

Saki Santorelli on Control Therapy

The work you have done around “control” is critically important to people in the western world. For the most part, people in the west have no context in which to envision receptivity as a powerful, positive agent in their lives. Without that context and a means of embodying that as a reality, life is, at best a rat race. And as Lily Tomlin aptly put it, even if you’re win, you’re still a rat...

Director, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Clinic

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But there’s another kind of control cultivated in meditative practice that has more to do with paying attention and yielding when it’s called for. Deane H. Shapiro Jr., and John Aston at Stanford University, who have done groundbreaking work in this field, found that there are different forms of control. With positive assertive control, we put our noses to the grindstone and see the task through. With negative assertive control, we do this to the point where it becomes deleterious to our

health and well-being. I believe that much of this behavior stems from a lack of trust in other people and the world in general and, when linked with a kind of aggressive hostility, appears to make us prone to heart problems. Then there is positive yielding control, which has to do with surrender, acceptance, and choosing your battles. Nonstriving can have enormously positive effects on people’s lives. But there’s a downside to it as well, which Aston and Shapiro call negative yielding control, where people move toward passivity and resignation and don’t get things done. By realizing that we

have these different forms of control at our disposal, we can respond appropriately to different situations.

Saki Santorelli, in “Wanting to Exhale” Common Boundary, March /April 1999

Bill Mikulas...a wonderful synthesis of many literatures and ideas...I have recommended the book to many students and colleagues. An excellent, comprehensive and stimulating overview of this very important field...it is nice to have your work all tied together in one comprehensive volume.

I continue to be impressed by your book Control Therapy. My students find it very useful as a text that integrates key aspects of health psychology practice. You did good!: Jared Kass, Professor of Counseling and Psychology, Lesley University

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anonymous review-
ers' comments:

"Scholarly, well-written, of considerable general interest...unlike many journal articles, it is rather fascinating to read; the sections on complexity of control (multidimensional) and the need for more careful assessment are excellent.

"Unique, timely, a very provocative article. The particular value of the article is showing how many different meanings control can have, how culture-bound the notion of control can be, and how much more specific we need to be about our definitions of control if we are to provide tailored interventions to individuals. The last section also shows how the theme of gaining control has been with us since antiquity; but also, how we seek to gain control will determine the future of our civilization."

Shirley Oates, Ph.D. United Kingdom

I have found your work truly inspiring. Control Therapy (and earlier Beyond Health and Normality...have been such inspirations to me.

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>I'm a doctoral student in Counseling Psych, and I'm writing my
>dissertation on women with breast cancer. When I mentioned to Carl
>Thoresen (my advisor) that I thought one of the mechanisms to explain
>some of my results may be related to trying to gain control -- he gave
>me your book. You and Deane have done a superb job of presenting a
>complex model.
>

In actual practice this sort of therapy often looks much like Segal's Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002), Shapiro and Astin's (1998) Control Therapy, or Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as developed by Stephen Hayes and his colleagues at the University of Nevada Reno (Hayes, Wilson & Strosahl, 1999). The fundamental difference between these and more purely Eastern approaches is that a therapeutic intervention informed by Buddhist teachings places somewhat more emphasis on personal growth, character, and compassionate concern for self and others than its Western counterparts' more specifically-targeted cognitive and behavioral emphases.

Deane's comment.

Thank you! (I'd add Linehan's Dialectical Behavior Therapy. "I'd like to see future research compare and contrast these different approaches." Ultimately, as noted in the Control Therapy Book and Manual, I'd love to see research taking a "matching approach" helping build a foundation of knowledge for when to see which control based techniques with which client with what particular concern.

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"significant and comprehensive..."

Sandra Prince-Embury, Ph.D., Project Director, The Psychological Corporation

"I was fascinated with your article (American Psychologist, 1996). Using the Cain and Able parable was helpful for me in understanding the importance of the SCI's different scales I see the SCI as a value in many clinical settings and as a tool people could use to better understand themselves

David Roble, Product Manager, NCS (National Computer Systems

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Control Therapy is an exceptionally thoughtful, thorough and comprehensive, yet highly readable, survey of a topic of major importance to our individual and societal wellbeing.

