

HYPNOSIS and Other Stories

By M. G. Dahl

© June 21, 2022 M. G. Dahl

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CHAPTER 21 : HYPNOSIS and Other Stories

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Forward

This collection of articles were written for the International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association (IMDHA). Some appeared in the Unlimited Human magazine, some were in the Subconsciously Speaking newsletter, some are drawn from handouts used during hypnosis conference presentations.

Thirty five years ago I was drawn to the IMDHA by the face of Irene Hickman, D.O., as keynote speaker in the promotions for the conference. The opportunity to meet her was irresistible, and I registered to attend the conference in Michigan. The presenters were fascinating. I was delighted to meet such high quality, knowledge presenters and practitioners, and asked the founder, Anne Spencer if I could take the certification test that weekend. My first certification was in 1985 from the American Council of Hypnotist Examiners (ACHE), founded by Mark Gilboyne. Anne Spencer, founder of the IMDHA, had studied with Gilboyne. She accepted my training time with ACHE educators Jerry Kein and Jack Mason who were then in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, and I passed her essay answer certification test.

It is a pleasure to be part of such an eclectic group of mind power professionals. For 35 years I've studied, sharing meals and ideas with remarkable, enlightening humans through this hypnosis membership. I feel refreshed after attending the annual conference.

Dr. Hickman invited me to study at her place in Kirksville, Missouri; a transformative experience with Dr. William Baldwin and Father Marty Patton. Learning to observe for and notice spiritual phenomenon accelerated the speed with which people I had the great fortune to serve, were able to process change. How inspiring to bear witness to people rapidly reclaiming the power to transform their lives for the better, using their innate and learned skills for coping with or resolving what bothered them.

When the IMDHA was purchased from Anne Spencer by Linda and Robert Otto, they placed it under the umbrella of the organization they founded, the International Alliance of Professional Hypnotists. It joined the International Association of Counselors and

Therapist (IACT), which the Ottos purchased from Jillian LaVelle. These organizations have membership options if you are interested in hypnosis: associates, students, certified members, and educators.

The names of my educators are accurate. The names of people in these articles are made up to protect their identities. They are fascinating humans who decided to sit with me because they were ready to change something in their life. They had a longing to release things that bothered them so that they could live more enjoyable, fulfilling lives.

These teaching tales are intended to remind you that you are powerful, resourceful.

You are remarkable!

We can often change things in our lives, given the right tools to remember, and redecide.

If you are not contented with what is occurring in your life at this time, reading this book, may elicit changes in you. These stories of other people in the process of change, may remind you that change is not only possible, it is occurring with every breath, breathing in, and breathing out.

And the old becomes new again.

June 18, 2022

Monica Geers Dahl

Inverness, FL

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Chapter 1 - Being Stuck

During the first Daytona Beach hypnosis conference, I was gifted with a room by one of my former students. It is such a delight to have the camaraderie of hypnotherapists of like mind; inclusionary, open to experiences, sharing freely, joyous updates, and burdens halved.

I was heading for the door to our suite, thinking of the awards dinner and folks I admire who would be in attendance in body, or spirit. My hostess launched into one of our traditional leads on to a session, "I feel stuck."

"Where in your body do you feel it?"

(Color, sound, size, shape, moving or still, loud or quiet, anything else that creates a full sensory experience of the stuckness?)

"What's it like?"

What color is it?

What size?

How big or small?

Clearly defined or diffused?

Still or moving?

Is it loud or quiet?

Does it have a voice?

If it has a voice, is it young or old? Male or female?

If it could speak, what would it say?

Is it a part of you like your nose is a part of you?

(Sometimes we carry words from the past that feel like they are a part of our own thoughts. We may encounter sneak attacks of emotions, or words as if out of nowhere.

Sometimes they are other people's words that we haven't yet fully processed for integration, assimilation, or disregarding as less than useful for life right now.)

We reached the, *I'm not ready to do this*, part of the conversation.

"I'm not ready to forgive _____."

I'm all about the client having control of the speed of change. I prefer quick, some like it more slowly. Some folks want to hold a grudge, or stew, or marinate, or percolate, not done. Raw. Not fully cooked. Stick it back in to heat some more.

Stuck.

Maybe stubborn, too.

In this moment of lived experience, there were two options available for me. There was a dinner party of my colleagues starting downstairs. I could get involved with a lengthy hypnotherapy process, seize the therapeutic moment, maybe miss dinner and the awards ceremony. Fr. Marty Patton had called to ask where I had been, what I had been up to, and to make sure I was in attendance that year in Daytona. I was on a short list of folks being tossed around for an award, and I hadn't been to the conference for the many years of academia. I asked if someone could pick up the award for me if I was the person who was gifted with this opportunity. He said, "Be there."

I was writing the dissertation for the doctorate, and seeing no clients as I focused on completion of the degree. My juice was allocated elsewhere, toward my own deadlines and goal achievement. Having already pulled my juice lateral from the degree plan, I wasn't planning to miss a good meal in great company to take my time with someone who was "stuck." Hmmm, pleasure or pain? I wanted to give loft to my academic goal. I preferred dining with my lovely colleagues.

My colleague / roommate had access to my professional skills for years before this dinner party. I felt we had plenty of time to address this stuckness. Part of a healthy hypnosis practice includes taking time to play, mingle with colleagues, and applaud one's progress with fun. I didn't have to give up my fun for this long standing

stuckness. I chose fun for me, and a direct suggestion of what my colleague could do with her stuckness. I said something like:

“Ok. You can stay stuck as long as you like. Now that you know where you are stuck, it gets nothing but worse until you CHANGE YOUR MIND! You can hang onto all that stuff for as long as you like, or you can CHANGE YOUR MIND! I am going downstairs for a good meal and great company. Let’s see, your baggage, or my good time. There may even be music and dancing. Go ahead, stay stuck as long as you like, perhaps you’ll even have nightmares tonight to help you process this stuckness to the point of finding out whatever it is that is bothering you enough to hold onto a grudge that denies you the opportunity to follow the path of greatest joy, happiness and fulfillment. When you fail to forgive, or hold a grudge, it is like eating poison and hoping the other person will die. So go on, hold on to that stuckness for as long as you like.”

Change comes from the inside out. Each person knows, at some level, and knows that he or she knows. This person knows what is liked, disliked, wanted, needed, and preferred.

I went to the door, opened it, and my colleague said quietly, “No. I didn’t want to have nightmares.”

She was able to process her resentment quickly when I demonstrated something more fun than mucking around in a sad story of betrayal and loss. I didn’t want to invest my time joining her in her stuckness. We both knew a narrative of loss and suffering wasn’t going to fly with me at that moment we were in. I was not there to do hypnotherapy work, I was socializing, attending to enjoy professional camaraderie.

I asked what process she used to release her lack of forgiveness so quickly, and thereby avoid any nightmares later. I am curious about the inside job when people move through change.

“I decided I didn’t want or deserve to have nightmares because I wasn’t forgiving _____. Hanging onto that unpleasant feeling wasn’t worth it. Forgiveness was easier, less poisonous to me.”

The tools of transformation that we learn in hypnosis training programs are wonderful. We can apply them to our own lives just as easily as we apply them to the lives of our clients. When we are “stuck” in some way in our own lives, it is useful to have someone trained in hypnosis to speak with, as they can remind us of methods we have used in the past, things that work. We can run those patterns internally, creating a more generalized sense of wellbeing and joy in living an authentic life based on personal wants, needs, and values.

Chapter 2 – Bird Phobia

“My Bird Phobia is Interfering with my Business Plan”

I heard Anne (not her real name) telling her boyfriend that a bird phobia was interfering with her business plan. I was curious, so I asked how a bird phobia could interfere with someone's business plan. Anne is beautiful, mid-twenties, college educated, working several post graduate jobs to generate the launch money for her business plan. Living / working in Key West, Anne was waiting tables with indoor / outdoor dining. Key West is known for its Gypsy Roosters.

The poultry of Key West are a wide variety of shapes, colors, sizes and sounds. Some are descendants of the original fowl brought by European settlers, some are descended from the Cuban fighting cocks, some are rarities imported more recently by chicken lovers to satisfy their curiosity about different birds. We are not talking about domesticated chicken kept in coops in someone's back yard, we are talking about Key West gypsy chickens, free ranging poultry with roosters that crow all night. There is no middle ground among Key West residents; there is a running verbal gun battle in the local chicken wars which position people for or against the “feathered rats”. They are bold creatures.

Anne was slowing down her table service because of the presence of birds at one of her outdoor dining worksites. The birds running around the outdoor seating creeped her out, she had difficulty running food to the table, or even paying attention to the orders the customers were giving her because the birds were too close, and moving around freely. This was reducing her ability to provide the excellent service she expects of herself through reducing her speed and accuracy. She was distracted by the birds, and it was costing her money in lost time, sales, and tips. This bird phobia had been present for as long as she could remember. Her boyfriend confirmed that she had been bird phobic their entire relationship.

I asked if she would be willing to let me film a rapid resolution of her bird phobia, and she said, “Sure.” Her boyfriend sat in to observe. None of my recording equipment

would work. So, we proceeded with a session that lasted no more than five minutes. This is based on the NLP strategies of anchoring and collapsing anchors.

What am I looking for? **Non-Verbal Cues**¹ which are external clues to internal state; including physical movement, shifts in breathing pattern, color and texture of skin, movement or change in nose, lips, eyes, pupils, hands, feet, head, body, pace and pitch of voice. These things may be very subtle, quick, and you need to know what to look for. Observe:

Skin color / tones	Dark / Light	Not shiny / Shiny	
Eyes	Focused / Defocused	Dilated / not Dilated / Contracted	
Eyelids	Wide / Narrow	Open / Closed	
Lips	Lined / Unlined	Full / Thin	Open / Closed
Nose	Relaxed / Tense / Flared		
Breathing	High / Low Slow / Fast		
	Deep / Shallow	Steady / Intermittant	
Face	Mobile/ Flat	Open / Hidden	Relaxed / Contorted
Body	Moving / Still	Open / Closed	
	Relaxed / Tense / Contorted	Leaning Toward / Leaning Away	

We sat in straight back chairs, facing each other. I told her that I was going to touch her in two places, and apply varying degrees of slight pressure to set and release that stuck message of inappropriate fear interfering with her business plan, then I placed my hands palms down on her legs just above the knees.

Depending on our physical position in regard to each other, we can do the same thing with my fingers on the back of her hand (between different knuckles) or standing behind her with my hands on her shoulders, or if she was relaxed back in the recliner

¹ Dahl, M.G. (formerly Geers, M., 1994) modified from chapter 305, Hypnotherapy Vol. 3, 2012) correct this)

with her feet up, I could use her feet as the anchor site. Those are my primary sites when I use a quick release of phobia by setting and collapsing anchors. I prefer to face the person and use the knees for the anchor site because I get a close look at the face and the activity that clues me in as to when I will release the negative anchor.

I asked Anne to tell me about her bird phobia. I watched. She described her experiences, and when I observed her to become emotionally aroused by her fear, I pressed on one of her knees slightly until she was done with her narrative. Then I released the pressure on the negative anchor and allowed my hand to remain on the same place on her leg, and said, "Good, now think of something pleasant like watermelons, or going to the beach."

I asked her to think of something she had done that she felt happy about, "Don't tell me what it is, just tell me when you think of something that makes you happy. When you've got it, just say, 'I've got it'."

She said, "I've got it."

"Good. NOW BE THERE, AGAIN. Notice what you see, hear, feel, smell, taste, and think in that happy place." I watched. When I observed her to become emotionally aroused by happiness, I pressed the other leg to set the first of three positive anchors, and held the happy anchor until the face looked to me like a peak of happiness. Then I released the slight pressure, leaving my hand on the same place on her leg, and said, "Good, now think of something pleasant like watermelons, or going to the beach."

"Now remember a time when you worked and achieved something, something you feel successful about. Don't tell me what it is, just tell me when you've got it."

She said, "I've got it."

"Ok, BE THERE, AGAIN. Notice what you see, hear, feel, smell, taste, and think in that successful place." I pressed the same spot on the leg used to anchor the happy experience, and held the increased slight pressure for the anchor of success until I observed the face look confident, successful. Then I released the slight pressure,

keeping the hand on the same place on the leg, and said, “Good, now think of something pleasant like watermelons, or going to the beach.”

“Now remember a time when you laughed hard, a time when someone, or something provoked your sense of humor and you laughed with joy and humor. Don’t tell me what it is, just tell me when you’ve got it.”

She said, “I’ve got it.”

“Ok, BE THERE NOW! Notice what you see, hear, feel, smell, taste, and think in that place of laughter, whatever it is that made you laugh hard.” I pressed the same spot on the leg used to anchor the two previous positive experiences, and held the increased slight pressure for a funny / laughter anchor until I observed her chuckle, maybe ten seconds. Then I released the pressure, and said, “Good, now think of something pleasant like watermelons, or going to the beach.”

“Now notice what happens.” I slightly pressed the negative anchor, and asked, “How does that feel?” She said it was not so great, and I released the pressure, leaving my hand on the same place on her leg. Then I slightly pressed the positive anchor on the other leg, “How does that feel?” Oh, it felt so much better.

We went back and forth between the positive and negative anchors three times, and then I asked, “Would you like to get rid of that bird phobia now?” She said, “Yes.”

I slightly pressed both anchors simultaneously. She got that look that I recognize as being a “jello moment.” I asked, “Are you experiencing something?” There were so many changes flitting across her face, she nodded. “Is it wiggly inside? Things moving quickly, like shaking jello?” She nodded. “Tell me when the shaking stops.”

It was perhaps a minute when her face visibly relaxed, and I released the pressure on the negative anchor, leaving the hand in place, and leaving the slight pressure on the positive anchor. She said, “It’s done.” I left a slight pressure on the positive anchor for another sixty seconds.

A week later, I asked Anne about her bird phobia. She said, “Oh, I didn’t notice.”

I asked, “You didn’t notice any changes?”

Anne, “No, I didn’t notice the birds.”

Her boyfriend said, “She hasn’t been freaking out about birds since last week, and I didn’t notice until you asked.”

I asked if I could film her post hypnosis response, and again none of my recording equipment would work.

A week later, Anne approached me to say, “I’m different. I talked to my mom and she said I’ve been afraid of birds my whole life. I’m not afraid of birds anymore. I didn’t really notice it at first, because I stopped noticing birds. Then you asked about it, and that was weird. I realized I wasn’t noticing birds at all, until you asked about it. This week, I saw a dog attack a pelican at work. It was the first time in my life I was consciously aware that wasn’t afraid of the bird in front of me. I was worried for the bird, afraid that the dog had hurt it.”

The speed with which a phobia can be entrained into the human nervous system can be erased quickly as well, given that the phobia is based on an inappropriate fear. An appropriate fear is based on the level of danger posed at the moment of contact. An inappropriate fear is based on an exaggerated or non-existent level of danger at the moment of contact.

Using this speed technique, I have witnessed clients relieve themselves of dog, spider and bird phobias.

For those who find this method ineffective, there may be secondary gain, or genuine danger at the core of the phobia. For secondary gain, a more content oriented method can be used to unpack the human distress and ideally restore a relaxed state of health, well-being, happiness, and success in life. For genuine danger, hypnosis does not remove a person’s innate capacities for self-preservation.

Chapter 3 - Color and Hypnotherapy.

There is an ongoing debate in the field of hypnosis about depth and quality of response. Some folks say that depth is needed for good results. Some folks say that a good quality of response can be had without deep trance states. I believe that depth is useful in dealing with surgical applications, and that conversational hypnosis can be used for most everything else. One of the fastest ways to bring about depth in conversational hypnosis is to use colors. According to Husband and Davis' Depth scale (Lecron & Bordeaux, 1947, p. 67), color sensations are experienced at the deep or somnambulistic levels of hypnosis.

When I first got into this field, I, with my arrogance, assumed I could "assign" colors to help a person heal that I had found helpful for me. I quickly learned that it was better to ask what color was linked with a feeling or thought, and ask what color would feel better. Then I learned about the Hindu chakra system, which has a thorough analysis of color and what those colors indicate are at issue in a session (Brennan, 1987). Chakra 1 is between the legs and is red. Chakra 2 is in the pelvis and is orange. Chakra 3 is in the stomach and is yellow. These first three chakras reflect the physical body in the physical world. Chakra 4 is in the chest and is green. This is the astral bridge by which the spirit gains access to and infuses the body with life force. Chakra 5 is in the throat and is light blue. Chakra 6 is in the brain and is dark blue. Chakra six is the crown of the head and is purple.

When I ask about colors now, by the responses, I get an idea of where the person is, where they are going, and how we can intervene? We can do a process of aligning the colors to match the Hindu chakra system. First do an assessment, "What color do you find: between your legs, in your pelvis, in your stomach, in your chest, in your throat, in your head, and at the top of the head?" Then re-arrange the colors to align with the Hindu system. It's amazing how fast people relax and release tension when they imagining their bodies as rainbows.

Color intervention can also be done just after the progressive relaxation is complete (but it is not necessary to induce trance to use color as an intervention), and then ask, "Is there any part of the body that needs to relax still further?" If yes, "Where is it?" The client identifies the part of the body that is still tense." "What color is it?" The client tells me the color. If the client hesitates, or says, "I don't know," I say, "Imagine you have a box of Crayola crayons. What color would you use to draw that feeling?" This generally elicits a color response. Then I ask, "What color would feel better." The client tells me. I asked the client to, "Breathe out the color that is tense, and breathe in the color that would feel better. Is there any other part of the body that needs to relax still more?"

