

Professional Mediocrity

Psychotherapy, that most unusual even incredible juncture between therapist and patient, became mediocre. The initial amazement at what happens when patient meets therapist and therapist meets patient, began to wane.

One day of psychotherapy melted into another. The private practice became successful, with the waiting list of appointments forever growing. The training programme became successful, with an ever growing number of trainees. The transference made sure I was continually imbued with power and potency from patient and trainee alike.

Writing, thinking and lecturing early in my career caused some success locally, and even internationally. Requests to do workshops nationally and internationally left the ego a little larger, (and surprisingly, even a bit embarrassed)! The Goulding Award also did wonders.

Where does it all go? My God, my work life had become mediocre. Professional mediocrity. One goes to conferences and the journals for inspiration. Conferences do little. They are places to have a good time, meet other people battling with professional mediocrity, hoping to find new meaning, and to play the game of "My theory is bigger than your theory". The journals do little more. The desire for interprofessional acceptance means they forget to say anything new. They become mediocre. The more unaccepted a journal is, the better it is!

I had forgotten to learn from the people who can teach me the most. My patients--my students. I got lost, I looked to the wrong places for my instruction. Alas, I was afflicted with professional mediocrity.

Is it possible to have too many patients or too many students? Can psychotherapy and the patient/therapist relationship handle too many? Once I thought yes, now I think not. The transference, or should I say the counter-

transference ends up mediocre. That very special group of people, known as patients, do not deserve to be lost in professional mediocrity.

Tony White

TA Times (Newsletter of the Western Pacific Association of Transactional Analysts). August 1990, page 8.

[Tony White](#)