

Section 7 - On Blaming

Introduction:

I cannot say that finding someone to blame, whenever anything goes other than planned, is more on the rise than in years past. However, with all of the media coverage of everything from politics to sports, I sure hear a lot of blaming rather than understanding, solving, and improving. All of this blaming is surely not evidence that “adult personality functions” are predominating in society. So why is there so much blaming?

For me, this subject is of extreme importance in life in general, and therapy in particular. This is because, on one hand, “blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment” have in common that they are functions of the baby core of the personality. That is because they involve projective processes, hatred of being small or helpless or dependent, intolerance of guilt, and often unconscious envy. They also have in common that they serve NO USEFUL PURPOSE IN ADULT LIFE, and can RUIN ALMOST ANY RELATIONSHIP.

In families, marriage and the workplace, “blaming” and “morally” judging others tends to have a severely “corrosive” effect on the morale of the parties involved. Both tend to destabilize relationships over the long term, commonly leading to estrangement in families, divorce in marriage, and in the extreme, going “postal” in the workplace.

Similarly, in the consulting room, any therapist who has an “unconscious” predisposition to “sit-in-moral-judgment” of patients, no matter how subtle, will have difficulty holding on to patients.

Because both of these subjects are primarily a function of the “baby” part of the personality, they particularly benefit from the application of Kleinian models. Klein’s model of “projective processes”, the “paranoid-schizoid” and “depressive” positions, the distinction of “persecutory guilt” from “depressive guilt”, and “unconscious envy” are all particularly central to thinking about these issues.

Axioms:

Axiom #1: The more intensely “blaming” is a dominant theme in a person’s mental life, regarding a particular issue, event, or relationship, the more it implies that mental activity is dominated “unconsciously by baby levels of the personality”.

Axiom #2: It is inevitable that “blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment”, regarding a person or situation, will entail the unconscious projection of unwanted “parts of self” or “internal parental figures”, on the part of the person doing the “blaming” and/or “judging”.

Axiom #3: Where “sitting-in-judgment” is a prominent theme in a personality, it is useful to assume that intense “unconscious envy” is lurking around, causing its usual problems.

Some Definitions I Find Useful:

JUDGEMENT: The application of “reasoning” to a situation in order to form an “opinion”.

MORALITY: The application of the assumption that something can be divided into the categories of “right and wrong”. It can be applied on a continuum of “idealization”. That continuum would span from the less idealized descriptors of “ethical and principled”, to the considerably more idealized “noble, righteous, and virtuous”.

[“Ethical and principled”, can to a reasonable extent, be judged by “behavior”. However, “noble, righteous, and virtuous” have too much of an “idealized purity of motive” to actually be knowable about another person, and represent assumptions that unconsciously link back to “idealization” in infancy.]

SITTING-IN-MORAL-JUDGMENT: It is the act of conjoining morality and judgment with a goal of achieving a sense of “sanctimonious superiority” over that which (or whom) is being judged. It is based on an infantile assumption that something can be “all good or all bad” (i.e. black or white), and denies the inevitable “complexity” (i.e. shades of gray) that proper thinking and reasoning brings to a situation.

BLAMING: An emotional activity in which one “sits-in-moral-judgment” of another person and views that other person as being “guilty” of thinking, feeling, or behaving in some “bad” fashion. It is commonly accompanied by a mental state of feeling wronged by and superior to the perpetrator.

At a deeper level, it is commonly a function of the “externalization” of something from the unconscious inner world of the person doing the “judging” or “blaming”. The more that “righteous indignation” and “moral superiority” are involved, the more likely it is that “hated” baby states of mind can be assumed to have been “evacuated” into the situation.

None of this should be equated with “constructive criticism”, which has “positive motivations” by definition. It is at risk to represent an overlapping circle with the problematic forms of criticism, but it is less likely to involve projections of “unwanted” parts of self if the motivation is genuinely constructive unconsciously as well as consciously.

