

CASEBOOK OF ECLECTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY

Preface

John C. Norcross

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Created in the United States of America

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Preface

This compendium was designed as an extension and elaboration of the *Handbook of Eclectic Psychotherapy*. The 13 case histories presented herein concretely illustrate the practice of systematic eclectic psychotherapy in its varied manifestations. The positive response to the *Handbook*, requests for detailed cases, and our training experiences all dictated that we address what eclectic psychotherapists actually do, rather than what they say they do or what they recommend to others. As Samuel Johnson once observed, "Example is always more efficacious than precept."

Although intended to complement the *Handbook*, these in-depth cases stand firmly on their own. The cases transcend the indefinite boundaries of eclecticism to address the broader issues of psychotherapy practice and process. The results, in my estimation, brightly illuminate the shadowy figures of psychotherapy's past: reliance on theory rather than human interchange, reluctance to share our work, and discontinuity among clinical theory, research, and practice.

The case contributors deserve special acknowledgment for their perseverance and courage. The Case Guidelines (see chapter 1) required extensive transcripts, therapist remarks, and written patient impressions. More than one irate secretary answered my telephone inquiry to a

contributor with a remark on the order of "So, you're the one asking for all these *?#! transcripts!" Aside from suppressing office rebellions, contributors were asked to present explicit instances of their therapeutic errors, include unedited client comments, bundle it up into a coherent chapter of less than 60 pages, and subject it to the critical eyes of two unfettered commentators. Few psychotherapists, integrative or otherwise, would accept such a challenge, let alone surpass it, as did the contributors to the present volume.

Not a week passes of late without my quietly acknowledging the lifelong contributions of my parents, Carol and George Norcross. Parents frequently advise their children (and occasionally psychotherapists, their clients) that genuine appreciation of loving care develops gradually as the child (or client) matures. This has been particularly true for me with regard to my family, whom I cherish more and more with each day. I thus thank my family—George, Carol, George III, Donald, Philip, Nancy, Rebecca—and Weimaraners—Dagmar, DJ, and Misty. To my stepdaughter, who appropriately felt under-recognized in previous works, I reiterate my appreciation and love. As partial compensation for not highlighting her name earlier, I hereby repeat it boldly three times: Rebecca, Rebecca, Rebecca.

Finally, I am grateful to two groups of people who have convinced me that practicing psychotherapy and writing about psychotherapy are

compatible, perhaps even synergistic, pursuits. The first consists of the patients whose private troubles and treatments constitute the content of this *Casebook*. The second consists of the editorial staff of Brunner/Mazel, especially Ann Alhadeff and Bernie Mazel, who provided perfectly timed admixtures of encouragement and direction.

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