

Self-Care Checklist

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VALUING THE PERSON OF THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

- ✓ Adhere to the ethical imperative of engaging in “self-care to maintain and promote your emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being to best meet your professional responsibilities.”
- ✓ Ask your patients, if you have not done so recently, what has been most helpful in their psychotherapy. Take to heart their frequent compliments about your presence, affirmation, and support.
- ✓ Resist the pressures of managed care to define yourself as a nameless and disembodied “provider”; maintain your individual identity as a distinctive practitioner of psychological healing.
- ✓ Internalize the relational crux of the work. Yes, we conduct treatments to eradicate disorders, but we also offer relationships that heal and strengthen people.
- ✓ Assess your deep motives for becoming a psychotherapist beyond the altruism of “to help people” and the idealism “to improve the world.” How are the motives facilitating or hindering your effective self-care?
- ✓ Take a mindful moment to identify existing self-care activities you desire to continue; start from a position of strength and celebration about what’s good.
- ✓ Prioritize your self-care: Put specific times in your schedule to sharpen the saw.
- ✓ Practice what you preach to your clients about nourishing the self: avail yourself (when applicable) of what you provide or recommend to clients with similar needs.
- ✓ Embrace an integrative mix of self-care strategies (as opposed to relying on a single theory).
- ✓ Avoid concentration on a single self-care technique, and promote cognitive and experiential growth on a broad front. Do you rely on only one or two self-care methods?
- ✓ Assess your own self-care, as you might a student’s or a patient’s—on a weekly or monthly basis.
- ✓ Track your renewal by maintaining a journal, calendar, or behavioral log of activity.
- ✓ Complete structured questionnaires on resiliency, burnout, and self-care periodically to facilitate your self-awareness and self-monitoring.
- ✓ Consider posting your action plan to bolster your compliance and to model self-care to peers and patients.
- ✓ Contract for some honest feedback from significant others about your workweek, functioning, and self-care. Let others supplement and enhance your self-monitoring.
- ✓ Track the emotional residue you’re taking home from your professional work.
- ✓ Put your consequential self-care activities in your schedule/calendar first thing every month. Literally schedule your self-care.
- ✓ Celebrate mental health professionals in general and you in particular!
- ✓ Alleviate the distress of conducting therapy, but also value and grow the person of the psychotherapist.

REFOCUSING ON THE REWARDS

- ✓ Internalize the practice of psychotherapy as the quintessential two-fer: the beautiful compensation that no person can help another without helping him/herself.
- ✓ Recall that career satisfaction among psychotherapists is consistently high and rivals (or exceeds) that of other professionals.
- ✓ Remember your initial reasons for entering the field as a means of refreshing your sense of calling and professional fulfillment.
- ✓ Build into your weekly schedule a concrete method to count your blessings, such as an imagery exercise, gratitude exercise, or mindful journaling.
- ✓ Attend to the profound satisfaction of helping others; vividly recall the life-transforming psychotherapies in which you were privileged to participate.
- ✓ Scratch the good dog, not the bad one, when confronting challenging clinical days.
- ✓ Look for ways to create a greater sense of freedom and independence in your work.

- ✓ Variety and intellectual stimulation prove indispensable. What can you do to increase their impact on your work schedule and professional duties?
- ✓ Satisfaction from helping others is crucial, so be sure to include at least some professional activities that demonstrate you are helping someone!
- ✓ Enjoy maintaining relationships with clients that span years, involving intermittent courses of treatment.
- ✓ Harvest the bounty of qualities that you have developed as a mental health professional, including openness, creativity, wisdom, awareness, psychological mindedness, and interpersonal skills.
- ✓ A sense of humor and the absurd is one of your most potent stress relievers. Practice!
- ✓ Be careful when applying your expertise to your family of origin... fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
- ✓ Self-monitor the quality of your friendships. Do they sustain you?
- ✓ Remember: you are actually self-employed, regardless of who you work for.
- ✓ Clinical practice may not make you financially rich, but if it is your calling, it is a wonderful way to make a living.
- ✓ Bear in mind, particularly during your beleaguered moments, that there are typically many more benefits than hazards associated with the career of psychotherapy.