I draw a stick figure to track location and color, and I number them. Once the client has completed a body scan which lets me know where they are holding tension, I have them go back and check the areas out one at a time. Usually just changing the color will reduce or relieve the tension.

Dave Elman (1964) used a method called the Green Finger technique for rapid elimination of pain.

Sometimes we have to get another sense involved in order to gain the relief the client is seeking. "If that color had a voice, what would it say?" This is when we engage in a Great Debate (a la Charles Tebbetts, and that is another article).

respectfully submitted

monica geers dahl, M.A., Ed.D. candidate.

"Blessed are those who dream dreams and are willing to pay the price to make those dreams come true" (unknown).

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Chapter 4 – Conference 2016: Basic Hypnosis and Hand Passes

What a Fabulous Conference in Daytona (2016)! The first night of our two-day Basic Hypnosis class, we headed out to the beach to explore hand passes and energy fields. We showed up after sunset, and raised our hands to the sky to explore what it “looks like” energetically. We practiced observing the energetic fields in ourselves, building subjective awareness of our own energy fields, setting up to practice hand passes and energetic exchanges.

Just because Mesmerism “died out” doesn’t mean the energetic hand passes stopped being practiced. Even as a child, my siblings and I played energetic hand passes with each other. We didn’t know anything about Mesmer. We would build energy balls and throw them at each other; “warm fuzzies” and “cold pricklies.” We learned to discern what was being sent and received. The energetic stuff is natural.

Today, in the adult world, I have been introduced to the energetic strategies known as creating sacred space, healing touch, therapeutic touch, Reiki, laying on of hands, reconnection, cranial sacral therapy, qigong, prayer, distance healing, network chiropractic, EFT, and movement with intent.

Hand passes, yes, we practiced a full range of basic hypnosis training including the old school magnetism of Mesmer. Ed Horn and his lovely assistant filmed our two days class, but did not attend our evening experiential on hand passes. Copies of the two days in class can be obtained through the IMDHA.

My great joy in facilitating this group was the excitement generated by eager students. Expertise in a field is generally obtained in a decade, it is when a person has a sense of mastery over a subject. One way to continue learning is to retake classes, observing what was missed, overlooked or forgotten from earlier classes. I think the most elegant learning for someone who is considered an expert in a field is that which comes from their students. Students asked the darndest questions, posing ideas outside an educator’s field of knowledge or understanding. This is fabulous!

Enthusiastic students create amazing opportunities for learning, growth and development. I enjoy the, "I don't know, let's look at this more closely," experiences.

I thank my hypnosis students for their many insights, feedback, corrections and queries. My exams are open book, and we have a habit of grading them together, so that a student can argue their position and improve their grade. My students chortle about, "I got to correct the teacher and the test." "I got to be heard and understood." Thank You! I appreciate and honor my hypnosis students and cohorts who challenge me to learn and grow. I thank my class participants for their generous and surprising questions which stirred me to think more deeply. THANK YOU! With every class, I learn something new.

The two day 2016 basic hypnosis class is available in the IMDHA virtual library, it is one of the many benefits of IMDHA membership.

With Appreciation for all the attendees in person, and watching from afar.

THANK YOU!

Chapter 5 - Creating State and Collapsing Anchors

By Monica Geers-Dahl

The work of Viktor Frankl (1963) examines how mental state is the only thing over which a person has control even in seemingly hopeless environments. Frankl survived the death camp experience of Nazi Germany and wrote his theory of logotherapy arguing that man's search for meaning is the driving force in human growth, development, and health. Richard Bandler and John Grinder were collaborators in the development of mental technology known as neurolinguistic programming (NLP) to describe just how humans learn and make meaning of the world through what they perceive, express and do automatically.

Humans have an ability to create states that can either support or deny their dreams, ideals, and hopes for the future. Hypnotherapists are skilled at eliciting state and using those emotional experiences to create the internal alignment empowering clients to achieve their stated goals (and ideally generalize to successes in other areas of their lives).

Creating State

A positive state of being has a different pattern from a negative state of being. Since State of Mind is affected by focus of attention, posture, vocal qualities and breathing patterns, you are able to change your State of Mind by changing what you are doing. You can do it right now!

You can create a change in someone else's state by eliciting specific states: recall and revivification.

Exercise:

"Think of the most wonderful time you can remember. Perhaps you were inside or outside. With someone or by yourself. Where ever you were, whatever you were doing, BE THERE AGAIN. Breathe the way you breathe when you are in the most wonderful time you can remember. Hold your body the way you do when you are having a wonderfully good time. Notice how you speak to yourself and others in

that most wonderful time. Imagine yourself speaking like that now. Notice what you are focused on, thinking about and remember how good it feels to BE THERE again and good and excellent . . . Now notice how good you feel. Who did that to you? Not me, I'm not your mind. Your mind is the most powerful tool you own. Now take that feeling, that state, and think of a word or a phrase that symbolizes that feeling for you."

(If you would like to demonstrate the power of the mind to change state, set an anchor or trigger during the positive state:)

"Then store that feeling, that state, upon a shelf and let me show you more about how your mind power works for you."

Managing State

You can access different inner resources with shifts in breathing, posture, tone of voice and focus of attention. The most elegant way to use state is to re-direct internal representations by selecting a time in which you had the qualities you desire, or successfully achieved your desired outcome or something better.

"Return to that time in which you _____. Back to the same state that you had then. Back to the time or times when you _____."

(Use sensory representations to establish a clear associated state and then set an anchor for a triggering device to get into state when desired.)

Changing State

(As learned from Tag Powell, in Florida, sometime in the early 1980s. First, set up an anchor with three positive events. Using the same anchor or trigger, anchor as is established in thinking of a wonderful time.)

"Think of a wonderful time. Don't tell me what it is, but tell me when you are there.

(When they indicate they are "there",)

"Be there, again. Be in that wonderful time."

(You will notice a shift in their being when they get in state. Then fire the anchor, perhaps pressing on a shoulder. After a moment, release the anchor and say:)

"Now leave that time and go to a time of humor and laughter, a time in which you laughed hard. Tell me when you are there."

(Wait for their response,)

"Be there, again. Be in that time of humor and laughter, now."

(Wait until the shift happens and anchor this memory on the same anchor as the wonderful time. Wait a moment and then say,)

"Now let that memory go and remember a time of great power, a time in which you felt strong and powerful. Tell me when you are there."

(Wait for the response. Then say,)

"Be there, again. Be in that time of power, that time of strength and power."

(When you notice the shift in state, anchor the same place as the two previous anchors were placed. Perhaps you would prefer to use a time of success or a successful outcome. Perhaps a time in which the subject accomplished something, or did something they were proud of. Whatever it is, you are establishing a triple whammy of positive power to counteract any potentially negative response. It would be a shame to link a single positive experience with an overwhelming negative one.)

"Now think of a miserable time. The worst . . . perhaps the most miserable time you can remember. You know which one I mean . . . sink into it, again. Hold your body the way you do when you are that miserable. Breathe the way you do when you feel like that. Hold your body the way you do when you feel so darned blah . . . Notice how you speak to yourself and others, and imagine yourself speaking like that now. Notice what you are focused on, thinking about and remember how miserable it feels to be there . . . Notice how you feel."

(Set an anchor / trigger, different than the positive one.)

"Who did that to you? Not me, I'm not your mind. You are in total control of what you think and how you feel. Which way do you want to feel? Which way is going to get you what you want? This?

(Use the positive anchor or trigger, wait for a moment.)

"Or this?"

(Use the negative anchor or trigger, wait for a moment.)

"Perhaps it is time to remember the full range of options available between the two extremes."

Collapsing an Anchor

(This is useful as a fast phobia cure. Trigger both anchors simultaneously and notice the response. You may notice a ripple of emotions or vibration pass over the subject. Wait until there is a slight shift into greater relaxation, then release the negative anchor, holding the positive anchor for a bit longer.)

"Now you are more aware of all the options between those extremes. There is so much to learn, and so much to know. You are smart. You know how to think. You know how to learn. You know how to speak. Trust yourself. There is so much more to KNOW NOW. So many more options available than way back when. You've grown and learned and developed many new resources."

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Monica Geers Dahl, Ed.D., presented on the topic of creating state and collapsing anchors at the annual IACT/ IMDHA conference in beautiful Daytona Beach, Florida, in May 17 - 19, 2013.

Chapter 6 - Dental Anesthesia

Dental with Hypnosis: Elman's Green Finger and a Visit to the Beach.

For years, my hypnosis skills have allowed me to cultivate a high threshold for pain. The upside? I can turn off pain. The downside? Through disregard, I can hurt myself badly ignoring the body's natural signals.

The upside includes pleasure in having dental work. I like going to the dentist.

"Take good care of your teeth, and your teeth will take care of you."²

For dental work, I have perfected the ideal of the dental office as a mouth spa. The cleaning is a good scratching of my itchy teeth. The taste of rubber gloves and slight pressure of the dental hands in my mouth send me to the beach in my head, all is well in the outside world. I trust my dental team.

When I'm getting a filling, the metal band around my tooth to hold the packed composite in place while it cures is the most overtly uncomfortable part of the filling, and I have reframed it as my favorite part. It means we are almost done.

When the first wisdom tooth needed removal, I asked the dentist what the ideal outcome was. He said, "It bleeds until it fills the socket and then the bleeding stops." When he came back in to check on me post extraction, his eyes got wide. I asked, "What?"

He said, "It bled until it filled the socket, then it stopped."

"That's what you told me was the ideal outcome. I asked my body to do what you said was ideal."

When the last wisdom tooth was impacted, with roots into the sinuses, the local dentists wanted to have full anesthesia for surgery up into my sinus cavity. I waited until a new oromaxillary surgeon arrived in town, a young guy. I showed up for my appointment, handed him my full mouth x-rays, and told him to go ahead and extract. He offered a

² E. Margaret Metzinger, my mother, 1936-2012

needle for numbing in one hand, and a mask for gas in the other. I said I was planning to use the Green Finger technique. He didn't know it, so I showed him.

"I imagine the finger is getting so numb it is stiff like a bat. And then I think 'green'. I imagine the finger is so numb it is like a thousand shots of whatever it is you have in your needle there, and then I think the word 'green'. Then I imagine it is so stiff, so rigid, so numb like a wood bat that it just won't bend no matter how hard I try, and then I think 'green', after confirming, ah there, that it just won't bend. Now I transfer that numbness to my jaw and mouth. First the outside of the gum and teeth."

Three strokes of the finger onto the outside gum transferred the numbness to the gum between the teeth and cheek.

Then reload the finger, "green, green, green."

Three strokes of the finger onto the gum inside the teeth arch, along the hard palate.

"Now, I'm almost ready. There are things I want you to do. You must avoid asking me how I am feeling. If you must, ask me, 'How are you doing?'" If I need you to stop, I will raise my hand, and you will stop so that I can set my mind properly, again, and when the hand goes down, you will resume. Avoid the use of words that evoke pain, like blood, sharp, cut, stitch, needle, forceps or scalpel. Tell your nurse, 'Give me that tool' and point to it. Is there anything I need to know to make this an ideal outcome?"

"You'll come back in a week for removal of stitches."

"No dissolving stitches?"

"No."

I sent myself into that deep down place where I can go away, and the body can be responsive to the medical or dental team working with me. I primed myself,

"All experiences of touch are just a light pressure, leading me to a successful outcome."

"All background sounds and smells reassure me all is well in the outside world."

And I went away to the beach for a visit to our lovely blue waters in my mind.

In the background, away from the rustle of the palm fronds above my shady beach spot, . . . ok, I burn easy. If I'm going to the beach, I'm going to be laying out in the shade, enjoying the blue water, blue sky, light breeze

I could hear the sound of the tool opening my gum, like the sound of a sharp knife I used to peel flesh off a fresh fish, right down to the bone.

But the sparkling water in front of me, in my mind was exquisite, and the gentle lapping of the waves

I could feel the gum flap fall away to expose the tooth.

I could smell the ocean, the salty fishy smell, the sounds of seagulls yelling about a food source, and who has first feeding rights.

I heard bone broken away, somewhere way back in the awareness, once, twice, maybe three times bone was broken out to release the wisdom tooth impacted into my sinuses.

We did fine until right at the end.

I became suddenly electrified with a cold bolt from my tooth socket, to the top of my head, to the bottom of my feet, and back to that tooth socket. My hand went up, I opened my eyes to say, "I can't do this . . . " but it didn't get out of my mouth.

The dentist had my tooth, intact, out of the socket.

He said to his secretary, "Give me that tool."

He put in the first couple of stitches easily. Then he said, "just one more stitch."

I felt the needle burn through the gum flap as he finished reattaching the gum.

Then he smiled and said, "I haven't seen anything like that since I was a student doing rounds at Walter Reed. A large veteran came in, had all four of his wisdom teeth removed using nothing but the Green Finger. He did it just about the same as you did it. I thought it was some military thing. What is it?"

"Dave Elman's Green Finger Technique."

Then he gave me the bill. It has a huge markup from what he quoted for removal, I asked what the difference in price was. He said he normally got paid for anesthesia, but that wasn't included, since I did my own. The additional cost was the extra cotton he used. He billed me for that. A lot.

I asked him, "Why didn't you tell me to turn off the saliva?"

He looked startled, "You can do that?"

"If my body is properly instructed of ideal outcomes and processes, it can slow or reduce blood flow. I assume saliva would have the same responsiveness, but we didn't ask, so we don't know."

I was completely healed up in two days. The swelling was down, and the stitches hung in my mouth, way in the back, tickling me for the next five days waiting for removal. If I had a pair of scissors with a long thin curved blade, I would have taken them out myself.

I dropped off a copy of Elman's Hypnotherapy when I went back a week later to get the stitches removed.

In discussing my experience with another hypnotist, I learned that the nociceptors of pain and temperature are beside each other. I knew to turn off awareness of the pain signals, I didn't realize that there were temperature receptors I needed to turn off, too.

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Chapter 7 – Dog Phobia

Rapid Resolution of a Dog Phobia or Kids are great subjects.

The last time I worked with a young person (12 y/o) with a dog phobia, I was approached by the mother at a public event in which I was setting up a booth. When she asked if I handled phobias, I asked if she had a doctor's referral as phobias are the domain of psychiatry and psychology. She didn't have a referral. I told her i would work with her no charge, see what we could do. She said it was her daughter. I agreed to interview her daughter, no charge.

The interview was easy. I sat across from the daughter and placed a hand lightly on each of her knees.

"Tell me about your problem with dogs."

She started with a story about how her grandmother's little dog had bit her on the lip and hung there growling. I pressed on one of the knees lightly to set a negative anchor as she hit the part of the story about the dog growling while hanging on her lip. The mother didn't know that had happened, and expressed surprised at the daughter's recollection of something that the daughter claimed occurred around the age of four.

I released the pressure on the knee, and asked, "Did you bleed?"

She responded, "Yes."

"Did you die?" (I enjoy using the ludicrous obvious to shift state and reframe a problem.)

She looked at me in what appeared to be astonishment, "No."

I placed slight pressure on the opposite knee to set a positive anchor as I said, "So you survived all that."

"Yes."

I released the slight pressure and reframed the incident something like, "What a shame you had such a bad experience with that nasty little dog, and you didn't know enough to keep your face away from such a nasty little biter. You were very young then, and you didn't know how to assess if a dog was friendly or not. You probably thought that dog was as friendly as you, and bent over to say hello. You've learned a lot about life since then, haven't you?"

She brightened up, and as she said, "Yes," I put a slight pressure on the positive anchor, "Yes." I nodded and then released the slight pressure on the positive anchor site.

"Do you have any other incidents like this?"

"Yes."

She told another story about being assaulted by a dog, she was playing in the water with her brother, and a golden retriever ran into the water. She was scared and ran away, it ran after her, jumped on her, and scratched her. I pressed the negative anchor slightly, and then released it. Her brother "saved her" by pulling the dog off of her. I asked, "Did you bleed?"

"Yes."

"Did you die?"

I placed slight pressure on the positive anchor as she "No," and reframed the situation, "That as a very different dog from the nasty little biter you met when you were young. That dog might have been coming to play in the water, but you didn't know that, and you acted like a cat. You ran and the dog chased you. I wonder what would have happened if you had continued to play like a little girl instead of acting like a cat by running away?" I released the positive anchor.

"Are there any other incidents?" "Yes."

She pulled up her shirt sleeve and showed me multiple scars the size of the tip of my thumb, and told me a story about being mauled by a Rottweiler. This was the only dog story her mother knew about. I didn't press the negative anchor on this issue, we already had enough anchoring of the negative. She told me the whole story. I asked, "Did you bleed?"

"A lot."

"Did you die?"

"No, but I had to go to the hospital."

"I am so sorry you had an encounter with a big mean dog. Dogs can be just like people, some are mean, and some are nice. Would you like to let go of that worry you have about dogs?"

"Yes."

I asked her to remember something funny, and when her face was laughing, I pressed on the positive anchor spot, and released it.

I asked her to remember something she had done that she was proud of, and when she had that look of satisfaction on her face, I pressed the positive anchor spot, and released it.

I asked her to remember a time when she had worked hard to achieve something difficult, and had succeeded, and when I noticed her face looking happy, I pressed on the positive spot and then released.

