

Live, Love, Grow Strong!

Spring/Summer, 2008

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“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.”

Martha Graham

Believe in yourself...

Ellen M. Gregory, MA, LMFT
Founder and President

**believe that you can,
believe that you will,
and you will,
because you can!**

Our infant self was born into this world full of potential and possibility. Reflections of our hidden potential, validation of achievements, and the trust, support, freedom, and protection from our caretakers were needed to actualize who we could become, and to foster our internal belief and worth.

Throughout our formative years, we needed our caretakers to provide us with a secure way of being: an internal capacity to live through stress and pain of our failures as well as revel in the exhilaration and pleasure of our accomplishments. The absence of this can create doubt, doubt in ourselves and others, doubt that we have the power within to create the life we choose.

If we find ourselves here, *acknowledging* that we want our lives to be different is the first step to affecting change. When inaction creeps in, it is our adult self ignoring the child within sending continuous messages of self-doubt. Accepting and listening to the messages may lead to a path of discovery and insight into the

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Community

Living together is an art.

– William Pickens

Written by Elena Hull, MA, LMFT, CAT
Clinical Director

Within the therapeutic relationship both client and therapist do deep courageous work. At Midtown MFT, it is our belief that healing happens in relationship, and we place importance on tending to the relationships within our community. The ripple effect of a strong community touches each individual and everyone with whom that individual makes contact.

A community can hold the suffering, challenge, despair, or sorrow that is too great for one. It can reflect and therefore expand the joy and wellness of its members. The diversity of a community can provide a greater perspective and deeper insight than one mind.

Every individual has a story, a rich ground of experience, and infinite possibility. It is a great loss that in so many places of work and family this great resource, *community*, is never tapped into. Individualism is often oppressed, as opposed to reflected and included in groups. Self-actualization is the potential of the human spirit manifested, individuation is key to that fulfillment, and community is the water, light, challenge, and solid ground to promote the growth.

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Our Clinical Community

At Midtown MFT, we provide in-depth relational therapy for a diverse population of clients including individuals, couples, and families. We heal within relationship and our therapists understand deeply the importance of this awareness.

They provide for our clients from within their varying specialties and modalities. We aim to provide diverse and affordable services to the

community we serve. **Our mission** is to grow organically as a richly layered and vital community of skilled therapists.

Our **Clinical Community** is centered on a commitment to the professional and personal development of all of its members. A shared



"Let the beauty we love be what we do." Rumi

vision connects the diversity within our community and encourages the unique voice of each therapist to emerge in her/his work. Our community is founded on the belief in the healing potential of the therapeutic relationship and the importance of providing a safe, sacred,

and contained space for our clients. It is nurtured by our support of each other and our dedication to continued training, supervision, and peer interaction.

Our Clinical Model

is based in contemporary psychodynamic, transpersonal, and systemic models of psychology. We have a humanistic and holistic approach that listens to and tends to the minds, bodies, and souls of our clients. We work with clients to move through defense structures and into self expression for the purpose of healing their suffering. Many of us no longer need the walls we built to protect ourselves but would never risk taking them down alone. The relationship between therapist and client is a catalyst for transformation. We believe that our clients have within them what they need to effect great change in their lives, and the world, and that therapy is a process of uncovering and actualizing this potential.

practice updates...

The biggest news is that we changed our name from Midtown Counseling Associates, Inc. to **Midtown Marriage and Family Therapy, PC ~ Midtown MFT** for short! Due to MFT licensure, business corporation laws have changed, which forced us to change the entity type we practice under. Our new name feels right with our evolved business structure and MFT intern placement and development program.

In addition to providing clinical services by our licensed therapists, we are an intern placement and development program for students who are in an MFT Masters program, and post-graduates working toward licensure, who are committed to the therapeutic relationship, have a desire to work with clients on a long-term, in-depth basis, and who are willing to undertake the emotional challenges present in in-depth work. We are very excited that our training program is such a success and we thank our colleagues for all their support! We re planning on adding 2 more interns within the next few months.

Our three distinct clinical titles are Licensed Psychotherapist (LMFT or LMSW), Marriage and Family Therapy Associate, and Marriage and Family Therapy Intern. Fees are appropriately structured as well.

Our One-Day Anger Intensive

Workshop will now be facilitated by Rachel McDavid, Ma, MFT. The workshop is held the third Saturday of each month. Go to page 7 for a full description.

Office Space for Rent: We have weekend space available for rent. Email info@midtownmft.com if interested in sharing space.

our community...

