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# Adult Personality Growth in Psychotherapy

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Mardi J. Horowitz, M.D.

Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry

University of California San Francisco, CA, USA

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## Preface

Psychotherapy for personality growth aims towards augmenting a sense of identity, enriching relationships, and enhancing control of emotion. Integration of these key factors requires that a person learn to modify a narrative of characteristics of self in the present as articulated to the past and having future goals. Therapy towards these ends changes mental structures through both conscious and unconscious processing.

New modes of thinking about self and others means navigating emotional waters that have seemed turbulent. Safety in that course occurs by developing a therapeutic alliance, having frank conversations about dangers, and exploring new ways of coping with them rather than avoiding them. While important, insight is not the sole road to such adaptive changes. New relationship experiences can also lead to significant and enduring changes in attitudes, intentions, and expectations.

This book uses contemporary theories from cognitive and psychodynamic sciences, especially a modern understanding of the operation of schemas and emotional-control processes. Clinicians operating within cognitive-behavioral therapy frameworks, especially, may value this component of complexity in case formulation. Clinicians trained in psychodynamic therapy may value the specific emphasis on techniques to promote present moments of learning.

My approach includes attention to how a clinician can understand and modify symptoms, problems, and pathogenic feelings and thoughts. It also addresses how a therapist can increase a patient's capacity for resilience, strength, and creativity. I do not argue that what I present is altogether new. Instead, I combine known elements from many sources while trying my best for brevity, clarity, and illustration. I believe the results are consistent with modern neuroscience, developmental psychology, and socio-cultural understanding.

Change involves the modification of configurations of meanings about identity as nested in attachments. That is why this book will progressively examine and illustrate layers of self-beliefs and narratives. This is the reason I begin with a section of three chapters focused on identity and its variation across different states of mind.

The second section, consisting of three chapters, centers on relationship patterns and capacities. The final section of three chapters examines emotional control.

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Zack Vanderbilt did major work in getting all aspects of the manuscript together. He contributed important feedback on the ideas and how they were presented. I am proud of his work. Marilyn Spoja and Bente Mirow helped refine the writing. Then Drs. Kat Lopez, Nadia Taylor, Paul Elizondo, Wendy Feng, Adam Goldyne, Chelsea Young, Tracy Foose, Serina Dean, and Alice Huang were the most vital readers who led to clarity and augmentation.