

Narrative Practice and The Year That Was ~~ Moving On...

There was a part of me which almost didn't want to write this last reflection and also another part which couldn't wait to get it over with! Before I get into the actual meat of this month's reflection, I can't help but think about the week/s from 2020 which helped me to decide whether or not I should enroll for the course. This period was a pre-covid era and little did all of us know that the world that we knew would change forever! I remember giving it a lot of thought before I even wrote to the CF team indicating my interest for the course- the reasons were varied owing to many factors in my personal life and also my newly made transition into the world of independent private practice. The most influential of all those reasons which helped me take the action of deciding to be a part of this year long commitment was a voice along with a question, which said that *"people who come to work with you now will choose to work with you from the range of other practitioners available out there... they will choose you for multiple reasons unknown to you... they won't naturally land on you because you a part of larger organization... so now as an independent therapist what is the role that you would like to play in their lives and what is the difference that you would like to make from 'other' therapists"*? At that time of course I had a very limited knowledge of what the world of NT looked like, but whatever I knew, it kind of fit into the vision of myself as a therapist. The world of diagnostics, pathology, metrics, evaluations, labels, assessments, standards, median, haves, shoulds, etc. personally has been very confusing and everytime that I have worked with someone who has been at the center of these ideas, I somehow have never known what to do with it because I didn't believe that is all there is. On the other hand, there are therapies like behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, neuro programming, somatic work, analysis etc. which work for people I'm sure in the therapist's room but then they step out into the same world from where they came and after that what?

I remember almost about 8-9 years back when I was working with a non-profit mental health organization, which does some excellent work and the ethics of their practice is the backbone which shapes their therapeutic work- something that I so resonate with and thankful for it; so, there I met a client, a young woman in her 20's who had witnessed an abusive childhood because of domestic violence and very nuanced patriarchy in a 'modern-liberal' Indian household. We had a great working relationship because of the progress she made in her life in all aspects which was earlier impacted by the experiences she'd had. We took a break from therapy for some time because there was no 'need' for weekly sessions but in 6 months she came back to therapy again because she had experienced intimate partner violence during her therapy break. Somewhere along our engagement, I remember her telling me in one of our sessions, *"I understand we need to look the impact this experience has had on me, but now I feel that I am the only one who has to do all the work to 'fix' the damage that the society has allowed to happen, because of the larger atmosphere- is there no one else responsible? Is*

it just me? Why must I do this alone'? I remember this so vividly and until very recently these questions have haunted me because on the very basic premise that sometimes, traditional therapy can be limiting and also the fact that as a therapist why can I, not take a political stand in the realm of my therapeutic work and make possibilities emerge from there. Whenever I've taken a chance to do so, I have been so tentative and always wondered if as a therapist, have I taken the right call!?!

This past year, some of these musings have got an answer and the other musings have given birth to other musings. What I would like to convey through this last reflection is that my ethics of my practice in this very neo liberal world, is that I will make my sincerest attempt to always remember that *'personal is political'* and make continue connections with the four beautiful lines from NT:

Person is NOT the Problem

Problem is the Problem

Problem is Social

Hence Solution also Lies in Social

I cannot begin to thank NT and the last year for enriching my skills as a therapist, helping me stay curious and also allowing me to practice kindness on myself which was hugely missing in my own training of being a therapist!

My hope from as we move ahead is that I want to be a part of a NT therapist community which can help create dialogue, communication, shared vision and an alternate narrative for us as well as the people we work with.

A big thank you once again ☺