GRIEVANCE: A real or fancied cause of complaint.

GRUDGE: A feeling of deep seated resentment or ill will.

In summary, “blaming” has a more of an “action” attached to it of projecting “bad responsibility and guilt” into another, while “sitting-in-moral-judgment” has more of an emotional posture of “feeling superior” to another. Generally speaking, blaming is more likely to be linked to the “projection of guilt” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment” is more likely to be linked to “unconscious envy” in some fashion. In both types of situations, there are too many possibilities to make generalized assumptions without a detailed exploration of each situation.

Any therapist who has an “unconscious” predisposition to “sit-in-moral-judgment” of patients, no matter how subtle, will have difficulty holding on patients. The exception would be with patients who are unconsciously recreating such a situation from their own unconscious inner worlds. In those situations, the therapy is likely to remain permanently perverted and stalemated, in a subtle, or more overt, sado-masochistic relationship where being “cruelly critical” becomes the “coin of the realm”.

On the other hand, every therapist must tolerate being “blamed”, sooner or later, by some patients. This is inevitable in every treatment where “blaming” or “sitting in judgment” is a part of the patient’s unconscious inner world. This is “inevitable” for two reasons. The first is that for that sort of patient it is part of their fundamental “unconscious, internal” view of relationships, i.e. “the only game in town”. The other reason is that for that “internal view” to be worked on, it must be “recreated in the transference” with the therapist. In Kleinian terminology, this would be referred to as tolerating being made a “bad object”.

Overview and Background Assumptions:

1 – In life, things go wrong. Sometimes it is by chance, sometimes by neglect or irresponsibility, and sometimes by bad intent. Probably it is mostly commonly a result of a failure to “think”, literally as in ... “I didn’t think it would ... break, fall, catch fire, etc.” When something goes wrong and another is injured, disappointed, loses something, etc., there is mental pain involved. The “injured” party suffers in some manner and the person creating the negative outcome feels a sense of “responsibility” and possibly “guilt”.

Undesirable outcomes are created by all of us at one time or another, as well as suffered by all of us. There are noteworthy sayings that apply to such situations:

– In application to “bad outcomes”, one of my favorites is “Shit happens.”

– As applied to “guilt”, I try always to remind myself “There but for the grace of good fortune [or God] could go I.”

– As applied to “sitting-in-moral-judgment” I am reminded of the biblical saying “Let he who is free of sin cast the first stone.”

Note that all three of the above sayings imply that one may want to “think” about the entire situation, apply “reason” to it, and be slow to arrive at a conclusive “judgment” about how it happened and why.

2 – The application of thinking, reasoning, and judgment may lead to the conclusion that the perpetrator, if there is one, may need to make some “repair” to the “receiver” of the “undesirable outcome”. It may even be that something should be done to “educate or modify the future behavior” of the “perpetrator”. If one thinks about any of these in detail, it is crucial to recognize that they should all be a function of the “adult part” of the personality taking control of the “baby parts of self”, both in the judger and the judged..

Making a Distinction Between Baby States of Mind and Adult States of Mind:

1 – The human behaviors represented by the definitions, in the earlier section of this talk, exist as continuums, or overlapping circles, and must therefore have at least a modest degree of “arbitrariness” applied to them.

To make the differences more evident, it is useful to make a distinction between “baby level quality of thought” and “adult quality of thought and reasoning”. These distinctions are necessary for the differences in the definitions to be usefully, fully apparent.

2 – For example, babies lack any appreciation of “cause and effect” beyond physical or temporal proximity. In addition, their “concreteness” and “paucity of imagination” makes them completely subject to the type of simplistic reasoning of the “where there is smoke, there is fire” type. In other words, everything is “black or white”, “all good or all bad”, and a sense of “certainty” can be applied if desired.

This type of rigid, “non-thinking” can be found to exist, at times, in all humans, throughout the lifespan, precisely because the “baby core” of the personality exists throughout the lifespan, in all individuals.

