

# January 2018 Thoughts for the Day

1/31/18

We started up DBT skills group again at the office, in addition to our on-going groups. I haven't co-facilitated the group in some time. I have to say I like this group, although the introduction to the skills always seems like a slog. But down the road having that foundation makes the rest of the info make more sense.

1/30/18

As we age, it's difficult at times to watch friends and family become ill or pass away. Over time I think we may get better at handling these losses. As these events occur it also brings our own mortality to the forefront of our minds. It raises questions such as: Have you put anything in place regarding end of life decisions? For example, do you have an advance directive? And do you have a will?

1/29/18

As a Knoepfler I would be remiss if I didn't ask "have you started volunteering in some way?" I bring this up over and over. This is because the world needs more people to pitch in and help out. And the benefit isn't just for whatever cause you choose. You will also benefit as well, because most people feel good when they do something meaningful. It doesn't have to be with an organized charity, you can be a one-person volunteer organization. My mom recently reminded me of my one-person sit-in I did in high school. It actually changed people's minds when I did it too. But that was just a bonus. The fact that I acted on behalf of a community was the important thing.

1/28/18

There is a positive trend right now in community corrections of trying to be supportive of people being successful versus focusing on playing "gotcha" for violations. The pendulum swings back and forth on this one. Obviously there are bottom lines and enforcement has to occur when violations happen. But at the same time, we all win when people in legal trouble are successfully reintegrated into society once they have done their time. As a person in the community who doesn't work with people in this situation, you may ask what you can do. Hiring someone is a way assist a person in being successful. It may feel risky to do this, and for example you don't want a person convicted of embezzling as your accountant. But if their crime of conviction does not relate in any way to their job duties, why not give a person a second chance?

1/27/18

My first live show of the year was last Sunday seeing War at Jazz Alley. It was a great way to start 2018 when it comes to live music.

1/26/18

It's funny how the unintended consequences of something can be a benefit. My car's driver side window will roll down, but it takes an act of God to get it to completely come back up. This is obviously quite annoying, and the price tag for repairing it is more than I want to spend. The upside, no food from drive-thru windows. Especially during the winter months in Seattle. I have joked that keeping me away from fast food is the reason for not fixing the window, but it has become the real reason, not the money.

1/25/18

Ever develop a goal that was so vague that there was no way to figure out whether you accomplished it or not? When making goals make sure they are specific enough that there is the ability to say "Did it!" , or "Nope, it didn't happen." If you are serious about accomplishing things, the more specific the goal the better. For example, I set the goal of sending my contractors their 1099s by the 20th. They didn't go out until today. But the goal kept me mindful of them needing to be done. And once the self-imposed deadline came and went, I put more pressure on myself to do them and that is how I spent much of yesterday. That and learning what a fugue is.

1/24/18

The fugue. As a mental health provider it has a very specific meaning . In music it describes something much different. I am a person who loves music but doesn't know much about music theory and the construction of musical works. When it comes to fugues, this YouTube video does a great job in describing what a fugue is and how one is put together.

[What is a fugue?](#)

1/23/18

Segue - one of my favorite words. It's a transition from one thing to another. Are you good at segues? I think it takes practice. For me, when I think about segues, I think of music most of the time. I see a good segue as a sign of a gifted musician. The last several months when Prince did live shows before he died he took many songs and would include some of the most incredible transitions from one song to another and back. It was seamless and appeared effortless in the way he did it. I can listen to those live shows over and over and never get tired of his musical genius. And the segues are an amazing part of why.

1/22/18

When is the last time you danced? Are you self-conscious about your body and movement? If so, try dancing in the privacy of your own home. Most people find that movement and dancing are great for improving their mood. Once you get over yourself, see how you feel when you're done.

1/21/18

Starbucks closed my neighborhood store after 38 years in that location. They only moved several blocks down the road. But it is weird that they are no longer there anymore. Do you adapt to change without much difficulty? Or is it a struggle? If it is a struggle consider this.... Exposure therapy is where you expose yourself in manageable amounts to the thing or situation that causes distress and gradually you will become desensitized to it. How many trips around the block will it take before I stop expecting to see Starbucks? Probably three. Not very a very distressing situation. Perhaps it will depend on what moves in to replace them.

1/20/18

How do you deal with fear? Does it tend to create the "fight or flight" response in you? Are you cool as a cucumber? Do you lash out? Do you isolate? I believe the key is to try and stay in your rational mind as much as possible. For most of us, fear comes from the unknown. Time is generally our friend, and part of what is important is to have healthy coping mechanisms to let things work themselves out.

1/19/18

A client from more than two decades ago recently called me. He was a kid when I met him. He talked about how happy he is in life at this time. As a mental health therapist there are times when you wonder how certain people are doing when something triggers a memory of a client. Unlike a friend or a relative it is not our place to reach out to people and inquire about their life in order to satisfy our own curiosity. However, whether a person is doing well or struggling, I always appreciate getting updates. In general, if a person was a client for more than a few sessions I remember almost everyone. Sometimes I remember more about my clients and their lives than my own, which is weird and sometimes annoying to me and my family. But that is my job, to remember the people I work with and their stories.

1/18/18

One of the things I like about my current life is that I have set up my schedule so that 99% of the time I don't have to use an alarm clock, I can just let my body decide when to wake up. It is so much more relaxing when I go to sleep to know I won't wake up to a blaring alarm.

1/17/18

I have had a new pan to cook eggs in the morning. I worked at a breakfast restaurant for years and my egg cooking skills never went away completely even though it's been over 30 years since I cooked professionally. And with my new pan they not only taste great, they actually look beautiful.

