

The Tao of Motivational Interviewing.

May 5, 2024

Outline and Notes

Information in this presentation is taken primarily from the following sources:

Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change and Grow, 4th Edition, Miller and Rollnick, 2023, Guilford Publishing.

Effective Psychotherapists, Miller and Moyers, 2023, Guilford Publishing.

The Tao of Leadership: Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching Adapted for a New Age, Second Edition, John Heider, 2015, Green Dragon Publishing LLC.

The Tao of Pooh, Benjamin Hoff, 1982, Penguin Books.

This workshop will present information about the usefulness of accessing the ancient Chinese wisdom from The Tao Te Ching. Linkages will also be made to Motivational Interviewing, which can account for the power in MI. Essentially, both then and now, we need to pay very close attention to what is happening and from there figure how it happens or works. At times, the thoughts from both Taoism and MI are contrasted with what was traditional SUD treatment for the contrast.

Below you will find an outline that will cover all the topics in this 3-hour workshop. Room will be left for any notes you might want to write down during the presentation:

Beginnings – Tao Te Ching – Lao Tzu.

The Book of How things Happen or Work.

Studied natural processes – discovered what was happening and then how it happened. Paid attention to what was natural law.

Three parts:

1. Natural Law, or how things happen.
2. A way of Life (living in accordance with natural law and
3. How to teach or lead others in accordance with natural law.

Beginnings – Motivational Interviewing

Taken from **'The evolution of motivational interviewing'**: Miller, William R, British Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapies. 2023.

Eugene, Oregon – Fundamentals of the therapeutic relationship

Milwaukee, Wisconsin – VA Hospital. 'Alcoholic Ward'.

Albuquerque, New Mexico. Studies on empathy.

Hjellestad, Norway. – Training psychological students through demonstration. Bill became really conscious of his interventions when he was questioned by these students – why did you ask this then? Why didn't you say this at this point?

Sydney, Australia – met Stephen Rollnick – started collaborating on first MI book.

Principles

Softness – Taoism

What is soft is strong.

Water wears away rock.

Traditional SUD Treatment

Confrontation.....'What is wrong with you?'

Break through denial.

Softness - MI

MI has a noticeable softness or gentleness about it.

Seen clearly also in what is not done.

Inner Nature

Inner Nature – Taoism

A fly can't bird, but a bird can fly?

Do I belong here?

A fish can't whistle and neither can I.

I have limitations.

Why does a chicken, I don't know why.

We don't need to know everything.

We need to figure out:

1. Who we are;
2. What we have to work with and
3. What works best for us.

Inner Nature - MI

Therapeutic Characteristics of Psychotherapists.

Discussion of the Spirit of MI and it's necessity.

Partnership

Acceptance

Compassion

Empowerment

Yin/Yang

Yin/Yang – Taoism

Yin	Yang
Feminine	Masculine
Open, nurturing	Power, authority
Soft, yielding.	Can be misogynistic
Not valued by society	Valued by society
Gentle Interventions	Harsh interventions
Reduces defensiveness and discord.	Increases defensiveness and discord

Wu Wei

Wu Wei – Taoism

Literally means ‘Doing Not Doing’

Wu Wei – MI

Experts in MI have learned to pay attention to the impact of what they do and how they do it. They use the least amount of intervention needed. They make helping someone look soooo easy.

Characteristics

Not Egocentric – Taoism

Heider talks about leaders not being egocentric in 33 out of 81 chapters.

We must be able to put ourselves aside.

The best leaders are the best servants.

Be a good, not a great, leader.

Not Egocentric – MI

A humble beginner's mind.

Partnership.

No judgment

We are helping others be successful.

Stillness

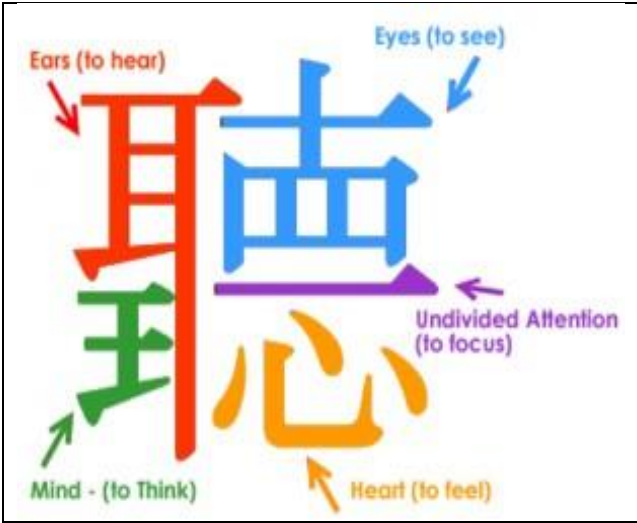
Stillness – Taoism

When the pool is the forest is still, you can see yourself.

Stillness allows you to learn what is happening – from there, you can see how things happen.

Stillness – MI

Some trainers use the Chinese character for listening to adequately capture what needs to be done for effective listening in MI.



It is a combination of the symbols for

Ears

Eyes

Mind

Heart

Undivided attention

Clarity

Clarity – Taoism

Heider's translation states that when I've struggled with my own issues and have gotten some resolution, I have clarity. This allows me to help others resolve their own.