Ellen Gregory, MA, LMFT
Founder and President

Elena Hull, MA, LMFT, CAT
Clinical Director

J. Brooke Radder, Psy.D.
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Jacqueline Ambrosini, LMSW
Psychotherapist

Melissa Kester, MA in MFT
MFT Associate

Rachel McDavid, MA in MFT
MFT Associate

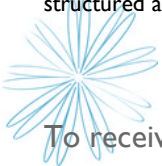
Ami Bhladokar-Haque, MPH
MFT Intern

Jacob Kabasso, BA
MFT Intern

Bradley Altman, BS
MFT Intern

For full profiles

www.midtownmft.com/about.htm



To receive services from our community, you can call us at

917-968-5599 or email info@midtownmft.com

so hard to say goodbye...



For a New Beginning

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you.
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plentitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

To Bless the Space Between Us
John O'Donahue

Brooke

Brooke Radder Psy.D. will be leaving Midtown, MFT this summer, moving out of state to continue her life journey. Brooke has been with us for two years. In that time, she has had a tremendous impact on our community, offering great mentorship and deep insight to our therapists and compassionate guidance to her clients.

Linda

We also say goodbye to **Linda Reich, LMFT**. Linda's journey has led her to Long Island where she is now a Team Leader for the Assertive Community Treatment program at Catholic Charities, working in the community with the severely and persistently mentally ill. Linda brought warmth, fun, and compassion to our team and her presence will be greatly missed.

new additions to our community...

Jacob

Jacob Kabasso, BS, joined our community in March as an MFT Intern. Jacob is currently in the process of earning his MFT Masters Degree at Mercy College. Before choosing psychology as a profession, Jacob spent a number of years pursuing a career in public relations and advertising. Jacob's approach to therapy is holistic and client-centered, and it is aimed at achieving lasting results through solution-focused work.

Bradley

Bradley Altman, BS, is currently earning his MFT Masters Degree at Iona College. Bradley has spent more than 20 years in business operations and accounting. As a manager and mentor, Bradley has gained valuable experience and insight into the expectations, challenges, and stresses in the workplace. Growing up in a family whose professional focus was helping, treating, and providing therapeutic care, Bradley has realized that the foundation his family created in his early years has always been intrinsic to who he really is, someone who deeply connects with others and provides an understanding, empathic, and caring ear.

Jacqui

Jacqui Ambrosini, LMSW, joined our community in May. Jacqui has many years experience working with individuals, couples, and adolescents in private practice setting as well as co-founding and implementing a youth development organization (Youth Health Empowerment Project). Jacqui has a psychodynamic orientation and journeys with clients to remove the barriers developed which allows them then to create meaningful experiences and richer relationships. Jacqui offers expertise, guidance, and supervisory experience to our community and we are very excited to have her mentorship as we continue to grow.

Butterpillar and Caterfly

“Imagine you can!”,
Called the Butterfly up high
to the sad little Crawler below.

“Believe that you can,
and then try, try, Fly!”
She said as she Soared through the
Sky

“Easy for you to say such a thing,”
Cried the bug with a tear in her eye.
“Easy to say and easy to do,
For you are You, and not I!”

“No, I am just destined to life on this
earth,
My ten thousand feet going slow,
With some saying yes and more
saying no,
And none knowing which way to
go.”

“Ah, but that’s where you’re wrong,
My kind little Friend,
And that’s the thought you must
end.

Because not too long fore the
summer sun set,
And the leaves turned gold and then
red,
I was not here, and I had your fear...
It was You that was I in my Head.”

~ Written by a client, for her soul mate



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Living and working in community consciously involves sacrifice and offering. Time, inquiry, communication, risk, resolution, mentorship, and apprenticeship are all asked of the individual to keep the community dynamic. All of the therapists that work at Midtown MFT have committed to our community in alignment with our vision *In return, there is support, greater holding, a safe space to provide and seek out guidance, an active exchange of ideas, and an endless learning and discovery process.*

As for our work with clients, we are grounded in working within the individual relationships with them, and we encourage the conscious creation and development of their own community. This may include immediate and extended family connections, work relationships, friendships, and creative outlets, the seeking of mentors or the growth into becoming a mentor. It may also include opening up an intergenerational experience of identity. Looking to the generations before to help us understand more of who we are and to make peace with the limitations of the ones who raised us. We can also work to better our relationships with the vision of creating a healthier family tree for the generations to come.

