

# Less Is More

Treating Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome with Traditional and  
Ericksonian Approaches to Psychotherapy and  
Active Guided Meditation

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# Less Is More, in other contexts

## Meaning

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- The notion that simplicity and clarity lead to good design.
- In science, the most simple explanation or theory is the best.
- Sarto defends his unproductiveness.

## Origin

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- Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe (1886-1969) 1 founder of modern architecture and furniture.
- Theory of Parsimony
- First found in print in Robert Browning's poem, Andrea del Sarto, 1855,.

Andrea del Sarto was a Renaissance painter highly regarded by peers such as Michelangelo but considered lazy and vexed by his faithless wife.

The poem contains one of Browning's most famous quotes: Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?

But more to the point: Sarto is speaking to his wife in this poem.

Who strive-you don't know how the others strive  
To paint a little thing like that you smeared  
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,-  
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,  
(I know his name, no matter)- so much less!  
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged

What troubles do you experience  
having EDS, my dear audience?

# Common Issues

1. Pain
2. No cure
3. Decreased mobility and strength
4. Vicious cycles of pain = addiction
5. Vicious cycles of limitations = depression
6. Life gets smaller and smaller

# The cure is HOPE!!!

Lets see how we get to hope and to more life satisfaction...

# Less is More is a metaphor

- Came from having EDS myself, taking a dissection course-age of my cadaver at death - and my surgeon after having 13 surgeries with him.
- Finding the balance between work/movement and rest as our bodies change/heal from injury and EDS.
  - Accepting the new normal - flexibility. Erickson quote re: inflexible neurotics.
  - Avoiding new injury
- Having EDS means accepting it and its limitations, and becoming lighter you have to eat less and differently.
  - Controlling what you can - lighter is better for the body - but not too light - again balance - 29 functions of fat.

# Less is More

- Focusing on what you have left rather than on what you lost
  - Roxanna Erickson's story of her dad at Squaw Peak's bench dedication, 1991
  - Native American/Jewish teaching tale - woman with the beautiful coat
  - Examples:

Abby- can't breast feed her first born baby

Unknown, ambiguity usually at heart of anxiety

She spirals into sensory problems, autism, starving  
Instead focus on what's left and good

Pearl- 90 year old woman can't sleep says up worrying about this one past incident, hypnosis review past successes instead, interspersal technique

# Less is More

- Inner focus rather than outer
- Sensing more important than thinking - sex therapy, trusting body and unconscious
- Experience more important than just therapy or book learning
- Facts - longitudinal study rather than cross sectional, today's science times, neuro-plasticity
- Pain reduction
  - Indirect - Tomato plant interspersal technique where casual conversation where special words or phrases are given emphasis so that they become effective suggestions.
  - Direct - heavy like a dull leaden weight, sodden with sleep incapable of sensing anything except heavy tiredness, wooden.
    - Amnesia for the pain so it is not anticipated
    - Detached and dissociated from the body

# Less is More

- Changing Habits - what you can imagine you can attain
  - Exercise, ritual, ceremonial,
  - Breathing, meditation, power of unconscious and now
  - Daily routines
  - Caring for the self - reach integrity and wisdom, E. Erikson
  - Attitude - expectation- expect a \$1 tale, us cripples tale, death and dying tale- purpose of life, rushing, acquiring possessions change to better relationships- get younger friends, playfulness - enjoyment
  - maintenance more important than progress, in fact leads to achievement

# My EDS patients

- Stuart - he did too much and injured himself - resisted acceptance of disorder - fearless in face of disorder vs. surfer of the waves of the world. Michael slowed down.
- Sally - she did too little - got into a vicious cycle where doing less caused more and atrophy to the point of quitting work and unable to write and type. Sally started doing physical therapy and writes a little at night. Baby steps (progress not perfection).
- Susan - she didn't do anything - but decompensated to the physical and social point where she stayed at home, cared for her family with outside, and family help ( her husband and mother). She has muscular pain, migraines and emotional problems but didn't really want to get better due to the secondary gain of having the disorder. Extreme negative thinking. Stopped after two sessions with me.

# Moral of my patients' stories:

- You have to be like Goldilocks
  - One bed is too hard
  - One bed is too soft
  - The last was just right!
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- You cant do to much or too little! You can do it just right for you!

# Less is More the Active Guided Meditation

Tested on a person with severe late stage MS, a principal dancer of ABT with multiple injuries, and a women grappling with aging issues, all believed I made it just for them. But I really made it for changing your life style if you have EDS.

Arrange yourself in a comfortable position and be prepared for a fascinating experience.