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LETTERS

Therapist: Patients try to become better

I take issue with the statement by philosopher Lou Marinoff that philosophical counseling is "therapy for the sane" ("The New Insight," by Bettijane Levine, Sept. 23). The implication is that those in therapy are not "sane." In my experience as a practicing psychotherapist, people in therapy are among the sanest in the world. They exert great effort, sometimes at great monetary expense, to confront their fears and to change in order to be the best they can be.

Jane Bolton

Culver City

The letter as I wrote it:

I take issue with the statement by philosopher Lou Marinoff that philosophical counseling is "therapy for the sane" (Los Angeles Times, 9/23/03, "The New Insight"). The implication is that those in therapy are not "sane." In my experience as a practicing psychotherapist, people in therapy are among the sanest in the world. They exert great effort, sometimes at great monetary expense, to confront their fears and to change aspects of themselves in order to be the best they can be.

I find the devaluing attitude towards people in therapy not only ignorant, but destructive. It is ignorant in that it does not acknowledge the common practice of therapeutic discussions of the clients' values--such as the "truth, beauty, goodness, and unity" values of philosophy as cited in the article. It is well known by therapists that one's self-esteem is diminished when one acts against one's values or does not act in accordance with those values. And it is an important part of therapy for one to develop and clarify one's own values.

The devaluing attitude is destructive because the shaming evaluation of people in therapy can make people who could greatly improve the quality of their lives shun it. What a terrible waste of human life!

Jane Bolton
Culver City

