



Who Is Therapy For?

By Laurie Appel, PsyD

I was talking to a mentor years ago about someone “driving me crazy” and suggested that person needed to resolve her “issues.” He replied “if they’re driving **you** crazy, then **you’re** the one with the problem.”

Most people come to therapy in order to change someone else. Though they may not say it, the implicit expectation is that the psychologist has the power to make the client’s child or spouse or coworker or in-laws change **their** ways. This rarely works. An “outsider” has far less influence on a client’s family and friends than the client does.

The actual role of therapy is to look at how your own behavior influences those around you and to explore the power you actually have to change your reactions, actions and roles in relationships. This may mean becoming a better limit setter with your kids, appreciating your spouse for the reasons you married him/her, or taking risks and asserting yourself with others.

Ask yourself these questions when starting therapy: how can I learn more about my personality and patterns in relationships and how can I approach people and situations in my life to minimize my frustration and maximize my potential for joy?

Laurie Appel, PsyD, is a NJ and PA licensed psychologist, having graduated from the Clinical Psychology program at Widener and Hahnemann Universities. Presently, she is a consultant for Sub-Acute and Long Term Care facilities and maintains a private practice in Swedesboro, NJ. When not seeing clients, she presents to various audiences both in public and on the radio on a variety of topics, such as trauma, parenting, aging, communication, conflict resolution, child development, and stress management. She is proud to have served as a consultant for various residential programs and for the brave officers of the Philadelphia Police Department. With over 20 years of experience working as a consultant and in her private practice, she has learned a great deal from her clients about the strengths and resiliencies of people from all backgrounds. For more information, visit laurieappelpsychd.com