



Book Review

A Spiritual Oriented Holistic Approach: The Connections Paradigm

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The Connections Paradigm: Ancient Jewish Wisdom for Modern Mental Health

By David H. Rosmarin

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Spirituality is seen as a significant resource in human wellbeing and functionality. It has deemed highly significant in research carried out in the domains of applied psychology. In addition to discerning the needs of the client throughout their psychology sessions, it is of importance that the overall intervention program provides attention to the client's priorities. When these factors are considered, it can be stated that spirituality has an undeniable supportive role in the psychology sessions and attention should be paid to the level of spirituality of the client and the manner in which spirituality can be incooperated into therapy. For this purpose, the priorities of the client as well as the competence of the menal health practitioner should be taken into account.

In recent years, it has become evident that holistic psychological counselling models incooperating spiritual orientation are required. David H. Rosmarin has developed a holistic counseling model with a spiritual orientation that "brought together approaches to cognitive behavioral therapy with the teaching of the Connections paradigm" in a way that can meet this need. He expresses that he has been using this model for many years hence has transferred his experiences into this book. The author has highlighted that there have been many

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positive and negative changes in our lives due to the development of technology. This has become increasingly evident in Western society in which social welfare has seen an incredible improvement whilst mental health has seen a major decline. Due to these reasons, Rosmarin states that he set out to answer two questions: First of all, why is western society experiencing increasing psychological problems in terms of mental health? Secondly, what kind of measures we can take to reduce this tendency and to support people psychologically? As a result of long-term research and applications to find the answers to these questions, Rosmarin states that modern mental health experts cannot provide people with a satisfying sense of satisfaction as they focus on returning clients to their basic functionality. This is not effective in the satisfaction with life. In his counseling sessions, some of his clients showed courage by asking “Is getting rid of my psychological disorders completely the best thing I can hope for in life? Or am I missing out on a greater happiness that I can achieve?” After these experiences, Rosmarin expresses that he engaged in a deep search for the meaning behind the question “How to live a happy and fulfilling life?” Through this search, Rosmarin was able to utilise a spiritually oriented approach to modern therapy.

David H. Rosmarin, PhD, is director of the Spirituality and Mental Health Program at McLean Hospital and an assistant professor of psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Rosmarin is a clinical innovator whose work on integrating spirituality into cognitive behavioral therapy has wide acclaim. He is also a prolific researcher, having authored over 50 peer-reviewed scientific publications, numerous editorials/book chapters, and over 100 abstracts. Dr. Rosmarin clinical work and research have received media attention from ABC, NPR, Scientific American, the Boston Globe, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.

The book has three sections, each of which consists of five chapters. These three main sections include these headings, respectively: “a) Inner Connection: (Body-Soul), b) Interpersonal Connection (Us and Others), c) Spiritual Connection: (Us and God)”. In these sections, the concepts of the connections paradigm are explained in detail with examples and exercises. According to the connections paradigm, every human being at any given moment inhabits one of two worlds: the connected world and the disconnected world. While the world of connection, which is also expressed as the world of love, is defined with interdependence, compassion, generosity and courage; The world of disconnection, also called the world of fear, is defined by separation, fear, anxiety, isolation, anger. Our emotional states throughout all of our life experiences depend entirely on which world we choose to inhabit. The connection is explained by the union of two complementary and opposite entities in three basic areas. Disconnection causes separation and alienation of any of these components. These three domains are hierarchical: our relationship with God has bounded with our relationships with others, and our relationship with others with the degree to which

we maintain Inner-connection. Healthy interpersonal connections form on a bedrock of body-soul connection, and these two domains, in turn, provide a foundation for developing a relationship with God. By contrast, it is impossible to sustain a spiritual connection without interpersonal or inner connection. In each domain of connection, there is a giver and a receiver. Connection occurs when one entity provides for the other, which in turn accepts the contribution.

According to him, listening to the voice of the body and responding to its needs will also open the barriers to success (p.34). The body-soul connection is the basis of our communication with others and with God. Here, as a result of the establishment of the body and soul connection, an acceptance occurs under the guidance of the spirit (p.78). It can be said that this acceptance situation is similar to the acceptance that third wave therapies want to bring about in clients. Here, it can be stated that there is a comforting aspect of showing compassion to oneself and oneself say your goodbyes (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999). Rosmarin emphasizes that in order for the soul to maintain the inner connection, the unique features of the body should be approached with love and patience. We need to truly accept and love ourselves, even if we are sometimes inadequate. In summary, Rosmarin says that today's people neglect their physical needs along with many activities they perform. This highlights the importance of taking care of our various needs.

