

# Book Review

## *The Making of a Therapist: A Practical Guide for the Inner Journey*

Louis Cozolino

New York: W. W. Norton & Company (2004)

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At first glance, *Making of a Therapist* may seem out of place in a person-centered journal. It is not written from a person-centered framework and often uses psychoanalytic language. However, Cozolino's ideas are based on non-directive counseling in which client and counselor feelings are at the center of the counseling process, counselors' facilitation of relationships with clients, and counselor empathy and genuineness within the therapeutic relationship. Cozolino provides an excellent justification for therapists to search deeply within themselves to uncover weaknesses and biases and develop a true understanding of self. This process may be at the very core of person-centered work.

Cozolino divides his book into three main sections: *Getting Through Your First Session*, *Getting To Know Your Clients*, and *Getting To Know Yourself*. He begins each section with an explanation of the importance of the topic and ends with either a case example or a personal story that involves his development as a therapist.

*Getting Through Your First Session* discusses the problems areas and tasks that novice therapists encounter, such as not knowing what to do, attending to a client while simultaneously being aware of your thoughts and feelings, staying calm in the face of panic, and creating problems by assuming things about a client. Cozolino gives an example of the latter problem: He failed to ask a young client who came to him for a drinking problem about other substance abuse. Much to Cozolino's amazement, the client gave therapy the credit for helping him kick his drinking habit by increasing his marijuana use. Cozolino's message is, "Don't ask and they won't tell" (p.57).

In *Getting To Know Your Clients*, Cozolino recommends approaches by turning challenges into strategies, identifies several emotions that can be obstacles for therapists, and reviews issues such as therapist-client attraction. He recommends taping sessions for review and comparing sessions against a list of basic questions, not to second-guess a session, but to focus on how to make improvements. He advocates for the value of confusion and maintains that it is more helpful to a client when the therapist asks for clarification rather than being silent or blaming the client for not making sense.

The author normalizes supervision and continually emphasizes that therapists are human and are vulnerable to oversights or misinterpretations. He strongly believes that supervision is essential to becoming a better therapist. He gives the clear message, for example, that therapists attracted to clients should seek supervision to discover why.

Part Three, *Getting To Know Yourself*, Cozolino describes "shuttling" the connection that new therapists need to make between their head and their body. Shuttling involves becoming aware of and continually monitoring thoughts and feelings relative to

the thoughts and feelings of the client. It is here that Cozolino employs psychoanalytic concepts to illuminate the inner journey of the therapist and how that journey may impact clients. He argues that unsettled issues from a therapist's past may surface and become a barrier to therapeutic work and harmful to clients. He makes a strong case that new and experienced therapists seek supervision to explore interpersonal issues related to countertransference. He posits that many therapists enter the field because of experiences in their childhoods and links a career in therapy to an attempt to give meaning to experiences in the past. He suggests that unresolved or unacknowledged experiences are the very issues that get counselors stuck in the therapeutic relationship. Cozolino argues that supervision is a journey of awareness and contends that once therapist issues are recognized and resolved, clients then have an emotionally healthy therapist who can effectively interact in therapy sessions.

As an advocate and practitioner of the Person-Centered Approach on the eve of completing my doctoral studies, I found two significant messages in this book. The first is that the process of educating therapists is most often focused on didactic coursework that fails to foster the personal and emotional growth necessary to competent counseling. The second message is that the process of discovering one's self does not terminate with a degree. Consistent with the thinking of person-centered counselors, Cozolino believes that formal education, even in an experiential context, is only the beginning of a life-long, self-reflective voyage.

Cozolino wants to give practitioners permission to feel anxious or nervous about beginning their career as a therapist. He encourages beginning therapists to attend to, acknowledge, and understand their feelings in therapy sessions and connect them to their own growth. He presents many examples of how transcendence occurs when the therapist attains a deeper insight into unexplored feelings. The result is often an emotionally healthier, more competent therapist. Despite the use of psychoanalytic terms, Cozolino's concepts are consistent with the person-centered conditions of being empathic and genuine in the counseling relationship.

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