Then I asked if she would like to explore how her nervous system can automatically pull up a memory of emotions without having to remember a specific incident. She said, "Yes."

I pressed on the positive spot and asked how that felt. She said it felt good. I released the pressure.

I pressed on the negative anchor spot and asked how that felt. She said it felt bad. I released the pressure. "Interesting how your body can pull up a feeling automatically, isn't it? Let's do that two more times to make sure you understand how this works."

We did the anchor comparison two more times.

I asked, "Would you like to get rid of that problem with dogs now?"

"Yes."

I pressed both sites simultaneously, and watched as the confusing messages rolled across her face, "Feels kind of wiggly like jello doesn't it?" She nodded. I suggested, "Tell me when it settles down."

I watched as her face began to relax, and when she said, "Ok," I released the negative anchor and kept some pressure on the positive anchor for another 30 seconds or so. "How are you doing now?"

"Good."

I released the pressure from the positive anchor.

Then we checked the anchors. She was neutral on the negative anchor, and was feeling good on the positive anchors. Job done. "Good deal, here's my card, tell me how things go for you."

The next day I had a visit from the mother, "What did you do to my daughter?"

"You watched, what did you see?"

"I watched you talk to her about her problem with dogs."

"And then what happened?"

"We left you and walked over to the ice-cream parlor. She was eating her ice cream cone and a big dog came and lay down on her feet, stuck out its tongue to catch the ice cream drips."

"How did she respond?"

"Oh, her father and I were freaked out, 'dog, dog, dog'. She said, 'so what?' What did you do to her?"

The mother explained that they had already spent a lot of money for therapy attempting to get her over her dog phobia, and nothing had worked. After one brief session of hypnosis in which we used the NLP strategy of collapsing anchors, the daughter didn't even remember being afraid of dogs. One session that lasted maybe fifteen minutes.

This is an example of using NLP anchors to overcome a phobia. I have been told by other NLP practitioners that phobias don't go away using that approach, but I have used it successfully with other phobias (birds and spiders) too. Does it work with everyone and every phobia? No. There are those folks with secondary gain and those who required uncovering to discover the initial sensitizing event and its related decisions so that the emotional load can be discharged. It was not successful when I applied it with agoraphobia (fear of going outside). The agoraphobics I have worked with required lengthy engagement (a year to two years) to be rid of their fear.

Chapter 9 - Emotions

If 80% (or more) of all illness is stress mediated, any method that teaches a person how to relax is going to have a positive impact on overall health and recuperative powers. What an amazingly wonderful sense of well-being when the body relaxes thoroughly.

Sometimes relaxation is insufficient for achieving the relaxed state of well-being we are striving for. Sometimes we need insight, skill training, goal setting. Psychoeducational or psychotherapeutic strategies may be needed to uncover and address emergent mental and emotional stuff that has powerful meaning for the person. Seeking transformation can reveal secondary gain, perhaps the person has a habit of responding in a certain way, and hasn't yet allowed the emergence of more effective strategies. Some folks are "stuck", still dancing with the old devil, the familiar devil instead of any possible new ones.

In 1987, I got to spend a month with Mark Gilboyne studying his dynamic strategies for human growth and development. He was a student of Fritz Perls, and demonstrated a highly effective Gestalt approach incorporating kinesthetic communication to direct a session, "Is there any part of the body that needs to relax still further?" Residual tension is the big arrow saying, "Look here!" Residual tension indicates unresolved "stuff" (that's the technical word). Emotions are the stuff that makes life meaningful and painful.

The goal of our sessions is to gain as much relaxation in the body / mind / spirit as possible. As we focus on the relaxing, there is a wonderful sense of well-being that occurs when the body relaxes. We let go of that "stuff". Gilboyne based his hypnotherapy uncovering work on the idea that all problems have a foundation in the fear of being unloved or unlovable. When the client starts talking about feeling unloved or unlovable, we are at the core of their wound.

Our goal is to cultivate self-love sufficient for discerning what is meaningful and valuable, supports healthy love of other and living more joyfully right now.

Loving / accepting self can make it more pleasant / acceptable to relax and accept life with all its challenges. Allowing self to relax right now, perhaps slow down and accept life right now, has the potential to engage the senses more fully

in observing / perceiving. Changes in perception, slowing of observing, can help pace the person for wise / prudent decisions that are more congruent with internal values and external demands.

Our goal is to be fully present right now, in this moment.

We can practice imagining the infinity loop; with one wing the past, the other wing the future, the X at the center the moment of now. Where on that infinity loop does the "bead" representing "I am here" exist for that person, on the right, left, or in the center? We strive for the center, create visual imageries of being in the center, in the moment of NOW. We slide the bead, like a bead on an abacus, to the X at the center of the infinity loop. We strive for a relaxed state RIGHT NOW

Inside you is a knowing. It knows everything about you and it knows that it knows. It has a core of love, light, truth, warmth, bliss, peace, humor, forgiveness, and a perfect blueprint of health. This is your true gift of life, your inner wisdom, stable and ever present center of creative intelligence. Emotions are energy in motion in the body, and an excellent map to the center of your Being

The first things that can pull or knock you off your center are shame and guilt. Shame is related to something you think you are. Guilt is related to something you do or have done. Shame and guilt leave you "stuck" in that time frame in which you made a decision somewhere in the past. Guilt can be a useful tool during decision making times, but it is a terrible drain on energy when indulged in daily. Shame and guilt are both false information that people use to control and manipulate themselves and others. In our society, some of the most common shame and guilt is related to being sexual human beings. Although advertisers use the lustful urges to stimulate the subconscious, our society can have a remarkable double standard about it being unacceptable to discuss positive sexuality openly. This is an amazingly pervasive incongruent message of our society.

After accumulating internalized messages intended to instill shame and guilt as control mechanisms, there can accumulate a layer of sadness, sorrow, grieving and pain. These things can be temporary situations or habitual thought patterns. In the case

of temporary states of being, these states contain large doses of change and learning. In the case of habitual thought patterns, they may be inappropriate feelings for the experience at hand, but have been automated through repetition. If sustained over time, the accumulated sadness, sorry, grieving and pain become inappropriate states that trigger fear.

Unless there is a gun in my face, or an animal approaching with the intent to eat me, fear is largely based on past pain and the concern that it will happen, again, in the future. Appropriate fear is based on a presence of authentic danger. Inappropriate fear is based on something other than now, instead of an actual response to the real issues at hand.

When you have been sufficiently provoked, or frightened long enough, you will respond with a desire to protect yourself. This can be observed in the hard shell of anger that emerges in response to a perceived threat. Behind all expressions of anger is some form of fear.

If you are successful at hiding from your feelings and you pretend that you do not experience shame, guilt, sadness, sorrow, grieving, pain, fear and anger; chaos and confusion will set in. Chaos and confusion are the result of conflicting messages, decisions and actions. The inner message is "I can't, or won't, decide."

If you are successful at avoiding decision making, you may find yourself in denial, numb to the discomfort of chaos and confusion. Numbness and pretending leads to the idea that "Nothing is wrong; Everything is ok."

Pretending nothing is wrong and living with a numbness eventually leads to the experience of the walking dead.

With angry clients, I will ask:

What thoughts do you have that precede the feeling of anger?

What are you most afraid of?

What kind of fears are beneath the hard shell of anger?

What kinds of sadness / sorrow / grieving / pain is beneath the fear?

Is it a present situation, or memories of the past, concerns about the future?

What kind of shame / guilt is beneath the sadness / sorrow / grieving / pain?

Would it be ok to practice forgiveness? Right now? For within the forgiveness is the seed of love

Anger is a great tool, it protects us, and is the emotional version of the physical tension in the body that is such a useful tool saying, "LOOK HERE!" Anger is a sign of the hard edge above the soft underbelly of something feared or fearful.

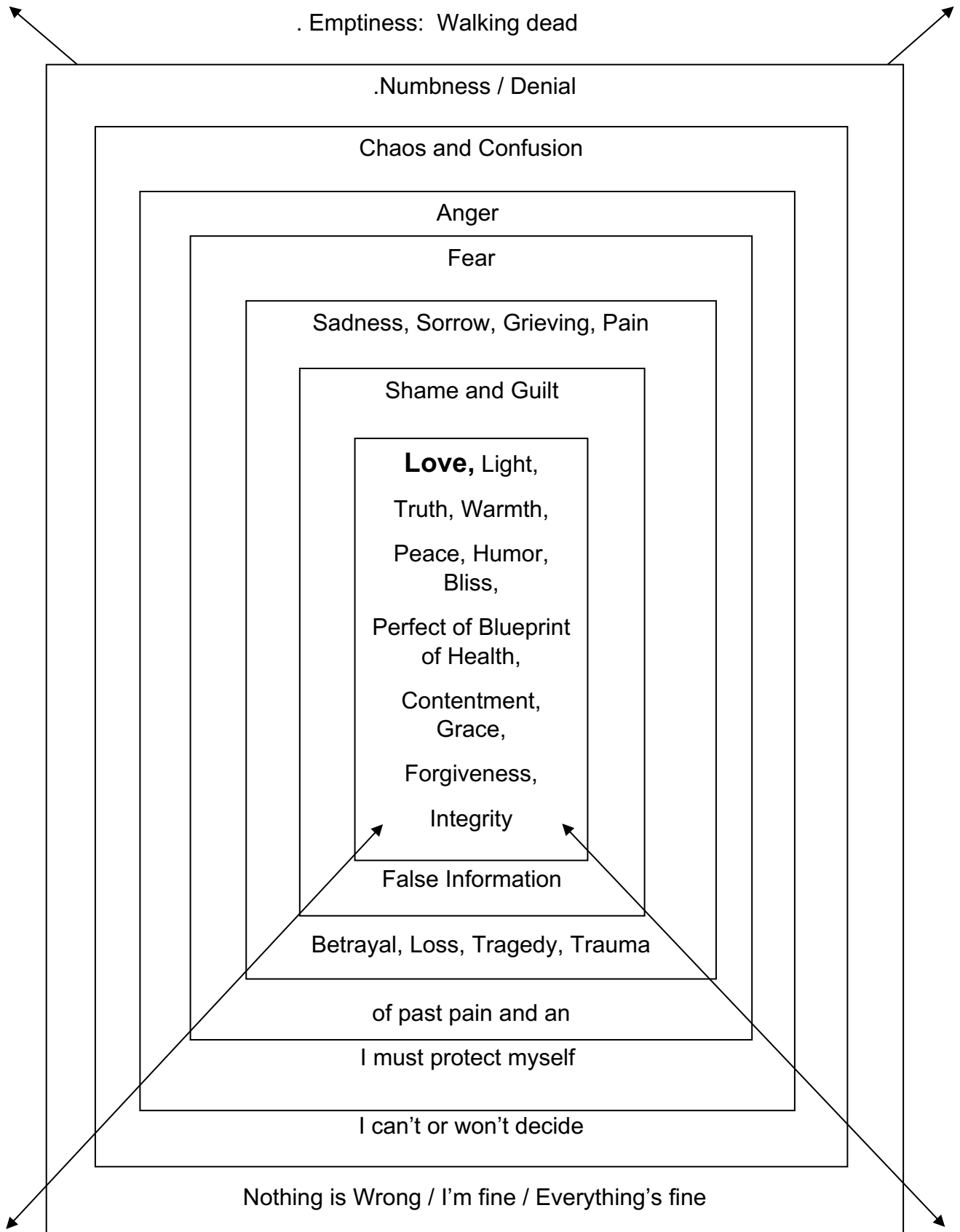
With angry clients who are upset that they are stuck, not changing fast enough, I use myself as an example, "I'm stubborn. My change process can be rapid, but most often it's slow and deliberate because I'm stubborn. I want to know everything about everything as I change. How about you? Are you normally fast and quick in your decision making and change strategies, intuitive and impulsive, or are you methodical, slow and stubborn?" Most angry folks will say, "I'm stubborn." This is when we discuss perfectionism (does it have to be 100% or can it be 93%, an A?), patience and impatience (are you the kid who can persist or the one who has to have it right now?). We discuss goal setting, how to set the mind like a bow, and the thoughts / goals like arrows. We notch the arrow onto the bow string, aim truly, and left fly, "in the long run we only hit what we aim at" (Thoreau).

The emotional diagram³ of this article is intended to provide a visual imagery of the layers of emotions that can help steer the process of hypnotherapy toward a healthy recentering in love, forgiveness, humor, peace of mind, endearment. The goal of this approach is to live at the center of the loving self.

The following Emotional Diagram initially developed in her own therapy, and has evolved over time. All psychological theorists tend to build their theories based on their own issues and subjective experiences. If you want to "peel your own onion," draw a circle and write, "LOVE," in the center. Build out the layers of your own onion with what you encounter that pull you away from your loving. It took Dahl months to get a draft that worked for her. Dahl added "contentment" in the fall of 2020, in response to a hypnosis student asking where it would fit in Dahl's onion.

³ © 1990 Monica Geers Dahl, Emotional Diagram, pp. 224, Hypnotherapy: Vol. II

. Emptiness: Walking dead



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Available on Amazon.

Chapter 10 - Enhancing Performance: A Case Study.

This is a complex case study of unfolding excellence. Ursula (not her real name) was a professional athlete and televised sportscaster. She was stuck, unable to let go of an unfulfilling personal relationship with Danielle (not her real name). It was complex in that the former lovers had an ongoing professional relationship. Couples counseling hadn't resolved their issues, it had only clarified them, and Ursula's needs were not being met. It would be more amicable if Ursula could move on with her life, find a new life partner. Despite giving lip service to wanting a relationship, Danielle's behavior made it clear that she was no longer available to fill Ursula's longing for a committed life companion, and she wasn't willing to let go either. Ursula couldn't even imagine initiating a relationship with someone else while she was still emotionally invested in Danielle. Three years of being stuck, knowing she was stuck, and being frustrated by not knowing how to reclaim her sense of personal power in relation. As a professional with a strong emphasis on life-long learning and skill development, Ursula was frustrated that all her fine skills were not resolving this area of her life. The loyalty, dedication, and team building strategies that made her successful in her professional life were bogging down her personal life, and it was adversely spilling over into her professional performance capacity.

The work of Fritz Perls addresses the idea of unfinished stories, gestalten, things that drive a person from the inside until they are completed, resolved. The Gestalt approach seeks authenticity, being in the moment of now, looking at the foreground, what is obvious. Ursula revealed herself to me as an articulate, aware person, sensitive to the needs of others. One of her strongest values was her implicit mission orientation as a team player. She was unable to fully engage with her dynamic sports and entertainment lifestyle while she was emotionally stuck without a life partner to pal around with, share her innermost dreams with. Being solo was not her preferred style, she was most comfortable in a team structure. "I want someone to grow old with . . . I've got to go to a funeral this week, they were a couple for sixty years. I want a

companion to grow old and die with. . . . My parents have it. I know what it's like. . . . My father would be saying, 'Come to your senses'."

There is public debate about how much medical care, illness, and disease is related to stress, it is obviously greater than chance, 50 / 50. Anecdotally, 80% of the medical problems could be triggered by stress.⁴ The obvious is that people benefit from learning to relax. Reduce overall systemic stress, establish state self-regulation in a relaxed state, and the body has a natural process which some call homeostasis, and others call homeodynamic. Homeostasis refers to the assumption of a natural range and rhythm within which a being functions optimally without breaking down, restoring and calming the system to the most effective baseline when not called upon for performance demands. Homeodynamic indicates that the natural rhythm can have fluctuations based on performance demands, and there is still that baseline of optimal relaxation wherein the body has its most effective calming and recovery from performance demands. My bias is the assumption that the body has an innate wisdom, a capacity to self-regulate and heal itself. The body is wise. Ursula and I initiated the progressive relaxation, and followed the assumption that the body holds residual tension in the areas where the knowledge needed to heal is stuck.

"Is there any part of your body that needs to relax still further?"

We broadened her awareness of the locations of residual tension in her body by assigning a color, a visual strategy of knowing.

"What color is the part that needs to relax still further?"

"What color would feel better?"

"Breathe that in, and breathe out the color of the tension."

Sometimes this is all it takes. Not with Ursula. She was still stuck. Sometimes I ask, "What color eyes would this feeling have if it had eyes?" I have assumptions about eye color, and that is a different trajectory in spelunking based on the work of William

⁴ Dr. Raymond McKnight, Co-founder of Truman Medical in Key West, 2001 gave me this observation of the clients to his busy walk in clinic.

Baldwin, the option I selected to broadened Ursula's self awareness by eliciting an auditory knowing.

"If it could speak, what would it say?"

We established a dialogue between the part that needed to relax and Ursula.

"What purpose do you have in Ursula's life at this time?"

"What are you doing to her?"

"What are you doing for her?"

It was all about loyalty, dedication, commitment. Her strategy, vision, persistence and dedication to following her dreams meant she was more like an ocean liner than a go fast boat, she was slow to turn away from her long term goals. I began to perceive her stuckness as indication of her tremendous dedication to doing what was right, persisting until she mastered a skill set and won. Her ideal was to be winning back her lost love. Persistence and skill development were the strategy for winning in other areas of her life. Her attachment to the outcome she preferred prevented her from being authentic in the reality of her lived experiences, that she was in love with an unavailable person. It was no longer a viable love affair, and she had no control over Danielle in eliciting behavior to fulfill Ursula's own needs for intimacy, commitment, affection. The minimal contacts were still intense for Ursula, the visual trigger of seeing Danielle elicited feelings of loss, grief, dark sorrow.