According to Rosmarin, an interpersonal connection is more complex than an inner connection. This is due to the existence of communication between two bodies and two souls (p.92). We are required to see the globe through the eyes of others, feel their joy, despair, and develop a pure empathy to recognize and meet their needs. To enter the world of another and remain at the level of interpersonal connection, we must also learn to give rather than receive. It is through this that the paradigm differs from meditation-oriented paradigms. Additionally, learning to tolerate and suffer the burden of relationships is considered a respectful preparation for spiritual connection with divinity as it teaches us to accept circumstances that are beyond our control (p.157). Through the Covid-19 process, we, as a collective, have experienced and acknowledged that making peace with uncertainties is one of the main criterias of being well (Sungur, 2020). With this, Rosmarin discusses various ways in which one can control and move away from negative emotions. However, instead of moving away from emotions, it may be more important to recognize the emotion, identify it, monitor it, focus on what it tells us and focus on its functional aspects. When we acknowledge the emotion, we can refocus on ourselves and our needs. Moving away from emotion may prevent us from acquiring the information we can learn from it. Therefore, following our emotions without escaping can be an advantage for our actions (Berking & Whitley, 2014; Leahy, 2015).

The concept of spiritual connection includes realizing the recognition of the will of God. It is also worth emphasizing that it is not necessary to be a member of a religious doctrine but to benefit from the spiritual connection. Nevertheless, individuals must be open to the possibility of a God's existence to develop their spiritual connection (p.159). Connection, both inner and interpersonal, weakens over time without a healthy relationship with God. Spiritual connection involves going beyond the physical limits of our inner and interpersonal worlds. The purpose of this step is to establish a uniquely close relationship with God by perceiving the presence of God every day and fulfilling the requirements of what we perceive (p.161). Spiritual connection focuses on recognizing order and design in the world, recognizing our own vulnerability, seeing the divine potential in each of us, making heroic efforts to reveal that potential. Rosamarin also expressed the following opinion as a result of his interview with a Muslim client: "During this session, I saw how consistent most of the Islamic concepts about the client's religious traditions and the nature of God were with the paradigm of connections." (p.168). Rosamarin at this point, he says that the model can also be applied to clients with different religious beliefs. The concept of spiritual connection is highly significant hence the emphasis on the concepts. Connecting with the God here; trusting Him, being glorification to Him and being grateful. In addition, it is also important to contemplate the order and design in everything created and to take actions in a way that the creator can tolerate. It is emphasized that one cannot reach wholeness without the realization of spiritual connection. Considering these dimensions, the necessity for clients to be open to the existence of the God emerges. It can be said that this model is a study that can benefit those who believe in the God or are open to the possibility of the God's existence. In this respect, I think that it is not possible for clients who do not have a God idea to carry out the work especially in the area spiritual connections section.

In my opinion, the teaching in question has aspects that overlap with other religious teachings. It shows that the basic assumptions presented by this teaching can also be used for other spiritually oriented approaches. The flexibility of the paradigm in this regard can provide convenience to professionals in the psychological counseling process. It also draws attention in terms of the importance given to relationships in the counseling process, the emphasis on context, and its approach to people with different beliefs. However, the author's idea of being open to belief in God shows that there is a certain limitation in the approach. Here, the client's emphasis on the connection with God as the determinant of his relationship with himself and his environment is a sign of this. I think that this situation will be evaluated before the client begins the therapy. Therefore, it is considered important for clients who want to receive services in line with this approach to adopt a counseling model that gives priority to the spiritual field. In conclusion, the author states that many therapy approaches focus on only one of the assumptions predicted by the connections paradigm. He particularly emphasizes

that very few types of psychotherapy include spiritual connection. It is stated that the connections paradigm is unique in that it offers a multi-faceted view on the use of human resources. This statement of the author seems a little assertive. As logotherapy, Transpersonal Psychology, Positive Psychology, Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT), Mindfulness-Based Therapies, etc., all deal with the relationship of the person with himself, his environment and spirituality from different aspects. In addition to this, integrated therapy approaches such as spiritually oriented Psychodynamics, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, ACT are also studied. In summary, it can be said that in today's world, there is a need for multidimensional therapy approaches. This paradigm can be evaluated with a holistic approach that considers the spiritual and psychological dimensions of human experience and development as separate dimensions and evaluates the priority and wishes of the client. At the point of spiritual and psychological development, taking into account the answers of the client, the arrangement of the counseling approach will determine how the process will proceed.

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