RECOGNIZING THE HAZARDS

- ✓ Repeat the mantra “Psychotherapy is often a grueling and demanding calling” to establish realism.
- ✓ Search the web for research studies on practice hazards that address your distinctive professional and personal identities.
- ✓ Affirm the universality of occupational hazards by sharing your stressors and distress with trusted colleagues. Even the Garden of Eden had snakes!
- ✓ Identify the impact of clinical practice on you and your loved one; look in particular problematic anxiety, moderate depression, and emotional under-involvement with family members.
- ✓ Track the amount of physical isolation you experience each day. What steps can you take to create more opportunities for contact with other clinicians?
- ✓ Create variety in your day, such as intermingling psychotherapy sessions with supervision, consultations, study breaks, a trip to the gym, and so on.
- ✓ Invite family and friends to point out when you become too interpretive and “objective” when it would be healthier to be spontaneous and genuine.
- ✓ Know the actuarial data about the probability of a malpractice lawsuit or licensing complaint and weigh the high-risk aspects of your practice (e.g., child custody evaluation, violent patients, contested divorces).
- ✓ Calculate the possibility of patient violence in your office and take steps to enhance your personal safety accordingly.
- ✓ Take Coach John Wooden’s advice and refuse to believe either your most idealizing or your most demeaning client—you are neither God nor the devil.
- ✓ Beware the toxicity of chronic moral stress: repeatedly rendering suboptimal care erodes your soul.
- ✓ Limit your exposure to traumatic images outside the therapy room by choosing movies, literature, and other entertainment carefully.
- ✓ Reevaluate your involvement with managed care, particularly its possible contribution to your experience of depletion and burnout. How might you enhance your autonomy in your work?
- ✓ Adopt a team approach in dealing with high-stress clinical situations; distribute the burden and lighten the individual load.
- ✓ Beware of inadvertent domestic violations of patient confidentiality, and limit the amount of client material you share with your significant others.
- ✓ Consider how you balance empathic connection and self-preserving distance in your clinical work. When you find yourself on one end of the pendulum, pursue balance.
- ✓ Reflect on the number of clients that you’ve said good-bye to over the years. What has been the cumulative impact of those terminations?
- ✓ Address your own clinical limitations in an open manner instead of playing competitive therapist games.
- ✓ Proactively discuss your professional and parental commitments within significant relationships.

- ✓ Accept some spillover from your professional life into your personal life as a cost of being human.
- ✓ Discuss with your spouse/partner the topics covered in this chapter. How does he or she perceive their impact on your relationship?
- ✓ Learn how to handle distracting intercurrent life events. Perhaps consult with a trusted and more experienced colleague.
- ✓ “Start where you are”: cultivate self-empathy regarding occupational hazards.
- ✓ Embrace *wabi-sabi*: accepting the imperfect, celebrating the tattered, learning to love the chips and cracks.
- ✓ Tailor your self-care to your personality and context by disentangling transient, paradigmatic, and situational difficulties; each requires a different self-care plan.
- ✓ Reconcile and balance the hazards of psychotherapeutic practice with its rewards—“fountain of sorrow, fountain of life.”
- ✓ Recognize that occupational hazards are just that but also more: an opportunity to learn and grow.
- ✓ Adopt the long perspective as a healing practitioner; most psychotherapists enjoy lengthy, successful careers and would elect to do it again.