1/16/18

Another sex and the internet post. The state of interactive on-line sexual behavior has reached a new level (well at least for me it is something new I learned about that exists). While you engage in sexting with your partner, you can be remotely controlling their sex toy. Its funny to discover the many ways that technology has changed sexual behavior in the 21st century.

1/15/18

Its MLK day today. Take a moment to think about the progress we have made in being a more equal society with people of all races and ethnic backgrounds being treated better than in the past. And now I am personally going to take another few to put out energy into the universe that the progress will continue, because we still have a long way to go.

1/14/18

Ever think much about sexting? or engaging in live streaming of your sexual activity with a partner? I encourage people, especially young people to be very cautious about this activity. There are many reasons. At the top of my list is that in 5 or 10 years, will the video of the person masturbating or having sex be something they want their former high school friends to have. But even more so for the people under 18 at the time of creating the images, they are considered child pornography. And it was recently determined that a person (under 18) who created self-images and then sent them to someone else could be charged with child pornography. Crazy stuff.

1/13/18

I had a discussion with another therapist about using risk assessment tools. The research about the use of these tools in my field has substantiated that when used according to the manuals the tools are actually more accurate than the evaluator's personal judgment. These tools are similar to what insurance companies use to group people by risk. It all comes down to being young, unmarried and male, or so it seems. At least as a starting point anyway.

It can be a struggle to think that after all the training we receive, the tool is a better predictor of future risk than a person. But when you think about it, our job is information gathering, and the tool's is risk prediction. And I see our job as accurately scoring the tool and making sure there aren't any legitimate over-riding factors. For example, a person may score on the tool as being at a high risk. But if they are bed-ridden, the risk is obviously limited by a factor that the tool may not take into consideration.

New people to the field have to adjust to this idea that a tool can perform better than their judgment.

1/12/18

Some days accomplishing the little stuff feels like a big accomplishment. I remembered to get paper towels and garbage bags from the store this afternoon. Success.

1/11/18

In group a person pointed out that my words and non-verbals didn't match. A discussion of congruity happened and also how when things don't match you're probably seeing defense mechanisms in action. It's always fun when clients point out concepts when they see them in YOU the therapist. But hey, we're the safe people to do that with, so it makes sense.

1/10/18

How often do you back up your data? I don't use cloud storage for work. Somehow I feel safer using an encrypted external hard drive. It seems safer and less accessible. I back up every couple weeks. Even if your data isn't sensitive, backing up things liked treasured photos makes sense, in case the primary place your store digital files crashes, goes out of business, becomes inaccessible, or whatever.

1/9/18

I've gotten back into the habit of watching Jeopardy recently when I get home from work. I started watching Jeopardy as a kid when the host was Art Fleming. One of my goals was always to get on the show as a contestant. Anyway... I remember the day I got the email from the producers to come to

California to do the in-person interview/testing. After it was done I left with my 5 Jeopardy logo pens wondering if I would get the call that year to go down to be on the show. Alas, the call never came to actually be on the show. But I will look back with fond memories of that time when I received the email and made the trip to California. Who knows I may get another shot someday. Get well soon Alex - brain surgery - yikes!

1/8/18

I was at a bookstore with my mom trying to find something new to read. We were strolling up and down the aisles in the fiction section. I asked her if she could recommend any work by Dickens that she liked because I had been unsuccessful in finding anything by him I liked. She said she wasn't a big fan of him either. I asked why she thought he had become so successful and her opinion was that there weren't nearly as many options back then to read.

1/7/18

A few days ago I watched a video (I had heard about from someone) out of morbid curiosity. I am now regretting that decision in so many ways. It's a reminder to be careful about what you expose yourself to because you can't unsee or unhear things. The impact is already fading at this point, but it will never totally go away. It reminds me of a similar situation a couple years ago when a college basketball player ended up with a compound fracture of his leg during a game. The video of his leg breaking went viral. That is yet another image I wish I hadn't seen. Or Joe Theismann's as well. Ugh.

1/6/18

As the world seems like its devolving into a much less civilized place, for me the people who still have good manners stand out even more. It's a sad commentary that an impromptu "Thanks" meant so much to me yesterday. But I guess a part of it was because the person who thanked me has felt like he has nothing, and as a result nothing to give. But as he realizes he has a lot (maybe not in material wealth but in other ways), his ability to be grateful and show gratitude have increased.

1/5/18

I'm in the planning stages for my 2018 major vacation. I have two options so far on the list. My favorite time to vacation is September, so I have to think about where in world is a good place to vacation that time of year. I have a few months to expand, then narrow down the list.

1/4/18

As the new year begins I kind of dread the next three months because they are very focused on taxes and the IRS. In January, as a business owner I have to get my contractors their 1099s, pay state B&O tax, and pay a quarterly tax payment to the U.S. government. I am going to set a goal to get my 1099 contractors their paperwork sent out by the 20th even though I have until the 31st.

1/3/18

Will you look back on your life and wish you had done something you haven't? I like the idea of an evolving bucket list. But the time to create your list is early in life not on your death bed. "Bucket lists" when you are young are known as "goals". And people with goals tend to be happier than people without them. Even if you don't accomplish your goals, the process of creating and then trying to accomplish them can be rewarding in and of itself. And at least you'll know you tried whether it works out or not.

1/2/18

Back to the grind after a holiweek (in contrast to a holiday). I actually worked over the winter break so coming back wasn't too bad.

1/1/18

There are many sayings about talking too much. "Loose lips sink ships" or "Discretion is the better part of valor" and "A fool can be recognized by his many words" are three examples. The next time you are tempted to say something, think twice, maybe three times. Will it be constructive? Will it hurt anyone? Will the positive benefit outweigh the negative? After taking a little time, decide whether it makes sense to speak.

