

Beyond Empathy: A Therapy of Contact-in Relationships

Richard Erskine, Janet Moursund, and Rebecca Trautmann

Juxtaposition

loc: 58	Integrative psychotherapy, the method of therapy upon which this book is based, focuses on relationship.
loc: 59	psychologically healthy—
loc: 59	is to be in relationship
loc: 64	Contact is the touchstone of relationship; it is what makes relationship possible.
loc: 69	In a psychologically healthy individual, internal and external contact interact; each depends upon the other, and neither can exist in isolation.
loc: 78	three therapeutic elements
loc: 78	can further this process: inquiry, attunement, and involvement.
Page: 149	Because the need for love is present (at least as background) in any relationship, children who are abused or neglected by caretakers find themselves in an emotionally-confusing situation.
Page: 149	to feel the pain of the abuse, they risk losing their love for the abuser.
Page: 149	maintaining the child's own love for the abuser is the only way to have any love at all in the relationship. It is the only way to keep open the possibility that things will get better
Page: 150	This need to feel and to express love toward one's caretaker can be a major factor in working through abuse issues in therapy.
Page: 150	clients who have been abused may experience a sense of protectiveness toward their abusers that is so strong that it interferes with their ability to re-own the aspects of self that have been kept out of awareness
Page: 151	Juxtaposition
Page: 151	Juxtaposition occurs when there is, for the client, a marked contrast between what is provided in the therapeutic relationship and what was needed and longed for but not provided in previous relationships (Erskine, 1994, 1997).
Page: 152	George, another client, grew up in an emotionally arid environment
Page: 152	learned to cover up his sadness, his fear, and his longing for contact.
Page: 152	he had become so skillful at it that he hardly even noticed when he had feelings.

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Page: 152	his marriage was in trouble, and his career felt like a dead end. So George began therapy to figure out what was wrong.
Page: 152	For the first time in his life, someone seemed to be genuinely interested in and affected by the things that he was experiencing.
Page: 152	routines, this therapist cut right through them and responded to the feelings he was covering—and his cover was blown away,
Page: 152	George could no longer deny his knowledge of what he needed.
Page: 152	This is juxtaposition, and it can be more intense than the client is able to bear.
Page: 152	juxtaposition shows up primarily as a break in external contact—pushing the therapist away—
Page: 152	internal and external contact are interrupted. Contact with the self is broken so as not to feel what has been stimulated,
Page: 152	Juxtaposition reactions may be mistaken for negative transference or as signs that the therapist has missed the client and is not doing a good job.
Page: 153	A juxtaposition reaction does not mean that the therapist is missing the client. Quite the contrary! It usually indicates that the therapist is right on target.
Page: 153	Responding to the Juxtaposition Reaction
Page: 153	There are several levels of response
Page: 153	The first level
Page: 153	to do with what goes on inside the therapist
Page: 153	must first recognize the client’s reaction for what it is. “Oh, this isn’t what I expected. Is it possible that I’ve created a juxtaposition and the client is responding to it?”
Page: 153	recognizing a juxtaposition reaction allow the therapist to
Page: 153	understand the function of the client’s behavior.
Page: 153	The behavior itself may not be helping the client—
Page: 153	but they have a valid purpose and are being carried out in order to serve some important function.

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Page: 153	a juxtaposition reaction may be quite helpful, illuminating both the out-of-awareness experience of contact deprivation as well as the behaviors the client has developed in order to cope with that experience.
Page: 153	the therapist will adjust the pace of the therapy and the focus of attunement.
Page: 153	the intensity of the therapist's presence, and the rate at which new areas of internal and external contact are opened, can be reduced.
Page: 154	A juxtaposition reaction,
Page: 154	is essentially an interruption of contact.
Page: 154	first concrete step in dealing with the reaction may be to help
Page: 154	explore what is happening.