

What is Psychoanalysis?

Psychoanalysis today has evolved into a collaborative process between the analyst and the patient whereby a person's life problems and pain (whether it be work related, family issues, relationship issues, traumatic experiences or feelings of depression or anxiety, just to name a few) are examined and explored in a safe, respectful and caring environment. Psychoanalysis is a process of communication between two people which is focused on developing an understanding of a person's past history and their present situation as well as how the past and the present are interrelated since past relationships impact the present. The analyst is viewed as a co-participant in the analytic process and thus developing an understanding of communication patterns and ways of relating between the patient and analyst is crucial to the analytic process. The goal of psychoanalysis is to facilitate emotional understanding and healing, as well as growth and development so that the individual can achieve a richer and more satisfying life. In our fast paced and often impersonal society, psychoanalysis provides a rare opportunity to establish a long term therapeutic relationship with a concerned professional.

In 1946, Karen Horney and her colleagues put together a book, entitled: *Are You Considering Psychoanalysis?* (Published by Norton) In the book they elaborated on such subject as: Why Psychoanalysis? What Schools of Psycho-analysis are There? What are Your Doubts About Psychoanalysis? Who Should Your Analyst Be? What Do You Do in Analysis? What Does the Analyst Do? How Does Analysis Help?

The book is worth reading even today. It describes the powerful impact unconscious processes have on the organic and psychological functioning of the individual. Unsuspected conflicts and emotional problems can give rise to serious difficulties for the person.

In the intimate psychoanalytic relationship, motives, determinants and derivatives of everyday conduct and feelings are revealed. Many hidden tendencies and feelings, often began in childhood, persist, although they are detrimental to growth, as an unconsciously self-perpetuated aspect of the person. In the intimate relationship between the patient and the analyst, previously inaccessible aspects of the personality can emerge. Disturbances of the inside as well as disturbances of relations with others and with the self are brought into the awareness of the two participants of the psychoanalytic relationship. In addition to becoming aware of destructive trends the individual needs to recognize constructive innate forces which make it possible to make a commitment to healthier living. With increased awareness the individual is given a chance to let go of detrimental and maladaptive patterns and to resolve inner conflicts.

Is Psychoanalysis for You?

It used to be thought that only highly functioning individuals should undergo psychoanalysis. The contemporary approaches practiced by the analysts of the AIP make psychoanalysis a beneficial treatment for many who suffer from intense distress, trauma, interpersonal difficulties or displacement, as well as working with people from different cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. The unique attention to the unique qualities of the individual affords the patient the opportunity for personal growth, greater emotional involvement with others, and becoming strong from the ground up.