

The International Forum  
for  
**LOGOTHERAPY**  
Journal of Search for Meaning

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## THE PURSUIT OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

Rachel B. Asagba

Logotherapy has shown that the direct pursuit of happiness ends in failure. Happiness is a by-product of finding meaning.<sup>3, p.39</sup> I believe that, analogously, the direct pursuit of democracy in Nigeria would end in failure. I suggest that democracy in Nigeria can result as a by-product of finding the meaning of democracy. Thus I believe if democracy is to be established in Nigeria, as many individuals and groups have called for, there is need first for education about the meaning of democracy.



Most people crying for democracy in Nigeria really don't know its meaning. They do not practice it in their daily living, even within the groups they belong to. They need to understand that it is not just the absence of a military regime, "just as democracy does not automatically establish itself when a king is overthrown."<sup>2, p.96</sup>

Some advocate democracy without adjusting it to Nigerian factors, such as the tradition of authoritarian leadership and a hierarchial system of government. They merely shout "democracy!" They do not form different non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and establish democracy at the grassroots level to educate themselves and the masses (in their own local languages) so that people are able to understand the meaning of democracy. They need to learn:

- the reason for voting for their right choice--without giving or receiving money and other material things.
- to know their candidates well--what they promise to do for the people.
- all members of a party should have a say and a vote within their individual parties--not just the most powerful, the richest, or elders.
- all people should be educated from the grassroots to the elite--not just those who have wealth and power.

After the annulment of 1993 election, calls were made by the CD (Campaign for Democracy) group on three occasions asking people to stay home--no work and other outdoor activities. To the first call about 70% of the people responded, to the second call about 30%, and to the third call almost nobody. Most market women did their normal business--their understanding of what was going on had nothing to do with democracy. They needed to be educated in their own languages about the meaning behind staying home--to protest against the actions of the military regime. Then they could have mobilized their fellow market women.

Different groups with different names claim to fight for democracy but do not share the same meaning and reasons for democracy. Most of them have their hidden agenda--from free traveling outside the country to getting of monetary rewards or sponsorship from international organizations for "fighting for democracy." If they had been trained to listen to the voice of their conscience to tell the truth, most would have to admit to controlling, dominating, or using the group for selfish reasons.

Without understanding the meaning, whenever the Nigerian people had freedom, they did not know what to do with it. This was why civilian regimes usually failed, and everyone wanted to win by all means. The losers always complained and were unwilling to work with the winners. During the civilian regime the constitution and laws were there but the restrictions affected mainly the poor masses--this was not true to the meaning of democracy. Until the meaning and reasons are made known to the people, there will be no true democracy just as there is no happiness without a reason to be happy.

### **Suggestions**

The following suggestions are made for individuals, groups, or organizations interested in promoting democracy:

- Introduction of democracy could be compulsory as part of the curriculum from kindergarten to high school through technical/trade school to university level. This would prepare future generations to the fullest for democratization.
- Law and justice could be improved, either by a military regime or a democratically elected government, because these will lay the foundation of democracy. Everyone must see that law and justice are respected and used as building blocks for the foundation of democracy.
- The definition of democracy could be given in layman's language and in a way that both the democratic and military governments are able to perceive, understand, and share the same meaning. This would bridge the communication gap.

- The military training curriculum could include democracy. The curriculum could emphasize reasons and meaning of democracy and how important it is to the society. Continuing education and in-service training could also be included. This would enhance the soldiers' understanding of democracy.
- Dialogues and collaboration are needed between the military regimes, governments, the American government, UNESCO, the Trans-American Organization, and other groups interested in democracy, to find a lasting solution. For example, each group could have an office where dialogues take place with governments and with the people themselves. These offices could initiate studies with the grassroots people, to know what level of knowledge they have of democracy. They would be like the logotherapists who do not dictate meaning but turn on a light for their patients in a dark room, so they can see meaning themselves.
- Information of democracy could be disseminated to the grassroots level, emphasizing the reasons and meaning of democracy, through TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, plays, and books. People who call themselves democratic advocates could form organizations across the country to help pass the information to the grassroots level. Instead of merely shouting about the democratic lifestyle, they could let people see it by their example. A market woman, literate or not, would be able to explain the meaning or reasons for democracy in her own language.
- American university lecturers and those from other Western countries could be sent to universities as exchange programs. This would allow the Western academicians to brainstorm democracy and the factors that hinder democracy. Having experienced the culture themselves, they would be able to relate better in the quest of find solutions. Both students and staff could, through research and other measures, find suitable solutions to the best possible ways of democratization. At university level, monthly seminars and workshops would enhance this democracy education.
- Yearly or bi-annual conferences on democracy could be held at state, national, regional, and finally world-wide levels. Scholars, researchers, and other people could bring problems and solutions from their countries' democratization processes, sharing and working in partnership.
- Traditional chiefs and other elders could also be educated in each local government with frequent seminars and workshops on democracy, voting systems, etc.
- The three major languages of Nigeria could be made compulsory

