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# LAND

# The Island islands

# 'Feelings are stronger than the mind.'

BY ROCHELLE PALIPANE GUNARATNE

**"Feelings are stronger than the mind,"** says the effervescent Psychiatrist from Netherlands Dr. Marcel de Roos. His interest in people, their general well being and the greater need to hear their problems out has prompted him to look at a broader angle in which one could bring succour to the sufferer.

Sri Lankans are yet to get used to the idea of seeing a psychiatrist as many are of the notion that psychiatry is relegated to the wards of Angoda and if one suffers from psychological problems it's best to suppress the matter or seek professional help in secret as 'the neighbours will think one has gone stark raving mad!'

The tide has to change, if not society will consist of people who suffer in silence for fear of exposing their vulnerability. Depression, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, sexual/mental/physical abuse, acute grief are rampant in our society, but we fail to see further than our fellow Sri Lankan's face which is often wreathed with a smile. The sooner we accept the need for a professional psychiatrist to assist those in need, we pave the way for a society of wholesome, productive individuals.

Having therapy consists of nothing more than talking. It's venting your feelings, talking about your issues with the help of an understanding professional therapist. In due process, the impact of the emotions will become less and patients will feel a sense of balance in their personal life. Much depends on the relationship between the patient and the therapist.

Dr. Marcel de Roos is like a breath of fresh air to the psychological sphere in our country which consists of a handful of psychiatrist who try to change the way of thinking of the patient in the hope that by doing so the behavior and feelings will change too (cognitive behavioral therapy). "When I started my practice in Holland 25 years ago I noticed that the above mentioned form of therapy offered short term recourse and the depression or anxiety re surfaced in time. The inclusion of feelings in the therapy and making it the

focal point of counseling (instead of the "thoughts") changed a lot for my clients, and forged the missing link," added Dr. de Roos.

Elaborating on the above, he stated that the cause of a patient's depression does not lie in the present but in his past. "The depression is in many cases a symptom of an underlying conflict. Usually this symptom stems for feelings from the past which are still too painful to be felt. When you succeed in making the connection, then those 'old' feelings (usually mixed with present ones) explain to you the cause of your present state. Finally you can start to feel the painful feelings from the past in full; initially with the help

of a therapist, thereafter by yourself. Each time when you are triggered in the present by a representative of an old feeling, the intensity of the painful feeling will diminish. 'Medication can have its benefits with severe traumas and phobias in which the client is unable to cope with the deeper underlying issues. In my patient group, I prefer to work without medication and solve problems primarily through therapy,' said he.

'My practice in Sri Lanka involves dealing with individuals with a wide variety of questions and issues. Usually they are centered on problems like depression, stress, anxiety and sexual dysfunction etc. It could be personal or work

related as well.

Since a few months ago the emphasis in my practice has shifted towards business people from the corporate world. They operate in a highly competitive environment where it doesn't pay to show one's emotions. Especially CEO's and higher management find it rewarding to talk in a safe setting about their personal issues. Generally speaking, the higher in hierarchy the lonelier it becomes. In management courses the focal point is usually on the analytical side and on control while well founded decision making requires balanced emotions too.

A general manager of a retail company came to my practice on recommendation of

a friend of his whom I had coached for a few months. At first his question was to teach him better coping strategies with his stressful work situation but on the second appointment his underlying issues became apparent. A highly demanding father and a warmth lacking mother had made him the successful manager he was. From early schooldays on he had always strived to be outstanding in academics and in sports. He received his personal satisfaction from those. His emotional side however had lagged behind his achievements and he became a bit lopsided. So far in his career he had managed when confronted with emotion packed decision making, to overrule that with his will power. In the past month however he had been forced to lay off a few dozen coworkers in dire straits which had touched him deeply on a personal level. This General Manager had never learned to vent his emotions and in subsequent years the pent up baggage had become intensified. After a series of talks he felt much more balanced and he could cope better with the demands in his work,' exemplified he.

Dr. Marcel de Roos is also a member of Mensa International. (Mensa is the largest and oldest high-IQ society in the world. It is a non-profit organization open to people who score at the 98th percentile or higher on a standardized, supervised IQ or other "approved" intelligence test.) "I took care of the testing and introduction of aspirant members and was responsible for the selection of members into the group. Maxwell de Silva (Chairman of the Institute of Shipbrokers) and I are about to start a Mensa group here in Sri Lanka too. We are still in the early stages, but will expand it once we have sufficient numbers of people to join this intelligent network. We hope to meet regularly and discuss issues of interest," revealed Dr. de Roos.

The main reason which prompted this valuable individual to relocate to our isle is his stunning Sri Lankan spouse Jennifer, who supports his endeavours in the field of psychology and wishes to see it accepted by society as a necessary antidote to silent killers.

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Jennifer (L) and Dr. Marcel de Roos

**Wider cars blamed for more accidents**  
Safety rules that are making modern cars bigger have been blamed for an increase in scrapes and minor accidents.

**"Sex and the City" cast admit to fights on set**  
The wait for "Sex and the City 2" is over, and as the stars of the film travel the press circuit, they're finally admitting that there was some bickering on set, but they it wasn't nearly as big of a fight as the press has made it out to be.

**It's Fergie's stupidity and self-delusion that sum her up**  
Feminism and celebrity have been the Duchess of York's undoing, writes Melanie McDonagh. Fergie. As the national pantomime that is the Duchess of York resumes business after, oh, five years or so, let the name hang in the air a little and try some word association.

The old adage "you are what you eat" not only applies to our overall health and nutrition, but how our skin looks and feels as well. As the largest organ in the body, our skin can benefit from the same nutrition we get from foods that have a positive effect on our heart and other major organs. In fact, new research suggests that eating foods rich in protein and certain vitamins and minerals might provide valuable anti-aging effects.

## What To Eat For Glowing Healthy Skin

### Good Food, Good Skin

\*Choosing and eating at least three ounces of whole grain breads, cereals, rice, crackers or pasta. \

\*Eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, including more dark

green and orange vegetables.

\*Consuming calcium-rich foods, such as fat-free or low-fat milk and other dairy products.

\*Opting for a variety of low-fat or lean meats, poultry and fish.

Research has shown

that the antioxidants in vitamins C and E can protect the skin from sun damage and help reduce damage in skin cells caused by harmful free radicals, which contribute to aging skin. Similarly, we have long known that the B vitamin biotin is

responsible for forming the basis of skin, hair and nail cells, and vitamin A - found in many fruits and vegetables - maintains and repairs skin tissue. Without an adequate supply of these vitamins, you may notice it in the appearance of your skin, hair and nails.

