

## Ask a psychotherapist

A Response to the article "Facing Dilemmas and Facilitating Change" by Wendy Gabrek which appeared in The New Tecumseth Times on February 27, 2014.

Dear Wendy,

I appreciated your recent article about your own struggle to come to grips with change. You were very open about the various methods you'd tried and found wanting. The theme that ran throughout the article is how very alone you feel in your quest to make the changes you desire. That troubles me.

I believe, based on clear evidence from ethnological and psychological research, that human beings are profoundly social creatures and that we need the closeness and loving support of others in order to thrive, at all stages of the life cycle. We're just wired that way and as the old saying goes, "two heads are better than one".

We can find ourselves at certain points of our lives missing or even in conflict with some of those who used to support us. It seems natural in a society like ours that overvalues individualism, to seek answers on our own: from self-help books, meditating alone, psychics or pseudo-psychics. Groups of unlike people may not be much help if your problem is different from theirs.

Something that holds more promise is one-on-one counselling with a skilled and compassionate therapist who focusses with you on finding solutions to your problem. Unlike friends who rightly expect equal time from you to discuss their own dilemmas, a good therapist is totally focussed on you. Solution-focussed therapy can often be successful in 10 visits or less.

Talking with someone who can listen without judgement to your current dilemma could pop you out of that stuckness you describe. Ideally, a therapist should be seen weekly or every two weeks to be effective. Many therapists have sliding scales to accommodate income. I hope that you will consider this option and not feel that you must struggle on alone in your quest to change.

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