Day 12: Resistance

In Theory: Resistance in psychodynamic theory refers to the ways in which the mind avoids or interrupts access to certain thoughts, feelings, or memories. Sigmund Freud established that it is not conscious opposition but an unconscious form of protection that appears through shifts in attention, silence, or avoidance. What is most avoided often points to what is most significant. Resistance can appear as forgetting, changing the subject, or emotional flattening. Within this framework, it is not an obstacle to understanding but one of the ways understanding is held at a distance. In everyday life, resistance can shape what a person approaches or avoids, serving as a boundary that marks the threshold of what the self is ready to tolerate.

In Experience: Someone can think and speak with clarity and reflection, yet when certain subjects come close, the clarity gives way. Thought becomes less clear, attention moves elsewhere, or a sense of vagueness appears. Other topics surface instead, often with a sense of urgency that is difficult to trace. These shifts are not usually experienced as avoidance, but as a natural dynamic.

In Thought: What is not thought about is not incidental. The subjects that resist attention have a reason for doing so.

In Print: Strean, H. *Resolving Resistances in Psychotherapy* (1985)

In Attention: Notice a thought that starts to form and then does not.