

## The Congruence of a Christian-Oriented Approach to Counseling and the Illusion of Humanistic Psychotherapy

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### Abstract

Modern psychotherapy is characterized by a tendency to abstract from worldview and moral values. The article shows that the theoretical principles of modern psychotherapy and counseling to carry out practical work with people outside of ideas about the nature of man and ethical norms and rules are an illusion. Although humanistic psychology is trying to avoid the burden of responsibility for updating a person of one or another vital meaning, but the axiological problem can only be postponed, it cannot be freed from its solution. Following the principle of complete invalidity and the absence of any absolutes and values puts the psychologist-consultant and psychotherapist in an artificial situation that inconsistently models the life problem of the client. It is also an illusion that the therapist "as if" does not have his own worldview, or that this does not concern the client in any way.

In the personal interaction of the psychotherapist and the client, one person has a rather strong influence on the other (R. May, K. Jung) and the requirement for the psychotherapist to be invaluable and neutral comes into conflict with the professional requirement for the sincerity, authenticity and congruence of the psychotherapist (C. Rogers).

It has an "I-existential" in addition to the "I-functional" (A.F. Bondarenko) and has the right to declare its worldview and testify about it to the client, but, of course, has no right to impose it on the client, respecting the freedom of the client, leading with partner dialogue in the conditions of subject-subject interaction. If the "existential selves" of the psychotherapist and client are Christian-oriented and share common values, meanings and lifestyles, then this common thesaurus is very important for the client, and the client makes his choice in favor of this particular therapist. An increased interest in psychotherapy at present "Spiritual/noetic - V. Frankl/dimension" poses the question of where the boundary of psychotherapy ends and spiritual practice begins. In spiritual practice and psychotherapy there are common there are differences: the goal of psychotherapy is the healing of the soul, and the purpose of religion is the salvation of the soul/B. Frankl. In psychotherapy, they most often work with symptoms, personality disorders, in spiritual practice - directly with the most distorted human nature - restoring the integrity of the body-soul and spirit. The tasks of Christian-oriented psychotherapy are: 1-general - rendering assistance to a person in saving the soul, and 2-private - rendering assistance in solving his life problems.

In modern areas of psychotherapy, too much attention is paid to the method, techniques, "technology"; ignoring the personal axiological coordinates of the therapist reduces the effectiveness of psychotherapy.

**Keywords:** *Psychotherapy; Worldview; Ethical Values; Illusions; Invaluable; Congruence; Client; Christian-Oriented Psychotherapy; Spiritual Practice; "I-Existentia"*

Modern psychotherapy, both Western and Russian, is characterized by a tendency to abstract from the worldview and moral values acquired by human culture, civilization and mastered by human society on the path of its development at the cost of huge sacrifices. Some psychologists believe that the ideal of psychology is the liberation of a person from all ideals. The theoretical principles of modern psychotherapy and counseling, the desire of some psychotherapists to practice working with people outside the framework of ethical norms and rules, support the illusion of such an opportunity to stay outside one's values and lack of such at the client.

However, in his work summarizing the current state of both Western and Russian psychotherapy, M. Gulin formulates the conclusion reached by the professional psychotherapeutic community at the present time: "It is not enough for a consultant to own only a specific theoretical system and to learn the process model appropriate to this system, as is often the case. It seems to the organizers and participants of hastily organized training courses in psychotherapy. Each theory, in its own terms, hidden or openly carries a number of values which, in fact, integrate theory and method together. These values also determine the life position, the life philosophy of the consultant, without which the mechanical use of the method turns into manipulation in the negative sense of the term, making the client an object and not an object of counseling and assistance" [7, p. 35].

Humanistic psychology tries to avoid the burden of responsibility for actualizing a person's life meaning, when a person must make a choice, but this axiological problem can only be postponed, you cannot free yourself from its solution. Based on statistical studies, American authors came to the conclusion that the client's semantic orientation was a measure of his mental health.

Following the principle of complete invalidity and the absence of any absolutes and values puts the psychologist-consultant and psychotherapist in a rather artificial situation, incongruent, inadequately modeling the client's life problem. A person's life in society is his lack of freedom from society, for the main postulate of morality is to do with the other as you want to be treated.

It seems that a similar situation of abstraction from moral standards in psychological counseling and psychotherapy is a symptom of "growth disease", lack of maturity, as the theoretical apparatus of such a branch of knowledge as counseling and psychotherapy, and lack of reflection of the practical work with people.

According to C. Jung, attention to ethical issues increases with the accumulation of professional experience of a psychologist [17].

