

February 2018 Thoughts for the Day

2/28/18

I decided I would try learning a little Spanish. I am dabbling in this through the free program Duolingo. It's a good way to challenge my brain, in addition to other things that I do.

2/27/18

I was hooked on watching Premier League soccer matches. Since the player Neymar Jr. was sold to Paris Saint-Germain it's been fun watching him play. Most of the games are played on the Spanish language channel so I am listening in Spanish and not understanding much of the commentary at all. Still fun.

2/26/18

A colleague was struggling and reached out for help on social media in a very public way. The colleague just needed some reassurance. The outpouring of love was very touching. Suffering in silence is not good for a person. And this colleague, she is a great reminder that it is OK to ask people for support and reassurance.

2/25/18

Is there something you do in the same way every day? Have you ever tried doing it differently? It takes a little more effort to break out of the routine. But it's good to keep oneself flexible in thinking. There are days and times where doing certain things on auto-pilot is helpful. because it leaves time and energy to get other more important tasks done. But sometimes even switching up the way you do mundane tasks is important. For example 99% of the time I put on right sock, then left sock, then left shoe and finally my right shoe. However, there is rarely only way right way to do something. So I started putting on my left sock, left shoe, then right sock and finally my right shoe. It is a goofy example, and it definitely takes more effort to put on my socks and shoes this way. But if one doesn't practice mental flexibility it may decrease over time. However, the minute you see me with my socks over my shoes, you will know I took this idea a little too far.

2/24/18

I am not Catholic but have a client who is. I agreed to give up cursing for Lent. 40 days with no F Bombs. It's been tough, but it feels good to do it. The fact that it is sometimes tough to refrain from using curse words lets me know I used them more than I believed.

2/23/18

Ever need to get some sadness out and you just can't let yourself cry? I have a friend who gets to that point and uses the following strategy. He watches a super sad movie in the dark and lets all the sadness out. He says it works every time for him. Personally music does a better job of this for me than a movie. But use whatever works.

2/22/18

Now do the same only physically. Test your limits. Not to a ridiculous degree. But do some push ups. Pull ups. Go for a jog or run. Play some basketball or soccer. Go for a hike or a bike ride. Push the limits of your endurance. Over time if you do this it will increase.

2/21/28

What are things you do to exercise your mind? Reading? Puzzles? Creating art or music? Ever exercised your brain to the point of feeling fatigued? It's kind of a cool experience. The next time you are bored, try doing something that pushes the limits of your brain's ability.

2/20/18

When will the public have had enough to demand change in the country regarding kids, guns and school shootings? I hope we have reached that point. Time will tell. It's hard enough getting through

high school for many, this added pressure doesn't help. I can't imagine going to high school in this day and age with social media. But with the added pressure of a fellow student possibly opening fire, that is just crazy.

2/19/18

Working with young adults is rewarding for me because many are going through existential crises. It's not limited to young adults, but it is common for this to occur in a person's teens and early twenties, compared to other times in a person's life. I work with many people involved in the criminal justice system who feel that their conviction has stripped them of the ability to have a meaningful life. Combine their age with their life circumstances and this can be overwhelming. Finding meaning in one's life in spite of adversity is really difficult. But when one does it seems it can feel more precious than if life is going well and it occurs. Without the contrast of the bitter, the sweet doesn't taste nearly as good.

2/18/18

Do you believe things are predetermined or that man has free will? It is an interesting discussion to have. I lean towards the free will side of the debate. Most recently the person who I discussed this with leaned in the opposite direction, feeling that all of our lives are predetermined, even if we don't know it individually. If life is predetermined, but unknown to the individual, would it change things? It would feel like you have free will even if you don't. However, if you believe people have free will, but really it is a facade and actually everything is predetermined, would it matter since you have the illusion that you are choosing? Obviously my leanings show in the way I word things.

2/17/18

Post Secret is a place where people send anonymous postcards with their secrets on them. It's fascinating to ask people to do this, whether they send them in, or bring them to therapy, or hold onto them and show them to no one. It can be scary to put one's secret down on a piece of paper where someone else might see it. But as I noted earlier about drawing, it can also be very freeing as well. Recently I had someone do this and it was a revealing process for them. I think secrets become less powerful when they are revealed, even anonymously. And people discover they aren't alone in carrying around things that are embarrassing or shaming. And sometimes they discover that the weight of the secret becomes lighter once it is revealed.

