PPOA Meeting Notes

June 23, 2020

Meeting via Zoom

Guest speaker psychotherapist Allan Greenfield

1715 N Weber St

Colorado Springs

719-634-5800 (w)

719-205-7713 (c)

Meeting called to order around 6:40 pm after quite a bit of banter getting everybody logged in and checking in to see who is participating this week.

Greenfield has been practicing for roughly 30 years in Colorado Springs, and he presented his material, which he had prepared specifically for this group.

His topic centered around the relationship between mind and body, saying that digestive diseases are exacerbated by distress and stress in life. He believes that the better we are doing psychologically, the better we do physically. We have a choice when things happen psychologically. We can pay attention to our feelings and the better we do at this, the better our physical well-being will be.

His theory is that when we tend to our own feelings we can attend to others’ feelings with more awareness. If we’re not attending to our own feelings, we’re not equipped to tend to others. We don’t want to be selfish by attending to ourselves, but when we’re doing better, we’re better able to positively affect everyone in our social network. Our relationship with ourselves can be likened to our relationship with others, and his work is about encouraging people to learn how to attend to their feelings. He particularly likes the 7-point guidelines.

\*1 Fairness: be fair with yourself. People often engage in self-defeating or self-deprecating behaviors, and we beat ourselves up in ways we would not beat up others.

\*2 Understanding: better understanding of ourselves leads to better understanding of others.

\*3 Caring: caring about what happens, because what happens matters.

\*4 Kindness: this differs from being nice, as it includes honesty, sincerity, and grace. Acting with kindness means interacting with people in the kindest way possible, and that must include truthfulness.

\*5 Importance: treating ourselves as if we matter, we should see ourselves as the most important in our circle. Taking care of our needs and attending to our feelings, we recognize our importance. All people should do this.

\*6 Nurturing: our welfare and the welfare of others is important. We are always wanting what’s best for ourselves and others.

\*7 Genuine: people do better when they are honest and genuine with themselves and with others. Lying diminishes the quality of interactions and relationships. Honesty is not intended to hurt.

In the ostomy group, there are always medical issues that come up, and the discussion moved to medical situations in which people who do not exhibit these principles are responsible for our care. We do not always feel important as patients because of the way we are treated by medical staff at all levels. Greenfield reminded us that doctors are merely people with degrees, and they have their own struggles with the 7-point guidelines and all the other issues that come up in life.

The topic of self-love is awkward for many people who grew up believing that self-love is selfishness. There are societal and religious forces that try to discourage people from achieving self-love. But from a psychological perspective, if you don’t attend to your needs, you’ll never achieve self-love, and you’ll never be able to truly attend to others’ feelings.

Greenfield also has a 4-point system for things all people are responsible for.

\*1 Beliefs

\*2 Thoughts

\*3 Feelings

\*4 Behavior

These four things are ours, and we can’t blame anyone else for any of them. By blaming others for these things, we are not attending to our own self. We are attending to others, giving them credit for our own feelings. The flip side of this is that we should never accept blame for others’ feelings.

Guilt is a common feeling, and if we do experience this, Greenfield encourages us to look deeper, because guilt is a sign that something is wrong.

People are often actually hurt by others, but Greenfield maintains that it is still our job to not allow ourselves to continue to feel hurt. In an abusive situation, our job is to attend to ourselves and get out.

Happiness is a hard choice. We can choose misery. It’s easy to find something to be miserable about, but what good does unhappiness do? What good does unhappiness do to your gut, your neurology, your sleep patterns, and all other physiological functions. Chronic unhappiness can exacerbate disease. Kindness towards ourselves and others does affect our mood. Being kind to ourselves first creates a way to share with others.

**BONUS: Three extra tidbits from Greenfield, via Dr. David Ascarelli**

\*1. **Don’t do guilt**! Don’t try to guilt other people, and don’t let people make you feel guilty.

\*2. **Don’t do should**! Don’t let people tell you what you should do, and don’t tell people what they should do.

\*3. **Try to be kind to everybody**!

How do you know if you need to see a psychotherapist? Well, Greenfield recommends sitting alone and still for five minutes. If you feel good after that, you don’t need it.