

Frightening Realizations

[When Therapists Take Away Your Child / Issue 794]

I would like to join the conversation regarding therapy and to share some insight I have gleaned after my own stint at therapy.

Just for context, I am a mature woman from the first generation of grandchildren of survivors. I am educated and savvy, anchored in old school while young enough to absorb current cultures. I went for therapy to help me recover from a trauma. I was intrigued, fascinated, and grateful as I witnessed my own healing through the therapy process. It took some time after completing my course of therapy for me to come to some of the more frightening realizations about therapy.

I can only describe the therapy process as being “under the therapy spell.” As more time passed post therapy, I began feeling like I was getting “me” back. I didn’t realize, while I was regularly seeing my therapist, what an effect she and her therapy room had upon me.

I now can clearly perceive the darker side of therapy and understand how therapy can become dangerous. I myself was completely lost within this “spell” and at the mercy of my therapist. Had we had a hard session, possibly at times because of my therapist’s humanness (maybe she had a hard day and wasn’t fully invested), I was terribly affected and took it as a personal failing. I can only

imagine how a young, vulnerable (and in a way every person on the therapy couch is vulnerable) client can lose her ability to stand on her own, to think on her own, to be objective and “above it.”

Being in therapy often by definition means losing personal autonomy. Except that the client is oblivious, and even may be so at peace, almost euphoric, with their therapy and therapist. Therapy is very powerful. Even the strongest among us is vulnerable to getting lost under its spell. And while that is part of what can make therapy really enabling, it is also part of what makes therapy potentially disabling.

Therapy should be used with great caution. And would that there would be a way to monitor the client, therapist, and process.

Name Withheld

Another Holocaust

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I am a Holocaust survivor who was alienated from my daughter and her family without any reason given. When my friends tried to speak to her rav about it, they were told to keep out of it – also no reason given. When I contacted my rav to speak to my daughter, he was told that she broke off her and her family’s relationship with me at the advice of her rav.

I tried in various ways – letters, phone calls – to establish contact, but got no response. I have not spoken to her or her family for more than five years.

I often wonder: Why did I survive to experience another Holocaust?

An aching mother