

## A Brief History of Psychotherapy Today's Modern Techniques

Just before the turn of the 20th Century, Sigmund Freud introduced psychotherapy to the world. His pioneering ideas were good for the most part, and his technique of "Free Association" and his "Analysis" provided decent results for his patients. He called his therapy Psychoanalysis, and it became popular throughout the Western World. It was the "Model T Ford" of therapies. However, this therapy was only available to the rich as it involved hours and hours of therapy for years on end.

In the early 1950's, an American psychologist, B.F. Skinner showed North Americans that therapy did not need to look at past childhood experiences in order to help those with emotional difficulties. Skinner's approach was called Behavior Therapy. Its principles were based on how all species (including human beings) learn.

In the 1960's, American psychologists added to Skinner's techniques and created what we know as Cognitive Behavior Therapy. It is based on what we think about our experiences. This approach is the most commonly used to this day. Like all therapies it has its strengths and weaknesses.

During this same period, another approach was being perfected by the German American Dr. Frederick "Fritz" Perls. He called it Gestalt Therapy. Not only did it deal with what we thought about our daily experiences, but also with how we felt about them. It dealt with our total experience (this is where the German word "Gestalt" comes from).

