry depression. Finally, he suggested that he punch a throw pillow bunched up in a corner of the couch in a corner of the student lounge. There were a few students around.

He did not wait for my reply. He started punching, harder and harder, until he was breathing fast and deeply, feeling the relaxation. He did this several times, while I sat quietly, finally remarking on how much different his face looked—smoother, less tense , not so red under the eyes. He countered how clear his mind seemed, that it was the first time in several days that he really felt relaxed. I managed to ask him if those punches were meant for me because I was planning to change courses. He said, he thinks those were



more of his angry feelings because he was obligated to take up Engineering when he wanted to go into the arts.

In an instant, I empathized with him. I knew how it was like to take up something where one's heart was not on it. He then began to talk quietly about his father, and how he wanted him to take up Engineering instead of Speech and Drama. After a minute or so of that conversation, I asked, " How do you feel now? " He was beginning to feel tense and angry again. The object lesson for him was (1) the need for physical release for his anger, and (2) the amount of control his thoughts exercised over his feelings (Ellis, 1966). The heart's yearning

The pent-up feelings seem to come mainly from either of two frustrations, my classmate was having feelings and thoughts which appear to be enormous, odd, scary, and feeling cut off from other people because of his own inferiority with our other classmates. I have learned from this incident that catharsis is often not enough. At some point in the helping process, the understanding, which comes with a careful analysis of anger, may be healing. My classmate was able to see his anger in the context of internal polarity or conflict, between desire for freedom and a sense of duty, and be liberated by the understanding.

The precise descriptions of the anger experience helped my classmate by removing excess emotional baggage. Insight is curative, but most frequently, both client and counsellor will find additional action useful to manage anger. For me, this action is intervention, helping my classmate change attitudes about each of our decisions. It was a poignant moment I would never forget.

I knew he wanted to lash out his anger on me. Although I appeared to be so passive all the while, in my heart I know I long for something. That something, however, is unknown.

I do not know if I am just one those people who experience wanting something they do not exactly know what or looking for something they do not know, for sure, if existent. Can you just imagine how it feels to be in the dark? Be somewhere without any clear direction? They say that every little thing just takes a little of getting used to. Oh, well, probably, as I seemed to have been used to the feeling of being lost. It was sad but true. Despite the lack of light in my life, I never questioned the existence of the Great Someone Up There. I perfectly know he is there. I do not recall how often I scream for His help.

Maybe not that often but, of course, I do. I do and in my heart, I know I am not essentially alone all the while. However, there are moments when I tend to question the number and quantity of challenges facing me. There seems to be an imbalance in load allocation. How come I felt so lost while others follow certain direction? How come I do not know what I want in life while others are so certain of what they want in theirs? How come I do not seem to possess enough reason to be happy and complete. I often envy happy and satisfied people, I must admit - but I do not harm to them. I just envy them, that is it.

And more often than not, I wish I were in their shoes. In all the insecurities I have inside, there were times when I ask myself if this is something I caused. What is that something I failed to do? What is that something that I can

probably change to make a difference? What could be missing? I have heard of success stories about people who started with nothing and ended up having the life they have always dreamed of. Can I not be one of them? My concern is never monetary. I did not wish for the whole world. I just want a piece of it - a piece of it where I can enjoy life to the fullest.

I did not ask for extravagant things. What would a loner do with those? I doubt if anybody could really enjoy everything alone. I did not wish for fame. I have lived my life not having the attention of the whole world. I just want some compassion and feeling of belongingness. I did not wish for power as I have never ever seen myself mandating others or controlling the world. It could be that I long for power but that power is the power to appreciate and enjoy life, the power to make people see me as a sensible being worth the company, the power to contribute to the 'real' things in this world.

In short, I was never a materialistic type. There are things I lack from within and that is something I longed for to fill in. I used to have a very narrow view of things in life. I exist. I have to live. I have to survive. I used to find the question, "What am I here for?" or "Why do I exist?" as cliché that should have been buried decades back. Come on! You are here because you are here and there is just nothing you can do about it! It is not a problem needing solution. It is just a situation that you have to live with. You are left with just two options - either you continue to exist or you end your own existence.

