

HAROLD B. DAVIS

Loneliness and Separation Anxiety as Factors in Termination

This presentation will deal with the concept of loneliness and separation anxiety as both are experienced in termination. The therapeutic relationship anchors a patient who may feel that he/she is floating and insubstantial. The stabilizing effect of the analytic relationship may produce a support that the analysand does not want to give up for it may produce an effect that permits the analysand to function better in daily life. If the analysand has not been able to develop sufficient connections outside the therapy to provide this support, then the reluctance to terminate therapy is greater.

Pervasive separation anxiety is a barrier to terminating treatment. Most analysands are able to terminate treatment, but there are some for whom pervasive separation anxiety prolongs the treatment. Loneliness is different from separation anxiety and may interfere with termination. In the termination phase of analysis with such people, the intensity of the separation anxiety and loneliness is enacted and worked through that permits a separation that is different from what the patient has previously experienced in his/her life. The analyst's own separation anxiety and loneliness also affects the length of treatment. In the former instance it may be expressed as a reluctance to let go of the analysand. In the latter instance it may be expressed by a mild depressive reaction.

Harold B. Davis is a Supervisor at the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy from which he holds a certificate in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. He is faculty and supervisor at the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and in private practice in NYC. He has held many offices in many professional organizations, namely as President of IFPE, the Psychoanalytical Society of the Postdoctoral program, and Section 5 of the Division of Psychoanalysis of APA, as well as being board member of many organizations, including IFPE. He has published a number of articles and has given many talks, both nationally and internationally, often from an object relations viewpoint.