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Psychotherapy
Couples
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Group Seminar Audio Series

The Argument Against “Letting It Go”

Whether we like it or not, bad things happen to all of us. Especially in our most intimate relationships, alongside joy and fulfillment there is also distress, disappointment, regret, and pain. We make mistakes and hurt others, and others injure and damage us. In my psychotherapy practice, patients often seek to resolve the pain and distress involved in how they have hurt others, or how others have hurt them, by trying to “let it go.” While compelling and pragmatically appealing, I have found that this perspective rarely works and, ironically, often upsets people even more when they cannot actually “let it go.” In this group seminar presentation, I offer a rather counter-intuitive view: the need to “hold onto it.” In my discussion, I will challenge the related notion of “it is what it is” and argue that what it was consistently changes and offers ongoing learning and insight. The relevance of these ideas for romantic relationships is described. *This seminar was recorded on February 17, 2018 in Laguna Hills, CA.*

Key Excerpts:

- *The inspiration for this presentation comes from the film “Magnolia,” which illustrates the value of regret and not forgetting.*
- *The human mind is like an immune system: something occurs and enters our experience and we are traumatized. It’s like a foreign body and the assumption is this can destroy me. So what the mind is trained to do is surround it, segregate it, and destroy it. But by doing this change and growth cannot occur.*
- *An unconscious emotional longing is to retain our vision of the world and preferences, not to come to terms with the ways in which our vision is challenged.*

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Key Excerpts (continued)

- *We are programmed to repair and make new again, to take things back to the way they were. This is a fallacy. So I talk about this like a broken bone. When you fracture a bone, it's never the same. The same goes for life and all that happens to us. Sometimes I compare this to your computer desktop. Each time you visit a website there are cookies, there are fragments, and behind your desktop these fragments accumulate and ultimately detract from the functioning of your computer.*
- *Experience must be processed and integrated, not sequestered and pushed under the carpet. This is “dynamic learning” and it is a psychological capacity.*

