

# Patience with Patients

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John Adams



The longer I live, the more I read, the more patiently I think, and the more anxiously I inquire, the less I seem to know...Do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly [with your God]. This is enough.

AZ QUOTES

Really? We have to have  
patience??



# Objectives

- Discuss challenges to delivering quality care
  - External factors
  - Personal challenges
- Focus on key counseling skills
- Build on that foundation that we were given
- Refresh the counseling spirit

# What gets in your way?

- Discussion:
  - 3-4 Examples of barriers you face to doing your best work

# Common Barriers

- External
  - Administrative concerns: Budget, Staffing,
- Internal
  - Transference and Counter transference

**“I am not what has happened to me. I am what I  
choose to become.”**

**-Carl Jung**

# Patient Behaviors

- Lack of trust in general
- What is at stake for the patient?
- Reactions to Withdrawal
- Personality disorders – Maladaptive relationships
- Anxiety
  - Generalized
  - Based on lack of understanding
- Other Mental Health disorders



# Key factors in counseling

- Research shows the type of therapy used is not as important as are the specific counselor behaviors: Enthusiasm, Confidence, and Belief in the patient's ability to change.
- Clients are more likely to achieve their goals when a good and positive relationship exists between them and their therapist.
- The counselor's interactions with the client are a powerful tool in the helping relationship.
  - The Top Ten Basic Counseling Skills
    - Kevin J. Drab, M.Ed., M.A., LPC, CAC Diplomate

# Listening

- Listening is an active experience
  - It is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages
  - The listener should be as involved as the speaker
- Listening is not same as hearing
  - Hearing simply refers to the sounds that you hear where listening requires focus.
  - Listening requires paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told through the use of language, voice, and body

# I'm sorry...what?

- The human mind is notoriously bad at remembering
- Research suggests that we remember only 25%-50% of what is being said to us.
  - Safe to say you will only remember about an hour of what we talk about here.
- Tuning out



# What to do?

- Why do we listen
  - To get information
  - To understand
  - To learn
  - For enjoyment
- Remember key facts and ideas
- Listen with your mind and body
  - Active listening involves not only verbal listening skills but non-verbal listening skills

# 10 Principles of listening

- Stop talking-you can't listen if you are talking
  - Studies have shown that talking raises blood pressure and attentive listening can bring it down.
- Relax-prepare yourself to listen, clear your mind of distracting thoughts like “what am I going to have for lunch” or “is it going to rain today”; focus
- Ease the client-make eye contact, nod or use other gestures to encourage them to talk, help them to feel safe to talk

# 10 Principles, cont.

- Show empathy-work to understand the client; keep an open mind to their views and opinions
- Have patience-don't interrupt or try to finish their sentences; let them talk in their own time...don't rush them; don't start to think about what your reply is going to be before you have heard the whole message
- Remove distractions-put your work down, don't fidget, end one conversation before you start another with someone else



# 10 Principles, cont.

- Avoid personal prejudice-don't argue or criticize the client or become irritated by how they are speaking. Focus on what is being said
- Listen to tone-a speaker will use both tone and volume to keep an audience attentive. This can help you understand the emphasis of what is being said.



# 10 Principles, done at last

- Listen for ideas not just words-one of the most difficult things to do is to piece together bits of information to reveal the whole idea
- Ask questions-when it's your turn to speak ask questions to verify you heard the ideas completely
- Number 11-STOP TALKING!



**KEEP CALM  
AND  
THANK YOU  
FOR  
LISTENING**

# Like a vacation tour guide

- You want direction if you don't know WHERE to go next
    - You might not have the energy or confidence to lead
  - You want to go where YOU want to go
    - You may become annoyed
    - Subvert the plan
    - Go in an opposite direction
  - Your style and flexibility matter
- Ashton M. "My Way or Yours." *Drug and Alcohol Findings* 2006 p. 22-29

# Directive style

- Works well with non-resistant client
- Resolved ambivalence
- Recognize the harm in their use
- Do not hold reservations for use
- Often demands conformity to a set world view
- AA has a directive/instructive approach
- Cognitive Behavioral also has a directive approach

• Ashton M. "My Way or Yours." *Drug and Alcohol Findings* 2006 p. 22-29

# Nondirective style

- Introduced by Carl Rogers
- Suits clients characterized by anger and resentment
- Patients are their own best experts
- Patients feel valued, listened to and understood
- Takes time for processing

• Ashton M. "My Way or Yours." *Drug and Alcohol Findings* 2006 p. 22-29

# Regardless of Style

- Patients ALWAYS have the power to decide for themselves what they will do
- The patient's values will steer their decisions and course of their recovery
- We only impact a short period of time in their lives directly