The classic of humanistic psychotherapy R. May said that any personality problem is a moral problem, that is, it has a moral connotation [10]. A very subtle remark about the connection of feelings of guilt and sinfulness is made by the Lithuanian psychotherapist R. Kociunas. He urges psychologists to work cautiously with a sense of sinfulness, because it is not always necessary to strive to free a person from guilt. Sometimes, in his opinion, it is necessary to help the client to survive the inevitability of this sense of sinfulness, which is inherent in the nature of man, because it will move a person to correction [8]. There must be retribution for the fault arising from moral misconduct - all this is done according to the laws of the moral life of mankind, and psychotherapy should not be "outside" (or "above") these laws. By violating them, she can lay, so to speak, time bombs.

The client's question, which he will sooner or later ask the therapist, is suggested by R. May: "How should I live?", "How should I behave?" - is essential for all moral systems.

But the fact that the consultant's value system determines the initial preconditions for counseling and psychotherapy, unfortunately, is not yet clear to all practicing psychologists. Some of them adhere to this point of view that counseling should be "objective" (value-neutral) and focus on client values. Others believe that the consultant should openly and clearly demonstrate his values to the client, because neutrality can give the client the illusion that the consultant approves the client's immoral act.

The presented article is theoretical and methodological in nature, justifying the need to rid the professional community of illusions that impede the effectiveness of professional activity. The theoretical analysis carried out in this article aims to show the influence of the

worldview of the psychotherapist, consultant, psychologist on the process of his work with the client, to show that the meanings and values of the psychotherapist, not well understood by him, nevertheless guide the process of personal interaction between the psychotherapist and the client. The methodological focus of the article is intended to demonstrate, with the example of Christian-oriented psychotherapy, the completeness and harmony of mutual understanding and interaction in the psychotherapeutic process with the general thesaurus of the specialist and the person who turned to him for help.

Representatives of the emerging Orthodox psychotherapy and counseling in Russia are often criticized for the fact that already calling themselves this way, they supposedly already impose their worldview on the client. But is it worth it to think that such an open identification of a professional with his worldview position is more honest and allows you to save the client from illusions:

1. Supposedly the psychotherapist does not have a worldview position or the statement that it should not be;
2. Supposedly lack of influence of the personality of the psychotherapist, his values;
3. About the possibility of allegedly moral invaluable actions and customer behavior.

Such psychology and psychotherapy, which goes “out of step” with human civilization, will not become a brake on a person’s development, instead of being an assistant on his ascent?

Should or should not the therapist hide his worldview?

With the statement of humanistic psychotherapy that the psychotherapist has no right to impose his beliefs and worldview, one cannot but agree! But to hide and pretend that the therapist “as if” does not have his own worldview, or that this does not concern the client in any way - is this cunning, is it hopeless illusion?!

In any personal interaction, one person influences the other through both verbal and non-verbal communication. We, therapists, the client also evaluates.

It is an illusion that a psychotherapist can be absolutely neutral and priceless, without his “position” in life, without any personal attitude to the client! In addition, the requirement of invalidity conflicts with the professional requirement for the sincerity, authenticity and congruence of the therapist. Without expressing his opinion about one or another immoral act of the client, the therapist still comes into dissonance with the inner voice of the client, his conscience, because the conscience of the client (if not completely suppressed) still assessed the act.

If practical psychology and psychotherapy are based on the postulates “Only that interferes with a person’s life is bad” (and this includes remorse, a sense of unrighteousness of one’s actions towards one’s neighbor, a sense of wrongness, meaninglessness of one’s life) or “A client is healthy when he becomes like on us” and the main task is to see the elimination of these “hindrances” (to silence the conscience, to teach removal and non-response to the pain of another), i.e. to help the client to find psychological well-being, a sense of comfort at the cost of being denigrated and indifferent, there are very big doubts about the truth of these postulates.

In the process of psychotherapy, discomfort occurs if the values of the client and the therapist do not match. American psychotherapists argue that their values (personal values of a psychotherapist), as a rule, diverge significantly from the values of ordinary people, i.e. customers. And since one of the directions of the psychotherapist’s work is to change the “inadequate rules” of life, to “reformulate” them, the question arises: where, in what direction do these values, the client’s rules change, being a neutral therapist?

So, only the deliverance of the psychotherapist and practical psychologist from the illusion of “unobtrusiveness” to the client of his worldview and reflection, self-control over the manifestation of his personal worldview in the consultation process, will become the conditions for realizing the client’s true freedom in the therapeutic process. Worldview reflection assumes the choice made by a practical psychologist.

