

FOREWORD

We humans come into this world with a brain that is one of the most complex and versatile computers known. It comes without any user's guide, and with only a few rudimentary programs installed, but with a prodigious ability to learn. From the moment we are born, and perhaps before, we develop and acquire new programs, often without our conscious awareness as we respond to our environment, our parents, and others around us.

Most of these programs work quite well. However, we also learn some programs that don't work well, and when confronted by a problem we often become preoccupied by what doesn't work, and lose sight of all those that do. Well-intentioned helpers often add to this misery by blaming and judging us for our failures. Psychiatry has an extensive 980-page manual of mental disorders labeling people who can't get their mental programs running in resourceful ways. That same manual has not one single page that tells how to resolve even one of those disorders!

Many of these diagnostic labels come with their own assumptions: that very little can be done to resolve the problem, or that the problem can only be resolved by years of difficult and painful therapy. When the therapy isn't successful, clients are often abandoned as "resistant." Rather than the helper admitting, "I don't know how to help them," they assume that the person "can't be helped," or just "didn't want to get well."

One alternative is to tinker with the computer itself and change its electrochemical processes with powerful drugs – or even electroshock. These "treatments" are only marginally effective, and often have powerful side-effects that interfere with all the other programs that were already running quite well. Drugs also run the risk of making people happy and content while they continue to do terrible things to themselves and one another.

Rather than focus on investigating failure, it is much more useful to discover how people successfully resolve problems. Most therapies focus their work on the content of a person's experience, rather than how their programs result in success or failure. When people resolve their problems what changes is not the "problem" itself, but the underlying process of how the "problem" is represented in their mind. The solution is often ridiculously simple, and often people will tell you exactly how they did it.

*I was born not knowing
and have only had
a little time
to change that
here and there.*

— Richard Feynman

*Beware of eloquent labels
and descriptions
of problems masquerading
as solutions to problems.*

*It's fairly easy to spot
wrong answers;
it's often more difficult to
spot wrong questions.*

— Steve Andreas

*We can't solve problems
by using the same kind of
thinking we used
when we created them.*

— Albert Einstein

*Don't worry,
just because you keep
an open mind,
your brains won't fall out.*

*How many people
use the latest software
on their desk computer
yet don't know about the
latest software for the
computer in their head?*

— Unknown

For example, when someone says, “Oh that used to be a problem, but I put it all behind me,” we discover that the person has literally put the memory image behind them in their personal space, where it is hard to notice, and no longer bothers them. When you discover a solution like this, it is ridiculously easy to teach someone else exactly how to enjoy the same solution.

Rather than study people who were stuck in their grief, we studied people who had rapidly resolved a significant loss. We discovered how they thought about the lost person in a way that resulted in joy for having had the incredible luck to have known them. Then it was a simple matter to teach others who were grieving how to hold the lost person secure in their hearts so that they were forever with them.

We did the same for people who had been successful in forgiving someone who had done “unforgivable” things to them, and again we are able to teach this process to others whose lives are corroded by chronic anger or resentment. Believe it or not, people can be taught how to resolve deep-seated grief or resentment in one session of an hour or less, and these are two of the key programs that Rob presents in **Restoring Hope**. While these may seem like bold claims, I invite the reader to do the exercises in this book, and find out how well they work.

Some readers may need to suspend their judgment and assumptions about how people can change when they use the exercises to explore their own and their client’s experiences. There is no magic or slight of hand; everything is exactly as it appears. However the results are often so magical that both client and coach are left in a state of awe at the internal creativity and healing power within each of us.

While Rob describes the exercises in easy-to-follow sequential steps, it is important to do them **with** a person rather than **to** a person—and with compassionate caring and respect, as you help people learn how to use their minds to create healing by adjusting their mental programs.

I invite you to not only enjoy reading this book, but to experience the deep satisfaction of being able to help yourself and others resolve their difficulties rapidly, restoring them to hope, and to a satisfying life.

Steve Andreas

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