MINDING THE BODY

- ✓ Mind your body as indispensable self-care; do not become preoccupied with sophisticated self-care methods at the expense of your biobehavioral basics.
- ✓ Track the quality and length of your sleep. How many hours of sleep are you averaging each night, compared to what your body needs?
- ✓ Take your own advice: exercise regularly. Mix up your exercise regimen to promote endurance, flexibility, and strength.
- ✓ Schedule minibreaks between sessions to self-massage your face, neck, and leg muscles; perhaps schedule regular massages to nourish yourself and relieve muscle tension.
- ✓ Stretch your muscles and reconnect to your body as antidotes to the sedentary nature of psychotherapy.
- ✓ Get moving during your workday: go for walks between sessions or during meals and avoid motionless sitting positions that reduce circulation and energy.
- ✓ Track your water consumption and secure sufficient hydration during the day.
- ✓ Eat balanced, nutritious meals before, during, and after work; avoid the empty calories of comfort foods.
- ✓ Develop an activity-permissive work environment for office activities, peer contacts, and between patients.
- ✓ Monitor your use of substances. Are you self-medicating with alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or food?
- ✓ Arrange for contact comfort and sexual gratification away from the office; it’s your professional responsibility to meet your physical needs.

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

- ✓ Self-assess your peer support at the office. How does it fare?
- ✓ Identify the three most nurturing people in your life away from the office. How can you thank them and how can you increase and use their support better?
- ✓ Insist on sufficient alone time. Do you know what to do with it when it’s available?
- ✓ Pursue ongoing nurturance at the office with your clinical colleagues; take lunch, conversations, and walks with one another.
- ✓ Peer consultation groups prove powerful vehicles; join or organize a peer support, supervision, Balint group, healing circle, or cuddle group.
- ✓ Participate in clinical teams and periodically conduct cotherapy to keep you fresh and vital.
- ✓ Seek nurturance from professionals in the community for both business assistance and collegial friendships.
- ✓ Develop arrangements for ongoing supervision or consultation. If it is unavailable or ineffective at your setting, then purchase it.
- ✓ Determine which clients “recharge your batteries” and brighten your day. Within the constraints of ethics and transference, structure your daily schedule and caseload to ensure that you see some of these patients on

a daily basis.

- ✓ Construct your own competence constellation to ensure your optimal functioning and protect you from unrecognized problems.
- ✓ Identify the interpersonal gratifications you receive from favorite clients and what happens following termination with them.
- ✓ Be a Telemachus seeking Mentor through your training, community, and professional organizations. How are your needs for mentoring being met today?
- ✓ Follow the evidence: The highest-rated career sustaining behavior for psychotherapists is spending time with one's spouse/partner and friends.
- ✓ Try to include phone calls, lunches, and breaks in your workday several times each week to provide contact with family and friends.
- ✓ Maintain your old, civilian friends who keep you grounded in life outside of clinical work.
- ✓ Utilize your family-of-origin relationships to help you reality test and to confront your grandiosity.
- ✓ Beware if your friendships are becoming fewer in number or diminishing in significance over years of professional practice. Take corrective action if necessary
- ✓ Don't go it alone. Take advantage of Colleague Assistance Plans, should practice troubles come your way or you need additional self-care.
- ✓ Something may be amiss if you are habitually giving out more nurturance than you are receiving. Seek a life mentor or personal therapist to remedy the imbalance.
- ✓ When confronted with occupational stress, tend and befriend, rather than fight or flight.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