It tends to be most prominent in those who had more severe emotional pain that began in infancy. That is because the pains of infancy would have necessitated using whatever coping maneuvers were available to the infant, and those invariably turn out to variations on the theme of “denial of” or “evacuation of” those unwanted baby states of mind. [In other words, using Kleinian models, the maneuvers are functions of “splitting-and-idealization” and “splitting-and-projective identification.”]

The ongoing use of such projective mechanisms later in life tends to be fostered by growing up with parents and grown-ups around the baby and child who themselves tend to be “concrete” and use the same all “black or white” types of judgments.

3 – By contrast, an “adult level” of thinking benefits from adults around the developing child who are mature and not overly concrete. This implies that they are more oriented to being “thoughtful”, “slower to judgment” until they have all of the facts, have the capacity to be “generous” as well as to “forgive”, and can “bear mental pain and uncertainty”, etc. The child learns these lessons from the parents’ manner of thinking and behaving, and is able ultimately to identify with such “adult” functioning.

4 – Because both of these subjects (“blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment”) are primarily a function of the “baby part” of the personality, a deeper understanding of their roots can particularly benefit from the application of some of the models developed by Melanie Klein. Her models of “projective processes”, the “paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions”, “persecutory” and “depressive” guilt, and “unconscious envy” are particularly central to thinking about these issues.

The Foundation for Blaming in Infancy:

1 – I will start with the assumption that infants have, as a fundamental problem, the issue of how to “bring order” to their life and inner world. To achieve some order, their initial task is to figure out what feels good/pleasurable, and how to hold onto it, while simultaneously figuring out what causes pain, and is thus “bad”, suitable to avoid or get rid of it when present.

As I described in Module Two of MKA, this can be thought of as entailing a process of “splitting-and-idealization”, to separate the “good” from the “bad”. That division is inevitably followed by a process of “splitting-and-projective identification” whereby the “bad” component is “evacuated” out of oneself into the outside world. The “container” (human or inanimate), into whom this “bad stuff” is placed, will be imagined to be containing this stuff, and at least impacted if not “taken over” by it.

If this container happens to be the mother, and she has the capacity to bear it and respond constructively, then the potentially hundreds of times a day that this occurs will lead to a feeling that this “bad stuff” is not overly dangerous or harmful. [See “Bion’s Mother-Infant Model” at the beginning of Module Two, Part One].

2 – If, on the other hand, this “bad stuff” is felt to be really dangerous to self and object, for whatever combinations of reasons, then there is the lifelong potential for a need to keep such stuff very “split off” and, if you will, and “not me”. Later in life this will lead to a chronic predisposition to need to find containers for it, either as a “chronic, continuous” approach to life, or as an “acute, situational” problem when something has provoked the threat of contact with an “unwanted” part or aspect of self (or object) that is felt to be “bad”.

It is important to recognize that whatever is being projected, is being projected because it has some particular “emotion” linked to it which is the source of the pain. Therefore, to understand the underpinnings of a circumstance in which a person is “sitting-in-moral-judgment” of another person or situation, it is usually very helpful to recognize which “painful emotion” is involved in the person doing the “judging”.

3 – But it also is helpful to have the concept that these painful emotions “do not ordinarily exist in a vacuum”. They are typically embedded in a context of an ongoing “internalized relationship” between a “part of self” and a “version of mom or dad”. Because of this fact, the “emotion” that is evacuated is usually evacuated along with the “part of self” that is felt to be having the emotion, or the “version of mom or dad” that is felt to cause the part of self to feel that emotion.

4 – When the child harbors too much pain for whatever reason, or has “turned away” from the parental figures, then that child will not have “good” adult figures to identify with and internalize. If the adult figures are seen primarily as the source of mental pain, then the child will be at risk to make the parent “all bad”. The resultant “blaming” of the pain on the parent is likely to lead to a “grudge and/or chronic grievance”.

