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*"Apply yourself.
Without effort, you cannot be
prosperous.
Though the land be good, You
cannot have an abundant crop
without cultivation".*

K&R Counselling
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*'Professional service,
Personal care'
Gestalt Counselling*

Awareness and Dialogue

The initial goal in Gestalt counselling is to promote awareness. Our belief is that: as you become more aware (of your body, your mind, your spiritual self and your environment) you become better able to create vivid meaningful experiences for yourself, thus improving the quality of your life, and ultimately enabling you to make satisfying life decisions. A gestalt counsellor works continuously to promote the clients, your awareness. He/she gives you responses on your body movements, your voice patterns and style, your interactions with him/her, and where appropriate, will encourage you to experiment with these within the safety of counselling environment. Although there are other aims in Gestalt counselling – such as the ability to support one's self emotionally and all ways, the improvement of interpersonal contact, etc. these are all secondary to the aim of increased awareness. Where awareness is, integration follows.

Experimentation.

Gestalt counselling is often described with three 'E's: existential, experiential, and experimental. Actually these three E's overlap. That is, to exist is to experience; and to experiment (in great or lesser degrees), is to experience your existence in a new way; and to really experience is to experiment with your existence! In Gestalt counselling, a significant part of the task of the counsellor and client is to create experiments which will either promote the client's awareness of old fixed patterns (ways of relating), or else will give the client an opportunity to experience and evaluate some new way of being and relating.

In contrast with the traditional talk therapies, Gestalt counselling keeps open the option for experimenting in any creative way that appears like it may be useful. So a therapeutic experiment might be: being different parts of yourself, creating patterns with stones, writing, visualising, drawing a picture, emphasising body postures or words/phrases like walking about or yelling "no", etc. The artistry of therapeutic-experiment design consists of letting the experiment emerge from the immediate context. Many of the experiments mentioned so far have been used by my clients, in a way that is relevant to them and which they have found very revealing, and rewarding.

In your counselling, you and your counsellor will probably concoct experiments. They can be big or small – as small as taking a deep breath and as big as moving to India – but in any case they will enable you to learn something.

"Holistic Health" is a popular phrase nowadays and generally it means:

- a) physical, mental, spiritual (moral/ethical) health are interrelated
- b) each person is responsible for her/his health and capable of improving and maintaining it
- c) Natural methods of health maintenance and illness treatment are preferable to chemical ones.

Spirituality and Higher Consciousness

The transpersonal dimension of counselling refers to those aspects of the therapeutic process that go beyond the limits of the individual and that connect with each other and to spiritual traditions

and values. This dimension encompasses the belief (or experience) when we learn to see beyond the manifest physical world, we gain an insight into the principles at work in the universe and begin to have a vision of the full beauty and interconnectedness of everything around us. We understand that our existence is grounded and permeated by the spiritual. That we are not isolated beings, but part of a larger whole and profoundly interconnected with all aspects of the universe. That we are spirit and soul as well as mind, emotions and body and that our spiritual selves need nurture and care in the same way that our bodily and mental selves do.

Spirituality

For many, the word spirituality invokes images of the afterlife, reincarnation, the spirit world, mediums etc. For others it evokes images more connected to religion. For me, it is all of these things and it can mean anything from planting, nurturing and watching a flower grown in your garden or window box, to helping a complete stranger in the street, to doing voluntary work helping those in need. People often feel this awe and interconnectedness when faced with nature in all its magnitude – mountains – the Grand Canyon – waterfalls, thunderstorms, tornadoes etc. Others see it in the dew on the morning grass or the freshly hatched butterfly opening its wings for the first time.

What is important is to find what spirituality means for you, what nurtures your soul. It will be different for each one of us.