- ✓ Understand concretely your roles, responsibilities, and limitations as a psychotherapist; only then can you share and establish these boundaries with patients.
- ✓ Work under capacity (90%) so that emergencies, family demands, and self-care can be accommodated.
- ✓ Secure informed consent and goal consensus in a collaborative manner with patients early on in treatment to avoid subsequent boundary misunderstandings and confusion.
- ✓ Clearly delineate your policies regarding extra sessions, late appointments, extrasession telephone contacts, payment for services, and the like.
- ✓ Consider adopting an informed consent form as a written treatment contract.
- ✓ Establish a monitoring method to determine when a particular boundary has been crossed.
- ✓ Cultivate shared responsibility with patients for the change process and treatment outcome; avoid taking sole responsibility for psychotherapy.
- ✓ Craft your own professional bill of rights. What are your inalienable rights as a psychotherapist?
- ✓ Demand a livable wage and a "good enough" income; you can do good while doing (financially) well.
- ✓ Set caseload boundaries: maintain your caseload at an effective number for you and limit the number of high-risk patients at any one time.
- ✓ Minimize your out-of-session exposure to emergencies and patient excursions into your personal time.
- ✓ Take protective measures to ensure your physical safety. Decline to treat certain clients, refuse to disclose personal data, prohibit clients from appearing uninvited at your home, and make your office secure.
- ✓ Learn to say "no" to clients, referral sources, agencies, and administrators; become a responsible assertive therapist.
- ✓ Rebuff inappropriate incursions into your practice by managed care organizations and other entities that would compromise your integrity and ethics.
- ✓ Delegate nonclinical work to staff or external services; focus on doing what you uniquely are trained and interested in doing.
- ✓ Be clear about post-termination contacts with clients. Saying good-bye to clients properly requires explicit statements concerning how, when, and why treatment may resume in the future.
- ✓ Beware of avarice. Are you working long hours out of financial necessity or getting greedy?
- ✓ Bridge the gap between work and loved ones by building in phone calls, personal visits, and short breaks.
- ✓ Demarcate the transition from work to non-work with regular rituals, such as music, exercise, change of clothes, or meditation.

- ✓ Transfer difficult patients—for an evaluation, a second opinion, or for treatment elsewhere—from a position of strength.
- ✓ Remember that your clients are not there to meet your needs; treatment relationships are not reciprocal.
- ✓ Define your relationships with colleagues with care. Transference influences these relationships, too.
- ✓ Let your hair down with family and friends. They want you to be genuine, spontaneous, and unprofessional.
- ✓ Establish an identity and life apart from your psychotherapist role. Don't get stale!
- ✓ Zealously protect your personal time with family and friends; work is work and home is home.
- ✓ Avoid friendships exclusively with clinical colleagues, as social gatherings may deteriorate into work.
- ✓ Embrace a mature synthesis of the dialectic between commitment to self and commitment to patients. Be both connected and separate through realistic boundaries.

RESTRUCTURING COGNITIONS

- ✓ Self-monitor your internal dialogue regarding your performance and your patients via thoughtful reflection, collecting data to dispute cognitive errors, or sharing with significant others.
- ✓ Examine your thinking for the underlying perfectionistic, self-denying traits endemic to mental health professionals.
- ✓ Compare your clinical performance to same-aged peers in similar circumstances, not to authorities.
- ✓ Track your overly busy schedule and rate pleasure and mastery of activities to help you discover what changes need to be made.
- ✓ Self-treat the error of selective abstraction by determining actual successes and failures, accepting the limitations of your therapeutic skills, and distinguishing between case failures and yourself as a failure.
- ✓ Think through transference feelings directed to you; to whom are they aimed and to whom do they belong?
- ✓ Beware of absolutistic thinking: musturbation (“I must be...”) and the tyranny of the shoulds (“I should have...”). They can affect you as much as your patients.
- ✓ Dispute the common fallacy that “good psychotherapy is equivalent to having all patients like us.”
- ✓ Recall that the other side of caring consists of confrontation. Caring about others includes being honest and tough at times.
- ✓ Reassure yourself that the conditions in psychotherapy, as well as in life, are not always easy. This is unfortunate but not catastrophic.
- ✓ Balance the amount of time you dwell on your successful cases and your frustrating cases.
- ✓ Redefine success as a process rather than an end-result. Success includes your effort, and mini- or partial achievements, not simply the complete remission of patient symptoms.
- ✓ Assertively reduce unrealistic demands made on you: don't take on more work than you need to or wrongly believe you're expected to do more.
- ✓ Recognize that your patients do not have to be as hard-working or persevering as you.
- ✓ Ask three critical questions—Did that really occur?, What are the probabilities?, and What is the worst that could happen?—when you catastrophize about you and your clients.
- ✓ Catch yourself when assuming blame (personal causality) for events in clients' lives and consider alternate explanations.
- ✓ Calculate real probabilities when thinking about treatment outcomes. The worst happens only infrequently—to you or to your patients.
- ✓ Evaluate treatment success on a continuum to avoid dichotomous thinking; psychotherapy outcomes rarely fall on either extreme of a continuum.
- ✓ Use self-insight, empathy, self-compassion, anxiety management, and conceptualizing ability when experiencing countertransference reactions.
- ✓ Resume ownership of your work choices: You chose this profession and your current employment.
- ✓ Confront the ultimate psychotherapist fallacy: “I should not have emotional problems. After all, I am a therapist!” Yes, you are an expert on human behavior—but you're still nutty at times!
- ✓ Create realistic self-care; avoid perfectionist tendencies toward eradicating your perfectionism.