The easiest part of being a hypnotherapist occurs when the client is willingly leading the session with his / her body wisdom. Our goal is a shared authenticity, genuine relating in a safe bounded and unbounded environment. Bounded in that all parties to the encounter are safe. Unbounded in that something greater than the sum of the participants can unfold when a state of relaxed awareness is achieved and sustained over time. I encounter and expect to observe a dynamic, organic unfolding of self in relation when I attain and sustain my own state of relaxed self-regulation.

My kindergarten teacher, Marian Gyr, was a WWII Marine Sgt.⁵ She was a font of many wisdoms for my younger self. She once said, “Myself. I am a cell in the body of God. I must be a cell in the foot because I like to walk.”

I consider myself a spiritual monist. I view myself as a small part of a larger, creative, intelligent being. The light I illuminate within myself is a reflection of my larger sense of self and the light I perceive in other beings. Through my personal and professional practices, I cultivate a light center within myself, and imagine, that what I wish for myself is what I wish for others. I imagine that we reflect to each other the Divine Light, that loving sense, the interpersonal relating in the Divine Light of which I believe we are all sparks. As a spiritual monist, I hold the idea that I am part of something greater than myself. Sharing tools intended to reclaim awareness of self is a wondrous experience in which I get to observe how a person unfolds his / her images of self and dreams in an organic process of growth and development.

I prepare my inner space with an assumption of light to guide the processes of creating the sacred space for unfolding. I connect with my inner light. I connect with the outer light. I ask for a strong flow between the inner and outer light so that I become a pillar between heaven and earth. I imagine that a string of pearls connects me with the divine presence, the energy flowing in my life. The string of pearls is my spine, each bone a lovely pearl. The pearls extend beyond the edges of my body, rising up through my head, to the hand of the divine. I seek to be limber and lovely as a well strung strand of pearls.

Simply accessing the body wisdom through progressive relaxation and clearing out residual tension was insufficient for Ursula to dive from the edge of her stuckness into the depths of her capacity to change. Still stuck. She was persistent. We had to dive deeper. If it is true that, “the problem behind all problems is the fear of being unloved or unlovable”⁶ (Mark Gilboyne, personal conversation, 1987), we needed to refocus her attention on her capacity to give and receive love in a rewarding,

⁵ Marian Strickland Gyr, October 11, 1921 - March 9, 2019. Minimalist, Quaker.

⁶ Mark Gilboyne, 1987 personal conversation. October 28, 1924 – May 5, 2010. Nom de guerre Gil Boyne, an American Pioneer in modern hypnotherapy. Founder of the American Counsel of Hypnotist Examiners (ACHE).

reciprocating relationship. I thought we needed to start with loving herself fully enough to attract and notice other people who were potential life partners. I wanted to look through the eyes of love with Ursula.

“Is it light or dark inside?”

Inside referring to inside the body, I have an assumption that loving is light, energizing, joyful, healthful, vital, humorous, vibrant, dark is draining, exhausting, hidden, forbidden, fearful, sad, guilty, angry, shameful, numb, ignored, betrayed, shunned. We discovered a darkness within that rapidly transformed into a mixture of light and dark. We elicited a familiar pattern in the imagery of the yin / yang spiral of light and dark. She got it.

“In the middle of the darkness is a bright white spot. Go to that spot.”

Once she was able to discern a light place in the darkness, “Go rest yourself in that spark of light. Notice how that feels.”

She liked it. I asked her to say, “Let there be light,” three times. She did the simple exercise and described her experience of feeling lighter within, expanding light, and becoming surrounded by light that emanated out to a place beyond the edges of her skin.

Then we looked for the light above, “Imagine there is a window in the top of your head. Look up. Is it light or dark up there?”

The process of looking within, re-engaging in an inner light, looking up, re-engaging in an outer light, aligning the light for a sense of connection, provides a safe space for wise perceptions and decision making. Ideally, the capacity to frame life from a relaxed, loving perspective is generalized from a learning experience into the rest of life. My goal was to elicit the eagerness to live a vibrant, loving, uplifting, humorous, connected life.

I was hearing Ursula in longing, sorrow, loss, alone. I was holding in my mind Ursula’s capacity to allow her authentic inner strivings to generalize into an alignment with wise living strategies in daily activities. My goal was to establish a framework of

safety, love, and lightness from within which Ursula was restored into full access to her inner wisdom, her innate tool kit of useful strategies. "Come to your senses woman."

Ursula had good role models for what it was like to have a sustained, long term committed relationship. She grew up observing elders who made wise decisions, decisions of integrity from a loving heart. Still the light above was not readily present for Ursula, so I asked her to remember Dawn with her rosy fingers.

"Remember. There is that slight wind that precedes the rosy fingers of dawn. Then the colors that fill the sky. Then the sun peaks above the horizon. What's that like?"

She had it.

"Then comes the chariot of the sun god Apollo, drawing the golden orb above the horizon into the sky. What is it like at the beach at mid-day?"

She got it, bright, hot, permeating the body as if at the beach at noon.

"Does that light above connect with the light within?"

No.

"Breathe the light in, breathe out the gaps, imagine that deep within you there is a mirror, it reflects the light, deep within there is a mirror. Perhaps you have played with a mirror in sunlight, flashing, flashing. Align that mirror within with the light above. Connect the light above with the light within."

She reported the light above connecting with the light within. Sometimes this is where a session comes to a comfortable ending. We had reached an hour, and this is sometimes where I give the person a homework assignment to spend a week practicing light imagery, deliberately breaking up old patterns of darkness and mixed responses. There is a residual, positive effect in the spontaneous smiling that often occurs when thinking light thoughts. Smiles are contagious.

Ursula's conversation with me ranged on a variety of topics, including the work of Tad James, specifically his release of the four negative emotional clusters (Anger, Fear,

Sadness, Shame / Guilt), and Robin Casarjian, specifically her approach to forgiveness. Casarjian proposes that forgiveness is a daily spiritual practice. It includes looking at each person as someone needing to be acknowledged, emotionally safe, and loved. She gently reminds that a person needs to practice gentleness and compassion with oneself. Just because we practice forgiveness doesn't mean we stick around for more misbehavior or unfulfilled dreams. We can forgive and love at a distance.

Ursula was only in town briefly, she was eager to find a sense of closure, we extended our session until she indicated she was ready for closure: 2.5 hours.⁷

Many times hypnosis case studies illustrate the speed of a hypnotic process. This case demonstrates the role of an ongoing professional relationship with a client who lives in a different part of the world. The initial consultation was intended to take a look at where she was, where she was going, where she was stuck. She was still in love with her ex-girlfriend, the unavailable Danielle. Ursula had been unable to let go and initiate a dynamic committed relationship with anyone else until she resolved her unrequited longing for Danielle. Her desire to wait it out, win her back, was adversely impacting her professional life and Ursula didn't like being stuck. During our first session, we were exploring different exercises to re-engage Ursula's innate drive for excellence with her inner wisdom as framed in light and love.

We started our second session with progressive relaxation, then assessment for residual tension and release, elicitation of inner and outer light, and cultivation of the eyes of the heart. We had what I perceived to be a sufficiently safe place from which to initiate a process of decision making with integrity. I proposed an imagery to perceive the things that tied her to other people, places or things.

"Imagine that there are cords, like electrical cords, plugged into you. They take your energy to different people, places and things. Like a vacuum cord. When

⁷ I consider 2.5 hours to be a lengthy session. Even when I teach, I like to take breaks every 90 minutes.

you pull a cord and disconnect it from yourself, you can give it a tug and it will retract into the body, place or thing that was drawing on your energy.”

We looked at her connections that were failing to sustain her personal growth and development.

“Imagine what your power level is set at with all these cords plugged into you.”

I sometimes use a 0 – 10 scale, sometimes a 0 – 100 scale with zero meaning dead, and either 10 or 100 meaning top speed, highest level of energy.

“Between zero and 100, where is your power level set with all these cords plugged into you?”

“Now unplug the cords attached to people, places and things that are failing to be beneficial to you. Notice what your power level does when you disconnect those cords. Did it go up, down, or stay the same?”

Ursula initially reported a high score on energy, when she unplugged the cords, her self-report of power level dropped. I interpret this to mean that she found a sense of purpose and meaning in this relationship, and she felt less powerful letting go. I am about re-empowerment, finding what will work better. It appeared to me that Ursula wanted to continue to engage with Danielle in a loving manner without being drained or dragged down by the memories of loss. By asking Ursula to allow the light from above to flow through her body, out through the gaps left in the time / space continuum, Ursula could continue caring in a loving manner and simultaneously restore her own reservoir of energy.

“Imagine the light from above flowing through your body, filling the gaps in the time / space continuum left behind by those old cords that used to connect you with people, places, or things. Imagine that the light from above flows through you and flows out from you, filling the gaps in the time / space continuum left behind by the cords that used to connect you with those people, places, or things you just released. Something curious is occurring now, every time they think of you, every time you are tapped for energy, every time one of those people,

places or things draws upon your energy, it draws that light from above you, through you, feeding you at the same time those other people, places and things get fed. They fill their needs by drawing from the light above and as it passes through your body, it feeds you both. Every time that person, place or thing feels a need for your energy, it flows through you and feeds you, too. You are nourished.”

The idea that every time she connected at any level, she would get fed too, was an embedded message was that she was worthy of being fed, loved, cherished, and energized, too.

As soon as the cords were disconnected and the gaps were filled with light, Ursula gave a higher self-report of energy. She was aware of being active in the process of filling herself with light imagery, and she liked it. She immediately turned her sharp mind onto wondering how soon she could manifest another love. She was eager. Ready. Three years of waiting.

“How much time would be appropriate for you getting to know yourself, you as a single person, loving and loved by yourself, before you will be ready to attract a worthy partner. Someone who wants to play ball with you. Someone who shares the game. Someone who plays as an equal, willing and able to share the playing field with a worthy team mate?”

Ursula fell back into her stuckness over loving Danielle. Yes, it was possible to let go, but what if she waited a bit more, tried hard enough, long enough, she could make the relationship work. Ursula was still stuck. She couldn't imagine a future life without Danielle as her life companion, and as long as that was her foreground, she couldn't observe anyone else of interest. She couldn't imagine anyone else. Looking at and imagining other people as possible life partners felt like cheating. It didn't match her image of self as a woman of integrity.

Ursula's framing of her stuckness in being unable to perceive a future without Danielle, and her value for integrity, leads us to the use of a rocking chair test with old

mother wit. This experiential exercise looks at integrity using a simple future pacing to reframe the present decision-making process.

“Imagine you can go up the beam of light coming in through the window in the top of your head. Float up. Way up. Up there in the middle of nowhere surrounded by the creative intelligence of the universe. Go so far up there, the soul knows nothing of pain and suffering, it knows about growth and development. Let my voice go with you there and back again. When you are up there in the middle of nowhere, so far up there that the soul knows nothing of pain and suffering, it knows about growth and development, say, “I’m there,” or, “ok.”

(wait for the response)

“Now look around for the verandah, a big front porch. It is a deep, broad, shaded area filled with comfortable seating. Rockers, swings, hammock, chaise lounges, couches, whatever is most comfortable for you. It is a comfortable place to rest yourself. Take a seat, get comfortable, rest on this lovely verandah. And when you have settled in, you’ll you are not alone. Look around. Notice an old person is waiting for you. Those eyes. They look so familiar. This is you, the old person you have become. Just as you remember childhood, youth, your soul already knows about mid-life and old age. It’s a memory. Imagine.”

“Imagine you become the old woman who stayed in the relationship that was unsatisfying for three years. Imagine. Whether it got better or not, you decided to stay. Look back on the life you lived as the woman who chose to stay. Notice how your decision to stay in relation with a person who refused to play a shared game of relating with you as a full partner for three years influenced you as you grew. Notice how it influences you as that old person on that big porch, that airy verandah. Notice how you feel about all that, your decision to stay in relation and how it influenced the rest of your life. And notice if you are feeling integrity because you did as you pleased and it was the right thing for you to do, to grow as you did, perhaps to feel feelings that you remember, or are you thinking, ‘I wish I would have done something different’.”

“Now return to the body of the younger woman, the one who floated up the beam of light, the younger self, the one surrounded by the creative intelligence of the universe. Remember, notice how you felt about becoming the old one who chose to stay in the relationship. And once you have explored those images, explore the concepts of integrity, despair, and wisdom, notice how you feel about it not, staying in a relationship that is not reciprocating at this time. Are you sensing integrity or despair staying in this non-reciprocating relationship?”

“Now imagine. Imagine you became the old woman who left the relationship that was unsatisfying for three years. Imagine. You chose a path of letting go of an unfulfilling relationship, letting go so that you could explore a life that may or may not have had the opportunity to live a life with a more appropriate life partner. Notice how you feel about that choice. Are you the old woman thinking, ‘I did as I pleased’, or are you the old one thinking, ‘I wish I would have done something different?’ And notice how you feel about all that. And notice if you have a feeling of integrity or despair. Once you have sensed that sense of being the old woman looking back on leaving that unfulfilling relationship, then return to the younger body. Return to the body of the younger woman, the woman who floated up the beam of light into the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the creative intelligence of the universe. Remember now. Notice how you felt about becoming the old one who chose to leave the unfulfilling relationship, freeing yourself for the possibility of a more fulfilling relationship with another person. And once you have explored those images, explore the concepts of integrity, despair, and wisdom. Notice how you feel about all that.”

We discussed integrity, choices, then I asked Ursula to ask her Mother Wit a series of questions and listen to the answers without saying them out loud.

“What am I doing that you are proud of?”

“What am I doing that you are not proud of?”

“What do you want me to do more of?”

“What do you want me to do less of?”

“What do you want to tell me about that I haven’t asked about?”

“Is there anything else I should be asking about or noticing?”

May I come back and visit?”

Ursula said goodbye to her elder self and flowed back down the beam of light into the body, bringing with her all the knowledge she needed to make loving decisions.

I proposed that there might be a pause between love relationships with other people, that it was possible to fill that gap with cultivating a healthy relationship with herself. The hunger for a relationship might be best initially fed with a loving, kind, gentle relationship with herself. She was adamant, she wanted a companion right now, preferably yesterday. She was hungry to give and receive love. What came out through asking her relaxed self how long she needed to love herself, cultivate a healthy, loving relationship with herself, before allowing another powerful love affair to unfold in her life was that a year was appropriate. Twelve months. It wasn’t what she wanted to hear, she wanted to hear that she could manifest something right now.

A week after Ursula returned home, she called to update me on her successful integration of new interpersonal strategies. Scheduling had been such that she was able to avoid direct physical contact with Danielle, which eliminated the trigger of longing that came with visual contact. The love was still a powerful aspect of her life. She was finding herself curiously free, pleased with being independent, and liked that she had learned strategies for coming out of a dark pit rapidly.

I consider a 2.5 hour session to be a rather lengthy process. In context with Ursula’s three years of suffering, I can understand how she could perceive the couple hour process as quick. The way she described her experiences, I got the impression her empowerment was in full flow of articulate, authentic expressions of loving kindness.

A week later, she called vulnerable. We went through the progressive relaxation much more quickly.

“Relax yourself from the top of the head to the tips of the toes, from the tips of the toes back up again. And scan the body for residual tension.”

We practiced the inner light exercise, the outer light exercise, connecting the lights. The residually tense parts of her body were described by her as two explicit parts: a career self and a personal self which were clearly delineated in different colors representing these aspects of self. We explored what color would feel better for each part. We elicited each part to make a trip up the beam of light into the middle of nowhere to visit mother wit, explore the rocking chair test of integrity with the old woman, explore the decisions and behavioral activities that she was experiencing, find strength in continued progress toward her goal of being kind, gentle, and loving with herself. We added a microcosmic orbit to her exercises, modified from the images presented by author Mantak Chia.

“Imagine the tongue to the palette, just behind the top teeth. Imagine. This is a light switch that allows the energy to complete a circuit. If you want to stop the circuit, remove the tongue from that position. Tongue to the palette is like turning on a light. Tongue off the palette is like turning off the light. Imagine. There is a light within you. A light within you. Imagine that you can drop a pearl of light from that light within you to the perineum. The place between the vagina and the anus. Ever play pinball? Imagine you can shoot that pearl of light up the spine by pulling up slightly on the anus, like the use of muscles to stop the flow of urine. Pull up that pearl of light as you breathe in, as you imagine the pearl of light flowing up the spine with the inbreath. It clears and energizes all the energy centers of the spine. Like pinball game, touching every bundle of nerves along the way, cleaning and energizing the nerves. The pearl of light flows up between the lobes of the brain, inside the skull, making a circuit up the spine, along the inside of the skull, coming to rest between the eyes. With the out breath the pearl of light flows down the front of the body, cleansing and purifying the organs. The pearl of light comes to rest ever so briefly at the perineum before flowing up the spine with the inbreath, and a slight pull up on the muscles of the anus, shooting the pearl of light up the spine, allowing it to roll around the inside of the head, resting ever so briefly at the space between the eyes before flowing down the front of the body, cleansing and purifying the organs.”

“Imagine that the light flows out the window in the top of the head, rising like a beautiful fountain. Imagine it is cresting, and then flowing back down around the bubble of light around your body.”

