



# Reshaping Family Relationships: The Symbolic Therapy Of Carl Whitaker

By William Bumberry, Gary M. Connell, Tammy Mitten

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Although some might consider Carl Whitaker's work as being brilliant, creative, and innovative, his techniques are commonly viewed as being beyond the reach of the average clinician. Some have thought his therapeutic successes reflect his personal charm, rather than a clearly formulated, consistent, replicable approach to therapy. "Reshaping Family Relationships" offers a model for understanding the process of change in family therapy from a symbolic-experiential perspective. It offers a vivid picture of symbolic-experiential therapy, highlighted by clinical vignettes of the work of Dr. Whitaker, as well as the authors. Clinical material and case discussion illustrate each component of this approach. The symbolic-experiential model not only identifies the various stages of the therapy process but discusses the different interventions that are typical at each stage. The six stages of therapy included in the core variables of this model are: generating a relational point of view; creating a therapeutic alliance; stimulating a symbolic context; activating stress to fuel change; catalyzing change through symbolic experiences; and the end of therapy - moving out and moving on.

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#### **Review**

"The authors both honor and demystify the magic of Whatakeris therapy through a mix of anecdotes, dialogue, and insightful commentary. The result is engaging, human, accessible tour de force on symbolic Experiential Therapy. Carl Whitakerwoul have been proud."-Fred P. Piercy, Ph.D., Director, Marriage and Family Therapy Program, Purdue University, IN

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