Roger Walsh MD, PhD. Professor of Psychiatry, anthropology and philosophy
University of California

Roger Walsh

A reader from the United States , January 31, 1999 ★★★★★

Control Therapy is integrative, insightful and compelling.

Control Therapy is excellent! It provided a theoretically coherent theory for integrating wisdom from the east and west into psychotherapy. After developing a clear and thoughtful foundation, the book further offered an in depth guide to using control therapy in clinical work. This book has helped me synthesize my belief that there are times to hold on and fight for change and there are times to let go and accept. This book has helped me both professionally and personally.

Robert Kantor, Ph.D, ABPP, Control Therapy is a wonderful resource, to me personally, and will come to be seen as a highly significant addition to clinical psychology

Australian Newsletter: Relaxation and Meditation: Mark Blows ...a splendid book...shows how an experienced psychologist carries out his work...the philosophical/ethical underpinnings give strength...the authors are promoting a shift towards a very much broader theoretical framework than the prevailing one in their profession, and, at the same time are acting subtly as prophets, ...drawing attention to a much needed change of direction in values. While it is surprising how much theory, literature reviewing and clinical practice that they subsume under the heading of control (including the misused and distorted direction of control), there are many clinical issues where control is not the central feature, even if it is seldom absent. It is set out in the best of the American text book, teaching style. It is easy to find one's way around it.

***** Please see the next two pages for the full review *****

Control Therapy; An Integrated Approach to Psychotherapy, Health, and Healing – Deane H. Shapiro, Jr. & John Astin; John Wiley & Sons, inc. N.Y., 1998. 370 pages.

This, in my opinion, is a splendid book, based on experience of Zen training, many years of reflection and practical clinical experience. It is a book that is useful for several reasons. It provides insight into how an experienced psychotherapist carries out his work, it gives a very broad summary of many contributions to psychology from all available theoretical positions, not just the prevailing orthodoxy (which is cognitive behavioural therapy). As pointed out early in the book, the approach of Deane Shapiro and John Astin is compatible with any of the main theoretical approaches - and above all it provides an integration of eastern and western perspectives to the challenges and problems of control and power in life.

The eastern approach tends to concentrate on changing one's attitude to difficulties, acceptance and non-attachment to the fruit of one's actions. The western approach is to master or alter the stressor. It would be a parody to say that there was anything like a complete division between the two sets of cultures in respect of these approaches. Deane Shapiro, who is Professor Emeritus, University of California, mentions many times that the American penchant is to actively control the stressor, sometimes becoming overly controlling, overly active. The Zen preference is one of acceptance.

Deane Shapiro has developed a schema with four modes or sectors of control:

- 1) Positive assertive, that is appropriate instrumental action.
- 2) Positive yielding, that is appropriate letting go, trust but not action.
- 3) Negative assertive, that is being overly controlling, agitated, dictatorial.
- 4) Negative yielding, that is passive despair, feeling victimised.

with two types of agency of control:

- (i) Self
- (ii) Others.

The theory is applied to various domains: for instance, body, mind, interpersonal relationships, career, self, the environment and impulse control.

Both the scientific literature and popular opinion refer mainly to three categories of control, omitting sector 2, positive yielding. In the Shapiro-Austin scheme the two negative sectors, compulsive, tight control and feeling an impotent victim are unhealthy whereas the other two sectors are life enhancing. There are very many ways to act in particular situations. Matching action (or refraining from action) to circumstances is an art arising from reflective thinking and maturity. Nothing works well without an opening of the heart, moving out of reflexive, limiting, styles of control. It is that underlying recognition of basic motivation that lifts the thesis of the book, not just its technical expertise of which there is a great deal.

There is structured control inventory that may be used for diagnosis, published by Behaviordata, California, as well as less structured guidelines based on analysis of what clients say. This book has much to offer to the practising, 'hands on' clinician.