Being fully human

Clarity – MI

The helper needs to look inwards to be able to successfully integrate the various aspects of the Spirit of MI in order to successfully help others. The parts of the Spirit are reviewed below:

Partnership:

Acceptance:

Empowerment:

Compassion:

Consciousness

Consciousness – Taoism

‘Consciousness, not selfishness, is both the means of teaching and the teaching itself.’

Consciousness – MI

MI was developed through a process of being more aware of what Bill did in role playing with the Norwegian psychology students. By paying attention to what was happening, they could see how things happened and were learning to act in accordance with that understanding.

Centered and Grounded

Centered and Grounded – Taoism

Centered	Grounded
“The ability to recover one’s balance, even in the midst of action. Not subject to passing winds or sudden excitement”.	“Having gravity or weight, being down to earth. I know where I stand, and I know what I stand for.”

Centered and Grounded – MI

Demonstration of Centered and Grounded – The Rounder

Being Oneself

Being Oneself – Taoism

Pay respectful attention to all behaviors.
Don't make yourself to be more than what you are.

Being Oneself (Genuineness) – MI

This is first discussed in the 4th Edition of MI. It is also discussed in Effective Psychotherapists as well as in 'Toward Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy: Training and Practice' by Truax and Carkhuff.

Predicts better treatment outcomes.

Interventions

Potent Interventions – Taoism

Potent Interventions - Taoism	
Most Potent	Conscious and spontaneous response in the here and now; no calculation or manipulation.
Less Potent	Doing what is right. Making things happen we think should happen. Calculated and manipulative.
Least Potent	Imposed Morality. Meets resistance with punishment. Shed no light on what is actually happening. Often backfires

“When we lose touch with what is going on, we try to do what is right.
We try to make happen what we think should happen. When that doesn't work, we try coercion.
The answer is simple: get quiet, pay attention and tune back into what is happening.”

(Not so much) Potent Interventions – Traditional SUD counseling

Confrontation – break through denial

Convince or persuade the person to change.

Potent interventions – MI

Most potent – the same as written above for Taoism.

Less potent – getting distracted, inadvertently not listening (although not calculated or manipulative).

Least potent – Not MI

Dealing with Anger

Dealing with Anger – Taoism

When attacked, react in such a way as to shed light on the matter.

Dealing with Anger – MI

MI has been shown to be quite effective in working with angry people.

MI teaches how to respond to anger people.

What about those who don't change?

What about those who don't change? – Taoism

Folks can know what they need to do to change, and still decide to not do so.

What about those who don't change? – MI

The MI helper knows she/he can do excellent work, and the person can still decide to not change.

The burden helpers often carry is relieved. As a result, there is less burn out.

Harsh Interventions

Harsh interventions – Taoism

Use harsh interventions only if all other interventions have failed or you are clear that harshness is indicated.

Harsh interventions often harm the person you are trying to help.

Harsh Interventions – Traditional SUD treatment

People who don't go along with the counselor, or argues with the counselor, are labeled 'resistant'.

This pathologizes normal human behavior.

Counselor would use more 'confrontation'.

Harsh Interventions – Mental Health Treatment.

Usual interventions before deinstitutionalization were horrendous!

More about punishment than any treatment. Contain and control.

Harsh interventions – MI

Harsh interventions are not used in MI. If you intervene harshly, that person is much less likely to change. must take responsibility for that harshness and apologize.

Kathleen Sciacca (1984) came up with the 'Non-Confrontational Approach' as a treatment for the dually dx'ed (SMD/SUD).

Gentle Interventions

Gentle interventions – Taoism

Gentle interventions should far outnumber harsh interventions.

What is soft and yielding will overcome rigid resistance.

Gentle interventions – MI

MI is designed to be a gentle intervention – has a nice flow to it.

Time for Reflection

Time for reflection – Taoism

Too much chatter and drama overwhelms the senses.

We need to be able to quiet ourselves and become still.

Time for reflection – MI

If we fail to think about our practice, we cannot change or grow.

MI 4th edition talks about deliberate practice – reviewing our work. (It's not mentioned in the 3rd edition.)

We have endless opportunities to practice MI – try an intervention with someone (open question, complex reflection) and see how that person responds.

The Paradox of Letting Go

The Paradox of Letting Go – Taoism

The Feminine or Yin Paradoxes.

When I yield to the person working, I encounter no resistance.

The Paradox of Letting Go – Traditional SUD treatment.

It's been difficult to let go when the helper takes responsibility for the person's recovery.

We had to try harder.

The Paradox of Letting Go – MI

Letting to makes it more likely that the person will change.

Holding onto makes it less likely that the person will change.

The Paradox of Pushing.

The Paradox of Pushing – Taoism

Using too much force will backfire. Change is a rather delicate process.

Being a helper doesn't give one authority over the person working.

The Paradox of Pushing – MI

MI works so well because it's not done to people, it's done with people.

An very good MI session looks very low key.

The Source of Power

The Source of Power – Taoism

The source is natural processes.

Power is based on knowing what is happening and acting accordingly.

The Source of Power – MI

MI is powerful because it rests entirely upon what works, not on what I think should work or what worked for me.

Be a mid-wife.