The psychotherapist, like every person, has the right to the declaration of his worldview. Believing in eternal life and the idea of salvation, or in the evolution of matter before the spirit develops in it, the psychotherapist has the right to testify to the client about this and reveal his worldview values to him, but, of course, not imposing them on the client, respecting the freedom of the client, conducting a partnership dialogue with him, in conditions of subject-subject interaction.

A.F. Bondarenko in the inner world of a consultant psychologist, psychotherapist distinguishes between "I-functional" (professional knowledge, skills) and "I-existential" (worldview and personal semantic structures) [5]. The intersection of "I-functional" and "I-existential" forms a multidimensional life world of a professional psychologist. At the consultant, the therapist, the distance between the „I-functional" and the „I-existential" should be minimal. Otherwise, A.F. Bondarenko, there is dichotomy, anxiety and, as a result, insecurity or authoritarianism, which inevitably lowers the professional level of a specialist.

So, the existence of psychotherapy outside the worldview framework is impossible; the psychotherapist's appeal to ethical and worldview problems is evidence of his professional maturity and competence, as well as the spiritual and moral integrity of the individual.

Psychotherapists and counselors can be believers; this is their „existential self".

If you do not take out your worldview, the Christian view of the world beyond the scope of professional activity, then how can this be combined? Different clients can turn to a Christian psychotherapist:

- Lacking religious experience and not seeking it;
- Lacking religious experience, but seeking it;
- Having a negative spiritual experience, occult;
- Having spiritual experience in christian denominations.

Talking with the first 2 types of clients, a Christian psychotherapist, in addition to solving purely psychological problems, may indicate the possibility of opening a new spiritual space of vital meanings, forming what V. Frankl called the noetic dimension [14].

Believers are a special category of clients..... There are interesting studies, the results of which testify to the best mental state of believers. Believers feel happier and less likely to suffer from cancer [2], they are more altruistic and less focused on material values [3], they are characterized by a higher level of sympathy, sensitivity, openness, flexibility, as well as self-acceptance, trust in a world that seems to be "kind", "warm" [11]. N.G. Osukhova and D.A. Medvedev draws a conclusion on his experimental results that for believers religion performs the function of satisfying a person's needs in finding life coordinates, ultimate moral values and guidelines, providing generalized ways of interacting with oneself and others, self-understanding and self-building, and religion also influences on the formation of an integral consistent image of the world and a calm attitude to death [11].

A Christian-oriented psychotherapist and client share common values, meanings of life, lifestyle, picture of the world. This general thesaurus is very important for the client, often believing clients choose the psychotherapist with whom he shares a common faith and ideas about a "right life". In Christianity this is called collegiality - the unity of people in Christ, and from here in this union - the help of Christ God. This shows the principles of Orthodox psychotherapy - Christ-centeredness, spiritual and moral unity. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh wrote about the Meeting [1]. When two are touching their entities, when they are touching each other in the Image of God, the interaction that occurs between them changes both of them.

Recognizing the presence of a "spiritual Self" in a client, patient, consultant, psychotherapist, they take into account not only their present condition, but also the possibility of revealing an eternal, spiritual purpose.

Christian Orthodox psychotherapy, which is actively developing today in Russia, is based on the Christian doctrine of man, on the ascetic 2000 years of practical experience of Christian ascetics and the personal experience of the spiritual life of the psychotherapist himself.

The main provisions of Christian anthropology: man was created by God in his own image and likeness. The image of God in man assumes such properties as creativity, love, rationality, power; the main thing is freedom - that is, man is created free. As a result of the use of freedom by the first person in an improper way (violation of the prohibitions given by the Creator) - the fall - there was a distortion of the nature of man, which was subjected to harmful passions. The meaning of the life of a Christian is to restore the nature distorted by sin and thereby become like God. Thus, in the Christian concept of man, the imperfection of the nature of modern man is postulated, the meaning of life as the pursuit of Perfection and "technology" is the "way" to come to this Perfection.

In the *Psychotherapeutic Encyclopedia*, ed. B.D. Karvasar's Orthodox psychotherapy is defined as "a combination of forms and approaches to healing the soul, based on a worldview based on the Orthodox faith, spiritual, ascetic and liturgical experience of a single, Catholic and Apostolic Church" [12, p. 366].

Accordingly, Orthodox psychotherapy in its view on the nature of man comes from the Christian worldview, but since the goal of a Christian's life is to save the soul for eternity, then Orthodox psychotherapy sets as its task not only healing, but also helping people along the way.

