

**A Picture is Worth MORE Than a Thousand Words:
PhotoTherapy, Therapeutic Photography, and People's Personal Snapshots**

Lecture Presentation • April 17, 2008 • Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars • Vancouver
by

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Author of the classic text: "*PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums*"

(Open to everyone interested (prior knowledge of photography or therapy is *not* needed)

Presentation:

Our personal snapshots are like "footprints of our minds" that show what and who has mattered most in our lives. The emotional contents of each of these "mirrors with memory" will always be more important than what their surface details depict visually -- because the photo's story (and the feelings, thoughts, and memories it evokes) is always freshly created inside the mind of each viewer (even its maker), every time it is seen.

While the interpretation of any photograph might be intended a certain way by its original creator, any later viewer will always have their own unique perception, due to their own "personal filters" they unconsciously view it through. For this reason, any photograph will always contain meaning beyond the ability of words to fully represent, deconstruct, or predict, as it selectively communicates symbolically and unconsciously only to those who notice its cues.

Based on this, therapists and counsellors can use their clients' interactions with their own personal snapshots and family photographs, along with pictures taken by others, as powerful nonverbal tools to deepen and enhance their therapy process ("*PhotoTherapy*" techniques). Related techniques can also be used in non-therapy applications ("*Therapeutic Photography*") to help people increase personal insight and self-understanding, activate social change and explore diversity, expand qualitative and community-based research methodologies, improve communication with family and others, and produce other kinds of healing experiences.

Both PhotoTherapy and Therapeutic Photography are about "photography as symbolic emotional communication", rather than about "photography as art". They make use of the "secret lives" of ordinary non-art photographs as active agents of change, exploration, and reflection, rather than only as "art objects" to be looked at.

The Speaker is a private scholar who is considered the "world authority" on these techniques, which she will discuss and illustrate during her slide-illustrated Lecture. Her Presentation will be of interest not only to those interested in therapy or counselling, but also for anyone who wants to explore how and why their own ordinary personal and family photographs can communicate at so many levels beyond their conscious awareness or intention.

More information can be found at the website "[PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling and Therapy](http://www.phototherapy-centre.com)" or by contacting the Presenter, Judy Weiser, at: jweiser@phototherapy-centre.com.

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Judy Weiser, Founder and Director of the *PhotoTherapy Centre* in Vancouver, Canada, is a psychologist, art therapist, consultant, trainer, author, independent scholar, and early pioneer of PhotoTherapy techniques (using people's personal and family snapshots to access feelings and memories during their therapy process). Long considered the "world authority" on PhotoTherapy, she has given nearly 300 workshops, lectures, and training intensives about these techniques (and related applications of "Therapeutic Photography") in over 50 cities world-wide during the past 30 years, and has mentored dozens of graduate Theses and Dissertations.

Former Editor of the journal *Phototherapy*, Judy authored the classic 1993 text "[*PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums*](#)" (now in third printing), as well as numerous professional articles, book chapters, and a video/DVD on the subject. She also created and maintains the primary informational resource and networking website for the field ("[PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling and Therapy](#)") as well as its related "[PhotoTherapy and Therapeutic Photography Discussion Group](#)".

Her list of upcoming events, full publications list and additional biographical details can be found on the above website, and she can be contacted at: 604-689-9709 or at: jweiser@phototherapy-centre.com.