Is that something needing some sort of profound thinking?! Life is as plain as that. You just have to go with the flow. The True Art of Listening Counsellors

can provide instruction in observing and listening by making these skills an integral part of their ongoing activities. The dominant characteristic of observing and listening activities are often appropriate for poor readers or students in the primary grades. To believe that all students will learn the same things at the same time, at the same rate, and with the same degree of retention is sheer fantasy.

In almost any classroom at any grade level, the range of students' abilities, interests, talents, knowledge, previous experiences, personalities, learning styles, dispositions and needs is so great that it is staggering. This kind of individualized instruction has resulted from efforts to make teachers more responsive to individual students and their instructional needs. Activities that focus on observation skills emphasize things that children can observe; things that can include objects, behaviors or processes. Teachers need to adapt a curriculum appropriate to the needs of the students.

Some of the best teaching resources for students with these kinds of learning difficulties are those teachers have developed themselves. Teachers could build most of the student activities. This will go into refining—that is, they will be tried out with students and then revised—but once developed, they can become resource to be used in future years. Before teachers can duplicate an activity, it would also be wise to share it with someone he/she can rely on for honest feedback—a colleague, or a fellow student teacher.

One is almost certain to find that what one thought was perfectly obvious is not, and thus gain a chance to make appropriate adjustments before trying it out with one's students. It is best to start small and then build the collection

of materials slowly and steadily. Responsibility in everyday life From then on, after realizing the implications of these theories, I began to take responsibility for my life now at work and beyond--which involves self-management competency. Often, when things do not go well, people tend to blame their difficulties on the situations in which they find themselves or on others.

I have learned that effective self-management does not fall into this trap. Self-management competency includes integrity and ethical conduct and personal drive and resilience. I agree with what Jay Greiner posits about the reason why it is most difficult to take personal responsibility for mistakes. It is because one feels threatened and insecure. The word responsibility itself is a misused word. More than postponing automatic assumptions, Perls, the renowned psychologist sees growth as a move from letting others be responsible to taking responsibility for oneself.

Education in today's environment will be successful if we formulate activities that are engaging as much as they are educational, and if we adapt to new technologies that will help complement classroom interaction. I have further learned that drive and resilience are especially important when someone sets out to do something no one else has done or when that person faces setbacks and failures. The responsibility aspect which Jay Greiner talks about will spur more insights about ethical dilemmas that arise at all levels in the business world.

People, whether employer or employee, may face situations in their work or dealings with other people in which ethical dilemmas arise. The individuals in

these cases are faced with ethical questions in their relations with customers, employees, and members of a larger society. More often than not, the answers to these questions are difficult because it involves weighing of values. Conflicting values in a given situation are not capable of compromise. One has to choose one over another. Sometimes, the ethically correct course of action is clear, and hopefully individuals act accordingly.

But the answers are often not simple. The dilemma is most commonly presented when ethical concerns come into conflict with the practical demands of business. This is related to the proper obedience and responsibility that I discussed earlier. Knowing how to negotiate and persuade people would be very essential for the progress of my future career. Through interactions with various kinds of people in a potential workplace, I get to know particular complexities of people and use this to a good advantage. I believe that an effective leader is a pathfinder and a team builder.

As pathfinders, he has to recognize needs and accommodate the legitimate needs and wants of all stakeholders by clarifying: Vision, Context, Direction, Location, Goals, Strategy, Purpose and Pace (Business Ethics). As team builders, he has to help others achieve as they create healthy, safe conditions for risk taking, help others become leaders, provide resources and be a resource themselves, help some move from dependence to independence, help others get things done; and help determine how people work together.

In the course of my experiences as a leader in the fields I have chosen, I have come to understand how my social environment wants me to be, and why, I can more wisely choose which people and events in my environment I want to make a part of me, and which ones I don't. Conclusion In summation, in order to become the person I want to be, I need to continuously identify my core competencies. Skills are to be developed according to the actual needs and not merely based on generalities and perceptions. Work-based learning will address this concern by integrating actual experiences and practices in developing new knowledge about the organization.