Based on this, it is possible to formulate the general and particular tasks of Orthodox psychotherapy.

General - assisting a person in overcoming the distortion of his nature, spiritualizing his nature and, thereby, salvation; it is necessary to help the sufferer to come to repentance - to see his problems - through his recognition of the psychological passionate mechanisms - the causes of his inadequacy; through the awakening of reserve opportunities for the restoration of virtuous character traits, a distorted Image of God.

Private - assisting a person in solving his specific problems and life difficulties by psychotherapeutic methods.

The horizontal vision of the client's specific psychological problems against the backdrop of decay, the distortion of nature - the „common disease of mankind" - the spiritual „vertical" helps the Orthodox psychotherapist to go beyond the „symptomatic treatment" and solve the more important task of helping to overcome spiritual defeat.

The general and particular tasks can be represented as a cross of the work of a Christian psychotherapist.

Thus, a distinctive feature of Orthodox psychotherapy, based on the Christian worldview and asceticism, is the presence of a moral-axiological and sense-orientating coordinates.

Obviously, the solutions to the problems are horizontal half, not completed, if the client does not go to the vertical to solve his problems: he remains in a circle of evil infinity.

The main method in the process of counseling becomes conversation, a Socratic dialogue, *Mayevtika*. Empathy, unconditional acceptance of the client, the therapist's authenticity creates those relationships that are the main factor in the effectiveness of changing the client and thereby solving his life difficulties.

The Christian doctrine of man emphasizes the peculiarity of man, which concerns such an ontological property of man as freedom. The essence of man is in free education, the formation of himself. The Russian religious philosopher A. Khomyakov showed that the Slavic root of the word „freedom" has the meaning of „being yourself". Translated from Sanskrit, as Anthony Sourozhsy notes, the verb form of the root of the word "freedom" means "to love", "to be loved", and as a noun it means "my love", "my beloved" [1].

Thus, "to be yourself" (the problem of authenticity in psychotherapy) means "to love" and "to be loved". Here the deepest existential meanings are hidden [15].

Even the Creator of man, the Creator and His Master, does not wish to violate the freedom granted by Him to man himself: "Behold I am at the door and knock" if you let me in. Therefore, in Orthodox psychotherapy the most important principles are those that „respect“, emphasize human freedom, and the actions of a psychotherapist that are at least in the least suppressing or encroaching on this human freedom are completely unacceptable.

The principles that „respect“ the freedom of the client are strictly regulated by the choice of techniques and techniques by an Orthodox psychotherapist.

The Orthodox psychotherapist does not have the right to change, „reconstruct“ the client, the patient in accordance with his even the most „correct“ values and with the best intentions.

The ethical principle of the inadmissibility of any manipulation with the client, the patient as an impact on him without his knowledge and consent or with consent, but with hiding from the client the true goals and actions of the therapist

In Christian teaching, man is given in the aspect of duty: created according to the Image of God free, rational and capable of love, he should, according to the Creator, use his freedom to acquire personal holiness, to approach God - to deification, to Compare Him. This is humanism, according to N. Berdyaev, betrayed man, considering him as a semblance of the natural world and not wanting to know his high purpose [4]. Oddly enough, the modern psychotherapist existentialist Buigental echoes him almost in the same words: the development of European culture often leads to the betrayal of the human in man [7].

Recently, psychotherapists have increased interest in the "spiritual dimension". In Christian anthropology, human nature is described as a trimeria of "body-soul-spirit". In the twentieth century. the category of spirit (noos, nus), the "noetic dimension" was returned to psychotherapy by V. Frank [14]. The question is, where does the border of psychotherapy end and spiritual practice begin, is very relevant and complex.

Both in spiritual practice and in psychotherapy there is a common:

- The need for self-knowledge by the client;
- Obtaining integrity;
- Finding resources, potentials for change;
- Recognition of the beneficial role of suffering for personal change.

Spiritual practice goes deeper, further than psychotherapy. Modern psychology and psychotherapy are the subject of their analysis of the psyche, soul, psychological problems; religion is engaged in „spirit“, „spirituality“, spiritual life. The division into "work" at the soul level (psyche) and "work" at the spirit level is so subtle, and a person is so holistic in all its manifestations that this division can only be represented as a theoretical construct.

And also time do not see the differences between psychotherapy and spiritual practice.

V. Frankl saw the difference between psychotherapy and religion in that the goal of psychotherapy is the healing of the soul, and the purpose of religion is the salvation of the soul [14]. In psychotherapy, they most often work with symptoms, personality disorders, in spiritual practice - directly with the very nature of man - consciousness, spirituality. In the spiritual tradition, more attention is paid to the integrity of a person, harmonization of all components of his nature.