2/16/18

I know a person with physical limitations who is not feeling so hot. The person confided that maybe it's time to get a motorized scooter to get around. Maybe it was unfair to say this, but I said that it seems like that would be the beginning of the end. I want the person to keep fighting for their mobility. Time will tell whether the person truly needs that much assistance to get around. The person has agreed to hold off on buying a scooter. I hope they will start with a cane or walker before going for the scooter.

2/15/18

The month is already half over. February always seems to go by fast.

2/14/18

There is a lot of hype and pressure on this day to show your love for someone special. And if you don't have a special someone it can feel really bad. But Valentine's Day is just another day, and a holiday like many others contrived to sell products. So don't feel bad if there isn't a special someone in your life on this day. Treat yourself, the person I hope you love the most, to something special. It doesn't have to be a fancy or expensive present. But maybe it's a treat that you normally wouldn't allow yourself. Or perhaps it's taking a mental health day and binge watching a guilty pleasure TV show you want to see.

2/13/18

It's interesting to ask people to draw or do other creative activities in therapy. Many people become very self conscious. If they can get over this it's very freeing experience to create something.

2/12/18

Has your therapist ever asked you whether the services they are providing are meeting your needs? Or helping in any way? Recently I asked a client this because I really wondered whether they were getting anything out of the therapy experience or if they were merely attending to keep certain people in their life happy. The person told me that I am the only person that they are even remotely honest with about their life. I am hoping that the trust they have in me can be extended to other people in their life. However, in the meantime I am happy to be that person until this person has a sufficient support network in their day to day life.

2/11/18

I talked to a person who is an undergrad who wants to go into my professional specialty. She is eager to do an internship to see whether she really likes the work as much as she thinks she will. I connected her with a person who may be able to set up an undergraduate internship experience for her. I remember my own undergrad internship experience with Youthcare (back when it was Seattle Youth and Community Services). It was probably one of the most influential experiences I have ever gone through and cemented by belief that I wanted to work in the mental health field.

2/10/18

As a follow up to yesterday's post, in addition to support at work, it's nice to have people in your life who you can totally be yourself around and say all the things you want to say and be who you are without judgment. I was talking to an old friend on the phone and this person always cheers me up. We are able to make one another laugh at life and ourselves. It's great.

2/9/18

My office assistant is back at work and boy I can tell the difference having her there. It's so much more relaxing having help. I've gone from being a person wanting to do everything all by myself, to enjoying having someone working with me to get things done. It may seem expensive to do this, but in the long I believe it's worth every cent.

2/8/18

Someone I know is probably being "catfished". They don't seem to want to believe it. Because they are so convinced that this person is the love of their life, I have urged them to travel to meet the person. So far they haven't. I have a feeling the person knows that things aren't exactly how the other person is representing them. I have come to believe this person doesn't want to know because the fantasy of an amazing partner will come crashing down. We all live in denial about certain things. This is not an area where I would want to be in denial.

2/7/18

It's funny because lately I have had dreams of being an observer in life rather than a participant. I encourage my clients to find new hobbies or resume old ones that they haven't been doing for awhile. I think I need to take my own advice, because apparently my dreams are telling me something.

2/6/18

A couple weeks ago, in anger I said something mean to a colleague. I was surprised that I said what I said. There was no need for me to be such a jerk. The best gift I gave myself was to apologize to the person for what I said. I feel a million times better for owning my words and that it was wrong to say them.

2/5/18

When working with people who are struggling and depressed, it is hard for them to focus on reasons to be grateful. But that is part of what we ask them to do in therapy. And it really helps. When is the last time you focused on the reasons you are grateful to be alive vs. all your complaints and concerns? Last week two former clients took time out of their day to call and email and thank me for something I did for them. It certainly made my day. Not just the "thank you" but that they remembered that being grateful is important.

2/4/18

A man involved in updating risk assessment tools regarding adult men who have been convicted of a sexual offense created a YouTube video to explain how to use the updated tools. I like his video:
[Risk Assessment Video](#)

2/3/18

I did my 20+K steps day for the month today. Last month I did three 20+K days. This month I might get a second one in.

2/2/18

Friday is currently my favorite day. I don't get wild. It's a mellow day. I try to schedule as little as possible. It's a nice way to end the week.

2/1/18

At the end of this month one of my favorite non-profits is holding their annual fundraiser. KCSARC provides prevention, legal advocacy, and treatment for people who have been sexually assaulted. Please consider giving to them and help them continue to do important work they do.