- ✓ Offer yourself unconditional self-acceptance (USA) as a psychotherapist and as a person.

SUSTAINING HEALTHY ESCAPES

- ✓ Undertake a candid assessment of what purposes overwork has for you. What prevents you from engaging in healthy escapes?
- ✓ Perform an honest appraisal of prevalent *unhealthy* escapes (e.g., substance abuse, isolation, sexual acting out) and determine whether they apply to you.
- ✓ Take vital/detachment breaks during the workday to restore energy and reset your focus.
- ✓ Make relaxation part of your workday; go old school with meditation and deep breathing or try new school with technology and apps.
- ✓ Maintain your sense of humor; it is a career-sustaining behavior.
- ✓ Join your colleagues and staff for get-togethers in the office and spontaneous escapes from it.
- ✓ Plan phone calls, lunches, and breaks in your workday several times each week to provide contact with friends and family.
- ✓ Practice balance: over 80% of therapists routinely engage in reading or a hobby, take pleasure trips or vacations, and attend artistic events and movies as part of their self-care patterns (Mahoney, 1997).
- ✓ Schedule a weekly Shabbat – a regular day of rest and respite from the week’s demands.
- ✓ Monitor your vacation time. Is it less than you as a psychotherapist would recommend to patients in similarly stressful occupations?
- ✓ Follow Freud’s example: every year take several weeks away from the office, and stay largely out of contact.
- ✓ Create adventure and other diversions away from the office. Is play a staple of your emotional diet?
- ✓ “Chop wood, carry water”: participate in concrete physical activities with a clearly visible and obvious outcome to counterbalance your psychotherapeutic work.
- ✓ Balance your socialization and alone time; determine how much restorative solitude you require.
- ✓ Take personal retreats that distance yourself geographically, emotionally, and interpersonally.
- ✓ Lengthen retreats into periodic clinical sabbaticals devoid of psychotherapy responsibilities.
- ✓ Get your weekly dose of Vitamin N by absorbing nature in your healthy escapes.
- ✓ Try new and exciting activities for the first time: river rafting, camping, snorkeling, and the like.
- ✓ Avoid wishful thinking and self-blame in self-care; instead, pursue action-oriented strategies.
- ✓ Make a self-contract to integrate healthy escapes into your routine. Monitor and chart your progress.
- ✓ Ask yourself once a year (perhaps on your birthday), “How do I play?”