The difference between psychotherapy and spiritual practice is also that the goal of psychotherapy is to help a person solve his life task, adapt him to earthly life, while for spiritual practice the goal is to help a person in solving external problems - not the main, but secondary. The main thing is to prepare a person for eternal life. In psychotherapy, there are no criteria for improving a person, while spiritual practice has goals and criteria for improving a person.

If in secular client-centered psychotherapy the condition for healing for the client is love, the psychotherapist's sympathy for the client, then for Orthodox psychotherapy based on Christian values and the doctrine of the person, "love for one's neighbor" is the cornerstone, the foundation of the foundations. But how much does "love for one's neighbor" and "acceptance" of a client by a psychotherapist coincide? Although C. Rogers refused the career of a Protestant pastor, his acquaintance with the Christian teaching certainly left a mark on the client-centered therapy he created. And if empathic acceptance of the client is the main condition for the effectiveness of psychotherapy, as studies have shown, then the main „tool“ of the psychotherapist in this case is his personality.

Will the techniques and technologies, even the most skilled ones, replace the empathy of the individual?

In the modern areas of psychotherapy, too much attention is paid to the method, techniques, „technology“, although psychotherapists cannot agree on an understanding of the essence of the psychotherapeutic process, what is happening with the client. A. Maslow thought on this subject as follows: "Positivist reductionist science is trying to be free from the values that it took beyond knowledge, because they could not be studied by valid methods. This attitude leads science to death, turning it into bare technology, making it immoral and unethical. Such a science will be nothing more than a collection of tools, methods, techniques, a tool that anyone can use for any goals... The separation of science and religion creates a crippled science and a crippled religion" [9, p. 209].

The main method in Christian-oriented psychotherapy is conversation, dialogue.

The dialogue develops with the unconditional acceptance of the identity of the suffering interlocutor, the client as a psychotherapist. The condition of dialogic contact, according to T.A. Florensky is empathy for a person, empathic attention, the provision of the opportunity to „speak out“ - this is building a relationship with the „cash I“ of the client. T. A. Florenskaya distinguishes from the client "present Self" (his earthly concerns and problems = private task) and "spiritual Self" (his faith and spiritual life = common task). If the adoption of the "spiritual Self" by a psychotherapist, according to T.A. Florenskaya, of course, the adoption of „cash I“ is due to the assessment of its manifestation from the standpoint of Christian commandments, spiritual and moral values [13]. But it is very important not to impose this assessment on the client, but to lead him to the realization of his own imperfection. In the process of recognizing by the client the contradictions between his "spiritual Self" and his "cash Self", it is important to leave him the freedom of choice.

The form of Socratic dialogue, mayevtics, is the most adequate in Orthodox psychotherapy. In a Socratic conversation, advisory communication is built in such a way that by means of small problematic questions, examples, analogies, etc., the client joins an independent analysis of his problems and is led to insight - the discovery of truth for himself [6].

In Christian asceticism, the doctrine of passions - negative states of a person (anger, anxiety - sorrow, despondency, vanity - hysteria, self - selfishness - pride) and addictions (gluttony, fornication of silver lovingness) is elaborated in detail. Their symptoms and overcoming algorithms are described in detail. The possibility of using these algorithms by a Christian psychotherapist along with psychological techniques is shown in our work [16].

In psychotherapy, there is another illusion that the client's awareness of his problem automatically leads to its disappearance, because, as if after the realization, the client changes his behavior. But experience shows that this is far from the case. Of course, the awareness and understanding of the causes of the problem is the most important step in the process of the client's internal work, it may or may not, however, become a turning point in a person's changing himself. Everyone knows how difficult it is to change yourself, even if you understand how and what to do. Even if you understand how much better this will make your life and the life of your loved ones. It's easier to change another. Therefore, the „axiom“ that the process of self-knowledge is at the same time a process of self-change, causes great doubt.

In spiritual practice, the process of counseling turns into accompaniment, carried out by the clergyman in the sacraments, where the sufferer receives God's help.

## Conclusion

So, the existence of psychotherapy outside the worldview framework for nature human is impossible; the psychotherapist's appeal to philosophical and ethical issues is evidence of his professional maturity and competence, as well as the spiritual and moral integrity of the individual.

Christian-oriented psychotherapy is distinguished by the presence of two tasks-general: assisting a person in overcoming the distortion and spiritualization of his nature; and private: assisting a person in solving his specific problems and life difficulties by psychotherapeutic methods.

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