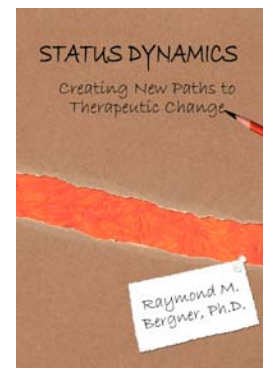




BURNS PARK  
PUBLISHERS

P.O. Box 4239  
Ann Arbor MI 48106  
www.burnsparkpublishers.com  
734.663.5435

Review of *Status Dynamics*  
*Descriptive Psychology Bulletin*



“NEW PATHS TO THERAPEUTIC CHANGE”

Reviewed by Carolyn Allen Zeiger, Ph.D.  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist,  
Retired adjunct faculty at the Universities of Colorado and Arizona

Talk? Drugs? Or some combination? What *actually* causes therapeutic change? Research on talk therapies such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) has made it clear that “talk” actually works – often better than drugs alone. But how? Why? And what does a therapist *do* to create an effective path to therapeutic change?

Dr. Raymond M. Bergner answers these questions and much more in his new book, *Status Dynamics: Creating New Paths to Therapeutic Change*. What I love about this book is that Bergner is *not* saying to psychotherapists: “Start over! Forget what you’ve been doing!” Instead, he clearly lays out some ways to make what we are already doing more effective. And I would add, *much* more effective. I know, because I’ve been using many of these techniques myself for a number of years in my training and supervision of other therapists as well as in my own practice. This work is tried and true—not just good ideas. Bergner also offers a framework for better understanding what we do and why it works.

Bergner asserts that therapy is not just “talk.” Something much more powerful is going on. The therapist and client engage in a joint project of “world reconstruction” – literally changing the world and the client’s place in it – to make the client “eligible and able to participate in life in meaningful and fulfilling ways.”

Successful psychotherapy clearly involves new insights, but equally clearly, insight is not enough. As one skeptic put it, “OK, so you’ve had bad luck, you’ve been through rough times, or your parents messed up the job of raising you. What are you going to *do* about it?”

Bergner discusses what to do about it, and how, in specific detail, richly illustrated with case examples (with a classic Peanuts cartoon about Charlie Brown and the red-haired girl thrown in for good measure.) He devotes a chapter to policies for effective therapy, ranging from the obvious (“Go first where you are welcome”, “Don’t expect the client to be somebody else”) to the strategic (“Don’t buy victim acts”, “Deal with the reality basis of emotions.”) He talks at length about the use of “images” in therapy (somewhat like parables), showing the power of such memorable images as “Poor No More”, “Bowling 300”, “Little White Balls” and my favorite, “The Poopie Contest.” Throughout the book, Bergner helps therapists see how to create, as he puts it, “places from which our clients can act effectively in their worlds to bring about personal change.”

Written by a therapist for therapists and their clients, *Status Dynamics* is “one of those rare books for therapists at all stages of development, from beginners to masters” according to Dr. William J. Doherty, Director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the University of Minnesota. It is ideal for those training or supervising therapists also. In addition to its target audience, the book may prove very useful to Life Coaches with a background in therapy.

Raymond M. Bergner is Professor of Psychology at Illinois State University and a psychotherapist with over 30 years experience in private practice. He is a leading figure in the school of status dynamic therapy, a part of the intellectual discipline called Descriptive Psychology which grew up around the late Dr. Peter G. Ossorio in Boulder, Colorado.

*Status Dynamics: Creating New Paths to Therapeutic Change* by Raymond M. Bergner, Ph.D. is published by Burns Park Publishers – publication date November 2007. Hardcover, \$24.95, it is distributed to the trade by Biblio Distribution and available directly from the publisher at [www.burnsparkpublishers.com](http://www.burnsparkpublishers.com).