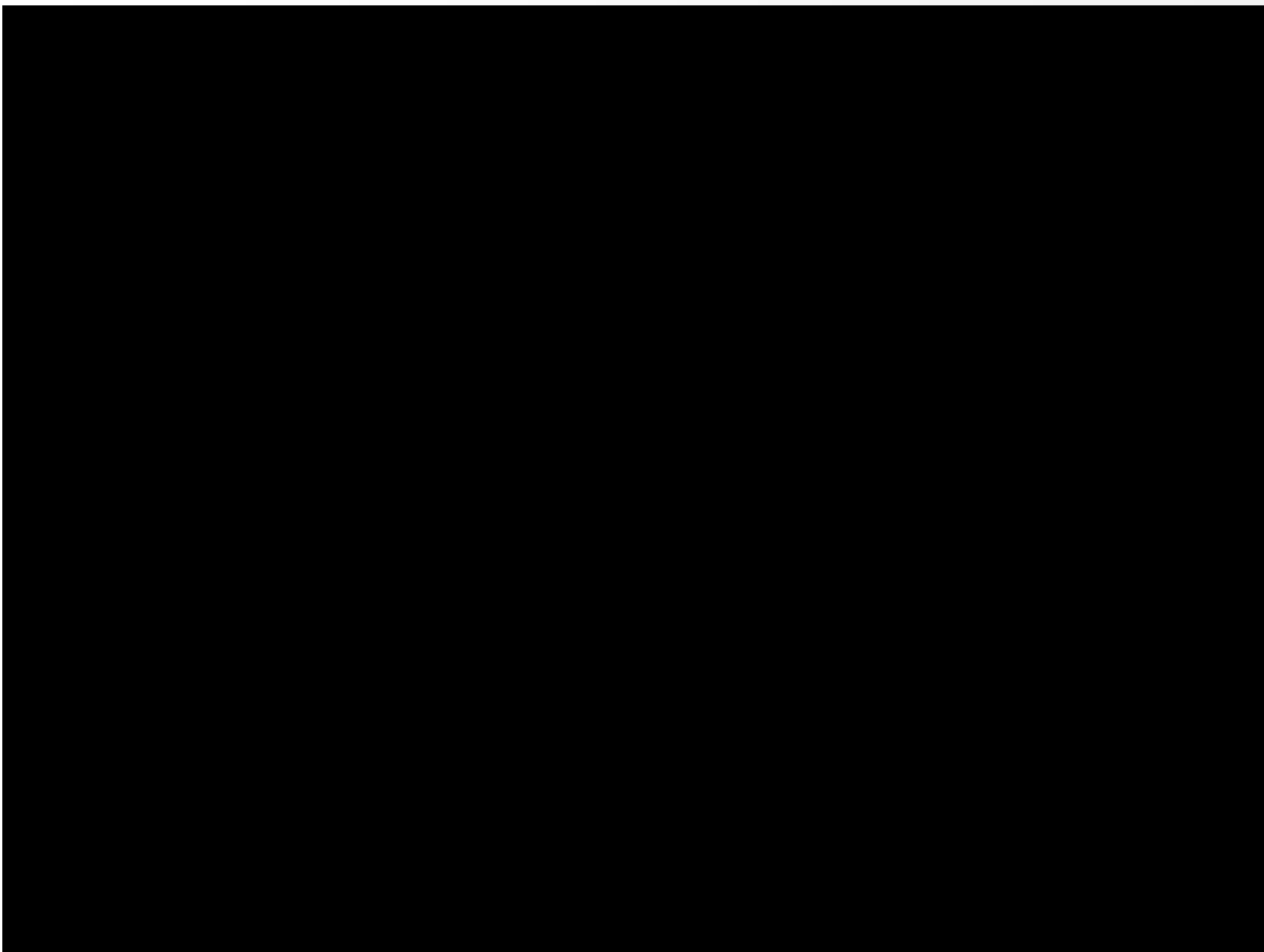
# The Role of the Counselor

- Recognizing the unique relationship we have
- No Quid Pro Quo
- It's not personal
- The power of objectivity
- The ability to respond rationally and not reactively
- Principles before personalities

# Empathy

- Empathy is a skill
- Defined as-understanding another's perception, feelings, experience
- Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another