Today, I now know that practice and theories must be merged together (Sill, S. 1958). People can overcome barriers to effective communication. They must first be aware that barriers exist and can cause serious problems. Then they must be willing to invest the effort and time necessary to overcome the barriers. Learning is a lifelong process. If I operate with the assumption that I do not have all the answers or insights, I allow myself to value the different viewpoints, judgments and experiences others may bring.

Sometimes I cannot help but think how my life would have turned out had I stayed in the comforts of my home, not taking risks or venturing into the pursuit of my goals. In small ways, I may not even recognize that I do contribute to larger events that happen in this world. If anybody would ask me now if I regret giving up my first degree to pursue counselling, I will answer, " The sad past led me to a wonderful today. Every bit of failure and pain did not really lead me to regretting anything because in each of those, I

learned. And in each of those, I grew – not just as a person for myself but as a person for other people.

” And now, I no longer find the question, “ What do I live for? ” mushy. I can tell, with chin up, I live for others to appreciate their lives. I do not just exist. I live. I continue to learn through others with high hopes and belief that they also learn from me. As I act, others may take heart and be stirred to action too. But if I waited for things to just happen then in the comforts of my own home, I would have probably be doing things automatically without any awareness devoid of the colorful life I have led ever since I made my choice to be responsible and independent and not sabotage my ability to do things for myself. Part II

Portfolio Counselling’s Role in Education The theories learned in the course is revealed as I look at it deeply and as I ponder on the experiences I had about the listening process and being listened to. What comes to be more alive to me now is the issue on Understanding. I learned that to be truly effective, the counsellor must have a thorough understanding of human behavior and be able to apply that understanding to the particular set of problems. For a moment, I knew that my experience with my friend was what I really wanted. This was actually what counsellors do with their clients. And I knew that I had the aptitude for it.

In a way, it occurred to me that what I was doing at that moment was like the Person-centered approach which authors Embleton and colleagues (2004) were talking about. At that point I knew the person-centered approach was an effective model for both counselling and psychotherapy



especially living in a complex world. (Embleton et al. , 2004). Diagnosis and the hypothesis-generating are critical and inevitable parts of the counsellor's work. To understand human behavior means to have a set of concepts and theories that help to account for and explain significant human reactions and relate them to experiences.

These concepts and principles provide the core for the counsellor's diagnostic work. Counsellors use their understandings to talk to themselves about their own behavior as well as the concerns, actions, perceptions, emotions and motivations of their clients. With no theory, counsellors have nothing to say in their conversations. Counsellors who comprehend the role that an understanding of human behavior serves in their work, and who recognize the proper function of diagnosis, will work very hard to avoid the pitfalls in this area. It is part of their ethical responsibility. " How can I help?

" As I uttered those words, I remember Higdon's work on *From Counselling Skills to Counsellor: Psychodynamic Approach*, because it gave me a new understanding as he began talking. It was as if I was listening with another ear, able to comprehend the emotions behind those words and what he was really saying. (Higdon, 2004). So, I was able to cope with it well. Initially, I was about to call it quits. I had my own issues to attend to. But it dawned on me that his desire to punch the pillows was his desire to remove the cobwebs in his own mind about what he really wanted to pursue.

When I really " heard" him, and listened to him from the heart, I understood that it was his own feelings that he was wrestling with. (Higdon, 2004).

Catharsis is often not enough. At some point in the helping process, just as in this example, the counsellor must take advantage of a pause, the completion of some part of the session, or an explicit expectation of the client to help him move to a greater understanding of his anger and eventually to some new action or attitude. Ellis' proposition that the way we think has a lot to do with the way we feel.

Recently, I am reminded of the trend pursued by Meichenbaum (1974), which have very broad applications as a total system of therapy, and is particularly useful with clients whose anger shows righteousness or defensiveness as the dominant component, and many find it by far the most useful long-term approach. These theories became alive as I underwent that experience with my friend. How does it work? Ellis (1966) presents the basic paradigm to clients: (a) A stimulus takes place in your life; (b) you interpreted it in some way; and (c) you have an unpleasant emotional response (anger).