Ursula practiced imagining the energy cleansing her body, emitting from the top of her head, reaching an apex, and then washing off the edges of the bubble of light. As it came back down to the ground it was pulled back up into the body like a circulating pump draws water in for a fountain. We expanded her sense of self in relation, to imagine herself like a tree.

“Imagine roots extending from the toes and sides and heels of the feet. Roots going all the way down to the center of the earth. Imagine energy coming up from the center of the earth, entering the arch of the foot like a freshwater spring, flowing up the legs, the body, out the top of the head in that wonderful flow of energy, cresting like a fountain, and washing you off, cleansing, clearing and energizing you.”

At the end of our phone call, Ursula was once again describing herself as being filled with light. This article summarizes the second part of that first session, which came to a natural point of closure when Ursula was able to report that she felt light inside, light around her, able to see through loving eyes and make wise decisions. It includes two phone consultations in which my goal was to sustain the stated objective of twelve months being kind, gentle, fun and loving to herself.

Many of the case studies in hypnosis I write about demonstrate the most rapid, elegant processes. This case is complex. Ursula initiated contact upon her return to her home country to establish an ongoing professional relationship. She wanted ongoing assistance to help her through her twelve proposed months of metamorphosis back into the excellence in professional performance and endearment in personal performance that she preferred. Even Kings and Queens seek the company of effective advisors.

Post Script

Ursula did not wait a year to initiate another love affair. She was quickly into a relationship with another athlete, Jane (not her real name). It was passionate, powerful, it wiped Danielle from her mind and life. That was rocky for a year, on again, off again, lots of conflict, difficulties with communicating wants and needs in such a way as to be able to achieve her wants and needs. After a couple of years of chaos, Ursula broke of the relationship with Jane. She took a year to get to know herself, including prayer, meditation, dating with friends not lovers, and grief. She then restored her relationship with Jane under much better conditions. The terms she set for herself while in trance, take a year off to get to know yourself, were apparently needed by her inner most wisdom to resolve her own internal conflicts, and heal whatever she needed healing in order to be healthy in relationship. The opportunity for an extraordinary love relationship interfered with that inner set plan, but did not stop it. The opportunity for love and companionship finished wiping Danielle out of her mind and life. Once Ursula had her year of self reflection, she was able to comfortably restore her passionate relationship with Jane, they are still together as I write this post script (2022).

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Chapter 11 - Fire Starter

Hypnosis with a Fire Starter

Joe (not his real name) came to the event pulling a food cart. He was new, and I was interested in tasting his food. An hour later, he was in front of my stand with white cream all over his face.

“What are you now?” I asked, “A mime?”

“No, I blew up a propane tank on my face, and burned myself.”

Me, “Oh, sit down. I understand that when a person receives hypnosis in the first 24 hours of a burn it gets rid of blistering, and there are no scars.”

He sat down, and we did a hypnosis session. I used progressive relaxation, color breathing, and direct suggestions for the creative engineering department and chemistry lab to reduce the swelling, cool the body, remove damaged cells to the appropriate waste disposal sites, and accelerate the healing in all the places that had gotten overly hot.

He showed up the following night, and there was no blistering evident on his face. He looked smug. I had an intuition that we needed to do a follow up session. It was my first encounter with using hypnosis for a severe burn. I suggested, “Sit down, let’s do a follow up session.”

“No,” he said, “I don’t need it.”

The next night, he showed up in front of my stand and he had a HUGE blister on the tip of his Italian nose. It looked like his nose tip was going to fall off. That was a deep burn.

I again suggested he sit down for a follow up session, and this time he sat down. We used progressive relaxation, color breathing, and asked the engineering department and the chemistry lab to release all the chemicals and electric signals needed to reduce the swelling, restoring health to all the cells of his body, particularly his lovely nose. I gave the suggestion that the healing would happen so fast it would surprise him.

He showed up the next night with a dark brown skin patch on the tip of his nose.

The following night, the brown skin had peeled off and there was pink healthy skin.

I didn't see Joe for the summer. He travelled with the bands on tour, selling food.

He showed up that fall, walked up to my stand and said, "Hey, you said there would be no scarring. Look, I've got a scar."

He closed his eye and pointed to the crease of his eyelid. I looked closely and said, "you are a fool, that is the crease in your eyelid."

He laughed and said, "I blew up my van the end of my season. It totally burned out. I was jumping foot to foot, hoping that there would be something left. All my earnings of the summer were in that van. Even serial numbers left would allow the treasury department to replace my cash. After the firefighters left, and the van was cooled off, I pulled open the charred door, and something flew out of the van, landing on the ground unburned. Your business card."

Joe was a firestarter. When he got upset, things literally blew up around him.

Joe began to attend my weekly hypnosis groups. His first meeting, as I was leaving the room, he ran up and said, "I'm going to sue you."

"What? What for?"

"My wife. She's stuck in hypnosis."

I looked over to see his lovely wife still laid out on the floor, quiet. I walked and noticed how relaxed her face looked. I said, "She can hear every word we are saying. If she is enjoying herself, she will smile."

She smiled a huge radiant smile.

I continued, "I guess she forgot that she does this to herself, and she can do this any time she wants. She doesn't have to stay here laying on the floor to feel this relaxed, she can emerge from trance, and bring this feeling with her. She can take it with her wherever she goes. She can go in and out of trance at home, when she wants

to relax comfortably, anywhere she wants to relax and feel this relaxed or even better. Every time she enters trance, she goes deeper and faster than the time before. She avoids putting herself into hypnosis when she is driving the car, operating equipment, or handling the hot oil of your food cart. Now I'll count from 5 to 1 and she will return to full waking state feeling wonderfully good all over. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1."

His wife opened her beautiful eyes, and rose, all the while beaming that radiant smile.

Joe was a Firestarter. He was hot tempered and began to use mind power strategies for self-control. He finally learned to manage his odd firestarting gifts when he found the Red Road, Native American spiritual practices, and learned to be a fire tender in sweat lodges.

Joe has been an attentive student of hypnosis since our first encounter 30 years ago. He teaches me all kinds of interesting things he has learned in his continued education into the powers of the mind. He has a lot of silver in his hair now. He is honored in his sweat lodge community as a man of compassion, a fine fire tender.

Chapter 12 - Forgiveness

In 2010, I was sitting at a the IMDHA/IACT conference between Father Marty Patton and Brigadier General Paul Durbin just before the Sunday service. We were discussing what programs were useful that weren't being offered at the conference that year. Hypnosis and Color, always a useful strategy. Time Line Therapy, had I studied with Tad James? No, I went expecting Tad and got to spend time with his son Matt. What I was most passionate about was forgiveness. That is the source of so much stuckness. Forgiveness of self, other, and God, we practically recited it in unison.

Refusing to forgive is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.

This is an experiential process. Bring a grudge you find disruptive to your joyfulness, transform that stuck energy into a more natural flow of compassion for yourself and others.

Modified from Hypnotherapy (Dahl, 1994, Chapter 210)

Release and Forgiveness

I consider forgiveness a creatively selfish act. It means I am willing to be gentle and kind with myself, surrender to the situation and accept the reality of it with an open heart and mind. Letting go of the hurt, pain, betrayal, loss means I can stop wasting energy defending myself, reclaim the experiences of happiness, joy, appreciation, contentment, trust and hope for myself and others. I am then free to use my full capacities for positive growth, creativity, love, and joyful appreciation for living and being.

Some change is slow, like the growth of a redwood. The change occurs in small, incremental movements, progressive, sometimes regressive, but small. Change doesn't always take a lifetime, a year, a day. . . "Be ye

transformed in the twinkling of an eye” (Paul the Apostle). When the moment of readiness for change comes, the subject will steam roll you if you stand between him or her and the desired change.

The purpose of this program is to:

- 1 – practice forgiveness
- 2 – reduce suffering and improve quality of life
- 3 – cultivate compassion
- 4 – develop easy to use skills useful in personal and professional life

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or pretending something didn't happen, it doesn't mean it's ok to let it happen again. Forgiveness means letting go of the negative feelings and any resentment toward a person, situation, organization, or community in order to free up one's own life energy for positive creative applications. Forgiveness is used to build resilience, sustain self-worth, and reduce the adverse impact of stressful life experiences. Forgiveness is an element of excellent lubricating capacity in the process of healthy living. It means finding compassion, warmth, good wishes and concern for self and others.

Let any pain in this moment pass. May happiness be part of me. Let joy arise in my life, body, mind and feelings. My body is a temple of my soul / spirit. It is a luminous energetic flow of love and compassion. Each person I encounter is another Being wanting to be acknowledged, heard, safe. I am a Being wanting to be acknowledged, heard, safe.

Grounding

Imagine, roots growing from the feet down to the center of the earth.

Roots from the toes. Roots from the heels. Roots from the sides of the feet that touch the ground, roots from the pad of the foot at the base of the toes. Roots down to the center of the earth. Up from the earth is a bubbling well of loving energy. Beloved, loving, endearing energy. Everything we need is here. It is here. Grounded like a strong tree, deeply rooted, drawing moisture, nourishment from the center of the earth. It comes up through the arch of the feet, up through the legs as if the legs are hollow straws. It rises up like a bubbling freshwater spring, just right, just right, perfect for your health, perfect for your authentic expressions of self, in the right place at the right time. And you trust yourself.

That light / moisture energy rises up your spine, as if the spine is a hollow straw, it is filling with a beloved sensation, a fluid sensation, not too hot, not too cold. Just right. It emerges out the top of your head, it rises and crests like a refreshing fountain. It washes down around the edges of your becoming, you're becoming more aware, your skin, your energy, your thoughts, your feelings, it washes you, passing through your, cleansing every muscle, cell, fiber and tissue of the body / mind / spirit, washing out , washing off, clearing, refreshing. Washing you off, filling you up with a lovely refreshing. . . curiosity. . . washing off. . . all that other stuff.

Washing it off, and You notice, and are curious, about how this feels right, because you are resuming a grounded position on the earth, in your body, and that bubbling light energy washes you out, washes you off, taking all grime, and muck back into the earth, the dust, the dirt, where it transforms into healthy fertilizer for the green living things. And you notice your breathing. You're breathing. You are breathing. Breathing in oxygen, breathing out tension. Breathing in life, breathing out carbon dioxide. And you don't take all the oxygen that comes in, you take only what you need, what is best, and most effective for the task demands, and you release the rest. Breathing in relaxation, breathing out tension. Notice the in breath, and the out breath. And good, and excellent.

Inner Illumination

Light within, light above, expansive flow of energy, from above to within, from within to above, as below, so above. A radiant energy enters and illuminates, radiates from within, shining forth into the world, this is the highest and most natural functioning for your temple of self, home to your soul. Feel the aliveness, the spontaneity, the gratitude and integrity, loving radiant, restored to self with love, acceptance, compassion. Compassion, good wishes for well-being, concern, and warmth. The practice of forgiveness reconnects self with a sense of worth, resilience, reduces the adverse impacts of difficult situations and people.

Exercise: Priming for Love / Compassion

Hanson (2009) frames the world with the Buddhist view that pain is inevitable, suffering is optional. The nervous system has three wings; sympathetic (SNS), parasympathetic (PNS), and enteric (gastrointestinal). PNS is rest and digest, SNS is fight or flight. PNS calms the nervous system, supports insight, centering, aliveness. Being hurt once, which can be thought of as a first arrow, is the idea that a wound is temporary, and ideally the nervous system will reset to a natural resting level in the PNS activation. But once a second or third arrow hits the same target, the SNS arousal level may kick in to protect and defend without a resumption of the PNS relaxed state.

Remember someone who loves you. Imagine being in the presence of that person right now. Remember the feelings that come with being cared for, protected, loved.

How does it feel to receive this kind of love?

This stimulates attachment circuits of your brain, primes you for compassion.

Remember someone or something you love and actively protect; a child, an elder, a friend, an animal, an ideal, a project, . Notice how you feel inside when you think of this person, place or thing. Now allow yourself to extend that same feeling toward yourself, allow your love and compassionate desire to care for another flow down into your own life, body, thoughts, and feelings, finding all those wounded, cracked places and filling them as if with a healing balm, like aloe on a burn, allow a healing salve to soothe your innermost wounds, your public and private hurts. Let that healing balm flow down into your heart, into your lungs, into your stomach and gallbladder, your liver, your kidneys, your bowel. How does that feel in each organ? How do they respond to your loving, compassionate desire to care for them? Now let that loving, compassionate energy flow down into your glands. Your pineal, pituitary, hypothalamus, thalamus, thymus, adrenals, gonads / ovaries. How do they respond to your loving, compassionate desire to care for them? Now feel that loving, compassionate energy radiate so fully within your body that it overflows you, oozes out the pores of your skin in a golden bubble of loving, compassionate life. And you find yourself. You find yourself smiling. And the body smiles back. Every muscle, cell, tissue and fiber of your being.

Hanson (2009) proposes a law of little things, the pile of positive and negative memories are sorted to compare with incoming data. This residue of past experiences filters incoming data to match expectations. When releasing negative, it may be a conscious, deliberate thing until the nervous system is re-wired to find solutions and options with a positive slant.

Your life is filled with memories of what has happened in your life. There is a pile of things that were positive and beneficial, there is another pile of things that were negative and detrimental, there is another pile of things that appear to have had a neutral impact in your life. Our goal is to reduce your focus on the negative, move smoothly through the neutral, and increase your focus on the positive.

Opting to engage from a positive slant allows you to take the virtuous path, which is founded in your own self-interest based on enlightened compassion despite the behavior of other people. Being good feels good in the long run as you have behaved with integrity, in a blameless manner, freeing you from regret or guilt. Doing what is right is more likely to result in a clear head and heart. Behaving positively wires the brain to transmit dopamine, which feels good in the working memory, able to amplify joy, bliss, tranquility, happiness, contentment. This allows joy to become the focus of your attention. A positive frame of reference.

Casarjian's (1992) approach is to practicing forgiveness daily, make it a normal part of living. To become proficient at this practice, select a target to practice forgiveness with. Once you have identified a person, situation, or organization with whom you are finding it difficult to relate, feel betrayed, abandoned, offended with in any way for whatever reason, notice how you feel about forgiving this person, place or situation.

Is there any conflict inside?

Are you aware of anything that holds you back, or inspires to you practice?

Can you immediately practice forgiveness with the first thing / person / situation that came to mind when I suggested it or do you want to start with something that is not so much in the foreground?

Perhaps you want to select a small offense first.

Perhaps you will find the practice of forgiveness with the stranger driving aggressively, someone you don't know, than someone with whom you have a larger emotional load to release.

Notice if there is more than one person / place / forgiveness. Perhaps you will find it easier to practice initially with someone / thing / situation with whom it is easier to practice forgiveness. Maybe the stranger who is driving badly and annoyed you, or cut you off.

l'enfer, c'est les autres ("Hell is other people", Sartre, No Exit, 1944).

Be gentle with yourself and others.

Practice grounding, cleansing, priming for love / compassion.

Refusing to forgive is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.

Forgiveness is a selfish act.

That's right, SELFISH.

Not a greedy selfish, to hell with the other person attitude

A creatively selfish, I must love my neighbor as my self

Not better than or worse than me

How able are you to practice forgiveness, acceptance, listening to love / compassion in your own heart for the face in the mirror?

Can you forgive yourself for all the times you didn't strive for your dream, or let yourself down?

Can you get back up, brush yourself off and keep going. That's how you learned to walk. Ride a bike. Swim. If you are still listening, you survived all those times you learned what didn't work. You know what works. You know what you want or need that you haven't gotten, yet.

Readiness for Change

We are biologically designed to approach opportunities and avoid threat in order to survive as individual organisms. We pay close attention to that which could kill because of the survival instinct. This leaves the human organism with a biological priming to observe for that which is lethal in order to survive. That which will not kill us tends to drop below conscious awareness, innocuous,

unnoticed. We tend to move toward that which is pleasing / desirable / attractive for whatever reason, and away from that which is unpleasant / undesirable / repulsive for whatever reason.

All human beings resist change until they are ready to change. It is only when we reach a point of readiness to change that change occurs. The indecision stage of knowing that something needs to change, but not knowing how, when, or in what form change will occur, can be a state of exquisite torment. The times of hanging in limbo, indecisive, uncertain or unaware of what choices are available, present some of life's greatest opportunities for change and growth or status quo and stagnation. When movement in a positive direction is achieved, there comes a feeling of relief. Change is often felt while it is occurring, but the how, when and what form is seen most clearly in hindsight.

"Back there, I changed."

The moment of readiness for change is triggered during:

1 - Mental, emotional, physical and/or spiritual suffering.

"I cannot tolerate this any longer."

2 - Hopelessness entering despair.

"I cannot continue on like this and survive."

3 - Becoming aware that change is possible.

"I'm tired of this. I must do something different."

"I'm over this. There must be something more."

"I'm through with this. I've outgrown it."

I may see others change and think, "I can do that."

Forgiveness

“Real pleasure is not the opposite of pain, it is the absence of it” (Finley, 1993, p. 64).

“It (*forgiveness*) reawakens us to the truth of our own goodness and loveableness” (Casarjian, 1992, p.10, *italics mine*). Casarjian suggests that remaining resentful might be a way of refusing to accept responsibility for one’s own role in the past, present, and future, and proposes that beneath all the hurt is a desire to be heard, acknowledged, safe, loved, and respected. Practicing forgiveness allows the individual to refocus life’s energy on a spirit of hope and optimism, in contrast to pessimism and hopelessness, learned helplessness. This is a shift into loving creation rather than selfish, destructive application of life’s energy. Forgiveness may release a need to grieve loss, find acceptance with the way things are instead of the hoped for ideal. What is life like if you stop struggling to get things the way you hoped they would be, and accepted them as they are?

