BOOK REVIEW

**Impact: The story of interactional therapy** by Charl Vorster

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I relate, therefore I am. Thus, how I impact on you and how you impact on me determine the nature and quality of our being – Charl Vorster

Eloquently foreworded by Warwick Phipps, this book explains what interactional therapy is all about. It signifies a major contribution to South African psychology in presenting to us the thoughts and experiences of one of the most renowned clinical trainers in our country, Prof Charl Vorster. In the personal note and acknowledgement section, the author takes us through his journey of 30-odd years in psychology and he highlights and acknowledges the important persons on that journey.

The book explains how the principles of interactional therapy are applied in practice using the interactional pattern analysis (IPA). This is a tool that is remarkably effective in practice and, once it is mastered, becomes easy to apply. The book is structured in two parts: A content and a process section. This allows the reader to
experience an example of interaction in the first-person dialogue, on a content level. Thereafter, the reader can study the process level in order to understand the theory behind interactional therapy.

The theoretical foundation of the book includes a chapter on Interpersonal variables and mental health: A new procedure for psychotherapeutic diagnosis where the method of using the interactional pattern analysis (IPA) is explicated and applied to a case study. Dale Haarhoff contributed A summary of general systems theory within the context of psychotherapy and takes the reader through systems theory, cybernetics and family systems theory with a well-written, clear and easy pace for such a complex topic. Thereafter, we are treated to Prof Charl writing on The process of communication, and finally, Larissa Ernst-Terblanche explains The humanistic approach to psychotherapy, highlighting the therapist’s role and attitudes in therapy as well as the elements of person-centred therapy.

On a personal note, I thoroughly enjoyed reading Impact, having been trained by Prof Dave Beyers from UP in the same paradigm. In my training, we also experienced the Sea Point group psychotherapy and hours of IPA. I wish I could have had this succinct and clear handbook to Interactional Therapy while doing my master’s clinical training back in 1998. I therefore believe it will make a valuable contribution to the lives of students and colleagues interested in Interactional Therapy. Furthermore, Impact contributes to psychology on a theoretical and practical level.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Erica De Lange is a clinical psychologist in full-time private practice in Menlopark, Pretoria. She is a post-doctoral research fellow at the African Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research at North West University, Potchefstroom Campus. She has co-authored a number of books, including Practice Success: A practical guide for the psychologist with Elaine Bing. She has presented workshops and published academic articles, and enjoys attending and presenting at conferences. She is an avid Spanish flamenco dancer and loves her hubby, music, and the African sky.