

Jeremy Gillentine—August 29, 2024

COUC710--Yalom, chapters 1-2 Discussion Thread: Therapeutic Factors & Interpersonal Learning

My question posted August 24, 7:53 PM

In our reading the authors state, “Psychologically, group members spend infinitely more time together than the one or two meetings a week when they physically occupy the same space” (pg. 65). Would this type of psychological time spent together be a valid tool for people generally to use in various relationships (e.g., marriages, friendships, church families, etc.) to help improve closeness and intimacy or would it promote an unhealthy level of attachment dependency?

Yalom, Irvin D.; Leszcz, Molyn. *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (p. 65). Basic Books. Kindle Edition.

Katrina Blest—Question—August 21, 4:52 PM

When working with a group that includes a member who is indifferent or detached from the group, Yalom suggests that the member may recognize their value for the group over time (2020). How should the therapist navigate the thoughts and feelings of other group members while the individual is still disengaged?

Jeremy Gillentine—August 29, 2024—Response 1

COUC710-- Discussion One: Yalom, chapters 1-2

When there is a person or persons in a group who struggles to become a cohesive partner in the therapeutic process of a group, it may be necessary to address this for the continuity of the remaining members of the group. A method of addressing this could be a discussion of group dynamics, noting it may take additional time to develop trust for some members. Further, the

group leader may need to solicit the patients and compassion from those who may be less hesitant to actively engage the group. An & Kivlighan (2023) indicate that dynamics of group cohesiveness are apt to change for the better over the course of time. They further understand that group cohesiveness may become better cemented over time and a group may even begin to develop similarities in the ways they respond to various situations that arise in sessions.

A group leader needs to be actively seeking to engage all members while also being patient when individuals in a group may not be ready to be vocal in sessions. It is also a critical skill of a group leader to help to diffuse responses from a member who tends to lash out because of their potential lack of trust or cohesion with the members of a group. Unfortunately, just as an injured animal may lash out at the very people trying to help it, a person who has been harmed or who has low confidence levels may be prone to antagonistic comments in an effort to remain an independent participant. Just as Yalom & Leszcz (2020, pg. 43) pointed out, there are many ways people see group sessions that range from apprehension to eagerness. It may be wise to begin a discussion to assist members who are more participatory in the group to better understand this variance of perspectives.

An, M., & Kivlighan, D. M. (2023). Examining within-group variability in group therapy. *Group Dynamics*, 27(3), 217-228. <https://doi.org/10.1037/gdn0000198>

Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2020). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (6th ed.). Basic Books. Kindle Edition.

Kelley Ryals—Question—August 26, 7:08 PM

This question came to me while reading Chapter 1. After formulating the question, I read both chapters again, frantically searching for another question but this one just would not stop forcing it's way to the forefront.

What is it about the human condition that causes us to think about, and perhaps even long for, our inheritance, when faced with a loved one's death?

Jeremy Gillentine—August 29, 2024—Response 2

COUC710-- Discussion One: Yalom, chapters 1-2

What an interesting question!

I can think about this from multiple vantage points. The thoughts here will consider a person who operates through the lens of a Biblical Worldview. The first perspective that comes to mind is what is the relationship with the person from whom you are anticipating an inheritance? I would hope that there is a healthy relationship and the desire for that person's wellbeing is considered above all else. A more concerning thought is when dealing with someone's looming death who has been a wretched figure in one's life. It would likely be a much greater temptation to place the inheritance to come over the wellbeing of the person. These are thoughts that must be weighed considering the Biblical Worldview and addressed accordingly.

A second view, though not entirely separate from the first, is being faced with this thought while being in crippling debt. When humans find themselves buried in debt, it may be all they find themselves thinking about. It would be a rational thought to be a bit anticipatory of a solution to this immense burden. However, when striving to live by a Biblical Worldview, one must truly consider what is important in this situation. I am reminded of some Bible verses that indicate that

God is good and can handle things even when we do not see a way forward (e.g. Psalms 20:7
Some trust in chariots...but we depend on the Lord our God. NET).

A third perspective may be that the person has a large portfolio, and your inheritance will make you instantly wealthy. This can certainly be enticing to consider! Again, it gets back to the end-of-life wellbeing of the soon to be deceased. Also, what are the thoughts regarding the funds? Frunzaru & Frunzaru (2017) share some thoughts about materialism that can produce possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. These are concerning when seen through a Biblical Worldview! A further question would be is gaining access to the inheritance about no longer working and living a life of luxury or about seeing the Kingdom opportunities that you would be equipped to come alongside? To be clear, I am not saying luxury is wrong, but if luxury alone or materialism becomes the focus there would be some reexamination needed when operating from a Biblical Worldview perspective.

All of these thoughts could be brought out and discussed in a group counseling session and gain valuable perspectives. Just as Yalom stated that the analyst of their group, regarding desiring an inheritance said, "that seems to be the way we are built" (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020, pg. 13). This simple phrase offered some peace but could have just as easily developed into a diverse group discussion.

Frunzaru, V., & Frunzaru, E. M. (2017). materialism and life satisfaction a sociological and Christian comparative approach. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 16(48), 31-45.

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Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2020). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (6th ed.).

Basic Books. Kindle Edition.