



# GROWING AS A THERAPIST

I have always believed that the client guides our path—as therapists, where they go we follow.

Most paths have forks where you may need to take a detour. These usually appear when as professionals, we meet clients who challenge our primary model of therapy, or we struggle to enter the client's frame of reference.

My first fork in the road came about when I first practised as a school counsellor. For a long time, I believed and bought into the purity of my approach.

It soon became apparent that I needed to expand both my knowledge of the client group and my therapeutic interventions. So I enrolled in a child and adolescent theory course.

A year or so later, another fork in the road appeared—that of working with grief, so I took a loss and bereavement course.

Through the years I have taken quite a few detours from the path I started on. The most recent was attending a course on neurobiology and trauma.

In my supervision sessions, I would reflect that some of the detours felt like betraying the clear, pure path I started on. It felt, quite frankly, uncomfortable.

Then one day, while out walking in the hills near where I live, I found myself taking a different route to my favourite tea room, and it felt unfamiliar, a little rocky and unsafe underfoot.

At the end of this path, I realised that my detour had gotten me to my favourite tea room safe and sound.

I consider my additional learning like my walking gear which comprises of sturdy boots, warm socks, water-resistant coat, my trusty Jeep cap and a small compass to keep me heading in the right direction.

Therapeutically I still walk the same person-centred path; I am now just better equipped if the client wants to take a detour on to unfamiliar or rocky terrain.