One sees this perhaps most commonly as a result of the spacing of siblings, who were born too close together. This leads to a resentful feeling that the “pains” of that spacing, and never getting ones “fair share”, were “purposeful acts” on the part of the mother and/or father to deprive the infant or child of his “fair share of the goodness”. That phantasy is often accompanied that the child was replaced by the new baby because the child was “bad” in some way and “unloved”. Such phantasies lead to grievances that can commonly be seen to last over the lifespan, visible with every family gathering, even in old age.

5 – Before I give you some samples of projections linked to blaming, I need to make one final point about infancy in relationship to blaming. It is that, as with most things human that are “problematic”, one has to factor “UNCONSCIOUS ENVY” into the equation if one wants to make sense of the full gamut of blaming activities. This is because blaming has so much of a sense of “grievance” attached to it, usually with strong unconscious components involved, for some individuals.

6 – Whenever one sees “grievance” as a long term tendency in an individual, one has to consider that the grievance originated with a baby feeling of anger about having been born a “helpless baby” instead of coming out to be the “mommy” with the ability to “have everything, know everything, and be able to do anything”. In other words, the infant wishes to be the same as the mommy is imagined to be, instead of having to be the helpless, dependent baby.

As I like to phrase it, the baby comes out at birth saying “Why do you get to be the big, fancy grown up mommy who has everything, knows everything, and can do anything while I’m the helpless, shitted-up baby? I hate that! Why don’t you be the baby and I’ll be the big, fancy mommy. See how you like that.” [See Module Two, Part Two on Unconscious Envy for an expansion of this idea.]

Some Hated Baby States of Being:

1 – Some “QUALITIES ATTENDENT TO BEING AN INFANT” might include: smallness; helplessness; complete dependency; not knowing; complete physical inability, ineffectiveness, or incompetence behaviorally; etc.

These are potentially quite distressing to infants, especially when the adult caregivers are inadequate to the task of modulating these pains, and therefore leave the infant with a greater degree of distress than is necessarily inevitable in infancy. When inadequately modulated in infancy, these qualities become the “object of hatred”, are not tolerated, and are felt only to be suitable for being “evacuated”.

– This type of experience in infancy can lead to a baby who cannot wait to “grow up” and to do everything for itself. In the future it will avoid “dependency” at all costs. It will want to hold its own bottle, feed itself, and be completely independent at the earliest possible age.

Later in life, any reminder of these “hated states of mind” is avoided or attacked, often with extreme intensity. The person will be at risk to be a “bossy, arrogant, know-it-all” as he or she grows up, as a manifestation of the fear of returning to the “hated baby states of being”. Such individuals often make the people around them feel like a “stupid idiot” or “incompetent baby”

They will also have a positive preference for thinking that “absolute judgments” about right or wrong, good or bad, etc. can be made. These judgments will always be in danger of being infected by the “hatred of baby states” and a need to feel “morally superior” to such states of being, which will then be seen as existing in others but not oneself.

2 – FEAR OF “SEPARATENESS”: If separation is the source of great pain in infancy, as a consequence of one’s utter dependence on the caregivers in the environment, then anything that could result in separation (or its extreme, complete abandonment) will be avoided like the plague. Such a reaction to separateness often leads either to a powerful need to feel “omnipotently self-sufficient”, or on the opposite pole, a need to always be “joined up” to whomever they are relating.

– This latter approach may extend to an inability to “think for oneself”, as having a “mind of one’s own” is felt to be too dangerous, because it risks feeling separate when not in agreement with the surrounding environment. Such an anxiety is exemplified by the fable of “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, where the Emperor’s employees fear being seen as “stupid” or “not fit for their job”, if they have a “mind of their own”.

– The take home lesson in relation to “blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment” is that separation and separateness are to be avoided, and the person will go on the attack when threatened.

