

WORLD VIEW, SELF IMAGE AND BASIC TRUST
(Using Psychotherapy to Change the World You Live in)
You don't have to keep living in the world you were born into!

Our self-image, worldview and basic trust are formed in early childhood. The family that we are born into is the basis upon which we develop our worldview as well as the people from which we develop our self-image. Those of us who are born into horribly dysfunctional families create a view of a horrible world! What else can a child utilize in order to form it's view of the world?

The infant arrives into this world having spent nine months in a state of bliss, assuming a healthy pregnancy. Shortly after birth, the newborn experiences a state of deprivation for the first time. Although the infant is unable to "think" about it's dilemma, it is believed that the infant is aware on a cellular level that the situation demands attention and the child initiates "problem solving". To the newborn baby, "problem solving" consists of kicking and screaming. That is problem solving at its most primitive level. Ideally, a caring adult shows up and with a tender voice and gentle hands the caretaker proceeds to identify the problem and fix it.

This situation is repeated hundreds of times in the coming months and years and over time the infant may begin to trust that things are going to be "all right" even in the face of hunger or other deprivation. This is the beginning of "basic trust". This basic trust is developed and strengthened every time a caring adult responds to difficult situations and mistakes with love and tolerance.

While the child is, or isn't, developing basic trust, it is also developing a world view and a self-image. The familial atmosphere the child experiences in the first months and years is the world the infant has to come to terms with. The child doesn't lie in it's crib speculating about the environment, it just experiences that environment and it is on that environment that the child bases all of it's responses. These responses are deeply entrenched in it's unconscious by the time the child is introduced to the wider world outside of it's family. This world view is generally resistant to change without professional assistance.

The infant's self image is shaped by the way the caretakers relate to it. If the caretakers relate to the infant as if it is precious and valued and wonderful, then those characteristics become incorporated into its self-image. . If the caretakers treat the infant as if he is resented and an unwanted intrusion into the caretakers world, then those characteristics are incorporated into the infants self image. This resultant self-image tends to be life long and resistant to change without professional assistance.

The combination of basic trust, self image and world view are the principle determinants of the world we live in and they tend not to change over time. Since they are deeply entrenched in the unconscious mind where they are not readily examined or modified, most people die without altering conclusions that they reached before they were four years old.