

SEEING AND BELIEVING: Using Photographs as projective catalysts to help people tell their stories, explore feelings and memories, find personal healing and improve communication with others

Judy Weiser, Psychologist, Art Therapist, Founder and Director of the *PhotoTherapy Centre* in Canada; Author of "*PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums*"; Manager of the "*PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling and Therapy*" Website (www.phototherapy-centre.com)

The meaning of any photograph is not located on its surface, waiting to be read like the pages of a book, telling the same story objectively to every viewer. Instead, its unique story is actually created new, every time a person looks at it -- and has a feeling or memory in reaction to seeing it. Each photo's story is always different, even if the same person sees the same picture repeatedly.

Therefore, any time a photograph is seen (or even remembered), its meaning is actively projected from the viewer onto that photo's surface -- and at the same time, associated feelings and related memories are spontaneously touched deep inside them, as unconscious connections are made (that the viewer may not even be aware of!).

Therapists trained in "Photo-Projective" PhotoTherapy techniques use these "secret" components of ordinary snapshots and family photos to help their clients learn more about themselves (during formal therapy sessions) in ways that words alone cannot do: to gain "Insight" as they explore their own unique way of perceiving (and reacting to) what they see -- and thus learning more about how their perceptions reflect their underlying unconscious value system (and thus their expectations and communications)....

However, these techniques are also important (and perhaps even more relevant!) for anyone interested in using photographs in non-therapy applications (for example, for self-exploration, personal healing, positive social activism, relationship-building, reducing social exclusion, community-strengthening, conflict-resolution, educational communication, and other aspects of visual storytelling) -- or even in photographic art -- because: ALL these applications have to do with understanding how people create meaning and communicate with one another -- and the metaphor of photography (exploring how photos create their meaning and thus share their stories and secrets to all viewers) is a perfect path to this learning. (More about this technique can be found at: <http://www.phototherapy-centre.com>)

The goal of the workshop is for people to personally experience how Projective PhotoTherapy techniques work in both therapy and non-therapy applications. It is for the purpose of education and is not for therapy purposes.

After a brief illustrated presentation, the rest of the day will be primarily experiential with time for discussion after each exercise practiced (using photos brought by the Instructor). Many handouts will be provided -- and if time permits some videos will be shown that demonstrate the effectiveness of these techniques.

This workshop is open to everyone interested, including non-therapists -- and there is no "top limit" on how many can attend.