

Professional Mentoring is not psychotherapy.

This model of work is based on the premise that what causes struggles for most adolescents is NOT that they have anything wrong with them, but rather that they are ill-prepared to handle the complexities that emerges as they enter this stage of life (relationship issues, awakening sexuality, major life decisions, enormous academic pressure linked to fears about their future, etc). What I believe is that what most of them need is not treatment, but instead life growth & life learning and lots of it!

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Often times teens who struggle are sent to professionals for help as the symptoms of being a struggling adolescent show up, typically with things like declining grades, stress about social life, retreating from talking with parents, anger and irritability, moping around, getting in trouble in school, and/or many other common adolescent behaviors.

Because each professional is trained to look for what they are trained to look for, inevitably they will find it. Send your teen to a psychiatrist and they'll likely wind up with a prescription for medication. Send them to a psychotherapist and they'll get a mental illness diagnosis. Send them to an acupuncturist and they'll find blocked energy channels, a nutritionist and they'll have dietary issues... It is not to say that these are necessarily bad or wrong and indeed there is evidence that each have their time and place where they are effective at helping people generate shifts in their life*, the question is at what level do they help people and how effectively?

Since the masses of those who seek out help are not educated on the nuances of the different approaches or the different research supporting or debunking these approaches, clients often begin at a distinct disadvantage. They'll trust the expert and follow the expert's guidance through whatever process they are led regardless of whether or not they are actually generating substantial change in their lives. Indeed most are effective at doing surface level behavioral changes without actually creating the underlying structural shifts to make these new behaviors become self-generating (in other words causing fundamental shifts in a person's whole orientation to life such that in the future on their own they will create and generate behaviors which allow them to effectively sustain this new way of life, without having to come back to the specialist for help).

Professional Mentoring is designed to lead to generative change though!

Our work is designed to help teens and young adults develop the fundamental ability to sustain feeling centered, composed and confident even under immense pressure or immense criticism from negative outside forces. To make excellent decisions that allow them to stay 'true' to themselves. To develop the ability to communicate with the skill and precision necessary to create healthy, functional relationships, and to develop the capacity to make and keep commitments.

Most importantly they will know in a short period of time whether or not this approach has value for them. Plus, if we feel we are not able to be effective with you, we will discontinue the work—saving you the time and resources to use in places more appropriate for your situation. Integrity in this regard, is our highest value.

| Professional Mentoring | Common Psychotherapy |
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| Positively biased education about life. Focus on what is working and on developing the skills and qualities necessary to help a person get what they want. | Begins with assessment and diagnosis of mental illness and psychological disorders. |
| Mentoring relationship, actively engaged in life as it happening. Sessions typically 90 minutes with phone contact, email and even personal visits to school, home, etc when necessary to do effective work. | Clinical relationship, typically in 50 minute segments in office weekly |
| Future oriented – always moving towards the future you want in spite of what has happened or the circumstances a person finds themselves in. | Commonly focuses attention on resolving the past as a precursor to moving forward or emphasis on coping with the present. |
| Soma-Semantics and the MythoSelf Process – teaches people their unique physical process to access and sustain balance and centeredness in spite of outside pressures or circumstances. | Lots of attention on feelings and gaining insights... Often an emphasis on “healing” from past |
| Directive, assertive with suggestions on things to be doing | Typically non-directive and rarely is advice given. |
| “If you want to feel good, talk to your friend. If you want someone who is going to get you results and get your life working better – go to Jeff!” – Ruthlessly compassionate! | Nice and compassionate. |

* The teens we work with are mentally healthy and are struggling with typical life issues inherent in being a teen in this culture. It is the responsibility of the client to do their research and determine which approach is most appropriate for their situation.