When there has been too much pain suffered in a family or community, we are called to find or create a community outside of the family tree that could not care for or sustain our spirit. The therapeutic relationship can be the beginning of this journey. Community is an act of connecting intimately from our strength and our vulnerability. It is an active engagement of offering and a place in which to learn to truly receive. Becoming part of a community can be a homecoming.

“We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been — a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere, a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.” -Starhawk

“The life I touch for good or ill, will
touch another life, and that in turn
another, until who knows where the
trembling stops or in what far place
my touch will be felt.”

-Frederick Buechner



Every dream worth having
contains the **power**
to make itself come true
but to **create** it requires
more than imagination.
It requires **action**
and it demands of all dreamers,
a **belief** in themselves
and others
in the **promise**
of each soul to find a way
to dream the world anew.

Mindfulness...

For many centuries mindfulness has been an important practice of philosophical and spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, and only recently it has gained the interest of psychologists of the West.

Mindfulness is a state of receptive, nonjudgmental, present-moment awareness, attention to what is taking place, both internally and externally, in the present. It involves focusing on the reality of the present moment, accepting and opening to it, without becoming engaged in elaborative thoughts or emotional reactions to situations.

Mindfulness is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance, and it involves simple observation without thinking about, comparing, or evaluating events and experience.

Through the practice of mindfulness one can learn to see his or her thoughts and feelings as transient and separate from “self”. This results in an increased ability to allow thoughts and feelings to pass through the mind without seizing onto and becoming attached to them. Even challenging or psychologically painful internal states can be observed to dissipate when one chooses not to elaborate on the thoughts or feelings but to simply notice them.

Through this process it is possible to develop an understanding that negative feelings can be lived through and tolerated, and therefore to reduce reactivity and impulsivity in emotionally challenging situations. Over time, one may learn to anticipate the kinds of experiences that lead to particular emotions and to grasp at a deeper level of the nature and impact of these emotions. *This awareness of one’s own emotional processes is also essential in developing the capacity to understand the experiences of others.*

The positive effects of mindfulness include improved mood, reduced anxiety and depression, decrease in overall psychological distress, and increased levels of empathy. Mindfulness may help to lower the levels of negative emotions, aggression, anger, and hostility. Mindfulness techniques have been used in assisting individuals suffering from cancer, psoriasis, and depression to cope with illness and stress. Remaining in the present moment is also important for successful interpersonal relationships because, especially in heated moments, rumination about past events and worries about the future can easily take us out of the here and now. In a relationship,

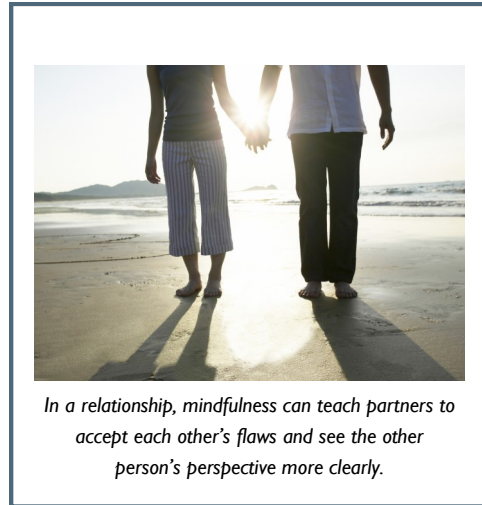
mindfulness can teach partners to accept each other’s flaws and see the other person’s perspective more clearly.

All couples have to regularly negotiate vulnerable emotional experiences such as hurt, fear, and sadness in the context of their relationships. A relationship that deals with these negotiations poorly may result in

destructive communication patterns. Mindfulness promotes a more accepting and less avoidant attitude towards challenging emotions. Seeing the independence of thoughts and feelings from any notion of the self helps to recognize that a broad range of thoughts may be possible in response to a particular situation. Mindfulness can make

it easier to accept the possibility that one’s partner can have completely different thoughts and feelings from one’s own, and that they may be equally valid. More mindful people might also be better able to identify their own emotions, and, as a result, will find it easier to communicate their emotions to their partners.

~ Jacob Kabasso



In a relationship, mindfulness can teach partners to accept each other’s flaws and see the other person’s perspective more clearly.

A Daily Meditation for Mindfulness and Balance...

Sit with an alert and relaxed body posture, so that you feel relatively comfortable without moving. (You can sit either in a straight back chair with your feet flat on the floor or on a thick, firm cushion three to six inches off the floor.

Keep your back, neck, and head vertically aligned, relax your shoulders, and find a comfortable place for your hands (usually your knees).