# Empathy is not...

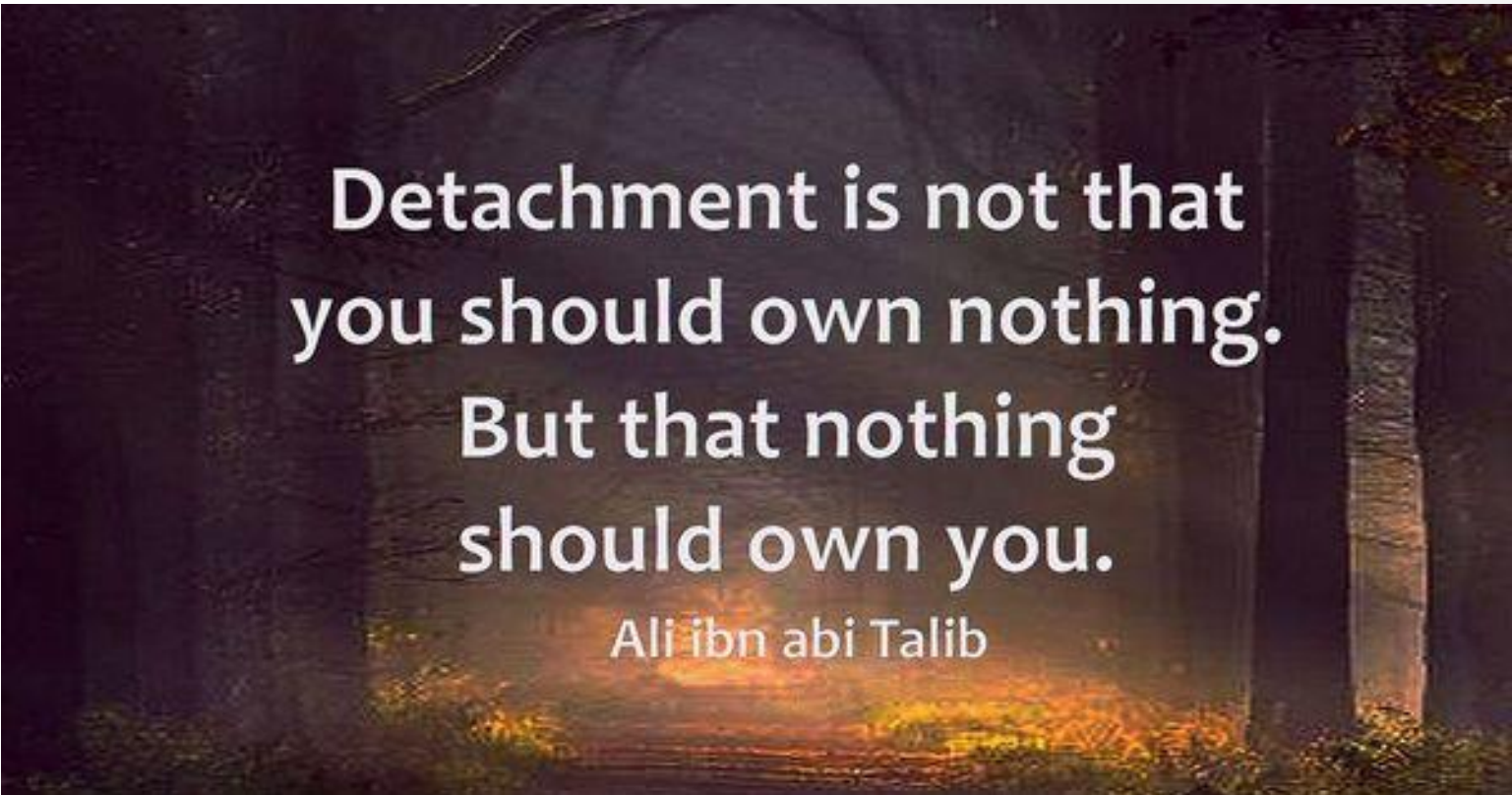
- Sympathy
- Identifying with the client
- Sharing a similar experience
- “I know how you feel”
- Painting silver linings

# Empathy skills

- Verbal and non-verbal attending
- Paraphrasing
- Reflecting
- Being non-judgemental
- Self-awareness and vulnerability

# Benefits of Empathy

- Better understand the needs of your client
- Have less trouble dealing with interpersonal conflicts
- Will learn to better motivate others
- Will have an easier time dealing with negativity of others if you understand their motivations and fears



**Detachment is not that  
you should own nothing.  
But that nothing  
should own you.**

Ali ibn abi Talib

# Mindfulness



# Using Mindfulness

- Assists in being Present with the patient
- Brings your Attention in Focus on the session
- Aids in being non-judgmental
- Promotes Empathetic responses
- Recognizes changes in patient responses and allows for flexibility in approach

# Warmth and Genuineness

- Warmth
  - Caring, respect, acceptance
  - Communicating interest and concern while recognizing their right to make their own decisions
  - Does not mean you agree with everything they say
  - Unconditional positive regard
- Genuineness
  - You mean what you say
  - You are honest
  - True to your word
  - Be yourself....be human



# Dignity and Respect

- Dignity-the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed; a sign or token of respect
- Respect-an act of giving particular attention; high or special regard; expressions of regard or courtesy
  - Everyone has the right to choose their own paths and make their own decisions

