Constructivism and Psychotherapy
(An overview from an article by Michael Mahoney and Donald Granvold, World Psychiatry, V.4 (2), 2005 June, 74-77)

Constructivism...

1. Is a metatheoretical perspective that embraces diverse traditions in medicine, philosophy, psychology, and spiritual wisdom. It is a perspective on personal psychology, social functioning, and human change.
2. Emphasizes connection vs. separation and isolation. Human relationships are very important in well-being and development.
3. Embraces the hope of continual development.
4. Honors brain, body, emotions, social aspects and a notion of spirit that pervades all of the above.
5. Central focus is the *dynamic* structure of human experience, or process.
6. Encourages individuals to be active in their own unfolding.
8. Promotes egalitarian relationship between therapist and client, one of respectful collaboration, trust, safety, and activity.

9. Has four basic themes:
   - **Activity:** Humans are active participants in their own lives. We react, anticipate, and move in the midst of forces greater than us... *in a never-ending dance of effort and surrender.*
   - **Order:** We need order, so we organize our worlds and respond to the order within them. We find patterns and create meanings. Our emotions develop as powerful biological forces in our self-organization. Change requires a disturbance of this order.
   - **Self:** The organization of personal activity is fundamentally self-referent, making the body a fulcrum of experiencing and encouraging a sense of self or personal identity.
   - **Social-symbolic relatedness:** We are born in relationship and it is in relationship that we most extensively live and learn. You are a reflection of your vast connections with people and ideas (past and present).

Constructivism is focused on possibilities, strengths, and personal resources, human resilience, and the promise inherent in lifelong change.