Bring your attention to breathing. Observe the breath as it flows in and out. Give full attention to the feeling of the breath as it comes in and goes out. Whenever you find that your attention has moved elsewhere, just note it and let go, and gently escort your attention back to the breath, back to the rising and falling of your own belly.

When you can maintain some continuity of attention to breath, try expanding the field of your awareness “around” your belly to include a sense of your body as a whole.

Maintain this awareness of the body sitting and breathing, and, when the mind wanders, bring it back to sitting and breathing.

Begin with 5 minutes and gradually increase the time as you like.



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many beliefs of ourselves we may hold that weren't ours in the first place. *Some of us have been playing a part*, a role in a play, on a stage for our entire lives. We are tired of the role, and we realize it will not lead us down the path we desire; but, we continue to play the part because that is all we know. One day, we realize that it is just a role; something handed to us a long time ago that we internalized and believed was ours to bear.

Change is a slow process that emerges over time from deciding how we want to be, how we want to treat others, and how we want to feel. Intention creates a plan and action; and, slowly, our new way of being can emerge.



When put into perspective...most desires are within our reach.

A Few Good Reads...

A Line Between Friends by Michele VanOrt Cozzens

This is the very well written story of a man and a woman exploring a friendship that has lasted over 20 years--that is, until one day the woman, Noelle, receives an unexpected letter from the man, Joel Rolland. He asks her to stop all contact. "Please don't write to me or call me anymore," he writes. Noelle doesn't know what to make of the letter. She discusses it with her husband and then goes back in time and recounts her history with Joel, who is a boy she met in high school. They became friends when they both attended the same college. And then one night, they "cross the line between friends" and their relationship is forever altered. It's just that one of them doesn't know it.

Why Love Matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain, by Sue Gerhardt

Why Love Matters explains why love is essential to brain development in the early years of life, and how early interactions between babies and their parents shapes the baby's nervous system, affect future emotional well being and relationships, and have lasting and serious consequences. This book is a lively and accessible interpretation of the latest findings in neuroscience, psychology, psychoanalysis and biochemistry.

Drinking: A Love Story, by Caroline Knapp

Caroline had her first drink at fourteen. She drank through her year at an Ivy League College and through her award-winning career as an editor and columnist. Publicly she was a dutiful daughter, a sophisticated professional. Privately, she was drinking herself into oblivion. This startlingly honest memoir lays bare the secrecy, family myths, and destructive relationships that go hand in hand with drinking. It is a love story for our times—full of passion and heartbreak, betrayal and desire—a triumph over the pain and deception that mark an alcoholic life.

One-Day Anger Intensive: an in-depth look at the root of your anger.

Saturdays, 11-4pm Upcoming dates: June 21, July 19, August 16

Clients can expect:

- A deep, insightful look at your core way of existing in relationship to your self and others. In a safe, supported environment, with others facing similar challenges with anger, we will explore hurt that has been masked by anger.
- We will identify family of origin struggles and trauma that have made a lasting imprint on who you are today.
- We will discuss your current relationships and identify the patterns from your past that have been replicated. It is these patterns that trigger your anger today.
- A look into the biological differences between men and women and how they trigger anger.
- An explanation on why all of the anger management courses you have taken have failed to produce lasting results, and the missing key ingredient necessary for the change you desire.
- An introduction to the idea that anger as a defense creates destructive patterns in relationships, but anger, when recognized as a protection, becomes a red flag, a signal that we need to make a change.

Trough a new insight into the protection anger provides, clients will learn to focus and witness their own wounding that precedes anger, to stop waiting for the source of their anger to change, and to find within themselves the strength and courage to accept the call to action: a voice holding us accountable for our own suffering.

This workshop consists of guided meditation, creative and relaxation exercises, and discussion.

Pre-registration with payment is required 1 week prior to the workshop. Space is limited to 7 people.

Tel: 917-968-5599

Workshop Fee: \$150

This workshop is facilitated by **Rachel McDavid, MA, MFT.**

From Wedded Bliss to I'm Pissed!

Committed relationships offer the promise of life-long friendship, love, understanding, and support. Ideally, our partners would be responsive to our needs and wants, giving us the security and trust to make us feel safe. Typically, most couples fall into patterns of unresolved conflicts and repetitive arguments.

We become stuck in these repetitive arguments because we are fighting for the same unmet needs and wants left over from our childhood years. Emotions are timeless. When our partners trigger past wounds, our bodies realize, and quickly remember our unmet needs, and an unexpected flood of emotions can surface; feelings that are disproportionate to the current disagreement.

