

ONE HOT MINUTE

BY EMILY MECHTENBERG, MS

Many thanks to Dr. Ebony McClain

Every week, I hop on the phone with Dr. Ebony McClain to discuss all things therapy. Ebony is my supervisor and guides me when I feel uncertain or stuck with client cases. She gives me feedback on business decisions and clarifies ethical questions. Ebony reassures me when I'm self-doubting and calls me in if she senses my avoidance or denial. She celebrates my victories with me and then nudges me in the direction of continued growth. Ebony sits with me in my emotional responses to client cases, acknowledges life's unfair points with me, and then reminds me of the sweetness in life that balances what is enraging. Since Day 1 of meeting Ebony, I knew I was in the company of pure gold and a total boss. Thank you, Ebony, for sharing your brilliance and compassion with me every week. Your presence in this world is a shining gift.



Thank You, Dear Clients <3

The image above is a pic I took of my 2021 vision board. I created it for myself a year ago at a time my counseling practice was 4 months old and budding slowly. My presumption was that eventually more connection, fun, and healing would reflect in my personal life if I put intentional effort in (It worked!). I threw in a side hope that having abundant growth in my new profession was even the



Big Appreciations for Karen Tessandore, LPC

Karen was a cohort mate I met in 2016 when we both started APU's Counseling Psych program. Lots of things struck me about Karen right away - she was concise in her work and would often, gently, get straight to the point. She was clear, logical, and orderly with an impressive awareness of detail. What stood out to me most about Karen, though, was that she knew exactly what she wanted to do immediately following grad school - to open a private practice of her own. And she successfully did just that when we graduated.

Witnessing Karen confidently go after her dreams was more than inspiring to me. Karen has been an absolute support to me - as a cohort mate and internship partner turned close friend, as a business coach, and now as a colleague. Without Karen's example, encouragement, and expertise, I would likely still be floundering post-graduation. I continue to be inspired by you, Karen, and I strive to be more like you.

slightest possibility.

Little did I know that ALL of these themes would feel so present and ever-growing for me in my counseling practice this year. Here is how working with clients improved my life in 2021:

“All the while, clients are there with me, teaching me what they know, and silently asking me to look inside myself.”

CONNECTION - Pandemic times can be lonely and scary times. Connecting with and staying present with clients, week after week, keeps me hopeful. I get a feeling that there must be something I'm doing well as clients stay with me or return after a therapy break. And clients quietly push me to take better care of myself so I can show up to be with them, teach them what I know, and ask them to look inside themselves again and again. All the while, clients are there with me, teaching me what they know, and silently asking me to look inside myself.

ABUNDANCE - This was a tough one for me to put on the board and I still have mixed feelings about it. “Abundance? Me? Why should I have access to abundance?” On the other hand, isn't abundant interest in services necessary for any thriving business? At this juncture, abundance in my counseling work means clients I've formed ongoing and fruitful relationships with, whether session frequency is weekly or return-as-needed. It means clients recognizing through researching my work that we will likely be a good fit based on who they know themselves to be and what they are struggling with. It also means timely new client inquiries, which can feel like magic.

Because of each prospective client who has contacted me, every client I've worked with short-term, and especially clients who've stayed with me for months, some for over a year, some since the very start - I am forever thankful to you all. Any client working with me is a client willing to take a chance on a

new therapist, which some would say is next-level bold and courageous.

FUN - What a ride! And what a treat to open my schedule each week and beam about who I get to see. A frequent refrain therapists hear from non-therapists goes something like “How can you listen to people’s problems all day?” My answer is that I don’t think of what I’m doing as listening to “problems.” Yes, in therapy we necessarily discuss painful events and tears are spilled. And we laugh a lot, too. Joy, surprise, hilarity, celebration, self-discovery, trauma recovery, boundary-setting, self-love, and release of difficult emotions are all parts of what clients bring into therapy. What’s not fun about seeing a person I care about give off that post-epiphany glow or feel triumphant after holding a boundary or share they feel lighter after unburdening themselves in a session? The fun aspect of therapy is such a bonus and affirms me in my decision to become a counselor.

HEALING - Unbeknownst to you, Dear Clients (at least I hope it’s not obvious), sometimes when we’re in session together, I’m taking in what you’re saying and having epiphanies of my own about ruts I find myself cycling in, personally. The clients I see all bring their own brand of wisdom into session and I do not squander my exposure to it. As much as clients trust me to be with them in their healing, I trust clients equally in their choices, and this enables me to trust life in general including hard stuff I face. My clients have helped me to reconnect with my centered, calm, kind, and compassionate self and to remember what I’m capable of.

The quote below by Rumi sums up a lot of what I’m left feeling about my relationships with clients at the end of 2021. Being in proximity to the realness and depth of other people is something I’ve always loved and makes me feel most alive, most humble, and most honored. Thank you, Dear Clients, for allowing me to be there with you as you adapt and navigate. I’m doing the same<3.

“Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.” ~Rumi