MAINTAINING MINDFULNESS

- ✓ Balance your foraging squirrel thinking with a more detached observational stance.
- ✓ Stop for a moment and reflect on the frenzy of your home life and clinical work: Do you achieve adequate pacing?
- ✓ Build in brief, pre-session mindfulness exercises that center you and enhance your therapeutic presence.
- ✓ Perform mind-body scans to acutely sense, observe, and feel your body in a nonjudgmental manner.
- ✓ Prime your mindfulness with self-compassion or secure attachment activities.
- ✓ Incorporate walking meditations and yoga stretches with a little creativity and commitment.
- ✓ Align your mind and body by combining mental mindfulness with physical postures in the office chair.
- ✓ Try cleansing breaths as well as breathing with long exhalations; both provide release and energy.
- ✓ Experiment with the meditative anchors of sound, nature, and sight; listen to music, immerse yourself in the weather, or focus on an object.
- ✓ Practice meditations that suit you in order to clear the mind, refresh the spirit, and centers the body.
- ✓ Ask whether you would encourage your clients to critique and condemn themselves the way you do for clinical miscues; cultivate self-compassion
- ✓ Engage in self-compassion breaks or loving-kindness meditations, which gently lead to affirmations.
- ✓ Trigger positive emotions by using gratitude exercises, such as three good things, gratitude letters, and gratitude visits.
- ✓ Attend to the warm feeling you had with/toward a client today and savor that feeling.

- ✓ Reflect mindfully on your work today: Recall what you did entering the office, note how many different things you accomplished, and quickly jot down the “good things.”
- ✓ Celebrate the transitions and rituals of psychotherapists, including successful patient terminations.
- ✓ Practice mindfulness as a skill but also as a life approach that represents humility and appreciates our common humanity.
- ✓ Remember always that just because they throw it does not mean you have to catch it.

CREATING A FLOURISHING ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ Avoid falling prey to American individualism and the fundamental attribution error: Harness the power of your work environment.
- ✓ Conduct an environmental audit of your workspace for comfort and appeal.
- ✓ Improve your work environment by providing pleasure in your furniture, aesthetics in your décor, and replenishment in your cupboard.
- ✓ Heal by design when creating or renovating your office: Follow the research on softness, personalization, and orderliness to promote your treatment objectives.
- ✓ Increase sensory awareness: using vision, hearing, touch, and olfaction counterbalances the cognitive and affective work of psychotherapy.
- ✓ Take protective measures to ensure your safety and that of your practice environment.
- ✓ Give yourself time between patients, 10 minutes to breathe, relax, make notes, return calls, and process.
- ✓ Determine whether your clinical talents and interpersonal interests are poorly invested in paperwork. If so, consider a clerical assistant, a billing service, a software program, or other alternatives.
- ✓ Defer and simplify the business aspects of your clinical position; do what you love and delegate the rest, as possible.
- ✓ Build behavioral boundaries to temporarily separate yourself from the clinical world by means of routines, assertion, and time.
- ✓ Increase supports and reduce constraints to keep high-demand institutional jobs bearable and rewarding.
- ✓ Recognize the grim truth that organizations create much of practitioner exhaustion and demoralization; refuse to blame the person when institutional causes operate.
- ✓ Search for ways to create greater freedom and independence in your work; those in more control of their workloads and schedules experience less burnout and more work-life satisfaction.
- ✓ Beware of false interventions and short-term fixes in dysfunctional institutions; treat the systemic roots, not just the acute symptoms.
- ✓ Create a self-care village in a workaholic world by advocating for self-care as a means of improving productivity and outcomes.
- ✓ Assist your colleagues and administrators in acknowledging the occupational hazards and in offering group support, Me-Time, and other replenishment opportunities.
- ✓ Cultivate a self-care ethos in training by improving selection of students, broadening training goals, increasing personal therapy, modeling personal development, and encouraging self-care research.
- ✓ Begin self-care at the top: insist that your professional associations include it in their ethics, accreditation standards, publications, conferences and continuing education.