For the person who “turned away” from their good objects as a result of “intolerance of needing the parental figure”, any feeling of tenderness, need, or dependency will cause the person needing “self-sufficiency” to hold those feelings in contempt, mocking someone who displays them, and attacking someone who tries to create them in that “avoidant” individual. The person is likely to project the baby

neediness, helplessness, etc. and “mock” the recipient of the projection as being a “big baby” or “sissy” or “weakling”, etc.

– The person who wishes to be “joined-up” to an individual or group is always at risk to attack any new idea or rival group that is “different”. One sees this continually in relation to religion and politics on a large scale, and in the workplace or family on a small scale. The unconscious fear of being left out or abandoned often leads to highly “judgmental” attitudes toward those who are “different” in their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors.

3 – UNCONSCIOUS ENVY: When combined with number one or number two, this makes for the most toxic form of “sitting-in-judgment”, and makes anyone in such a state of mind in danger of becoming a miniature Adolf Hitler. It leads to the greatest sanctimony, viciousness and cruelty, hypocrisy, etc.

– The “envious hatred of the other” engenders an unconscious urge to “ruin” the enviable elements in the other. As examples, the Hutus hatred of the Tutsies wealth in Rwanda lead to genocide, Saddam Hussein destroyed Kuwait’s oil fields as he retreated in order to deprive them of their enviable wealth, Hitler destroyed art, books and culture in his march across Europe, Lucifer refused to serve as second fiddle in Heaven, etc. These are all expressions of “envious hatred” of the goodness, success, and happiness of others.

– On a much smaller scale, we are all capable of feeling relief when someone “fails to achieve something” about which we would have felt envious. If we could do it with anonymity assured, many of us would cast the decisive vote depriving someone of that success. This is simply “human” even though it is not pretty. Most of us do not admit to ourselves that we often feel this way.

A good friend of mine, with whom I regularly engage in an activity at which he is better than I, remarked to me in a discussion that he did not think he “felt envy”, and that he “genuinely liked others’ success” at the activity. We recently had a day in which I could do nothing wrong and he could do nothing right at that activity. Toward the end of that period he walked up to me, and with a pained but charitable wink said to me, “I was wrong about not having envy because right now I hate your guts!”

– Most of us feel safe in this type of “hating someone’s guts” at a safe distance, and express it in the form of “sitting-in-judgment” of that movie star, political figure, athlete, sports team, nation, etc. when they stumble or fall. There is usually an “envious reversal”, at the root of such states of mind, whereby a “hated” baby aspect or part of ourselves is being projected into the fallen other.

4 – INTOLERANCE OF GUILT: This is a very important category because “intense envy and guilt” are among the most “unbearable” of human emotions, and tend to immediately be projected into the outside world.

It may well be that very primitive feelings of guilt, originally related to mom and anyone with whom she came in contact, are at the root of a considerable amount of judging and blaming. This primitive attitude would likely be linked to envy and jealousy of mom’s other babies (born and unborn) and dad, as well as envy of mom directly, as mentioned above, for being the “source” of everything desirable in life, in the eyes of the infant.

The problem with these primitive states of guilt (essentially for hostile attacks on mom, her body, and her other relationships out of envy and jealousy) is that one would literally have to see the person (possibly influenced by such guilt) in an analytic setting for an extended period of time, including looking at their dreams and ongoing object relationships, to get a sense of the depth of this “unconscious guilt”. This difficulty in seeing the early underpinnings is that they remain so “deeply unconscious” in most individuals, even though they may pervade that individual’s approach to life.

Perhaps the best we can do is look for plausible parallels in the person's conscious attitudes and behaviors, as described in this next section.

Clues That Baby States of Mind Are Leading to Judging and Blaming:

1 – The first clue is seen in the form of people making “SNAP JUDGMENTS” about someone. This is invariably done without looking at the unique details of the situation, as the “adult part of self” would be more likely to do.

