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42 – Physician Heal Thyself and then the World: Workaholism, Helpaholism and other Physician Conditions (Fraud Syndrome, Empathopoenia, Email-Overdose, MDeity Syndrome, Cell-phone-Otitis, etc) – Playful but Effective Medications for Serious Symptoms

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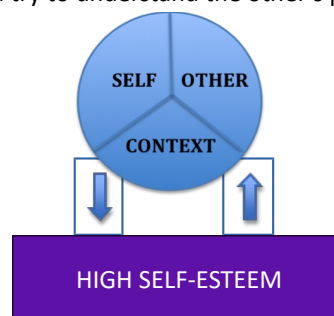
Most docs are workaholics or helpaholics -- especially Family Docs (1)! I am both. I still run workshops and a psychotherapy practice at 75. I love what I do, that's the problem!

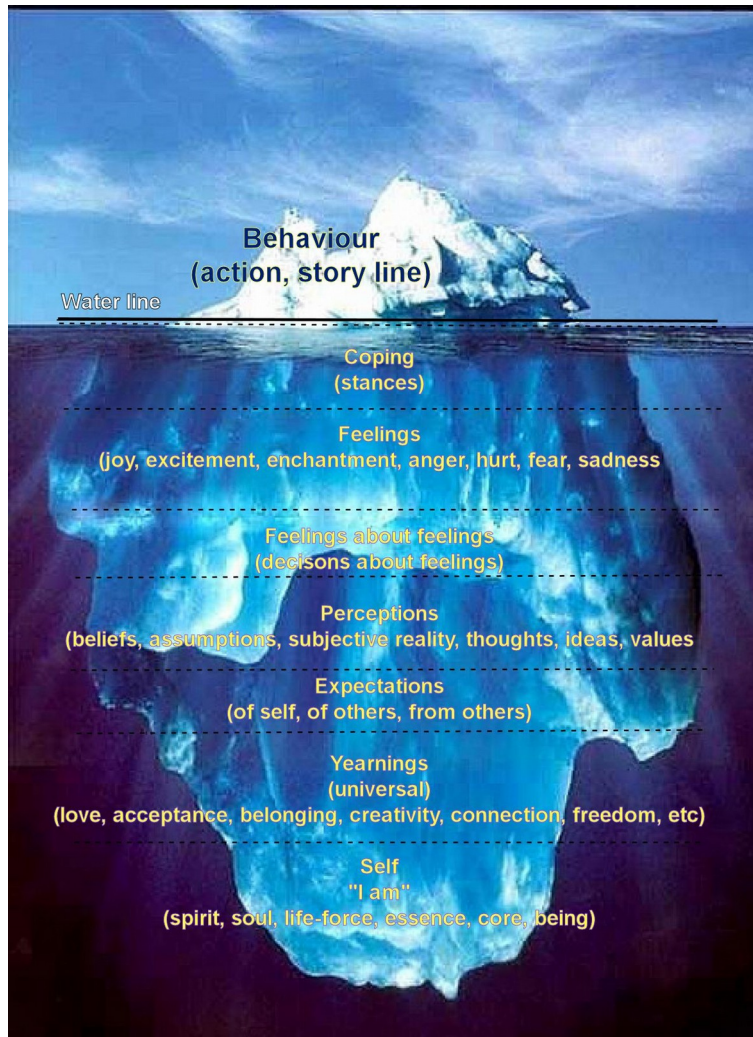
I'm getting better! I read Barbara Killinger's "Workaholics: the Respectable Addicts; a Family Survival Guide" (2), often worse in its impact than alcoholism. Take the Workaholic Quiz at: www.cnn.com/interactive/2011/05/living/workaholic.test/ and find out if your case is serious!

I was fortunate to train with Virginia Satir, the "Columbus of Family Therapy", an enlightened lady way ahead of her time. Stone deaf for two years from mastoiditis at six, she noticed people looked very different when communicating, and planned to become a detective on parents when she grew up. Her mother, a **Placator** never spoke her own feelings, hid anger deep inside, never saying "No!"-- like many family docs. Her father was a **Blamer**, hiding his helplessness and shame of alcoholism. Others looked like computers, the **Super-Reasonables** -- maybe she met some doctors (specialists particularly) -- hiding discomfort about feelings ("Just give me the facts. Don't bother me with this emotional stuff!"), quoting N.E.J.M or the Bible. Others were always joking or changing the subject, the clowns hiding despair, the **Distracters**. She later understood these four came from AND increase Low Self-Esteem (3). So one medication that helps stop the Performance-Based Self-Esteem of most physicians is the prescription of:

Congruence!

I remember being told to be congruent with patients in Med School, but nobody explained how! Congruence is being respectful, considerate and honest. Non-verbal signals match verbal content. If you're angry you may look and sound angry, but you don't blame or accuse, you try to understand the other's position.





Good luck!

Take home messages

- True self-esteem is independent of performance.
- Congruence raises self-esteem of all concerned.
- Listen to your inner kid, don't berate him / her.
- Satisfy YOUR real needs, THEN help the world.

Original abstract

<http://www.woncaeurope.org/content/3798-physician-heal-thyself-and-then-world-workshop-workaholism-helpaholism-and-other>

References

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