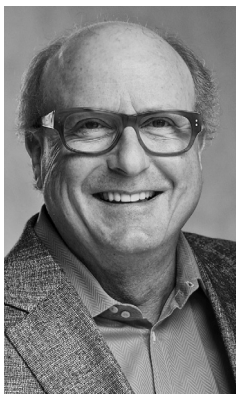


Sisyphus Happy



JOE FERGUSON, PhD

PhD Clinical Psychology, Fielding University
MBA, Wharton School of Business

Many of my clients are anxious, depressed, angry or otherwise unhappy when they first come to me. Most of them believe they *necessarily* feel that way as a result of particular circumstances in the world that frustrate, offend, irritate or terrify them. Most people can describe the principle rocks against which they are dashed in about 30 minutes, after which I demonstrate that I understand and then ask why they are anxious, depressed, angry or unhappy. It only takes about 15 minutes for most people to repeat exactly what they just told me, after which I ask them again why they are anxious, depressed, angry or unhappy.

At this point my new client is likely to be either animated by our engaging conversation or else irritated by my apparent failure to acknowledge the sufficient cause of their suffering, and I take advantage of this moment to ask how they are feeling *right now*. Since they are either animated or irritated at that moment, rather than anxious or depressed, I can point out that their unchanged circumstances don't necessarily dictate their feelings after all. This maneuver usually provides some immediate relief and it opens the door to addressing both the circumstances and their interpretation in parallel.

To a certain extent the world *can* be molded to our needs and taste, especially if we are clever and persistent. But since the universe never bends entirely to our will we must accommodate the remainder or else suffer. Albert Camus recommended that serious philosophers should first consider suicide and then, instead, embrace the indisputable absurdity of the world with heroism and passion, which genuinely transform and elevate even the most extreme circumstances. In a brilliant little essay Camus suggested that even the mythical Sisyphus could find genuine happiness rolling his rock eternally uphill only to watch it roll back down an infinite number of times. You won't have to carry it that far to resolve your own predicament. Trust me. Call me.

Concise Personal Counseling

\$150 per 70-minute session

332 Forest Avenue, Suite #17, Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(949) 235-2615 ~ DrJoe@Fergi.com ~ www.Fergi.com