

In psychology there is a sometimes-used term called the crooked cure. The crooked cure refers to a type of placebo cure, with a dose of transference thrown in. Essentially, it is when a client experiences a sudden radical improvement in how they experience themselves and the world. Isn't this a good thing you might ask?

The answer is that frequently it is not, because in these scenarios the cure is built on shifting sands—something which is not solid ground. The shifting sand in these instances are that the therapist is attributed with God-like powers. They are elevated to such an exalted state that merely being in their presence is enough to elicit a temporary improvement.

But what happens when the therapist for one reason or another can no longer continue therapy? The improvement evaporates, and the client is back to square one. To complicate things further the client may well develop a dependency issue which becomes habitual and hard to break. Not seeing their therapist can raise anxiety for them, so they rock back and forth between feeling good and anxiety. Seeing the therapists eases the anxiety temporarily but then not seeing them raises anxiety thereby further reinforcing the dependency which has formed.

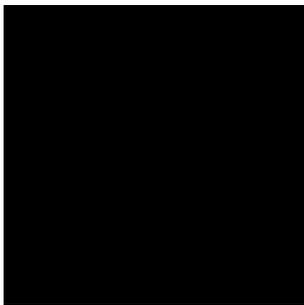
While this does happen in the counselling field, it perhaps is even more marked in the spiritual field. We often hear stories of students being in awe of their gurus or spiritual advisors where they are the solution or answer. It is not uncommon to hear of students who have been with the same teacher for many a year and show no sign of improvement. The cycle of suffering continues and on.

Often this cycle is unconscious and outside of both the teachers and student's awareness. At other times there may be a little awareness revolving around the issue, but it is given scant attention. After all it is easier to just sit at the guru's feet and not take responsibility for life and wellbeing. A formidable dependency is made between the two which often lasts well after the teacher has moved on.

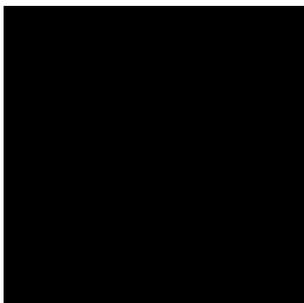
The issue of dependency, power and authority has to be dealt with openly and with compassion. Here the teacher's skill set and experience are critical. The dynamic as it transpired in their interactions becomes part of what needs to be worked through. The onus must shift from the therapist or teacher being viewed as the solution to the client being the agent of change.

It sometimes is difficult work, often involving challenging situations. But they can also be very fruitful for the client, as they learn to modulate their stress response and find new and

flexible ways to deal with life. As they take responsibility for their own lives a growing confidence in their own ability starts to build. That is a far cry from being overly dependent and partaking in the crooked cure.



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