

MFT– PSY 444- Psychotherapy

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Chapter 8 Question # 1

Gestalt therapy was founded by Fritz Perls and brought an existential approach to counseling.

Gestalts imply a unified whole, bringing awareness and contact with the environment to be fully understood. Perls believes that when a person becomes aware of his external and internal world, his mind is opened in a dimension that makes his ability to make more choices.

Gestalt therapy presumes that the relationship with others and the insight received from each other promote growth. Gestalt approaches the client confronting his internal and external reality to foster growth and awareness of self. As we notice in the case of Stan, the therapist intentionally made him feel frustrated and ashamed, bringing him an awareness of his dream to increase his understanding. The center of Gestalt is to make the client aware of his present to help him to deal with the unfinished situation in his past.

Gestalt therapy sees the client as a holistic whole that cannot be separated. Still, God created us as the body with parts, “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:4-5. Paul also describes that we have many parts in our body. “From him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Ephesians 4:16

Nonetheless, Gestalt therapy emphasizes that the client can be set free from his past and behavior by being aware of his environment. The truth is that the environment is complex and constantly changes. The Bible points out that we are free only in Christ. As Christians, we are called to be submissive to the work of the Holy Spirit in our, and He will set us free, “In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”

Romans 6:11-14

Gestalt therapy believes that the client can be his helper and healer. However, it is evident that only we are dead in our sins, and only Jesus can bring salvation and restoration into our minds, souls, and body. We depend on the Holy Spirit to help us change and transform us into a new self. “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved,” Ephesians 2:1-5. Only through God and the work of the Holy Spirit in us can we be set free from our traumas and change our behavior.

