

IN HER OWN WORDS

What to expect from Live Better

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My job as a psychotherapist and life coach is to share strategies that have helped other people improve their lives.

My Live Better column will convey strategies and techniques to enhance your self-esteem and your relationships.

I have been counseling clients on the southside of Indianapolis for more than 20 years and grew up in this community, so I have a vast amount of information to share about the resources in the area.

Some of you may wonder what a psychotherapist does.

Psychotherapists are counselors who work with people individually, in a family setting or in groups to improve their mental health. A counselor evaluates clients and looks at their functioning at home, work or in a social setting.

Historically they look at a client's past to determine patterns of behavior. They assess areas that need reshaping and then assist the client in working on family-of-origin issues that may have contributed to their problems.

My work includes using personal life coaching techniques. In coaching, there is an inherent belief that the client has internal strengths but may be lacking a formula for how to make needed changes.

Coaching works toward motivating and inspiring a client to achieve his or her goals. So while psychotherapy concentrates on fixing what is broken, coaching assists clients in developing personal strengths to build on what is already there.

Where psychotherapy focuses on personality weaknesses or life traumas, life coaching emphasizes abilities.

I find the use of both techniques helpful to give clients more opportunities for change and growth.

Here is an example of the two different models used by the same client.

A client comes into the office and wants help improving her relationship with her spouse. She complains that she does everything for him and yet he does nothing for her.

In psychotherapy, one might want to look at family-of-origin issues by investigating what healthy and unhealthy relationships she had as a child. In

this situation, the client shares that she lived in a home with an alcoholic parent.

As a result, she did the primary caretaking for her family. She didn't really experience a true childhood because she functioned as an adult throughout her formative years.

A counselor's work might include helping her see how she plays out the same patterns in adulthood. She would then learn skills to break the cycle of putting everyone else's needs before her own.

A personal life coach would help the client to see the strengths that she has as a result of her past. In coaching, she would be encouraged to develop other strengths that would assist her in meeting her needs now that she has an awareness of her lifelong caretaker role.

She would identify her goals and set up an action plan to actualize them.

As you read my column, I encourage you to look for ways it applies to you. I invite you to let me know what you would like to improve in your own life.

I want to help you create your vision. I will look forward to motivating you to be the best you can be.

Owners determine pets' final resting place

By MICHAEL W. HOSKINS
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Choosing a final resting place can be a tough decision for families who've just lost a pet.

Families can choose between cremation, backyard burial or more elaborate memorial arrangements.

Some southside funeral homes, such as Wilson St. Pierre, offer cremation services for pets but do not handle burials.

"It's always a tough time," Franklin veterinarian Jennifer Clarke said of pet deaths. "There should be someone who can help families through this and make the best decision."

"Kids do better if you do a funeral, if there's a whole ritual

to go through," Clarke said.

Veterinarians caution families about burying pets in backyards, warning that health rules prohibit burials in residential areas.

If they do choose to bury their pets in their backyard, owners must make sure gravesites are at least four feet deep, Clarke said.

After Sandy Burns of the southside lost her golden retriever Derby, she had to quickly decide how to lay her beloved companion to rest.

She and her husband, Phil, found out the week before Christmas that their 9½-year-old dog had liver cancer.

Derby needed emergency surgery and then chemotherapy. But on Jan. 10 she was acting strange. "She ran over to me, collapsed and within three minutes she was

gone," Burns said. "To lose her that quickly was a shock."

Burns called her veterinarian at Sugar Grove Animal Hospital on the southside, who phoned a Carmel-based business called Pet Angel to pick up Derby and take care of final arrangements.

"I didn't know something like that existed," Burns said. "We weren't sure what we were going to do and just weren't ready with how quick everything happened."

They decided to have Derby cremated. The couple had the dog's ashes placed in a resin container shaped like a rock with a metal plate with her name on the front, Burns said.

"It makes us feel good to know she's there with us at home," Burns said. "There's such a void without her."

• Grief

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE A6)

families to focus on a pet's quality of life when debating if the animal should be euthanized.

"We want them to know this is really the last kind thing we do for our pets," said Lynn Day, a veterinarian at the Sugar Grove

Animal Hospital on the southside. Mooki's vet came to the Hogan home and gave the dog a shot to put her to sleep. She died on her favorite bed, Hogan said.

The Hogans told their children, ages 8, 6, 4 and 2, about Mooki's condition, she said.

"We were completely open and honest with them," she said. "We told them that (Mooki) was getting a special shot to help her go to sleep; we didn't hide that."

Since Mooki's death, the children have drawn and painted pictures to remember their pet, Hogan said.

Her son made a picture of Mooki with the family's telephone number in hopes it would blow up to heaven, she said.

"We're all coping, but it's just different," she said. "Time and talking openly is the best thing. Eventually, a new puppy will probably be good for the family."

• Guides

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE A6)

thought only to ignore their feelings may be seen as cold or robotic. People who make decisions based solely on their emotions do not see the practical predictors in a problem.

If one picks a partner based on emotions, it eliminates important information that often ends up sabotaging a relationship.

Some people just shoot from the hip and don't assess their situation intellectually or emotionally.

Using only one technique often creates a one-sided approach to life.

Homework assignment: Spend the next week thinking about how you determine your decisions. You likely have used one of these perspectives to make decisions. Your home-

work will be to develop the other two modes in your decision-making.

If you are not in touch with your emotional side, you will need to strengthen your ability to identify feelings. There are lots of people who have shut down their feelings to avoid being hurt. Honoring feelings helps you to be more authentic.

If you have difficulty reasoning out decisions, write out the problem and brainstorm possible solutions. List the pros and cons to develop your intellectual abilities.

Developing your intuition requires that you decrease your activity, stay quiet and listen for that internal guide. Many people don't stay quiet long enough to get a clear, intuitive direction.

Everyone has intuition; however most of us have not been formally trained in honoring it. Some people say that when they listen to their gut they feel pulled toward a certain

answer. Others may feel that their intuitive response is a direct connection from God.

The more you recognize it, the easier it is to be guided by that "inner knowing."

People tend to ignore their gut feelings. Oftentimes the gut is the tie breaker when you have assessed a problem from an intellectual and emotional perspective.

Regardless of which mode you operate from, developing all three is imperative. The one you use the least is the one that requires the most development.

To be a healthy individual you need to check in with your head, your heart and your gut to make better decisions and improve the quality of your life.

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