“Forgiveness is a crucial part of release and change. If you want someone else to magically make you different, failure is assured. If you are willing to let go the shame, guilt, pain, hurt, grieving, sadness, sorrow, fear, anger, indecision, numbness and denial of a situation, you can then deal with what happens on the other side of those negative emotions. Forgiveness requires a release of negativity and a refocusing on the positive and good of Life.”

(It may be beneficial to establish a Gestalt dialogue with the person the subject is holding thoughts of unfinished business or negative feelings about. You can start with a great debate, or you can open the dialogue with:)

I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you and I am I. If by chance we find each other, that is beautiful. - Fritz Perls -

"I am I and you are you. I am not here to live up to your expectations and you are not here to live up to mine. If by chance we can find a middle ground, that is wonderful, but we don't need that to live. My middle ground is love. What's yours" (Gil Boyne, 1987)?

How do you feel unloved / unlovable in this _____ (situation / relationship)?

What will life be like when you stop struggling with _____ (issue)?

What will be left of that _____ (situation / relationship)?

What will your life be like without that struggle?

How will you feel about letting go of all that stress and struggle?

How will your life be different without that struggle or difficulty?

Self-forgiveness includes existential, spiritual, historical, cultural, physical aspects (Casarjian, 1992), and requires a being gentle, honest with self

I will never forgive _____ for _____.

I will never forgive myself for _____.

If I could I would _____.

If _____ could, I would want _____ to _____.

_____ should never have _____.

I should never have _____.

If _____ had only _____.

If I had only _____.

_____ should have.

I should have _____.

I refuse to forgive _____ for _____.

I refuse to forgive myself for _____.

What do I get from holding onto this grudge, this refusal to forgive?

What do I avoid with holding onto this refusal to forgive?

What do I foreclose / lose while holding onto this refusal to forgive?

The Forgiving Chair

"Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Listen to the sound of your breathing and imagine a beautiful old hard backed chair. It is one of those old intricately carved hard wood chairs that you may have seen in a museum. . . or an old person's home, perhaps your grandparent's home. It is so beautiful. . . but it is too pretty to be comfortable. It is slippery and slidy. . . and the chair is too tall for your feet to touch the ground. This is a very special chair. This chair in your mind is called the forgiving chair. It is made up of the many intricate human relationships that comprise your life. It is a beautiful chair, ornate, carved wood and so tall that no matter who sits in that chair, their feet do not touch the ground and we are young in this chair. It is so slippery that it is impossible to sit still in this chair. And every time you have something you are holding against someone, when you blink, you will perceive this chair. The image of the chair comes to you as you blink letting you know you are holding some negativity about someone, so that when you are ready, you can close your eyes, briefly and see if there is a male or female in that chair, and who that person seems to

be. As you become aware of that particular person who seems to be in the chair, you become aware of what it is that is bothering or disturbing you."

"Now as I snap my fingers, if there anything bothering you, anyone you feel owes you something, or anyone you are holding something against, they will appear in that chair one at a time or all at once."

(snap your fingers)

"Notice who is in that chair, if anyone, is it someone male or female?"

"Now tell them your true feelings toward them right now, start like this, 'Here's my true feelings _____.'"

"What would you like to do to them?"

"Do that now."

"Now how do you feel about what you have done."

"Does that feel better?"

"What would you prefer to do?"

Positive or negative experience, which do you wish to do? Struggle against it for a win / lose outcome, or surrender to the love that does not reject or judge.

How often have you been subjected to neglect, abuse, rejection, ridicule, hatred, betrayal? How often have you treated your own body with this behaviors? Can you forgive yourself for your vulnerabilities, frailties, and mortality?

Physical pain can feed upon mental / emotional pain causing a cycle of vicious pain enhancement. Physical / mental / emotional pain can transform through forgiveness into relaxation of the body / mind / feelings resulting in less

pain, more relaxation. Forgiving self / body for being sick helps transform the chaotic experience that can emerge during illness into a healing crisis.

Hot Hand / Cold Hand

I forgive _____ for all that stuff.

(Is it warm or cool between the hand and the heart? If warm, consider the forgiveness to be genuine, if cool, probe:)

What will be the worst thing that will happen when you forgive?

What will be the best thing that will happen when you forgive?

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Chapter 13 - Gestalt Therapy: Be Here Now

Monica Geers Dahl

“If we cannot understand ourselves, we can never hope to understand what we are doing, never hope to solve our problems, we can never hope to live rewarding lives” (Perls, 1976, p.2).

The German word *gestalt* means a unified whole, a perceptual whole that cannot be defined by the sum of its parts. *Ungestalt* is a deformity of the whole. Gestalt Therapy was developed by Fritz and Laura Perls in response to what they perceived to be flaws in Freudian Psychoanalysis (too lengthy, too much interpretation) and Behavior Therapy (fails to address thoughts, feelings, decision, and values). Wilhelm Reich's theory of character body armor provides a phenomenological foundation for Gestalt Therapy.

The first assumption of Gestalt is that an individual cannot be truly known and understood outside of context. The Gestalt is the entire picture, individual in context, with a biological, unfolding organismic process. The emergent need comes from the unified whole to be a figure in the foreground of awareness. When that need is resolved satisfactorily, it slips into the background to be assimilated, and the next pressing need emerges from the background to become the foreground figure. We are led through life aroused by authentic, emergent needs.

The healthy, mature individual has learned to find internal support, the immature individual is still leaning on external support to replace what that person perceives to be insufficient internal resources to cope with the emergent need(s). The purpose of Gestalt Therapy is to throw the client back on her or her own resources, to discover that he or she is already resource rich within. Gestalt therapy seeks to frustrate the desire for external support of neurotic patterns, while providing external support for authentic encounters of real feelings, in contrast to the mind games of “should” and “ought to”. Pay attention to the obvious.

What am I aware of right now?

We are split into you and I. Gestalt Therapy is an experiential process of encountering oneself and Other. In order to live authentic, genuine lives, an individual must be in contact with his or her own senses.

How am I aware of me? I am now aware of . . .

Without a genuine contact with authentic needs being expressed, it is difficult to have an authentic, genuine connection with the world. The contact boundary between self and oneself, and between self and Other, are the areas of awareness and lack of awareness of interest to Gestalt Therapy.

How am I aware of you? I am now aware of . . .

Perls drew from the character body armor theory of Wilhelm Reich, and uses proprioceptive awareness to resolve the proposed lack of authentic and genuine experiences of emergent phenomenon Here and Now. Proprioception is the body's awareness of position and movement. Learning and discovery may require an initial focus of awareness of the body's activities, such as riding a bike, and when the body masters the activity, full awareness of body movement is no longer needed, so proprioceptive awareness for that task slips out of conscious awareness and into automatic behavior. Pay attention to the obvious. Gestalt Therapy is intended to restore an individual's awareness of what is happening right Here and Now.

Perls proposed that anxiety is the stagnant, repressed energy stuck between authentic living Now and Here, and some abstract concept of "future" that has not yet arrived. It occurs because the individual does not know what role is expected, wants to learn, and doesn't know how. There are unresolved Gestalts mucking up the decision-making process of being fully Here and Now. When the senses are retracted from the fears of the unknown future, the individual generally finds that there is nothing to fear here and now, and that the anxiety is gone. The energy of living is fully engaged in an authentic encounter with the Here and Now.

The material brought into a session by a client includes ALL the unfinished business / Gestalt. Of all the unfinished Gestalts, the client picks out the most pressing issue to present to the clinician. The emergent issue is the figure / foreground, the

context is the background. When the foreground figure is resolved to the client's satisfaction, the figure recedes into the background, and the next pressing need emerges. Awareness and attention are drawn by that which of interest to the client. The focus of attention is what allows a figure or image to emerge from the background context. The figure in the foreground is what we are aware of. The process of awareness is led by needs, biological needs and survival issues take priority, first things first. When the prioritized need is resolved, a Gestalt is complete, and the foreground sinks into the background for assimilation.

We are aware of that which is of interest to our most pressing needs, seek the resources to fill the emergent needs, and the other resources recede into the background. The choice of what to be aware of is the composite of many needs and personal interest. The process of achieving our biological needs is known as metabolism, we expend energy achieving our needs. Problems arise when multiple needs present themselves and there is conflict in discerning what is the most pressing need. Sometimes the needs are in direct opposition to each other. This is where the process of shuttling allows a person to discover the polarized demands. The client shuttles back and forth between the opposing demands, initiating a dialogue between the conflicting needs. In modern hypnotherapy practices, this technique of Gestalt Therapy is taught as Parts Therapy. Mark Gilboyne studied with Fritz Perls at Esalen, Charles Tebbetts studied with Gilboyne, and Roy Hunter is a student of both Tebbetts and Gilboyne. Parts Therapy is a technique founded in the Gestalt Therapy of Fritz Perls.^{8,9}

Humans have a biological capacity for adaptation, and homeostasis. Homeostasis is the process of satisfying emergent needs. Each emergent need disrupts the existing balance, pushing the individual to reach for resources to resolve the pressing need. As a need is resolved, it sinks into the background for assimilation and adaptation. This is the self-regulating, learning and discovery process of balance (*gestalt*) and imbalance (*ungestalt*) in living. Self-regulation requires awareness of all

⁸ 2022 Modern interpretation of Gestalt Parts Therapy is found in Internal Family Systems Therapy, developed by Richard Schwartz. More information about IFS can be found at <https://ifs-institute.com/>

⁹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/internal-family-systems-therapy>

the presenting issues, and determining which pressing need comes first. The body naturally has a biological hierarchy of needs and values. The body attends to dominant survival needs first.

In addition to biological homeostasis, humans have a capacity to think and use abstract symbols. Thinking is a process that occurs out of sight, it includes dreaming, fantasizing, planning, rehearsing, deciding, choosing, valuing, finding meaning. Awareness is an inner process of perceiving with the senses: sight, sound, touch / feeling, taste, and smell. Thinking and perceiving are useful in creating the most efficient use of perceived needs and resources required to fill those needs. Behaving is a thinking and awareness process that has been made observable. Sometimes thought and awareness deliberately turn into action. Sometimes behavior is spontaneous, such as jumping out of the path of an oncoming car. Behaving is acting upon the environment in such a way as to manipulate environmental resources and bring about a satisfactory closure to an unresolved Gestalt. As a particular need is resolved, the Gestalt is finished, and the need ceases to be foreground, it slips into the background for assimilation, and is replaced by the next emergent need, or dissatisfaction.

Each generation carries the symbols and patterns of living gifted from preceding generations. These social pressures create external demands on the individual's awareness, resources, and adaptation. The question arises over how a person chooses to adapt, is it an inner self awareness, an awareness of social pressures, or a balance between the two? Sometimes an individual is unable to fill his or her own needs because he or she has never learned to be authentic. Perhaps they have accepted external demands as more relevant than internal demands. The resulting lack of orientation and imbalance leads to sickness.

The unbalanced human, who perceives him or herself as lacking the internal resources to restore balance, ideally seeks therapy to restore his or her orientation and balance. Perls proposed that many clients seek therapy to become more successful in sustaining their existing neurotic strategies that have put their own lives out of balance. It is too frightening to be fully responsible, mature humans, it is easier throwing themselves on the therapist, seeking external support for learning how to more

effectively lead their dysfunctional lives. Noticing when a person is giving up personal responsibility for being aware and making wise choices is a primary target of Gestalt methods. How does the person interrupt his or her own natural processes of awareness, thereby limiting awareness of choices? The Gestalt Therapy approach is to throw the client back on his or her own resources, frustrating the individual's neurotic intentions to avoid living a full, authentic life.

The contact boundary between the individual and the environment is a site of potential conflict. The conflict is a point of intervention. Is this an internal conflict, or is it an external conflict? When there is a conflict, what does the human respond to? The internal pressures, or the external pressures? The goal of Gestalt is to assist the individual in orienting himself or herself, discover what is wanted / needed, in such a way that the Gestalt is satisfied, and the story is finished in a manner the individual finds satisfactory. If attention / awareness is split between multiple demands, it may not be possible to focus or pay attention to what is most important. The conflict tends to be a polarized demand from multiple sources which the person describes as confusion. The neurotic is a person who has failed to develop or use his or her ability to prioritize in accordance with a healthy hierarchy of needs.

The human organism has a natural rhythm of moving toward and moving away from, engagement and disengagement, connecting and withdrawing. In order to have healthy interactions, the individual has to use or develop the ability to use awareness of needs and resources, a recognition of when to approach and when to withdraw without losing awareness of the full value of both the individual and the environment. If a person is unable to exercise a natural rhythm of connecting and withdrawing, the disturbances in the contact boundary interfere with the natural process of maturity and self-support. The individual is still confused about the relationships with self and with others. A mature, self-supporting individual has learned to adapt, discover, and fill the emergent needs.

A neurotic lives "through the glass darkly" because he is in an existential crisis, he cannot fill or cannot recognize his own needs. When personal needs, which are as vital as breathing, are not being filled by the current activities, thoughts, and

environmental resources, the immature client wants to have his or her needs filled by external support. The person does not view their personal resources as sufficient; they consider themselves as having insufficient resources to address the emergent needs. Gestalt works on the idea that the person is resource rich. A person does not come into clinical care without resources. The person struggling with unfilled needs has developed, cultivated, identified and used all the tools of manipulation that they have adapted to engaging the external world. The tools to manipulate the outside world are propping up their misperception of having insufficient internal coping tools, masking their true inner strengths and resource rich inner world, their authentic self.

If thoughts and behaviors are considered a part of the greater whole, mental and physical activities are different aspects of the same being. Thoughts manifest as behavior, pay attention to the overt behavior (actions) and you will find a link to the covert behavior (thinking / feeling). The Gestalt Therapy approach is that the individual knows what his actions and thoughts mean, and it is the clinician's role to bring those things to the client's awareness. Between thinking and doing is a middle ground of "playing at". There are four primary games people play to avoid personal responsibility; all involve boundary conflicts and confusions: Topdog / Underdog, Projection, Introjection, and Confluence.

Topdog / Underdog is a polarized battle between a person or aspect of self and another person or aspect of self. The Topdog is a perfectionistic blow hard that knows how everything is supposed to be done correctly. The Topdog demands that the world, other people, and oneself live up to his or her unrealistic expectations of perfection. The Underdog is a person or aspect of self that plays poor pity me, I'm incompetent, I would do it if I could, but I can't, well maybe tomorrow or the next day. The Topdog is direct in his or her demands. The Underdog cries, cowers, whimpers, makes excuses, and tends to win the battle because this aspect or person is more covert and cunning.

Projection is a way of rejecting aspects of oneself that one finds distasteful, pushing those bad behaviors out of oneself and onto the people and environment in which the individual is embedded. The person perceives in others what he or she refuses to see in self.

Introjection is a way of taking into oneself those aspects of the world that other people and environmental pressures impose on the individual. The person does to oneself what others want or have done to that person.

Confluence is a way of becoming one with others, and the environment, that fails to create a personal and authentic orientation to one's own needs. This person has not yet developed a sense of orientation about what is beneficial or detrimental to oneself, and is led by the dominant energies of the environment and others whether or not it is healthy to do so.

A target of clinical interest in Gestalt is the idea of figure / foreground and background. The figure which has emerged from the background of the Gestalt into the foreground of the Gestalt, and the relationship between the foreground and background start a process of self-understanding. The emergent figure of interest in Gestalt is indicator to the client of some unfinished story, *ungestalten*. Let the client tell the story. Pay attention to the first few sentences, and listen for the areas in which the client is trying to give up personal responsibility for the story. A maturing individual has good internal resources, and assumes responsibility for resolving the pressing needs of the emergent figure. An immature individual seeks external support because of a self-perception, a misperception, that they are lacking sufficient internal resources to resolve the presenting problem.

The individual is generally unaware of the ways he or she interrupts the natural processes of homeostasis, adaptation, assimilation and discovery. The confusion of the client is an indication of the individual's disrupted orientation. Confusion is very uncomfortable. Some people find it easier to give up personal responsibility to another person for decision making than to cultivate patience and sit through the confusion, bearing witness to the unfolding story. Giving up personal responsibility means that they are never responsible for their failures, or successes. Refusing to be responsible for finding and maintaining orientation and balance pushes the client away from effective coping strategies due to refusal to sit with the discomfort of confusion.

Confusion is a lovely indicator that multiple needs are clashing in and around that individual. A person who is out of balance, lacks orientation, cannot discern what the

most pressing need is, will express a sense of confusion. This is good. The goal of Gestalt Therapy is to help the client learn how to orient more authentically Here and Now. Through becoming more aware of Here and Now, the person becomes more aware of how they interrupt themselves. The awareness of self interruption results in an increased awareness of choices that had previously been screened out of awareness. Confusion can be a disguise where the real story gets stuffed under the rug, ignored. Sitting patiently through the confusion, willingly listening to all the different parts, allows for increasing maneuverability in obtaining resources related to authentic needs.

The chaos / confusion is an excellent tool for practicing “shuttling”, which is a shifting of perspectives between conflicting demands and needs. The human mind understands things in context. An issue will have a polarized opposite by which the client fully knows and understands the presenting problem.

