

Therapy 3.0

The difference between therapy 10-15 years ago -- versus our modern-day world -- is a stark contrast ... the type that therapist Dr. Moreen Rubin relishes.

“People have become more aware that it’s their responsibility to create the life they want to live,” says Dr. Rubin, a licensed clinical therapist in Calabasas, California, who helps adolescents and adults heal from depression and anxiety, as well as eating disorders, addiction and trauma.

As an eating disorder and trauma specialist, Dr. Rubin’s expertise enabled her to treat patients so malnourished that they were on the verge of death as well as people suffering from drug addictions that led them to an overdose. Throughout her years of practice, she recognized a pattern emerging for those who recovered under her care.

“The core issue underneath *most* self-destructive behavior is usually unresolved trauma, low self-worth, and the an inability to reconcile uncomfortable emotions,” she says.

Dr. Rubin has witnessed her patients triumphs -- many of whom have completely turned their lives around after hitting “rock bottom;” individuals who went on to



The new battle cry in therapy is Relationship Trauma. Just ask one of Los Angeles’ most intriguing specialists, Dr. Moreen Rubin.

become therapists themselves and now help *others* in dire situations; patients who have written books sharing their stories of how therapy helped them; and individuals who have gone on to thrive in their work and personal lives.

The secret to the success is two-fold: Dr. Rubin herself has the experience and skillset to guide patients through the process -- coupled with the individual seeking therapy being “ready for change and willing to put in the work,” she says.

The Beginning

Let’s rewind to where it all began: a PSYCH 101 class.

was here where Dr. Rubin “understood the power of the mind and how perception determines destiny. I realized that psychology could help people improve their decision making, stress management, and behavior based on understanding their past experiences. After that, I found that applying these skills helped me overcome some difficult situations.”

This is when the saying, “all research is really ‘me-search’” began making sense to her. Going into a career of therapy was “natural” she says. “It felt more like a calling than a job.”

Dr. Rubin focuses her work on resolving relational trauma as part of her specialty because she recognized that

“a lot of talented, successful people-- who were undeniably thriving in other areas of their lives-- came to my practice because they were struggling to overcome behavioral issues such as emotional eating, poor body image, anger outbursts, substance abuse and ultimately-- self-sabotaging their future success.”

Compassionately, Dr. Rubin shares the story of one extremely powerful CEO, a person whom others might assume “had the keys to success all figured out” but was unable to fix his strained relationship with his son. Another talented patient—a well-known actor—isolated herself from her family and friends because of her fear of overeating at social gatherings. Lastly, Dr. Rubin shares the story of a beautiful young lady who struggled to “make a relationship work” due to the pain of past relationships. “The human brain is designed to find different ways of avoiding pain, and sometimes the solution to our pain ends up becoming a problem we need to resolve,” Dr. Rubin says.

For many patients, at the root of their behaviors is unresolved *relational* trauma—emotional injuries that happen in childhood between parents and their children, as well as trauma that occurs in romantic relationships.

“I went into therapy not knowing I wanted to focus on resolving relational trauma, yet I realized the benefits of having healthy relationships with our partner, our children and friends is *the most important thing* for someone to have a satisfying life.”

What if they’re unable to achieve that satisfying life? “They will probably attempt to self-medicate the pain of that with an unhealthy behavior,” Dr. Rubin says.

In order to truly help someone, “you have to get to the root of the issue,” she adds. “For many people, the root of the problem is that they don’t have satisfying relationships and they don’t know how to create them because that may not have been modeled for them at home.”

Oftentimes, this stems from trauma that, as she says, is “highly misunderstood.” She saw a great deal of it as the Clinical Director of several treatment centers and luxury rehabs in Malibu and Westlake Village, CA. Today, Dr. Rubin also provides continuing education and workshops where she lectures about relational therapy and related-topics.

Defining Trauma

“Trauma is not an event, it’s an emotional experience,” Dr. Rubin explains. “When something happens to you that is unwanted, unexpected, frightening, and you feel powerless to stop it, *that’s* what trauma is.”

She goes on to say that “trauma shows up in our lives as a reaction to the present moment, not as a memory from the past. Trauma is something you carry with you in your mind and body, and you react to present-day events based on that trauma. Many patients are unaware that their undesirable reactions to their partners, children and life situations have a direct link to their unresolved childhood trauma.”

While many think trauma is a memory of something bad, Dr. Rubin says that is not the case at all. Many patients think “I don’t even remember it, or it wasn’t that big of a deal since I survived, so how can it affect me?” Clients see me because they feel stuck, and my hope is that therapy will give them tools to make sense of their past and live fully in the present moment -- as opposed to living in their trauma.”

How exactly does she help provide her patients with tools? By approaching her work with a combination of different modalities that allow her work to be “more unique. More targeted.” She pauses for a moment and adds: “I believe you shouldn’t have to be in therapy for 10 years. It should be something that you need when you feel confused, lost, or stuck; when you need a coach; when you want to reach a goal that you’ve been unable to reach on your own in your personal life.”

Just like you work with a personal trainer to help you reach your fitness goals, you work with a therapist to help you achieve your personal life goals. Dr. Rubin’s goal is that her patients do *not* become dependent upon her, and instead learn the tools to handle situations on their own. “I am committed to getting my clients out of therapy as quickly as possible,” she says.

Therapy in The Modern-Day World

Thankfully, the “stigma” that existed 10 years ago about going to “*your shrink*” has been erased. “Mental health should not be stigmatized because ‘our mental health impacts every decision we make.’ It matters just as much as bone health and cardiac health -- it is indisputable -- the brain is our command center.”

Conversations about mental health are happening more now than ever, and social media is one of the major places they are occurring. People are sharing their thoughts and feelings in a way we’ve never before seen. “Young people are bravely sharing their experiences of therapy on social media; it is making a difference for them and future generations,” Dr. Rubin says.

And when their bravery is lacking, they don’t hesitate to turn to therapy for help. “Everyone should have a therapist because we’re trained to help you deal and cope with uncomfortable emotions and life transitions -- things we all experience. We know that emotional stress creates disease and ignoring your mental health is destructive to your overall health.”

Her hope, she says, is that “more people go to therapy so that we don’t pass on ‘generational trauma.’ Hurt people end up hurting other people. As more people do more self-work and learn about themselves, they pass on the benefits to their children.” She urges people to remember that the “origin of the word ‘health’ means ‘whole.’ And you can’t be ‘whole’ without taking care of your mind and your body.” — By Leslie Hughes, California Business Journal.

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