



The Philosophy of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Stoic Philosophy as Rational and Cognitive Psychotherapy

By Donald Robertson

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Why should modern psychotherapists be interested in philosophy, especially ancient philosophy? Why should philosophers be interested in psychotherapy? There is a sense of mutual attraction between what are, today, two thoroughly distinct disciplines. However, arguably it was not always the case that they were distinct.

This book traces the origins of modern cognitive behavioral therapy, noting a clear analogy with ancient philosophy. Robertson skillfully combines the clinical experience of therapy and the academic grasp of philosophy to write in depth.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book is a fascinating interweaving of Stoic philosophy and contemporary cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). Robertson rightly reminds us of how much CBT owes its philosophical origins to the Stoics but, sadly, how often this debt is insufficiently acknowledged. He urges us to redirect our attention to the past to see how modern CBT still has much to learn from its ancient precursors. Highly recommended." (Michael Neenan, Co-Director of the CBT Programme)

"Many of us have felt the need for a book that covers the underlying philosophy of the cognitive-behavioural therapies in much greater depth. This book provides us with the missing link between the theory and the philosophy. It is a fascinating read and could be considered as either a prequel or a sequel to the standard textbook read by a trainee or experienced cognitive-behavioural or rational emotive practitioner who wants to understand these approaches to therapy within an historical framework." (Professor Stephen Palmer, Director)

"The author has uncovered a wealth of connections between modern cognitive-behavioural therapies and ancient Stoic philosophy. It should be read by anyone interested in understanding the historical roots of CBT or in learning about how ancient psychotherapeutic methods can add to the modern therapist's toolkit." (Tim LeBon, UKCP registered psychotherapist and author of Wise Therapy)

"Donald Robertson is blazing a trail to discover the sources of cognitive-behavioural therapy, and Stoic philosophy is prime among these. A fascinating work that should be compulsory reading for all practitioners in the field and interested lay people, providing insights into how ancient philosophy can give us the coping and life success strategies we are all looking for, both as professionals and in private life. A great read!" (Tom Butler-Bowdon, author of 50 Self-Help Classics and 50 Psychology Classics)

From the Author

The Philosophy of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a detailed examination of the relationship between modern psychotherapy, especially REBT and CBT, and ancient philosophy, especially Stoicism. I've tried to make the book readable enough to engage non-academics and non-therapists. However, I hope that philosophers and psychotherapists will find a common ground here and a basis for further dialogue over these ideas and techniques. The emphasis throughout the book is upon the practical application of Stoic philosophy to everyday problems of living. The introduction attempts to summarise the range of strategies and techniques described later in the book, to give a flavour of the practical dimension.

About the Author

Donald Robertson is an integrative psychotherapist and trainer, who specializes in the treatment of anxiety and the use of cognitive-behavioral approaches to clinical hypnotherapy. He is the author of a number of articles on philosophy and psychotherapy in professional journals, and the forthcoming book, *The Discovery of Hypnosis, The Collected Writings of James Braid*. Donald's background in academic philosophy has helped him to appreciate the relationship between modern psychotherapy and ancient philosophy, a subject that he has frequently written about and lectured upon in training courses and professional conferences over the years.

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