

## COUNSELING: Applied to Everyday Living

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According to Anthony Williams, [www.medicalmedium.com](http://www.medicalmedium.com), empathy is the gateway to healing. When we find empathy from another, we can then begin the process of healing, either from psychological and/or physical pain. Empathy is described by Williams as a deep, authentic understanding which, when received, removes mental and spiritual blockages, and shifts energy that allows healing to occur.

When people experience anxiety, depression, addictions or illness, they begin to have difficulties with self-worth. Even life phases (divorce, loss of jobs, going from grade school to middle school, impending graduation, etc.) can lead to questions of self-worth. Although some of these can, seemingly, be happy times or, seemingly sad times or times with mixed emotion, the question may arise: am I still as valued or worthy as I once was? When a person feels truly understood, their sense of self-worth begins to return or improve. . It is, as Williams so well states, like finding that first true friend—that one person who believed in you and encouraged you, and soon you began to believe in yourself, if only just a little. So how does counseling, or therapy, work and how can you apply it in your life?

When you meet a counselor, your first reaction may well be: no way, there is no way this person can relate to me. They are too different ...more money, more education, older, different gender, environment may be different from what you expect ... There may be all kinds of thoughts in your mind. But hold on. There is a better-than-good chance the counselor can relate to you, or will at least try. My experience has been that the first session is never the best one to make the decision of yes or no on this and I always suggest that clients give it at least two or three sessions with a counselor before deciding for sure that it will not work out and even then, try to identify the specific problem and discuss it together because it may well be resolved simply and a growing process for both parties. . .

An empathetic counselor is ready and willing to listen, and then validate the feelings, and then offer helpful insight. However, to do this, the client has to be willing to talk about what is going on or has prompted the visit. Counselors are not mind readers and while hopefully are perceptive and empathic, can only work with what you bring to the session and are willing to share. It is your session, not the counselor's.

We are all people of diversity. Although much focus on diversity is highlighted to those of specific race, disability, religious or sexual preference, each person and animal is one of diversity from another. We each live, think, feel and behave differently from another. We have different experiences from each other, and even if we were to all experience the same thing in the same setting, internally we would perceive it differently, describing it differently externally.

So, this, then, is how we apply the empathy of counseling to everyday life. When we are listened to, validated and offered insight from the empathetic counselor, our sense of self-worth is enhanced. We develop a greater sense of self and our internal healing begins. Physical and mental healing are tied together. We begin to realize that we feel better mentally and physically which impacts our thoughts, feelings and behavior in positive ways. This, then, impacts our overall empathy for others which, then, impacts what we receive from everyday life experiences from a diverse world. So, even when you meet a counselor, or a potential friend, or coworker, or situation and the first reaction is: no way! It will never work ...hold on. Give it a bit. Identify the specific problem. Talk it out. Don't blame the person or things that cannot be changed, or make unfair complaints or demands. Ask yourself: what can be solved to make it happen and how can this work for me, for us? That is true understanding. That is empathy. That is personal growth.