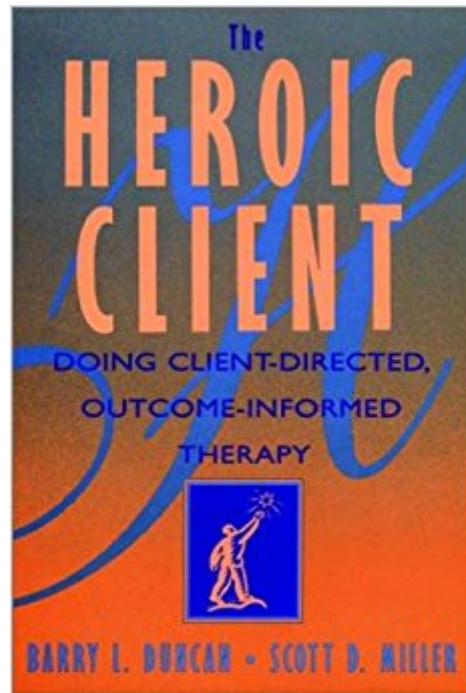




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# The Heroic Client



## Synopsis

In this controversial book, psychologists Barry Duncan and Scott Miller, cofounders of the Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change, challenge the traditional focus on diagnosis, "silver bullet" techniques, and magic pills, exposing them as empirically bankrupt practices that only diminish the role of clients and hasten therapy's extinction. Instead, they advocate for the long-ignored but most crucial factor in therapeutic success-the innate resources of the client. Based on extensive clinical research and case studies, *The Heroic Client* not only shows how to harness the client's powers of regeneration to make therapy effective, but also how to enlist the client as a partner to make therapy accountable. *The Heroic Client* inspires therapists to boldly rewrite the drama of therapy, recast clients in their rightful role as heroes and heroines of the therapeutic stage, and legitimize their services to third-party payers without the compromises of the medical model.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Heroic Client calls forth a therapeutic union between therapist compassion and accountability with client wisdom. This book inspires us to re-remember why we became therapists in the first place." (Stephen Madigan, director of training, Toronto Narrative Therapy Project, and managing editor, [www.planet-therapy.com](http://www.planet-therapy.com)) "Warning: If you're addicted to long letters of appreciation touting your clinical prowess, this book will be hazardous to your mental health. Duncan and Miller will show you how to harness your clients' expertise and make therapy a more collaborative, outcome-oriented experience. But fasten your seatbelts, you're in for a humbling ride!" (Michele

Weiner-Davis, author, *Divorce Busting*) "Few authors have captured and articulated the challenges facing practicing clinicians as well as Duncan and Miller. This is must reading for graduate students and novice therapists who are entering the field, thought provoking and stimulating reading for seasoned professionals." (Michael J. Lambert, Brigham Young University) "...an inspiring and timely book..." (The New Therapist, October 2000)

Psychotherapy has for too long relegated the client to a minor role in the drama of therapeutic healing. Moreover, in today's system of managed care, the client is marginalized further as the field is increasingly medicalized and supervised by those interested only in the bottom line. The result: clients are depersonalized by diagnostic labels that have predetermined limits to care, leaving them with few options for meaningful individual treatment. And this system often forces therapists of all disciplines to forgo new or alternative treatments, leaving them enslaved to follow practices in which they no longer believe. It's time for a radical change. In *The Heroic Client*, Barry Duncan and Scott Miller-cofounders of the Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change-outline the steps to revitalize psychotherapy by harnessing the client's own powers of regeneration and enlisting the client's own perceptions, and thereby making treatment more effective and accountable. This innovative approach advocates for the client's voice in all aspects of therapy and shows how to tailor both relational stances and treatment approaches to each client's personal goals. The authors present a simple, valid, and reliable way of legitimizing therapy to third-party payers using client feedback about the process and outcome of therapy. Based on extensive clinical research and field-tested experience, *The Heroic Client* will challenge therapists to rethink the process of therapy, recast clients in their rightful roles as heroes and heroines in their own therapy, and help therapists establish an approach beyond the limits of the medical model. Timely, highly readable, and thought-provoking, *The Heroic Client* will change the way therapists do therapy. [head]The book that will lead psychotherapy out of the Stone Age and into the age of The Heroic ClientIn this controversial book, psychologists Barry Duncan and Scott Miller, cofounders of the Institute for the St

