

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

The media talks a lot about the negative effect TV and movies have on us. How can watching movies be good for you?

Remember the proverbial hammer? It can be used to serve or to harm us. Movies can have a powerful effect on our psyche. Violent movies, for example, can be damaging or re-traumatizing especially for people who have experienced emotional trauma in their lives. This powerful tool can also be used to our advantage. It is important to choose the appropriate films and follow the cinema therapy guidelines.

It sounds interesting, maybe even fun, but does cinema therapy get results?

Merely watching movies, in and of itself, does not solve long-standing psychological problems. Cinema therapy can be used as an adjunct tool in psychotherapy. If you are in therapy and feel stuck, you could mention it to your therapist. I see my clients and group members gain new insights and change behavior in a new way using this process. Outside the therapist's office, cinema therapy can also help you to feel better, to learn more about yourself, and to learn new ways to grow and heal. Watch, with conscious awareness, films that touch you and follow the [guidelines](#) by yourself, with friends, or in a cinema therapy support group. You will notice results soon.

When I follow the [Guidelines for watching films](#), I have a hard time refraining from just getting caught up being entertained and forget to watch consciously. What can I do to keep from lapsing?

What you are saying about movies is true for life in general. We often get "caught up" in things and become conscious only later when we look back. Most psychotherapeutic and spiritual orientations (Buddhism talks about "mindfulness") teach us to become more aware about ourselves.

In cinema therapy it's not only OK but very good to be entertained by a movie. Enjoying a movie might give you a little vacation from your troubles and help you approach a solution with less emotional involvement and a fresh and creative perspective. Conscious awareness does not need to interfere with this. The goal of cinema therapy is to help you be both entertained and conscious. Like in real life, your conscious awareness will increase and decrease at times. Learning to have control over this will benefit you greatly in life.

I'm depressed a lot. How do I know if it's okay for me to do cinema therapy on my own, or whether I should contact a therapist to help me?

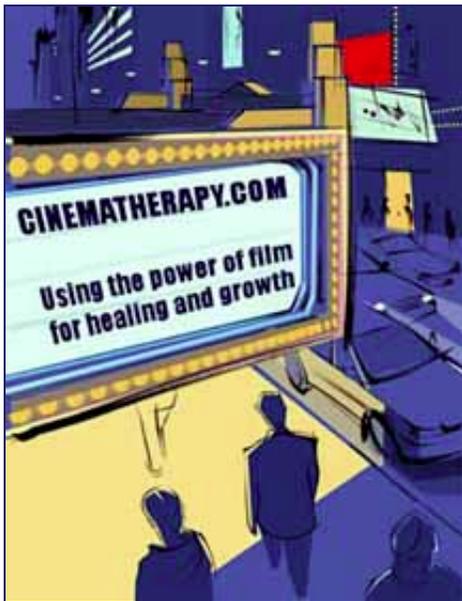
It sounds as if you might be severely depressed. I recommend you contact a psychotherapist for psychotherapy and possibly a psychiatrist for medical evaluation. Cinema therapy by itself is not helpful for treating depression or other severe emotional problems.

Is cinema therapy beginning to be taken seriously within the academic world?

Stories, fables, and fairy-tales have been part of psychotherapy for a long time. Lately the therapeutic use of film has been looked at more closely. Several [books](#) have been published and [seminars](#) are currently offered on this subject. I expect cinema therapy will be taken seriously and become more widely known in the near future.

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