The philosophical/ethical underpinings give strength. Psychology cannot be a morally and ethically neutral science. In eastern systems, for instance, Patanjali's yoga sutras or the Buddha's eight fold path, it is assumed that healthy development of the individual necessarily includes moral and ethical conduct. In fact, this is the focus in those systems. Deane Shapiro and John Astin restore morality and ethics to a central position in health psychology, the psychology of marital and other personal and community relationships.

The authors point out that Ellis, that founder of Rational-Emotive Behavioural Therapy, acknowledged that his theory of cognitive mediation of emotional responses has origins in the stoic philosophers, as well as Taoist and Buddhist Philosophies, but ignores the societal and cultural context of these traditions. There is no higher purpose in Ellis's conceptual framework other than individual hedonism, living longer with personal enjoyment.

In another place, an article in the American Psychologist, Vol. 51, NO. 12, 1213-1230, Deane Shapiro, Carolyn Achwartz and John Astin discuss the control myth of Cain and Abel. Cain seeks to regain his sense of control when he feels jealous of Abel. He kills his brother Abel, symbolically half of the human race. In many ways, contemporary men and women individually, and collectively at the level of society, face many questions about the direction or manner in which they may seek control. The prevailing American (and Australian) paradigm is simplistic, external acquisition as a sign of self worth and self competence. Furthermore, the authors argue, we need to go beyond goals of personal competence, autonomous self identity, and positive ego development. The energy behind these efforts should be re-directed towards compassionate service for the healing of others, and interpersonal and collective wellbeing. The authors also, however, fully recognise that age related stages of development and circumstances influence, limit or expand, intention and purpose.

There is no underestimation of the difficulty in educating people. There is a section in the book dealing with individual's stories (CF Maurits Kwee's articles in the previous edition of this newsletter for another author's view on the importance of life stories in clinical work). The implications for style of control, in an individual's story, may well be unrecognised and even unrecognisable by the client with the best of clinical help.

The authors are promoting a shift towards a very much broader theoretical framework than the prevailing one in their profession and at the same time are acting, subtly as prophets, drawing attention to a much needed change of direction in values. There could be a danger if their work were to be accepted as orthodox. While it is surprising how much theory, literature reviewing and clinical practice that they subsume under the heading of control (including loss of and distorted direction of control), there are many clinical issues where control is not the central feature, even if it is seldom absent. The clinician needs to have an "empty" mind much of the time, ready to let creative action generate from whatever transpires at the moment. This book could be viewed as an updated and much elaborated account of the psychology of Alfred Adler. Arising from Adler's psychology is the concept of the 'straw dust caesar'. This is a per-

son stuck, at a subconscious level, much of the time, in the Shapiro Sector 4 but who, with reaction formation and overcompensation, acts out at sector 3. Adler advocated developing appropriate skill in sector 1, as he did in his own life history, rising above the 'saw dust caesar' possibility. Of course Adler did not have a sector 2. As pointed out by the authors, Carl Jung had a version of that.

This is a great book for learning and teaching. It is set out in the best of American text book, teaching style. It easy to find one's way around in it.

The developmental points you make are sound and interesting. I liked your treatment of balance very much. (Ken Wilbur on Shapiro, Chapter 16, Self-control and positive health: Multiple perspectives of balance) In Beyond Health and Normality.

This is the first comprehensive book devoted to control theory and the use of control-based techniques in therapy. The book shows how these issues can be seen as a connective thread among therapeutic approaches--adding practical techniques to health psychology and behavioral medicine; honoring the humanistic/transpersonal vision of values toward which control might be used; examining existential questions of how people seek to create meaning and gain a sense of control in a universe which appears meaningless and chaotic; and looking at different cultural understandings of control--East and West.

CONTROL THERAPY details a unifying theory of human control, a control-based vision of mental, physical, and interpersonal health, and specific detailed clinical instructions and numerous clinical illustrations based on control based techniques. Further, a step by step model for short term treatment of eight to twelve sessions are provided.