Functional Analytic Psychotherapy
Creating Intense and
Curative Therapeutic Relationships

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To our parents,
Jack and Bess Kohlenberg
Edwin and Emily Tsai,
whose steadfast love, support, and pride
provided the foundation
for our strivings and accomplishments.

Preface

This book was born out of the many years of collective experience in treating and thinking about our clients. We view this work as a treatment manual with guidelines for creating deep, intense, meaningful, and healing therapeutic relationships. It is not a collection of techniques, although a fair share of them are included. Instead, we have described a conceptual framework that is intended to guide a therapist's activity. Although the theory we use is particularly well suited for this purpose, as soon as we name it, we lose most of our audience. Thus, our desire to impart intellectual stimulation and to share our clinical insights is hampered by the very vehicle on which we rely.

Clinicians do not easily take on new techniques that are given to them in a book. They are particularly unlikely to be receptive if the theory on which these techniques are based causes a strong, negative reaction. This theory, however, is widely misinterpreted and misunderstood; as a consequence, the first chapter contains explanations of the major tenets of radical behaviorism and addresses some of these misunderstandings (You may not have noticed, but we slipped in the name of the theory.) In Chapter 1, we also show how radical behaviorism leads to a focus on the client-therapist relationship.

This book was intended to be read more or less in sequence, but it does not have to be. Each chapter can almost stand alone because many of the lesser known concepts are reviewed, even though they may have appeared in an earlier chapter. The more theoretical and abstract writings occur in the first three chapters, and greater emphasis is placed on clinical application in the chapters that follow. For some, reading the more clinical chapters first might pique interest in perusing the earlier theoretical chapters. We hope that as you go through the chapters and ob-

serve how the concepts are applied in new ways, there will be a cumulative effect and the concepts will become more understandable.

In the second chapter, we lay out the principles of doing functional analytic psychotherapy (FAP). Although we provide five principles, only the first one is really needed, and we hope it will be the one you will remember: it is “watch for clinically relevant behaviors”; that is what this book is all about.

Perhaps the third chapter might prove to be the most difficult. It is the first time that some of the concepts of verbal behavior are introduced. A system for analyzing what clients say is explained. An “escape hatch” is provided for those readers who do not wish to spend time in learning the system and who wish to proceed directly to its major conclusions.

Emotions and affect are central to the therapeutic process. We have followed a slightly different road, however, from most other therapeutic systems. Our conclusions are that, on the one hand, feelings do not cause a client’s problems, nor are they responsible for therapeutic change. But, on the other hand, therapy cannot work if feelings do not occur. This paradox and others are explained in Chapter 4, where, it is hoped, our discussion on expressing feelings brings additional clarity to this confusing topic.

Everybody thinks and has cognitions. Not only that, but cognitions can play a major role in therapy. In Chapter 5, we give the radical behavioral view of these phenomena in a new way. The result is an approach that we think will be useful to psychotherapists, including cognitive therapists.

In this book, we have extended the application of behavioral theory beyond its usual domain. This extension occurs in its greatest degree in Chapter 6, which deals with problems of the self, a topic not usually discussed in behavioral circles. We present the self as a highly personal experience that comes in many forms, some more adaptive than others. Among the maladaptive forms that we discuss are borderline, narcissistic, and multiple personality disorders. We explain self problems as the result of various external conditions that take place during normal and pathological childhood development.

In Chapter 7, we challenge the contention that the FAP focus on the therapeutic relationship is simply psychoanalysis revisited. The psychoanalytic concepts of transference and therapeutic alliance, and the relational model of object relations therapy, are examined, and a case is made for how FAP occupies a unique niche between psychodynamic and current behavior therapies.

Depending on their interests, readers may think that we saved the best for last. Our final chapter delves into ethical precautions, the supervisory process, the problems inherent in traditional research methodology and its implications for FAP research, and how the principles of FAP can be extended to address problems in the world outside of therapy.

A word needs to be said about the behavioral terminology used throughout the book. Behavioral language helps to give new insights into clinical phenomena and conveys what we are trying to say about how therapy helps and why clients have the problems they do. This terminology was not developed in the psychotherapy environment, however, and is thus cumbersome when used to communicate about phenomena that occur there. We walked a line between the language of radical behaviorists and that used by most clinicians. Sometimes we went north and sometimes south, but we tried to capitalize on the richness of both.

This book emerged from a chapter that originally appeared in Neil Jacobson's edited volume *Psychotherapists in Clinical Practice* (1987). We are grateful to Neil for encouraging us to take that first step. In the present volume, we have facilitated clinical application by giving more attention to client verbal behavior and by using case transcripts. The chapter on the self evolved from a paper originally written by Robert Kohlenberg and Marsha Linehan.

Bob Kohlenberg wishes to acknowledge the importance of his daughter Barbara in the genesis of this book, as she was responsible for reigniting a burned-out radical behaviorist. His son Andy contributed an important perspective on ethics, whereas his son Paul reminded him of the significance of a curious mind, good humor, and commitment. His brother David was always there to listen, which was essential to the completion of this book. His precious co-author, Mavis, infused his life with her limitless love and intellect, which provided the threads that are the core of FAP.

Mavis Tsai cherishes the memory of Ned Wagner, her first graduate advisor. His enthusiasm about her ideas and writings when she was a neophyte graduate student was a priceless gift. In two short years, Ned instilled in her lifetimes of confidence, curiosity, and compassion. Her two other graduate advisors, Stanley Sue and Shirley Feldman-Summers, also played essential and greatly valued roles in her development as a psychologist. Other mentors include Laura Brown, James Coleman, and Ron Smith. Bob, her co-author and partner in life, has enriched the meaning and joy of her life beyond measure with his passionate love, fertile mind, and wondrous presence.

Fellow clinicians Carla Bradshaw, Barbara Johnstone, Karen Lindner, Vickie Sears, Ellen Sherwood, and Alejandra Suarez read part or all of the manuscript in progress and provided important feedback.

We are especially indebted to Anne Uemura, a friend and colleague of the highest order, who spent countless hours poring over every word of our manuscript and giving us detailed and constructive criticism.

The late Willard Day was a great inspiration. His work showed that interpretation is an essential activity of the radical behaviorist. His delight for fledgling ideas provided a haven in which they could grow and flourish.

Steve Hayes paved the way in applying radical behavioral principles to adult psychotherapy. Stanley Messer, the first psychodynamically oriented scholar who took our work seriously, gave us invaluable critical feedback.

To the next generation of FAP therapists—Michael Addis, James Cordova, Darla Broberg, Victoria Follette, Allan Fruzzeti, Enrico Gannault, Kelly Koerner, Marty Stern, Julian Somers, Paula Truax, and Jennifer Waltz—we thank you all for the give-and-take that occurred while ideas were new and a system was developing.

We are grateful to our clients who have shared with us their deepest pains and joys. Each and every one of our clients has contributed to our clinical acumen and has shaped who we are as therapists. To protect the confidentiality of the clients who are described in the case histories, all names and other identifying information have been changed.

The passing of B. F. Skinner is a great loss to those of us who admired him. The essence of his lifelong work was the hope it offered that we could improve our lives and the world in which we live. We wrote this book in the spirit of that legacy, and regret that he did not get a chance to read it and to see one more of the countless effects his work has had on others.

R.J.K.
M.T.

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