2 – The second clue would be the use of verbiage that is “ALL OR NONE, BLACK OR WHITE”. One of the most common examples is seen with the use of the word “evil”. There are behaviors that are inexcusable, and some individual's propensity for such behaviors suggests that they be locked up for life to protect others from them.

– But every person started life as a baby and “no baby is all bad”! Every patient I have ever seen, no matter how objectionable or destructive their behavior or personality traits are, becomes a “sympathetic figure” with whom I can identify, as I learn to see and understand the world in which they live through the perspective of their eyes and point of view. I have never seen a person who has absolutely nothing about them that isn't “all bad”, as the word “evil” would suggest.

3 – The “PLEASURE”, “VEHEMENCE”, or “SANCTIMONY” with which the “judging” and “blaming” is performed is always an indication that baby states of mind have infiltrated, or are dominating, the perspective of the judger or blamer. This is so powerfully in evidence when a public figure rails about something with great disapproval, only to be later discovered to be a “practitioner” of that which has been so stridently attacked.

4 – The final hint of infantile states of mind, that I wish to highlight in this essay, is the activity of “LOOKING FOR SMALL DETAILS TO POISON THE WELL”. This is so “quintessentially a baby state of mind”, which often goes ignored by those wishing to judge and blame, and is linked to a feeling that if something isn't “pure in its goodness”, then it can be treated as “all bad”.

Small children will often refuse to eat a cookie that has a small defect or break in it. When one looks at any complicated subject like healthcare, immigration, abortion, climate warming, etc., it is very difficult to see the entire big picture, unless you are an expert, and very easy to find “fault with some particular” in the picture.

With any of these issues, an “adult state of mind” would try to see the “whole picture” with an eye toward what is the “greater good for the largest number of people”. The baby parts of self are incapable of not being dominated by their own “emotional needs” and “imagined self-interest”. Even if they could see the big picture, their tolerance of frustration and sacrifice is too small, and their “frontal lobes” of their brains, where more sophisticated “assessments of morality and ethical behavior” will be made in the future, are as yet quite undeveloped.

It is tragic that so many of us never develop these functions, or choose to ignore them as grown-ups, and in effect never achieve a “proper adulthood” dominated by “adult” states of mind and functioning.

Summary and Conclusion:

1 – Blaming and sitting-in-moral-judgment of others is always a function of “baby states of mind”. It is almost always linked to the projection of unwanted or even hated “baby states of mind” on the part of the judger or blamer into the object of the judgment and blame.

Those baby states of mind often involve (1) “unwanted qualities” that are inherent in being a baby (such as smallness, helplessness, need and dependence), or (2) the emotions specifically of guilt and envy.

The “guilt” is often a product of very early hostile states of mind toward those with whom the infant must share its mother. In order to preserve its good relationship to the loved mother, the hostile elements are “split off” into the outside world and seen as “not a part of oneself”.

The “envy” usually has its root in attitudes about the mother being the source of everything the infant needs but cannot provide for itself. It is also commonly split off, but leads to envious attacks on others who are felt to deserve it, thus displacing the attack from its original object, usually mother.

2 – Evidence that the “blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment” is a function of baby states of mind is commonly seen in the “rush to judgment”, making the object of the judgment “all bad”, feeling stridently “superior” or even “gleeful” about the others downfall, and looking for “tiny pieces of evidence” that can be used to spoil the whole situation or person.

3 – All of the above qualities and behaviors of infantile thinking can be contrasted with “adult states of mind” and “qualities of thought”. An adult approach to evaluating a situation acknowledges that there are two sides to every coin and life is rarely one dimensional and black or white. This makes the adult approach move more slowly and cautiously to a final conclusion, recognizing the shades of grey, that no person is all bad, and few situations don’t have both positive and negative elements involved. The adult self can see the merit of such ideas as: “Everything in life is a TRADEOFF”, and “For every problem there is a solution that is simple, straight-forward, and WRONG.”