I was really excited about the premise of the book - that therapy should be client-direct and outcomes informed. They start off with some strong ideas about how diagnosis does not serve the patient or therapeutic outcomes, it's all good stuff for a chapter or so. It was great to see their passion for patient care in the beginning, as well. After a few chapters it starts to fall apart in my mind. They talk about adopting the patient's theory of change and putting aside your own, they give

excerpts where they open session talking about scores like they are a mechanic, and they talk about patients with tattoos, piercings, and long beards with extreme judgment. None of this would be so bad, but it seems to be contradictory and impossible as a goal. It is contradictory as a book because despite being client-centered and talking about how we need to be aware of how our beliefs affect outcomes, they do not explore how their judgmental attitudes towards the tattooed patient may have influenced therapy. I don't care that you felt such strong judgments, but show me as the reader that you acknowledged them and maybe processed them in supervision or with colleagues or something. The idea that one can simply put aside one's theories seemed a little far fetched as they unraveled it more and more. Donna Orange talks about holding theories lightly, which seems more realistic. We are all subjective beings with beliefs and feelings that can't be put aside into some container at whim. The authors of this book seemed to suggest that we can do just that. With that said, my impression of the book thus far (60 pages from the end), is that they present some great alternatives to medical model, deterministic approaches but their conclusion about how is unrealistic at worst or not well-described at best.

Barry Duncan and Scott Miller are with Marc Hubble directors of The Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change (...). These people play an important role in improving and renewing therapy. In this book, the authors explain how therapy has for too long been neglecting, ignoring, and depersonalizing clients, by its over-emphasis on methods and techniques, by following the medical model, by its emphasis on pathology, by hegemony of biological approaches, and so on. The authors first debunk the myths of: 1) PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSIS: a) it lacks reliability, b) it lacks validity, c) it puts the blame on the client, and d) it is often motivated by self-interest, fueled by greed, and blows with the winds of fashion, 2) DRUG TREATMENT OF MENTAL PROBLEMS: a) they work no better than therapy in the short term b) changes brought about by medication are less likely to persist over time c) there often are severe adverse effects, d) drug studies often look better than they are because they rate improvement by looking to clinicians' perceptions, not clients' e) the relationship between drug companies and psychiatry is an unholy alliance, making most of the drug-effectiveness research very suspect 3) THE MAGIC APPROACH: a) there is no special magic silver bullet approach which is much better than another approach b) the role of the competence and experience of the therapist is rather unimportant According to the authors, four decades of outcome research have shown that there are four main factors of change, being: 1. Client factors (percentage contribution to positive outcome: 40%). 2. Relationship factors (percentage contribution: 30%). 3. Hope and expectancy (percentage contribution: 15%). 4. Model and technique (percentage

contribution: 15%).Some conclusions:1. Thoughts, ideas, actions, initiatives, traits of clients are the most important predictor of therapy success!2. Next to what the client brings to therapy, the client's perception of the therapeutic relationship is responsible for most of the gains resulting from the therapy.3. Models and techniques are much less important than generally thought.The authors advocate a new and refreshing approach characterised by:1) Client-directedness. Clients' beliefs, values, theories and goals are respected, close attention is being paid to clients' initiatives, interventions and perceptions. Much attention is given to establishing the quality of the relationship, and to monitoring the clients' perception of the quality of the relationship.2) Outcome informedness. Progress is measured from session to session using paper and pencil questionnaires. By the way: the client's experience of meaningful change in the first few visits is emerging as one of the best predictors of eventual treatment outcome.Two thoughts come up after having read this book. First, this book is refreshing indeed and a shock to the therapy system. Second, the ideas ventilated in this book might be relevant for work outside the therapy field as well. Consider for instance what management consultancy and managing coaching could learn from this.....

good

This is a book that all mental health professionals should read. It is provocative and challenges everything that you were taught. Miller has always been someone who has challenged the status quo of theory and methodology. Traditional mental health practitioners are not going to like this. It questions diagnosis , evidenced based treatments, the " efficacy" of medication studies with research based outcomes. It also challenges therapists to ask clients how they are doing. Very challenging.

After being a counselor for over thirty years it is refreshing to see a scholarly book by authors who understand what is important in change, growth and healing. For far too long therapists and medicine have taken credit for the work done by the clients.This book outlines important research and common sense reasons why we need to really listen to the client and his family to learn how to support what he is doing to be healthy. Anyone interested in helping people change can benefit from this newest volume from the people who get what counseling is all about.

This was by far the best book I have read that could benefit beginning therapists in search of a therapy model. Clients needs always come first and this book just proves that over and over. We

are the experts in the room on therapy but they are the experts of themselves. If you don't allow them to be the main focus of therapy you may as well not be in this profession.

There were a few gems in this book that make it worth purchasing. However, it begins to be a little repetitive. This book will enhance your skills as a clinician.

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