

Foreword

"Every decade or so brings forth a seminal and breakthrough contribution to the field of psychotherapy. In the 70's Minuchin's *Families and Family Therapy* (1974) pioneered the systemic viewpoint. In the 80's, Bradford Keeney's *Aesthetics of Change* (1983) elucidated the fundamentals of epistemology and cybernetics as they relate to psychotherapy. And now in the 90's, we have Marilee Goldberg's *The Art of the Question: A Guide to Short-Term Question-Centered Therapy*.

"You might ask, 'What is the paradigm shift inherent in asking questions?' After all, questions have played a prominent role in exploring and understanding the truth since the days of the Socratic method and the Babylonian Talmud. Furthermore, every major branch of psychotherapy has used question asking as either a method for diagnosis or, more recently, as in the Milan family therapy school, as a basis for intervention.

"The answer is quite simple. *The Art of the Question* focuses on questions themselves and not on the responses. While all the great philosophical traditions and psychotherapy classics have concentrated on the answers, this book focuses on the art of question development. It promotes the ability to ask the right questions at the right time. This, in and of itself, is a dramatic shift—a breakthrough of enormous proportions.

"And this shift is extremely timely, since the climate of these times makes it even more difficult to appreciate the importance of questions. The emergence of new technologies, coupled with what they have made possible, has resulted in more impatience with delay and disinterest in process than ever before. People want answers and they want them immediately. Whether the context is personal or professional, wither the problematic issue shows up in marriage or in business, the prevalent Zeitgeist is, 'fix it and fix it now.'

"It is also problematic that the imperative of immediate answers and 'quick fixes' has led to the seeming expediency of linear, cause-effect thinking. Yet, in most situations and in most of our cases there is usually no single cause for suffering or dysfunction. Shifting to an emphasis on the art of asking questions is a highly useful antidote to this cultural condition. Both clients and therapists who use questions skillfully become more process-driven so that deeper issues and concerns can manifest themselves and deeper healing can take place.

"This book shows the reader how to develop the art of question asking in the service of change and growth. . . . As Keeney wrote, 'A question, by proposing a distinction, constructs its answers.' This book helps the reader to

The Art of the Question: A Guide to Short Term Question-Centered Therapy

Forward by Sam Kirschner, Ph.D.

generate the passionate questions necessary for learning and change. It is a book for therapists and clients. It is a book for executives and consultants. It is an important book for everyone who is searching for the keys to transformation."

-- *Sam Kirschner, Ph.D.*

Co-author, Comprehensive Family Therapy: An Integration of Systemic and Psychodynamic Treatment Models (nominated as one of the 100 most influential books in psychology)