

Interview with Marian Volkman **Author of “Life Skills: Improve the Quality of Your Life with Metapsychology”**

Today, Reader Views is talking with Marian Volkman, author of “Life Skills: Improve the Quality of Your Life with Metapsychology.” This is the first self-help book based on Metapsychology techniques. Marian is speaking with Juanita Watson, Assistant Editor of Reader Views.

Juanita: Hi Marian, thank you for talking with us today. What is Metapsychology and who developed this philosophy?

Marian: Hi Juanita. Thanks for having me. Frank A. Gerbode, MD is the originator of this subject. He studied philosophy at Cambridge, medicine at Yale, and did his psychiatric residency at Stanford. After all that, he was still not satisfied that we had efficient and effective enough methods to really help people permanently get past their traumas and achieve their full potential for happiness, fulfillment and growth. So he went to work to come up with something that would get the job done. “Metapsychology” is really the philosophical basis of the subject and “Applied Metapsychology” refers to the subject in practical application.

Juanita: How did Metapsychology come into your life and what has it done for you?

Marian: I had been doing regression work to heal trauma and also doing personal growth work as a practitioner for 12 years before I met Dr. Gerbode through mutual friends. I knew right away that I had found where I wanted to be, since we agreed on every essential point of practice. He was just getting ready to write his book when I met him. That was in the early 80’s and it has been an incredible adventure ever since.

Juanita: What type of situations, illnesses, traumas etc. will Metapsychology and your book “Life Skills” help?

Marian: The subset of Applied Metapsychology known as Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR) is good for all sorts of traumatic experiences: losses of all kinds including loss of a job, relationship or loved one; injuries of all kinds and also the often painful and distressing medical treatments that follow injury or illness; anything, in short, that a person finds traumatic to experience. Applied Metapsychology is a much broader subject that is very effective for working with issues of self esteem, the quality of one’s relationships, developing one’s abilities and reaching one’s goals in life. Most often this work is done in sessions one-on-one (that Dr. Gerbode sees as more of an educational than a therapeutic process, by the way). I wrote the Life Skills book so that people would have access to some of this great information to use on their own. I still highly recommend

that people get the sessions too, if at all possible, from a trained and certified practitioner (we call them “facilitators”). But knowledge is power, and there is a lot the individual can do on his or her own. The point of the book is to make a very useful subject as accessible as possible.

Juanita: Why did you write your groundbreaking book, “Life Skills?”

Marian: There are a huge array of useful tools and concepts within the subject of Metapsychology, but many of them were not very accessible to the public. You would have had to train as a practitioner of Metapsychology in order to learn all the things I present in this book. I taught many of the key points to my clients and students for years and then I suddenly realized that if I wrote a book, anyone could have access to these tools and apply them to improve the quality of his or her daily life. I love sharing this material because I have found it so enriching myself and because I never get tired of seeing people have realizations and go out and use it to make life better, more effective, and more fun.

Juanita: Is it meant to be used by a practitioner or can a lay-person use this book?

Marian: It’s specifically meant so that anyone, without any background in the subject can pick it up and use it. It has lots of exercises that can be done on one’s own, with a partner or in a study group. However people want to use it is fine with me!

Juanita: What is TIR?

Marian: TIR is a relatively brief (compared to traditional methods of treating trauma), non-hypnotic, person-centered method of relieving a painful memory of its burden of pain, emotion and resistance. It is person-centered in that the client is the one who reaches conclusions and determines when the end point has been reached on that piece of work. Our practitioners do not interpret clients’ experience for them; they just provide the safe space and the structure within the session that allows the client to work effectively.

Juanita: Why has the field of Metapsychology captured your attention so strongly?

Marian: I haven’t found anything better! There are lots of good methods out there that can help people, and I wouldn’t knock any of them, but this goes the deepest of anything I have seen, and goes quite fast – at the client’s own speed – and really gets the job done. I have been practicing this, using the entire vast array of techniques for over 20 years now, and I never get tired of it. I enjoy working with my individual clients and also teaching the subject, which is something I do both here in Ann Arbor and in many other cities and countries around the world.

Juanita: How will your book help people improve their quality of life?

Marian: First of all, when we learn concepts that are basic to life itself, we are bound to increase our understanding and hence our ability to work with various aspects of life. Secondly, the exercises are designed to develop one’s abilities. We all have abilities that we aren’t fully using. My hope is that people will find the exercises entertaining in themselves as well as finding that they have more use of those abilities as a result of doing the exercise.

Juanita: What are some of the key points readers can expect from “Life Skills?”

Marian: One is an understanding of how traumatic events affect us and how that knowledge can empower us to make better choices in life. Another is looking at the range of emotion as a spectrum

and looking at the factors that can cause people to move up and down that spectrum, and what we can do to improve our 'default' emotional state. Another is looking at human potential and what that means to you. What is possible? How do we get there? That is the kind of stuff that really excites me.

Juanita: I know you put a significant emphasis on relationships. Tell us how this applies to Metapsychology and this is conveyed in your book?

Marian: Since the quality of our relationships has such an enormous impact on our over all quality of life, there are of course tons of books on the subject. Life Skills covers some of the most fundamental knowledge on the working of relationships included in the subject of Applied Metapsychology, with an emphasis on practical use. If we understand not only how strong connections build up between people, but what can cause those connections to break down, than we have a way to remedy those breaks and make the relationship stronger than ever.

Juanita: What type of exercises can your readers expect to find in "Life Skills?"

Marian: I would like to say, "catchy" ones! I guess I can justify saying that because I had the great advantage of having my book edited by Robert Rich, Ph.D. He told me that it took him much longer to edit Life Skills than it normally would take him for a book of that length, because he kept doing the exercises instead of just continuing to read. I took that as a compliment! One thing I'd really like to say about this though is that if you get the book and you don't want to do the exercises, that is fine. You can write them down or not write them down. You can do them out of order, or just do the ones you like the sound of. The exercises are there to serve the reader, to hopefully bring about some enlightenment or increased ability, or both. It is your choice how to use them.

Juanita: How can your readers find out more about you and your endeavors?

Marian: It's kind to you to ask! My dear husband made a website for me: www.marianvolkman.com It contains information about my work and also has information about Turtle Dolphin Dreams, my little fiction book. I also have 4 more books in the works: 1 fiction and three non-fiction. News of them will appear on the website once they are closer to their publication dates.

One last thing I'd like to mention, your readers can preview a chapter of Life Skills by visiting www.LifeSkillsBook.com

Juanita: We really appreciate you taking the time to talk with us today Marian. Your book "Life Skills: Improve the Quality of Your Life with Metapsychology" is a definitive look into the field of Metapsychology. Do you have any last thoughts for your readers?

Marian: It can always get better! That's what I believe. Life of course has its ups and downs. If there weren't challenges and adventures, the thrill of winning at something and the fear and pain of losing, life would be dull. I do believe though that we are built for a much higher level of bliss. If we live fully and consciously to the best of our ability, learning and growing all the time and sort of pushing the boundaries of what we are capable of, we can achieve and maintain a state of enthusiasm and even bliss a lot of the time, without needing to take something to get "high". That doesn't mean that we will never be sad or angry or fearful, we are alive after all! But we can live so as to fully appreciate every aspect of life. Despite all the awful things that are going on in the world right now, I believe that human beings are in the process of evolving to new levels of ability. But that's another whole conversation, isn't it! Thanks for having me, Juanita!