from kindergarten to high school level. Teachers could be exchanged from the north with those from the south. Incentives and free accommodations could be given to non-indigenous teachers to encourage and compensate their being away from their origins. Excursions of school children to other parts of the country where other languages are spoken could be encouraged. This would bring trust and good communication between ethnic groups. If everyone could trust, discuss, and understand each other, it would be easier to establish lasting democracy.

### Conclusions

Like logo-education is needed to promote logotherapy, democracy education is needed to promote democracy. This education is not just a transmission of tradition and knowledge but also the use of the Socratic dialogue where the objective is to let everyone be "informed, sensitive and responsible." Logotherapy is "education to responsibility."<sup>2, p.xix</sup> Not only responsibility, but also "responsibleness" is required. As logotherapy uses these terms, "responsibility is imposed from outside; responsibleness is freely chosen."<sup>2, p.120</sup>

Everyone should help build the country. There is no leader that can do everything for the citizens. Everyone must contribute to the country, and all must work together regardless of religious or political background. The traders must learn to be considerate to the buyers, and the transporters to the commuters. People traveling abroad should contribute their expertise when they come home; and those living outside of the country should come home to contribute theirs.

Finding meaning in developing countries is like finding democracy.<sup>1</sup> If one applies all the principles of logotherapy in Nigeria, democracy would surely become a lasting institution.

RACHEL ASAGBA [U.I., P.O. Box 19695, Ibadan, Nigeria] is *Managing Director/Consultant of the Medical Counselling and Referral Centre and at the same time she is a Mphil/PhD Candidate at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.*

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## **LOGOTHERAPEUTIC PRINCIPLES IN THE TREATMENT OF PANIC ATTACKS WITH AGORAPHOBIA: A Case History**

**Richard I. Hooper, Mary K. Walling, & W. D. Joslyn**

This case history illustrates how logotherapeutic principles can blend with a variety of therapeutic approaches. We hope it will stimulate confidence in therapists by reminding them that even when they feel they have failed to facilitate change, they may have sown the seeds for future growth.

Mr. P was a 33-year-old alcohol dependent man who avoided crowds for fear of having panic attacks. His social discomfort was first apparent in grade school, and the panic attacks appeared some years later.

This anxiety disorder eventually led to alcohol abuse, blocked his attempts to go to college, and led to social isolation. The Psychiatrist who identified the disorder found no medical basis for the panic attacks but prescribed antidepressant medication to dampen the physiological overreactivity associated with the attacks. She referred the client for psychotherapy.



### **Logotherapy with Paradoxical Intention**

After noting that Mr. P had a sense of humor, the therapist used Paradoxical Intention following the sequence suggested by Fabry<sup>1</sup> and outlined by Yoder<sup>2</sup>:

1. Medical examination to rule out an organic anxiety disorder.
2. Self-distancing from the symptoms to gain perspective.
3. Detailed explanation of Paradoxical Intention and the sharing of case histories.

4. Collaborative creation of exaggerated symptoms in ways that appeal to the client's unique sense of humor.
5. Role playing the humorous formulations during therapy sessions until the client's sense of humor is fully activated.
6. Practicing the humorous formulations in actual feared situations.

A humorous formulation developed with Mr. P consisted of going into a classroom with the intention of shaking uncontrollably, dropping his books, and losing bowel and bladder control. After role playing this episode, the client attended an actual class lecture in the company of his therapist (who had permission from the instructor). In spite of the client's intention to embarrass himself, he became absorbed in a lecture on ecology! His humor and conscious effort to produce the symptoms interfered with the fear response and freed him from the anticipatory anxiety that had been fueling the phobia and panic attacks in the first place.

The therapy occurred in eleven 50-minute sessions spaced over a 17-day period. At one-month follow-up, the client reported having used Paradoxical Intention in several social situations, including his own wedding. After two months, he was hospitalized for a relapse of his alcohol dependence, but he reported no recurrence of his phobic or panic symptoms. However, 2½ years after treatment, panic attacks with agoraphobia began again. The client came back for outpatient therapy but did not change after five sessions of Paradoxical Intention. At this point, marital conflict became the focus of therapy.