If this pattern continues, and our fights escalate, we are trying to resolve conflict from an unconscious, childhood self.

How to resolve conflict effectively

- ∞ Decide how you want to treat him/her in the conversation (“I want to be respectful, loving, not critical and demeaning”)
- ∞ Realize that you are probably both suffering.
- ∞ Remember that underneath anger is pain and if **we don't communicate how hurt we are then it isn't listened to.**
- ∞ If we set-up the conversation as an angry attack then we can only expect a defensive counter-attack.
- ∞ Simplify needs, and ask for them. Instead of “You are such a slob. I don't have time to pick up your crap!”, reframe it, “I'm exhausted and overwhelmed with everything that is left around. I need you to help me a little so I can feel more peaceful.”
- ∞ Instead of saying no, or ignoring your partner, say what is preventing you from saying yes.
- ∞ Solve your problems... “How can we set things up differently so they work for both of us?”

~ Ellen Gregory, LMFT

The Journey Of Commitment

Loving and committing to another person is a spiritual process whether that means a wedding or any other type of commitment ceremony. So often, when we enter into a relationship, we allow our emotions to lead us forward without thinking more deeply about what true commitment involves.

If we can understand that sharing our lives with another person is not just based on love but also on the hard work of being able to compromise and enter into a dialogue with him/her, then we are much more likely to find the key to having a successful relationship with our partners. So many people have not experienced a loving relationship between their own parents and, therefore, have no role model of what love should feel like or look like.

Many of us have been exposed to the idea that love should be romantic and sweep us off our feet. While this is a natural part of any relationship, the true test of our love comes from our willingness to explore this world with another person, to not only share in the delights that we encounter but also to negotiate the bumps in the road together. Generally, this often takes the form of a mutual exchange of ideas; but, because any relationship is based on the needs and experiences of two people, we might also face a certain amount of

misunderstanding. Learning to be open and receptive to our partners and to treat their wants and ideas with respect can help us to navigate even the most difficult situations. One way to do this is to take a deep breath, holding our partner in a space of love, allowing ourselves to listen fully with our hearts to what he/she has to say. Should this become difficult to do, we can also turn toward people whose relationships we admire for advice or guidance. Knowing that there are resources out there to help us and being up for exploring them with our partner will only serve to deepen and strengthen our relationship.

Entering into a committed relationship is in fact a spiritual journey that we undertake with another person. By being able to love and care for someone else with an open heart, we will find that we can reach a greater level of



"The type of human being we prefer reveals the contours of our heart." ~ Ortega Y Gasset

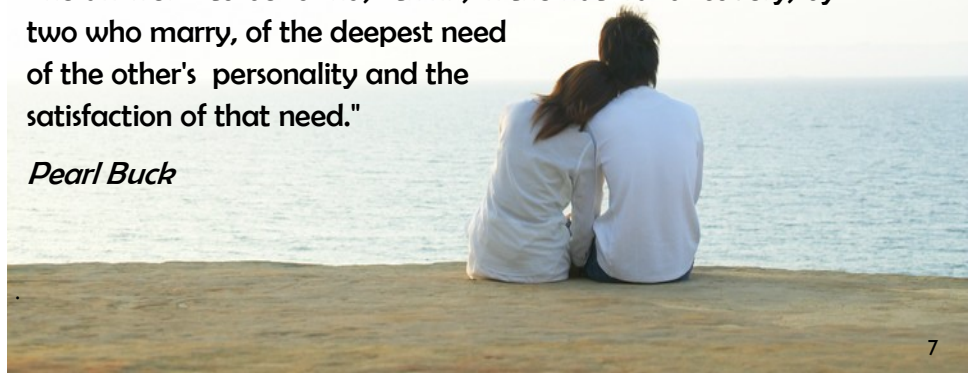
personal transformation, evolving along our path and learning powerful lessons about ourselves that we might not otherwise be able to do on our own.

Found in the DailyOM ~ the daily source for nurturing your mind, body & spirit. Every weekday, DailyOM will turn you on to ways to make your life happier, less stressful, more fulfilled and provide you with tools to stay centered in our hectic world. You can sign-up for your free daily email at <http://www.dailyom.com>

"What makes a happy marriage?"

It is a question which all men and women ask one another... The answer is to be found, I think, in the natural discovery, by two who marry, of the deepest need of the other's personality and the satisfaction of that need."

Pearl Buck



Midtown Marriage and Family Therapy, PC.

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