Confusion is uncomfortable, a person may try and escape the confusion, throwing his or her needs on the external world for decision making and interpretations. Sitting with confusion requires courage, and then comes the amazing discovery that confusion changes when a person is willing to sit with it. Confusion does not last, the *ungestalt* will push the environment for a figure to arise from the background to the foreground to express the unfilled need. Sitting with the confusion, instead of running from it with interpretations, explanations, redirections, will result in a discovery of internal resources that had been overlooked in the initial experience of confusion. Each time a person has the courage to go into the junkyard that is confusion, and sit with it, that person will emerge stronger, with resources that were already present within themselves.

Each satisfactory encounter with confusion makes the next encounter easier. This capacity to engage in confusion, patiently experiencing the frustration or chaos of not knowing, becomes a mature life process that generalizes to healthier life choices outside of the therapy room.

Have the client tell the story of personal awareness Here and Now from a first-person perspective,

“I am now experiencing . . .” becoming more aware of personal abilities and capacities. This strategy reveals the individual’s present resources, and opens alternative ways of thinking and behaving.

“I am aware . . .” helps reveal the unfinished business or incomplete event that is pressing for a satisfactory resolution.

The individual’s behavior (*hands, feet, breathing, body posture, vocal activity and tones, pauses, “ahs” and “ums”*) are useful in showing how the individual is communicating and interrupting his or her natural processes. The neurotic self-interrupts the natural rhythm of expansion and contraction, coming together and pulling apart. A natural organic rhythm is a process involving recognition of emergent needs, and the means (internal and external) of satisfying those needs.

“Understanding means . . . seeing a part in its relation to the whole. . . seeing themselves as part of the total field and thus becoming related to themselves and to the world. This is good contact” (Perls, 1976, p.73).

Everything the person does is an expression of self, concealed and obvious. When the client starts talking about others, future orientation, past regrets, pay attention to what the body is doing and bring that activity to the client’s awareness.

“Are you aware of _____ (your voice, your hand, your foot, etc.)?”

“Be the _____ (voice, hand, foot, etc.) and tell me your story.”

“If you could speak to _____ (client’s name), what would you say?”

We are driven internally by a biological wisdom about what we need to be satisfied, to have a complete process, a closed Gestalt. Between thinking and acting is a middle ground. The space between me and my environment is a point of contact, a boundary between me and Other. The encounter between you and me, me and Other, can be pleasant or unpleasant. The pleasant encounters are considered positive, nourishing, normal behaviors. The unpleasant encounters are considered negative, toxic, abnormal behaviors. Biologically, even amoebas tend to move toward that which is nourishing and away from that which is toxic.

Avoid “why?”, because it generates justifications, rationalizations, explanations for what has caused the event(s), it does not provide solutions. What and How reveal the structure of the process. Awareness of the structure, and how a person interrupts his or her own internal orientation, yields greater maneuverability for accessing needed resources.

Exercise:

“Now I am aware. . .”

When awareness increases, orientation and maneuverability increase.

We want to learn:

What do you want?

What are you doing?

What are you feeling?

What are you avoiding?

What are you expecting?

What are you demanding?

What happens when there are conflicting needs between one’s own needs and the needs of others, or society at large?

When a person is insensitive to needs, neurotic and criminal behavior can unfold. Criminal behavior is that lack of concern or awareness of the needs of others, and the environment at large, leading an individual to infringe upon others, taking without regard for the needs of others. When a person tolerates being infringed upon by others, or by the environment, that person has a lack of concern or awareness of his or her own needs, which is referred to as neurotic. A healthy interaction creates mutually beneficial behaviors and actions for all involved parties.

Do we stop at the edge of the skin?

What about the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we consume? All of these things we need to survive demonstrated how interconnected a human is with his environment. We don't completely end at the edges of our skin. That which is nourishing is considered valuable, attractive, that which is toxic is considered poisonous, repulsive. It is healthy for a person to understand what is healthy and what is toxic. It is natural for a person to learn these things through learning, discovery.

Not only is there an "edge of the skin" identity, there is the community identity that creates contact boundaries and encounter opportunities. The contact boundary between self and other is where an individual seeks to have a healthy coming together and pulling apart. Biological living involves a circular pattern of approaching and withdrawing, engaging and disengaging. This is both something a person does within him or herself, and with others in the larger world. The patterns of self-awareness tend to mimic the patterns of other awareness.

Become more aware of your preferences:

What / who is similar to or like me?

What is there here that fills my needs?

What / who is "other" than me, different from or not like me?

What is there here that repulses me or drains my resources with no equitable exchange?

What I want / need from the world is viewed as a positive experience. What I do not want / do not need from the world is a less desirable experience. It is natural and authentic to move toward that which is wanted / needed, and away from that which is viewed as less desirable. By being aware, spontaneous, engaged with each unfolding moment, it is simple to move toward that which is perceived to be desirable and away from that which is undesirable. Being one's authentic self means paying attention to oneself, listening to and understanding one's needs and wants, pleasure and pains. Being authentic does not mean ignoring others, to be a healthy, mature human

indicates a capacity to live in community, recognize the opportunities and limitations present in the environment, and the needs / wants of other beings.

So, what about parts of ourselves that are less than noble? (projection).

What about the ideas of others that do not completely fit our own ideas and values? (introjection).

What happens when the demands of the environment, others, and my own demands are in conflict? How do I decide what is most valuable, how do I prioritize what is foreground, and what is background? Conflict pinpoints the incomplete Gestalt, *ungestalten*, the unfinished business.

Am I being authentic? Am I aware of my senses, or am I running a game on myself? (Topdog/Underdog, Projection, Introjection, Confluence, Rehearsing, Should and Ought to, etc.). A game is a learned behavior that is perceived to have a capacity to provide and manipulate existing resources to support me in my needs. Awareness is a proprioceptive awareness of the senses: What do I see, hear, feel, smell, and taste? Proprioceptive awareness and memories do not occur in "time" other than Here and Now. Focus on the senses, put aside the games, thinking, planning, rehearsing, etc.

I am now aware . . .

I am now . . .

Authentic, mature living is an unfolding process of self-support. The immature human seeks environmental support because the internal support system is not yet fully developed. The mature human seeks environmental support because there is pleasure and discovery in sharing life in community with other mature, creative, wise, authentic individuals. A society of mature individuals will prioritize in the same authentic manner as skills developed by each individual.

"When it is fully engaged in Being Present in this moment, in this situation, there is no anxiety, only fully engaged, authentic living. When the person is unsure of what role is expected, this energy becomes stagnant, this is anxiety. The vital life force is not flowing into the appropriate engagement with life, and the heart races. The gap

between Now and Then is filled with stagnant energy. The solution is to be fully present NOW, and to act in response to the present situation with spontaneity. This is the creative, open eyed, authentic response of childlike wonder. Your senses are open, your senses are ready, you are ready, you are fully present, aware, and real” (Perls, 1972).

We cannot know ourselves only in relation with others, we must know ourselves in relation with self.

I am now aware of . . .

I now feel . . .

I now hear . . .

I now see . . .

I now smell . . .

I now taste . . .

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Chapter 14 - Healer, Heal Thyself!

What did YOU do over the summer?

A friend of thirty odd years joined me for my spring birthday and suggested,

“Do you think that maybe you have ignoring stops signs over the past two years? Really, two brushes with death, multiple breakage in your legs,¹⁰ having to relearn to walk three times . . .”

Her voice trailed off as her loving eyes assessed me, did I hear her?

Oh yeah, that. Yes. Of course. I am still on the green side of the sod. The past two years weren't just signs on the road to reduce my speed, I've passed mortality markers, and am the oldest living member of my birth family. There is likely more time in my past than in the future of this temple of my soul. Yes, I will die, too. I can't imagine entering death with the thought, “Gee, I wished I would have worked more.” Working through the hours of academia and post-doctoral supervision was not fun, it allowed me to meet external demands including four natural disasters, political action research, and divorce.

Since opening a private practice of hypnosis (1985), I have continually invested time in me so as to improve my fitness to serve. One of my favorite activities is some form of moving meditation. Perhaps a week noticing the sensations of the ground connecting with and disconnecting from my foot as I walk. Perhaps it is a week of color awareness in my environment; first a week of red, then orange . . . A lifelong practice of learning, awareness, entering sensory perceptions more fully, identifying and accessing flow states as needed, has allow me to develop and sustain a generalized level of relaxation. I feel that a relaxed, fit, aware body is my finest clinical tool.

¹⁰ Tendons rupturing and breaking.

The body has innate wisdom: there is the old brain of the gut, the compassion and understanding of the heart, and an outward mode of the soul through attention. My biggest life helpmate is the sensory based wisdom of this body. For best health, I listen to the voice of the body, sacred temple of my soul. I live best when I am open to the guidance of a divine spark I perceive to be indwelling this skin sack filled with swirling DNA soup. When my body is fit, and my eyes are soft with open heart and awareness, a rapid development of relaxation is possible for me and a client. We have mirror neurons, we reflect each other naturally, particularly when another person is doing something of interest or value to us.

From a relaxed state, any topic is open for observation, comment, discussion, insight, revelation, and transformation. Nothing has to be swept aside into some hidden, dark, tight place of the body when we can relax and ride through the rough parts of the rapids. Leaning into the issue, embracing the opportunity for learning, growth and development that will be culled from experience, come. Let us ride the curl of the lip of the cornucopia of abundance, ask for the healing we think we need, observe with open heart and soft eyes. What kinds of opportunities and solutions emerge? Are we ready to accept those options with gratitude, relaxed and ready to receive / perceive solutions and opportunities when they come flowing through awareness / possibilities? Let us build our own lives trusting our senses to know what we know, be what we know ourselves to be, honor and accept who what we are and do. Trust the senses, the body is wise. The abandoned, denied, rejected parts of self have a lot to offer, they hold the hidden knowledge, the banned / forbidden body wisdom. Let us ask for what we need. The basic hypnosis question for restoring human health is, "Is there any part of the body that needs to relax further?" The body knows, it keeps track of all of that stuff.

I heard my body voice, "If it's no fun, stop it. Get fit. You can do it."

Got it. Heard it. Understood it. Could I do it? Could I give myself the same love, attention, care and opportunities I give clients? I was fifty pounds over what this divine temple for my soul entered college with in 1995. Could I withdraw from the energetic demands of private sessions and redirect all that time for me? If I knew how much time I have left, and it was short, how would I live my life? Would it be different

from the way I am living now? Is there something deep within me that still needs expression? What is important to experience in the time remaining? Am I actually applying my time to things of meaning and value to me? If this life was cut short today, what would I regret leaving incomplete? Is there balance (external / internal pressures) in my life? Am I honoring myself in the things I am doing?

The IMDHA / IACT conference in Daytona Beach was the last professional activity prior to a planned summer off. On the drive home, in the afterglow of interacting with such a great group of professionals, I was thinking about the comments of colleagues who said my hypnosis strategies for veteran PTSD reduction / resolution won't work with the civilian population with PTSD. I am hopeful that one of those clinicians is inspired to offer us a presentation on what works best with the civilian PTSD population. With these thoughts in process, the cell phone rang, it was a psychologist referring a female with PTSD due to childhood abuse. I've now worked with two civilians with PTSD attributable to childhood abuse. My interventions worked fine, and yes, I observed differences.^{11,12} What I think I witnessed was:

attachment disorder (Fisher, 2014),
freeze / fold (Levine, 2010),
and traumatic brain injury aka concussion.

The attachment issues point to the inherent double bind of family / home being culturally idealized as a safe place in a harsh world, and in childhood abuse it is the site of most pressing danger. Developmentally, a person may learn to ignore innate warning indicators of imminent danger to the body in order to survive a childhood framed in the abuse of untrustworthy adults. Children who were subjected to assault, rape, and violence from people they needed to be able to trust for safety, love, nourishment and joy do not develop the same coping skills as children who are not abused (Branden, 1983; de Becker, 1999; Fisher, 2014; van der Kolk, 2014). Clinical

¹¹ <https://apn.com/resources/fight-flight-freeze-fawn-and-flop-responses-to-trauma/>

¹² Frothingham, M. B. (2021). <https://www.simplypsychology.org/fight-flight-freeze-fawn.html>

intervention with the adult with PTSD attributed to childhood abuse may need significantly more time for healing than the average military client with PTSD and no traumatic brain injury. Adults with a history of childhood abuse may require extended care in the same way that some veterans do with traumatic brain injury (mTBI) aka concussion. A person may need more time, patience, willingness to explore new behavior. It may feel a bit strange, and the person may experience other people trying to get them to change back to old, familiar behavior. One of the civilians I worked with quit drinking after her first session. She encountered a lot of pressure to have social drinks over the holiday from her Temple cohorts.

The biological fight / flight response stimulates the release of stress hormones and muscle activity intended to protect and defend. The freeze / fold is an innate biological response from an animal unable to escape a predator or dangerous situation, the frozen behavior is known as playing 'possum, or pretending dead. A healthy release from the freeze is observable in subtle, inarticulate movements seeking full release, or even a shaking / shivering which frees the stuckness, completing the normal release process of the stress hormones and survival actions (Levine, 1997 & 2010). Anyone who has done cathartic work with hypnotherapy has observed the therapeutic gains that come when frozen body memories are released.

The most startling difference I witnessed with civilian PTSD from child abuse was the speed with which the clients froze, went into a non-productive tailspin regarding career actions, folded physically and reported the emergence of a life challenging illness. What does all this mean? Let me concur with the clinicians who reported to me that civilian PTSD is a different animal from war trauma. Age of initial trauma, training in lethal force are two obvious differences, although children now have access to video games used by law enforcement and military personnel to improve performance skills in weapons use (Grossman & DeGaetano, 1999). Complex and developmental trauma does respond well to the same neurofeedback methods I used with military folks. The civilians with PTSD appeared to have more complex and developmental trauma from earlier in their lives.

Did I complete my summer as planned? Yes and no. An Asklepan health and fitness quest did not lead me to ancient Greek sleep temples and holy springs (Tick, 2010), this was a planned staycation. Living in a beautiful environment meant I only had to open myself to the existing opportunities. Membership in a waterfront club with a pool and gym expanded the pre-dawn / dusk 5.5 mile bike loop of the beach to include gym and swim. What exquisite sky colors are reflected in the ocean as sand from the Sahara dust storms fills our upper atmosphere during this hurricane season. The book (Kirk, 2015) planned for launch in March was delayed, I changed my mind about travel, went to Los Angeles for the July release, book signing and filmed author comments. It was fun.

What a fun summer filled with wonderful people, interesting conversations, food, music and film making, singing and dancing. I am more limber and slender than spring when size 18 was tight, now size 14 is loose. Taking the time to hardwire my brain for happiness (Hansen, 2013) means that taking time to savor beauty and pleasure, letting go of distractions (still working on that), letting things be as they are if they are irrelevant to a happy life is fun. An Oberon leather journal cover added to the kinesthetic and visual pleasure of journaling.

Now is the only time in which we have to live. Ideally, we show up, play our part, and live fully while we have the chance, right now. At 1am two nights ago, the full moon was bright in the sky when I heard the body voice, "You are retired until I tell you I am fine. No new clients until I'm fine." I'm ok with that. The wisdom of the body is fun.

Post Script

Through the EEGlistserv, I learned the word flouroquinoline toxicity. If someone had told me taking 3 Cipro antibiotics would create a hole in time and memories through my mid-fifties, I would not have taken them. After being a healthy, driven, high energy person, I became disabled with light and sound sensitivity, sweating, foggy brain, reduced executive functioning, fatigue, memory loss, loss of balance and the resulting falls, concussions and snapping tendons, neuropathy, skin infections, loss of sphincter control (bladder, bowel, belly button), and the resulting loss of interest in social activities and social life. I couldn't wear professional structured clothing due to the physical pain

in my abdomen. When I worked for an hour, I would have to retreat for an immediate 3 hour nap in fetal position.

The ongoing declining health caused me to give away the majority of my possessions, thinking it was time to close up my life.

In Spring of 2016, the doctor admitted I was the worst case of flouroquinoline toxicity he had ever seen. He recommended I get a dog to learn to walk again. I adopted a dog from the shelter, and fell a lot relearning to walk. Tendons in my lower legs got brittle, and snapped, another round of relearning to walk. I found a website¹³ that listed all the things that people have done in their struggle to recover from being “floxied”. I had done all but two: chelation and glutathione. Glutathione shots and drips gave me back a brain without fog, and a body that would walk without falling.

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Chapter 15 - Highway Hypnosis and Pregnancy

I was visiting a friend from the Hurricane Andrew part of my life this weekend. Over dinner, the story came up of how we met. Her youngest son didn't know that his mother had been told by multiple doctors that she would never have children. After four years of marriage to his father, and no pregnancy even with lots of practice, she still wanted children.

When I met Carrie (not her real name) we were at a post Hurricane Andrew group program where I was providing a stress reduction session for the participants. My eye went to her three times during my presentation, and I take that to be a spiritual nudge that I need to go introduce myself. I had to move fast to catch her in the hall as she was leaving, she was quick. She worked for a local television news station and had a deadline. We spoke briefly and we exchanged phone numbers.

A year later, she had a gig for me in her community, offered me an overnight in her guest room, and I drove to the mainland.