# Encouraging and Accepting

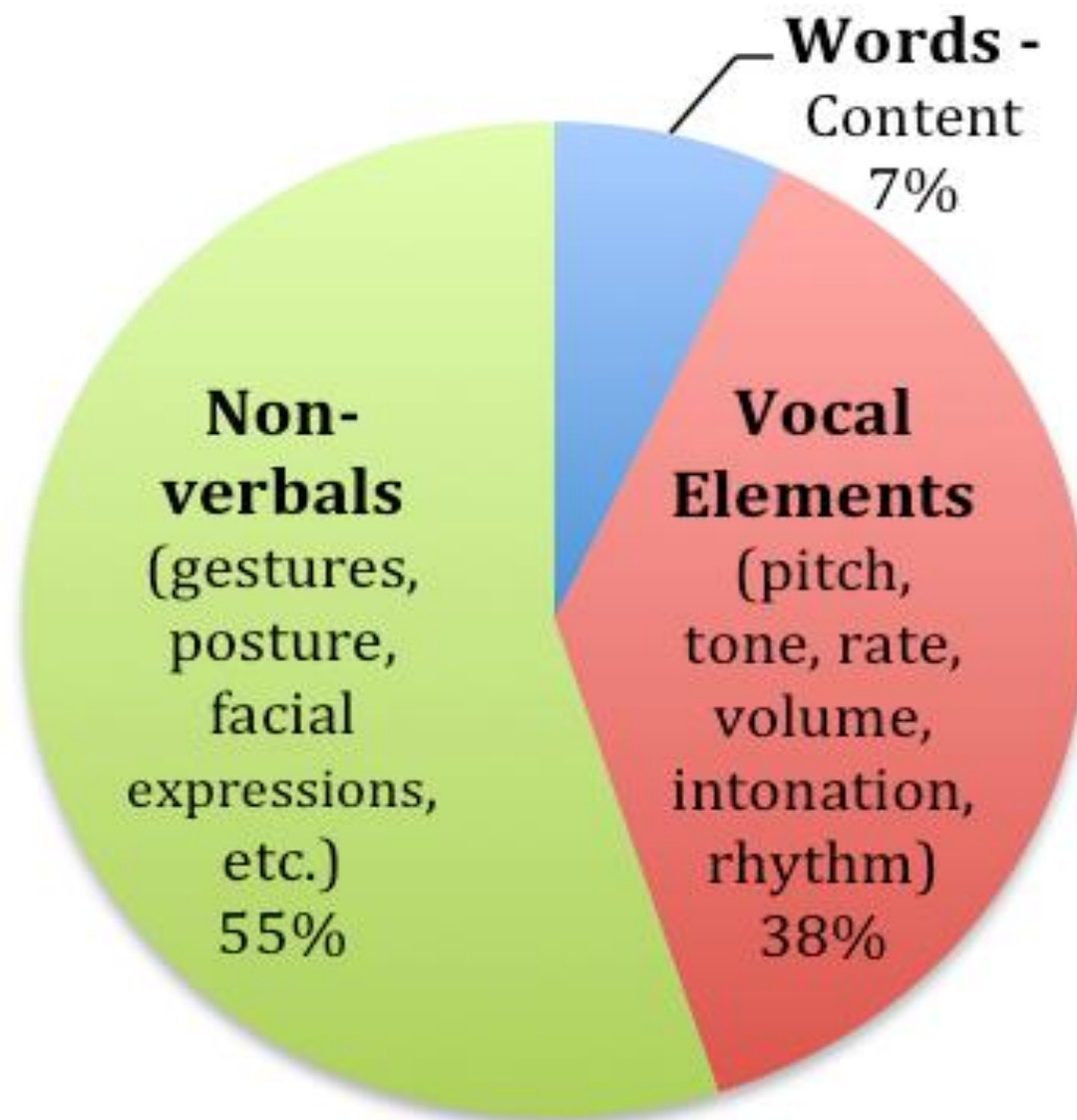
- Believe in the client
- Accept them for who they are
- Responding with nonjudgmental or noncritical verbal and nonverbal reactions
- Encourage them to make their own decisions
- Accept the decisions they make....while you use your skills to show them alternatives to decisions they make you know are unhealthy.
- Hope

# Non-verbal skills

- 2/3 of communication is non-verbal!
- Research has shown that clients often rank non-verbal factors, such as nonverbal gestures and body language, as the most important factor in building a counseling alliance.
- Much of our non-verbal communication is automatic...unconscious
- Learn to listen with your eyes

# What's involved

- Body language
  - Postures
  - Gestures
  - Facial expressions
- Eye contact
  - Direct or indirect
- Use of voice
  - Rate of speech
  - Tone/volume
  - Modulation-pauses
- Use of Space
  - Open vs closed
  - Your kinesphere
- Appearance
  - Dress how you want to be addressed



Dr. Albert Mehrabian

# In conclusion...

- Remember counseling is the detail
- It's the little things we do that can have the biggest impact on the client-counselor relationship
- Be aware of yourself and your client