PROFITING FROM PERSONAL THERAPY

- ✓ Heed the evidence: personal therapy is an emotionally vital and professionally nourishing experience.
- ✓ Give yourself 50 minutes of time every few weeks in a holding environment; practice what you preach about the value of psychotherapy!
- ✓ Confront your resistances for not pursuing personal therapy. Are these “good reasons”—or convenient rationalizations to avoid accepting the patient role?
- ✓ Take seriously Freud’s recommendation that every therapist should periodically—at intervals of five years or so—reenter psychotherapy *without shame* as a form of continued education.
- ✓ Beware the illusion that mental health professionals do not experience a need for personal therapy once in practice. More than half of psychotherapists do receive personal treatment following formal training.
- ✓ Seek family therapy and family-of-origin work as well; do not limit yourself to individual therapy.

- ✓ Supplement personal therapy with regular self-analysis.
- ✓ Consider an annual satisfaction checkup with a valued mentor, trusted colleague, or former therapist.
- ✓ Join us in modeling and encouraging personal therapy in the healthcare professions.
- ✓ Pursue other self-development activities in which you adopt the patient or student role.

CULTIVATING SPIRITUALITY AND MISSION

- ✓ Identify and then resonate to your abiding mission in life. What mission do you want written on your tombstone (epitaph)?
- ✓ Embrace your sense of calling to be a clinician. What are the spiritual antecedents to your career choice?
- ✓ Cultivate awe and wonder at the human spirit; it will enable you to pull hope from hell.
- ✓ Invoke and augment your client's spirituality to enrich their experience of psychotherapy.
- ✓ Connect to the spiritual sources of your hope and optimism regarding human behavior. If you have lost your enduring sense of caring and concern for others, get help.
- ✓ Offer religious/spiritual accommodative therapy for those clients desiring it, if you are trained to do so.
- ✓ Take 10-15 minutes and write a stream of consciousness letter to your God, Nature, Spirit, or a higher power. What did you learn or relearn about your connection to spirituality?
- ✓ Evaluate the integration of spirituality and personal growth in your own life. How are you doing? What are you doing to promote such a synthesis?
- ✓ Write a short mission statement explaining why you do what you do for a career.
- ✓ Create a hope-protecting philosophy of life that will help inoculate you from the despair of your clients.
- ✓ Identity and practice your *Tikkun* (healing and repairing the world).
- ✓ Pursue the ultimate questions and find meaning in your personal life so that practicing psychotherapy does not become the ultimate meaning for you.
- ✓ Become a citizen-therapist by merging your vocation with social activism.
- ✓ Let your life speak—manifest your values and vocation in daily life.

FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND GROWTH

- ✓ Strive for adaptiveness and openness to challenges—the defining characteristics of passionately committed psychotherapists.
- ✓ Upload your creativity in innovative treatments, valuable metaphors, and novel methods.
- ✓ Diversify, diversify, diversify. Involvement in diverse professional activities balances your workload and expresses the full array of your skills.
- ✓ Mix up your therapy days: individual, couples, group, and family formats; younger and older patients; talk therapy and action therapy. What else can you do to increase variety and novelty in your schedule?
- ✓ Improve over time by engaging in deliberate practice and collecting feedback on specific behaviors.
- ✓ Imagine periodically your future possible selves as a psychotherapist and then set sail in that direction.
- ✓ Embrace continuing education as *kaizen*—continuous improvement and lifelong learning.
- ✓ Watch videotape of your own sessions and those of masters to enhance your growth.
- ✓ Attend clinical conferences, read literature, and form study groups to access the life springs of a committed professional. Do you feel you are just getting CE hours or refining and expanding your skills?
- ✓ Focus daily on the good in your craft and your sessions to balance those perfectionistic expectations.
- ✓ Engage actively with professional organizations to shape our collective mission and to keep yourself involved.
- ✓ Create your personal mission statement to sharpen your focus and prioritize your activities.
- ✓ Convert self-care intentions into concrete behaviors—lest your soul be lost to the demons.
- ✓ Invest in interdisciplinary movements to investigate and remediate the cries of the world.
- ✓ Be gentle with yourself—shed the heavy burden of expectations about personal perfection that psychotherapists carry.
- ✓ Expect a lifetime of struggle for awareness and growth; self-renewal is a long-term process.