Ellis' Rational Emotive Therapy intervenes in the process at the second step, the interpretation, which, he says, comes from a faulty way of looking at life, a system of illogical thinking. The therapy consists of re-educating the client to think in a healthier, more appropriate way, by helping the client dispute the faulty thinking. This is the point at which many counsellors balk, because to keep at a resistant client with this kind of re-education requires a lot of conviction, ingenuity and persistence. There is a perversity that seems to want to keep the anger.

One sees it in the client who resists the helper's efforts to teach the ways his or her thoughts of being unjustly treated serve to maintain the anger. There comes a time in many helping situations at which the question is appropriate; " Do you want to give it up? " And the question: " If you give up the anger, what else do you have to give up? " Sometimes clients will say, " Yes, I want to give it up. But I can't" Some clients will say, " Yes, I want to. Help me figure it out. " Some will say " I want to stop being so angry, but I don't want to give it up altogether.

" Some will say, " No. No, I don't really want to give up. " Regardless of the answer, having the client state it explicitly usually puts the counselling at a stage to consider more accurately and profitably the realities of the client's aims. If the client asks for help, the counsellor is in good position to offer the resources of his or her ingenuity. If the client wants to stop but not altogether, the counsellor can point out to the client that truth and its implication: " That is your truth; are you willing to take what comes with it?

" If the client does not want to give it at all, the counsellor can take that as a statement of the client's goals and ask how he can help the client work through the implications of the anger and how to minimize the ill effects of it. In sum, an important precept here aside from Understanding is Client Change. I believe that the ultimate purpose of the counselling experience is to help the client achieve some kind of change that he or she will regard as satisfying.

Virtually every significant theory of counselling states that creating some kind of client change in a growth-enhancing direction is the ultimate

intended outcome of the counselling experience. Some say overt behavior change is the sine qua non of the experience. Others say that behavior change is simply symptom change; real and lasting change comes when the client develops new perceptions about self, significant others and about life. This is what was glaring from this experience. Client change is often difficult to document. Behavior change, if it occurs, is probably the easiest to observe because it is the most tangible.

However, clients may also change their views about certain behaviors that they previously regarded as undesirable—or they may change in the extent to which they experience stress related to an unwanted life situation—or they may change in a variety of other ways that involve internal experiencing. In spite of the difficulties of assessing some kinds of change, it seems that a counsellor who cannot describe the changes that the client has undergone has no basis for knowing when counselling has reached an effective conclusion. REFERENCES

Center for Strategic and International Studies 2002, " What is globalization? " Retrieved Feb. 2, 2007 at: CSIS Globalization 101 WEBSITE on the World Wide Web: [http://www.globalization101.org/globalization/Business Ethics](http://www.globalization101.org/globalization/Business_Ethics). Retrieved Feb. 2, 2007 at: [http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/0130797723/ref=sib\\_dp\\_pt/104-1829689-6709521#reader-page](http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/0130797723/ref=sib_dp_pt/104-1829689-6709521#reader-page) Ellis, A. (1966). Rational-emotive psychotherapy. New York: J. Norton. Embleton, Tudor, L. , Keeras, K. , Tudor, K. , Valentine, J. and Worrall, M. (2004) The Person-centred Approach: A Contemporary Introduction.

London: Palgrave Higdon, J. (2004)From Counselling Skills to Counsellor: A Psychodynamic Approach, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Leading Quietly. Retrieved Feb. 2, 2007 at: [http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/1578514878/ref=sib\\_rdr\\_ex/104-1829689-6709521?%5Fencoding=UTF8&p=S00Q&j=0#reader-page](http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/1578514878/ref=sib_rdr_ex/104-1829689-6709521?%5Fencoding=UTF8&p=S00Q&j=0#reader-page) Meichenbaum, D. (1974). Cognitive behavior modification. Morristown, N. J. General Learning Press, Perls, F. (1975). Growth in the HumanPersonality. New York: New York: Julian Press. Sill, S. (1958). LeadershipSalt Lake City. Bookcraft, 48.