4 – When one wishes to adjudicate the ethical or moral nature of a situation in life or a person, it becomes important to assess the “motivation” that was involved at the time. “Shit happens” as the saying goes, and some things are just an unfortunate roll of the dice, not the “fault” of the person doing the activity that didn’t “turn out as desired or planned”.

5 – “Blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment” are human, because we were all once babies. But they serve no useful purpose if performed by the “baby parts of self” once one has “grown up”.

– In marriage and family, it is necessary for the couple, as marital partners and as parents, to be able to differentiate “adult states of mind” from “baby ones”, and not allow the baby ones to dominate. “Blaming” and “sitting-in-moral-judgment” of one’s partner, or ones children, is a virtual one way ticket to divorce or unhappiness or worse in the children.

– On a much larger scale, the obvious implication is that the most “mature” members in society should be the ones making such judgments about “ethical and moral issues”. “Baby states of mind”, that lead to the “projection of hated parts of self or guilt”, should never be allowed to dominate the field of public discourse.

– Similarly, “infantile greed and envy” will invariably “corrupt the motivation” of those in power and making such adjudications, if personal self-interest is allowed to excessively dominate policies and procedures in governance. Society needs to acknowledge and keep this in mind if it wishes to survive for another millennium.

A Note For Therapists:

1 – The task of doing therapy requires making many “adjudications” by the therapist. Should I address a conscious or unconscious element at the moment? Should I listen longer before I speak up? Should I take up this issue in the dream or should I await further spontaneous associations? Should I play the role into which I am being put or should I immediately start interpreting the projections. Quite often one has to “make a decision” and see how it then goes in order to see if decision seemed productive.

However, there is one type of judgment that often needs to be made that is germane to this talk, and that is deciding whether or not something is “problematic, destructive, or crazy”. One occasionally runs into a

patient who insists that their behavior or thinking is none of the three when you are quite convinced to the contrary. Such patients will at times insist that you are “sitting-in-moral-judgment of them.

2 – The reason why it is necessary for all therapists to have had their own therapy is to “calibrate their instrument”. The longer and at greater depth their therapy is, the better. Otherwise, It is impossible to know if the patient is at least partly right that you are being a “moralist”, for whatever unconscious reason, or are projecting your own “issue” into them. That is unless you know a great deal about your own unconscious inner world.

– The problem here is that there are therapist’s who do have a “characterological” predisposition to “sit-in-moral-judgment” in life, and it will extend to their consulting room. It may be ever so subtle, or it may be problematically overt.

In the former case certain patients, usually with “judging” internal relationships, will recreate those problematic internal situations with the therapist. The therapist will be at risk to be unable to analyze the problem because he or she will actually be the problem.

Where the therapist’s judging is more overt, he or she is likely to have difficulty holding onto patients. The occasional exception, with such therapists, is the patient who unconsciously externalizes a “sado-masochistic element” from their own unconscious internal relationships, into the therapeutic relationship. Often in such circumstances, the patient would unconsciously rather have the therapist be “cruel” than for the patient to have to recognize the “cruelty” in themselves.

3 – This all segues into another important task required of the competent therapist. That is the issue of tolerating being made into a “bad object” so that the patient can “recreate in the transference” a deeply unconscious internal situation from their inner world. Sometimes the nature of that “bad” version of a mom or dad that is being projected into the therapist is a parental figure that is “critical and judgmental”. If a therapist is very clear about their own judgmental tendencies, because of having had extensive therapy, then they can be confident about whether they are or are not being “excessively judgmental”.

– Sometimes patients will maneuver a therapist, who is not basically “moralistic and judgmental”, into unconsciously taking on the role being moralistic and judgmental. It is much easier to tolerate such a situation when you know whether or not you should feel “guilty or contrite” for having done something problematic, when the patient insist that you have.

Being a therapist is very fascinating and gratifying business when you can see what does or does not actually belong to you. **YOU MUST CALIBRATE YOUR INSTRUMENT!**