### **Self-Transcendence with Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy**

A year after the marital therapy, Mr. P was referred to a second therapist for further therapy for agoraphobia and panic attacks. Using a cognitive-behavioral orientation, the therapist explored the role of hyperventilation in Mr. P's panic attacks and taught him to short-circuit the attacks by slow abdominal breathing. She also helped him identify and challenge cognitive distortions such as all-or-nothing thinking, catastrophizing, and other dysfunctional automatic thoughts. She gave him educational materials and homework assignments, which the client diligently completed. These weekly therapy sessions were an hour long and lasted for nine months.

Shortly after beginning this phase of therapy, the client shared his ambition to organize a residential living center for persons recovering from chemical dependency. This self-governed center would allow individuals to live together and be responsible collectively for each other. When he accepted this challenge it became a self-transcending vehicle for his own therapy. This project required many activities that were in direct conflict with his phobias, including making telephone calls, arranging meetings with local business people, and talking to groups.

Another self-transcendent goal of the client was to strengthen his relationship with his son, which required sobriety maintenance. Having remained sober for a year, he began to appreciate the degree to which alcohol dependency had masked his strengths.

These self-transcendent goals gave Mr. P increased motivation to learn the cognitive and behavioral skills required to achieve the goals. With growing recognition and acceptance of his increasing abilities, he met each challenge and gained confidence with each success.

#### **Self-Distancing with Hypnotherapy**

A telephone phobia was another obstacle in the way of Mr. P's establishing an independent living center. This fear led to procrastination around any task requiring telephone communication and added to his social isolation. This phobia, having originated 20 years earlier with the avoidance of bill collectors, had generalized to the initiation as well as the receiving of phone calls. The anticipatory anxiety accompanying this phobia included physiological events such as a racing heartbeat, dry mouth, and shakiness.

While engaging in the cognitive-behavioral therapy, Mr. P approached a third therapist for focused treatment of his telephone phobia. This therapist chose short-term hypnotherapy with homework assignments.

Mr. P was able to enter a deep trance, which he found to be a positive, relaxing experience. After learning the skill of self-hypnosis, he followed a three-stage process of deconditioning. First, while in trance he recalled a very distressing memory involving the telephone. Second, he shifted his attention back to the therapist's office. Third, he returned to the distressing memory while receiving the suggestion that each time he returned to the memory the negative emotion would decrease in intensity.



After mastering the three-stage deconditioning process, Mr. P actually practiced using the telephone while in trance. To the surprise of the therapist, he spontaneously used the Paradoxical Intention he had learned previously. He reported, "I pictured how silly it was to be afraid of the phone. I thought, 'What's going to happen when I take the phone? Is it going to wrap its cord around my throat and strangle me?'"

The client described the self-distancing he had learned as follows: "I came to realize there was the 'me' who I am now and another 'me' who was afraid to use the phone." In logotherapeutic terms the "me who was afraid to use the phone" was in the psychological dimension of conditioned reactions, whereas the "me who I am now" resided in the noetic dimension where freedom exists to take a stand against self-defeating habits in the psychological dimension.

After hypnotherapy Mr. P's telephone phobia disappeared completely. He remained symptom free at two-year follow-up. This new-found freedom increased Mr. P's self-esteem and reduced his social isolation. He said, "It's hard for a person who has never been boxed in like that to realize what a big thing being able to use the telephone can be! Now the only worry I have is getting the phone bill!"

### Comments

This case history illustrates no new principles or techniques of psychotherapy. However, it does remind us of things we sometimes forget.

First, logotherapeutic principles can be and often are combined with other types of effective therapy. These principles may or may not be recognized explicitly. They often are labeled and understood according to different frames of reference.

Second, therapists cannot take all credit or blame for a client's success or failure. Therapists sometimes forget that the most important therapist is the client. This was true for our client, who was "not to be denied." In spite of the eventual relapse after his initial treatment, Mr. P had laid much of the groundwork for his success in subsequent therapies.

Finally, clients go through different stages of growth. They may find one therapist a good mentor for one stage of development and another therapist more helpful during a later stage. Just as we can't

imagine a person learning everything they will ever need to know from one teacher, it is no more plausible that clients will learn all they will ever need from one therapist. Fortunately, therapists do cooperate with one another, even if they are not always aware of it.

RICHARD I. HOOPER, LCSW, MBA is currently a Doctoral Student at Portland State University. At the time of writing this paper, he was a Staff Social Worker at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Knoxville, Iowa.

MARY K. WALLING, Ph.D. is a Clinical Psychologist currently working as a Family Counselor at the Children's Home Association of Illinois in Peoria. She is a former predoctoral Psychology Intern at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Knoxville, Iowa.

W. D. JOSLYN, Ph.D. is a Clinical Psychologist at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Knoxville, Iowa. He is a Diplomat in Logotherapy.

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