



The Intimate Edge: Extending the Reach of Psychoanalytic Interaction

By Darlene Bregman Ehrenberg

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From an interactive perspective, the author proposes a "theory of therapeutic action", focusing on what is healing in psychoanalysis, whether or not it evolves from "technique".

Using vivid case examples, she looks at the "intimate edge", intense encounters and playfulness in a way that is based in traditional psychoanalytic thought and yet open to the possibilities of the moment.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Using vivid case examples, psychoanalyst Darlene Bregman Ehrenberg invites readers to experience the intimacy of the consulting room. In this context she elaborates why the recognition of the interactive nature of the analytic field has profound and radical implications for one's thinking about analytic technique, regardless of theoretical orientation. She distinguishes between theory of technique, which relates to what one does with awareness and intention, and theory of therapeutic action, which has to do with what is healing in the psychoanalytic interaction, whether or not it evolves from "technique". Her premise is that becoming more attuned to therapeutic aspects of the interaction, which often elude awareness, and to the dialectical relationship between the interpersonal and the intrapsychic can enable psychoanalysts to refine their theory of technique and ability to use themselves as analytic instruments so as to expand the limits of what can be achieved with all patients through analytic work. Stressing the importance of attending to the affective relationship and the role of unconscious communication and enactment in the analytic interaction, she illustrates how the analytic expanse is enlarged, and a unique kind of intimacy and contextual safety generated, as these dimensions of the interaction, often beyond words and accessible only through the countertransference, begin to be explicitly acknowledged and addressed. Extensive data from the treatment of patients who have traditionally been considered unanalyzable reveal the rich rewards of working at this "intimate edge", the unique value of playfulness, and the role of encounter in the process of working through. The emphasis is on how to turn potential impasse into analytic opportunity by realizing the unique possibilities of the analytic moment. These examples demonstrate that even with patients who have been violated and abused, and for whom cynicism, terror and despair may have long prevailed, it is possible to achieve the kind of psychoanalytic engagement that can lead to the reawakening of hope and desire. This book will be welcomed by clinicians at all levels of expertise with an interest in expanding the reaches of analytic possibility. It will also be of interest to anyone who has ever been a patient, who has thought of becoming one, or who is curious about how the analytic process can change people's lives.

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