When I stood to speak, I was startled to discover that my period started as I began speaking. That was odd, my period ended the previous day. I wanted to say, "Does anyone here have a pad?" But I didn't. Fortunately, I was wearing a black wool suit, with black stockings. When the presentation was done, I went back to Carrie's car and suggested she offer me the newspapers to sit on, as I was soaked. She said, "Oh, thanks for taking my period."

I said, "How do you figure?"

She said, "You probably just finished yours. I usually give mine away to someone who has just finished their period."

I responded, "That's true, I just finished mine yesterday. I like my period, I don't like yours. How do you do that? I have friends who don't like their periods, and would love to learn how to give it away to someone else."

She said, "I don't know, but it means I can't get pregnant."

I said, "That must be frustrating."

She said, "I've been married four years, I want children. The doctors say it is unlikely that I will ever get pregnant because I have twisted fallopian tubes, and a tilted uterus."

I sat on a pad of newspapers in her lovely car, and asked, "What would you think about starting a conversation with your uterus and fallopian tubes about letting you get pregnant?"

She said, "That would be very interesting."

We headed onto the highway, and I suggested, "When the uterus is ready to talk, just say, 'I'm here.'"

Silence.

Long silence.

I asked the fallopian tubes to let us know they were ready to speak by saying, "I'm here."

Silence.

Long silence.

Then Carrie asked, "What time is it?"

I looked at my watch, "9pm."

Carrie responded, "No, what time is it?"

I thought, and said, "September, 1993."

Carrie asked, again, "No, what time is it?"

We were driving down I-95 in evening traffic, both of us buckled up with seat belts.

I leaned toward her abdomen, and through the seat belt said, "Time to get pregnant."

We laughed, and continued our drive home to her place.

Carrie came to visit me in Key West for a second session. We did a standard progressive relaxation, parts therapy for all the relevant parts to speak up about what they needed to say, their purpose, what they wanted and needed.

Sometime after the second session, I was washing dishes after dinner, and I heard her in my head saying, "What time is it?"

I dried my hands, called her, and got her answering machine. I left a message, "You must be getting drunk, or getting laid. What time is it?"

She called me back an hour later, "How did you know I was making love with my husband? I was on the edge of orgasm, and a voice in my head asked, 'what time is it?' Then the answering machine went off, and you were asking, 'what time is it?' How did you know?"

I answered, "I don't know."

She called a few months later to say she had another gig for me. Birth of her first child. I served as her duella the first ten days. The boy was different from other children I have ever cared for. He stood up within the first week with full control of his head, and direct eye contact.

The younger son at the dinner table during this conversation asked, "What was I like when I was born?"

I answered, "You came in without any hypnosis help, just the assistance of your father in conception. You were born a normal child; wobbly neck, non-focusing eyes, no direct eye contact. Your mother was concerned, until I told her that you were a normal child. She didn't know. I've held a lot of babies.

The younger son chewed on his meal for a moment before he asked, "Didn't I do anything unusual when I was born?"

His father looked up from his food and said, "Yes, you crapped blue on day 10."

Two hypnosis sessions, one driving down the highway using a conversational approach of parts therapy, the other in a more traditional setting of Carrie reclining with her eyes closed, allowed her body to bypass the negative suggestions from physicians that she would never have children. Her two boys are now in their late twenties.

Chapter 16 - Hypnosis for War Trauma

An Excerpt from a 2010 Dissertation.

Combat neurosis is often triggered more by stress than predisposition, but the equation for hypnosis treatment of combat trauma is, "Predisposition plus stress equals neuroses . . . Motivation plus insight equals cure." (Watkins, 1949, p.39).

Predisposition means the history of the person. Stress means the immediate pressure from the environment preceding and during the individual's breakdown. Every person can reach a point of breaking with enough stress applied. The treatment is insight and motivation. Four factors are involved in this process: dynamics, symptoms, secondary gain, and the desire to heal. Direct suggestion is useful in temporary alleviation of symptoms and attitudes, hypnotherapy is used for trance interviewing, vertical and horizontal uncovering of relevant information through regression and hypermnnesia. Theoretically, neuroses are an interrupted reaction to an unfilled striving to complete something. The repetitive nature of neuroses is the attempt to bring closure to something. Gruzelier (2006) proposed that the symptoms of PTSD were parallel to those of hypnosis in that the experience of trauma produces symptoms such as physical and verbal stupor, numbing, identity distortion, amnesia, dissociation, automaticity, and absorption.

"There are three distinct styles of hypnotic suggestion: directive, permissive, and Ericksonian. Each represents a certain 'philosophy of life' (Brown & Fromm, 1986).

Hypnosis is a time saving approach using direct suggestion, hypnotherapy involves uncovering, hypnoanalysis involves uncovering with a psychoanalytic perspective. For work with traumatic memories such as war neuroses, psychoanalytic experience is not required. For analysis of transference and counter-transference, psychoanalytic experience is required (Wolberg, 1945). Direct suggestion is beneficial in reducing stress and promoting relaxation, a limited use of hypnosis. Non-directive hypnosis taps a "vast resource within the subject. Within each person is an unlimited supply of self-knowledge, wisdom, strength, creativity and capacity for abundant living"

(Hickman, 1985, p.49). Brown and Fromm report that directive hypnosis is the first emergent style of hypnosis with the hypnotist positioned in the role of expert. Permissive hypnosis emerged from modern research with the hypnotist positioned in the role of collaborator. Ericksonian hypnosis is a conversational, informal, indirect approach of eliciting unconscious search processes intended to reorganize the inner world and beliefs without a formal induction. There is no one style of hypnosis that is effective with all individuals.

The use of hypnosis rises and falls with cultural shifts in perceived value. From the 3000 year old Ebers Papyrus, to the Greek temples of Aesculapius, hypnosis has an ancient history. Anton Mesmer brought hypnosis from the world of religion into the scientific world with a veil of mysticism and a theory of animal magnetism. This era of hypnosis ended when Benjamin Franklin commented that the people were getting well by their own imaginations, and the use of mesmerism decreased. James Esdaile performed surgeries using mesmerism as anesthesia and was thrown out of the British Medical Association. James Braid renewed the scientific use of this natural state as a medical tool by renaming it hypnosis. Instead of animal magnetism, eye fixation became the tool of induction. Liébeault and Bernheim claimed that it was suggestion not animal magnetism that produced cures. Freud studied with Liébeault and Bernheim and began to use the talking cure. Breuer discovered abreaction by having Anna O. relive an experience while in trance. Breuer was apparently a better hypnotist than Freud. Hypnosis again decreased as Freud abandoned hypnosis and developed theories of transference, free association and interpretation of dreams. The suffering of the World Wars brought hypnosis back into use again as the volume of war fighters and their symptoms overwhelmed the existing services. Hypnosis has a broad range of capacities from the hypermnesia of enhancing memory retrieval to the numbing of pain that allows for surgery without anesthesia (Cooke & Van Vogt, 1965; LeCron & Bordeaux, 1947; Elman, 1964; Geers, 1994; Hickman, 1985; Watkins, 1949; Wolberg, 1945).

The length of time for healing varies between people. Two or three hypnosis sessions are sufficient for some people. Others may require a session or two a week

over a more extended period of time (Hickman, 1985). Treatment begins with suggestibility testing, and education about hypnosis and hypnotherapy processes, this is called a pretalk. After the pretalk, trance is induced and the client's capacity for deep state hypnosis is assessed. Direct suggestions are given for well-being. This may be the end of the first session. The next stage of treatment involves an interview to determine the client's response to hypnosis, further questions, identifying of the problem area, then trance is induced and uncovering methods are used to explore the identified problem. The first line of approach is often the easier topics, with more intense topics saved for later (Watkins, 1949). Hypnosis is proposed to be helpful with those suffering from skull trauma, "simple conditioned fears" (Wolberg, 1945, p.236), amnesia, and the stress of natural disasters and exposure to war.

Freud (as cited in Brende, 1985) theorized amnesia triggered an intrapsychic split which can only be resolved with rehearsing and abreacting the traumatic experiences. Age regression via hypnosis was used to re-enact the experience, evoke abreaction, and emotionally relieve the pent up unresolved emotional load. Freud and Breuer (as cited in Brende) observed that reliving a traumatic memory and abreacting the emotions related to it appeared to provide only temporary relief of symptoms, and concluded that direct suggestion and abreaction did not resolve deep seated problems. Hickman's (1985) use of non-directive hypnosis indicted that the client needed to repeatedly relive a traumatic experience until the emotional load is gone. Hickman observed that with a complete release of the emotional load, self-correction often occurred. This can be achieved by asking the client to tell the story repeatedly, fleshing in the details with each telling until the client is calm and quiet in telling the story.

Thirty years of asking questions using hypnosis instead of delivering suggestions led Hickman (1985) to conclude that, ". . . at a deeper level of their consciousness there is a source of knowledge and understanding, not only as to the nature of their problems, but also the causes of each problem and the needed remedy. . . within the subconscious . . . there exists a level of wisdom and insight far surpassing that available in our usual state of consciousness" (p.i.). The Freudian model of mind involves conscious and unconscious aspects. The Jungian model incorporates a

collective unconscious with transpersonal images that transcend time, space, and individuals (Monte, 1999). The Hickman model of mind involves three aspects: conscious, subconscious, and superconscious. The superconscious mind has a sense of being one with all things, it is a creative, intuitive, limitless awareness with a desire for growth, development and health.

Wolberg (1945) and Watkins (1949) suggested that practice with hypnosis helps develop deeper levels of response. A method for deepening and speeding up the therapeutic process is called fractionation which is done by opening and closing eyes repeatedly after trance has been induced, and with multiple inductions and emergence in the same session. Watkins referred to the multiple inductions in one session as an in and out interviewing style. It is achieved with an instantaneous induction using direct suggestion. The client is told that every time a pen is tapped, he would go deeply into sleep, and on the count of five he would awaken. The goal of this method is to speed up insight and understanding. Tools of hypnosis include dreaming in response to suggestion, automatic drawing and writing, recall, education and interpretation, regression, reframing, in and out, play therapy, crystal or mirror gazing, and dramatization such as psychodrama.

A motivational attack combined with direct suggestion was used by Watkins (1949). Upon first meeting with a combat veteran assigned to Company F, he would suggest, "I'm not going to promise to cure you, I can tell you that most of the fellows who come up here to Company F do get to feeling a lot better, and some of them become almost well" (p.117). Watkins's suggestion was a double bind, it let the neurotic aspect know it was respected as being entrenched, causing it to let down a bit of its resistance to treatment, and simultaneously indicated that getting better was normal in Company F. Tebbetts (1987) developed Parts Therapy to engage aspects of a person in conflict in a Great Debate to resolve these conflicts.

Some people think a hypnotized person can be led by a hypnotist to obey direct suggestions (Hickman, 1985). The client will not accept interpretations or suggestions that are lacking meaning for himself personally. This is a cooperative relationship and adventure in which both parties are active participants. Intellectual understanding is not

as sustainable as experiential understanding (Wolberg, 1945). Hickman's strategy was to be led by the client by building each question upon the previous answer of the client, and by letting the client know that it is alright to refuse to answer a question. This type of non-directive approach to healing is different from a directive strategy.

Hypnosis is an efficient method for uncovering memories, feelings, processes and symbols (Brown & Fromm, 1986). An issue with uncovering memories is that information may be revealed of a person's errors. Direct suggestions can be used to help a client remember, recall, or review only what he is ready to handle at that moment, and that the remainder of the information would be retrieved when he was ready or strong enough to cope or deal with it. Suggestions at the end of a session can include a double bind of remembering to forget those things that don't need to be remembered (Herman, 1992; Silver & Kelly, 1985). Useful insights can be elicited with suggestions such as, "The meaning will get more and more clear to you as you are ready to understand this" (Brown & Fromm, p. 114).

Hickman (1985) and Boyne (1987) proposed that the deeper wisdom of the human mind can learn from errors, recognize how those errors are still influencing present life, and make different choices to restore an optimum functioning, creativity, and harmony in the present moment by accepting themselves and their situations. Watkins (1949) proposed that from the Gestalt perspective, it is the unfinished business that is at the root of neurosis. When abreaction does not resolve a matter, the in and out method can induce trance for a few seconds, a suggestion is given to elicit greater understanding, and the client is brought back out of trance quickly to discuss things. Induction of trance can occur 12-15 times in an hour session accelerating reintegration of information at the conscious and unconscious levels.

Hypnosis and hypnotherapy have a history of use in dealing with combat stress (Gruzelier, 2006; Spira, Pyne, & Wiederhold, 2007). Hypnosis in the World War II era was primarily palliative. The therapeutic modalities included re-education, ventilation, confession, desensitization, guidance, persuasion and suggestion. These were considered superficial interventions. The client relieved himself of guilt, general anxiety and tension, gained insight through the help of the clinician in listening and

understanding, but the deeper issues of past problems and unresolved conflicts remained untreated (Wolberg, 1945). Kardiner (2009) proposed that hypnosis was useful in treating war neuroses when a person was repressing memories, bypassing amnesia, eliciting memories, triggering abreaction, catharsis, and ideally a cure, but only in the acute stage of trauma. The goal of rapid hypnotic intervention was to prevent the development of a defense mechanism Kardiner referred to as “an automatic contractile process” (p.152) in which the ego structure of a war neurosis stabilizes.

War fighters who remembered events for which they were previously amnesic had general reduction of anxiety, tension, and adverse symptoms. It is more common for a person to remember a part of a memory than to have complete amnesia, the part most often forgotten is the emotional load, the part considered most important from a therapeutic position. Memories back to three or four years old are considered the earliest form of accurate memory, reports of remembering nursing are rare (Wolberg, 1945). Hickman (1985) suggested that time and space are transcended when using hypnosis, that distant memories from ancient times emerge; childhood, infancy, in utero, and before birth can be accessed with regression in hypnosis. Freud (as cited in Wolberg, 1945) reported that traumatic memories may not be factual, but may be cover stories for real events. The issue is that the client responds to these memories as if they are true.

Hypnosis to recover historic events and their emotional content begins with relaxation and creating a safe space before uncovering (Herman, 1992; Silver & Kelly, 1985). When relaxation is achieved, the simplest approach is to ask the client to go back in time to the situation or experience that triggered, started, or caused the problem. The client develops greater insight into himself, and self-correction can occur (Hickman, 1985). “When I put my hand on your forehead you will relive the experience that you had at the time when you first developed your symptom” (Wolberg, 1945, p.236). A more complex age regression to reclaim memories can be initiated with an image of a line, ribbon, or rope leading from the present to the past. Projective methods can allow distance between the client and the memory. As a movie, the event can be reviewed, stopped, rewound, fast forwarded, played backward and paused based on

the ability of the person to handle what is being revealed. There can be a volume control for emotions. When using hypnosis, the client needs sufficient time for stabilization before uncovering, and then sufficient time for integration and stabilization after uncovering and before the session is complete (Herman, 1992; James, 1989; James & Woodsmall, 1988; Silver & Kelly, 1985). Gruzelier (2006) reported that in over a century of hypnosis being used for war trauma, there are insufficient controlled studies to verify that hypnosis can help a person access and integrate the memories that have caused the disruptions in functioning.

Spira et al. (2007) suggested that while basic hypnosis is a helpful tool for learning how to enter and sustain a comfortable state of physical and mental relaxation, and hypnotherapy can help with remembering or recall of a traumatic episode from a distance, which is a form of deliberate dissociating, research indicated that exposure therapy had a greater capacity for trauma resolution. People may be unable or unwilling to deliberately visualize the traumatizing events due to their avoidant symptoms. Virtual reality equipment helps these avoidant individuals through immersing them in the stimulus that evokes the emotional load using a headset and mouse or joystick to navigate through computer induced reality. Silver and Kelly (1985) suggested that hypnosis is a useful adjunct to flooding, desensitization, and narcosynthesis.

Vietnam veterans treated with hypnosis learned relaxation in the initial stages of treatment when anxiety can be a major concern. The abreactive process involves reclaiming memories. This can be done with an affect bridge in which emotions are stimulated to gain access, or a cognitive bridge in which thoughts are used to gain access to old memories. Integrative aspects of hypnosis involve recovering splintered parts of self associated with the traumatic event or series of events (Brende, 1985; Geers, 1994; Ingerman, 1991; Tebbetts, 1987).

Shapiro (1995) argued that EMDR and hypnosis are different because EEG measures on EMDR reflected a normal waking state, and EEG measures of hypnosis showed “pronounced theta, beta, or alpha waves” (p.315). Sue Othmer (2008b) reported that brain wave activity is unique for each person and that there is no one

standard of brainwave activity that is normal for all people. The question of what is and is not hypnosis has not yet been adequately defined or articulated (Tebbetts, 1985). According to Spencer (2002), hypnosis is any modality that creates a bridge between the conscious and unconscious minds. Boyne (1987) described intense emotions as a rapid hypnotic induction that bypasses logic and puts a person immediately into trance. EMDR specifically integrates the use of intense emotions.

Shapiro (1995) claimed that deep state hypnosis may interfere with EMDR processing. The fractionation of abreaction involves repeated entry and exit into traumatic material (Young, 1995). Fractionation is a common tool of deepening trance and enhancing insight (Geers, 1994; Watkins, 1949). The use of short, repeated bursts of emotional exposure appears to contradict Shapiro's assertion that deep trance may interfere with EMDR. Geers reported that debate in hypnosis regarding depth versus quality of response is ongoing. Depth is not always required for good quality of response, light states or waking hypnosis can be highly effective in eliciting human growth and development (Wolberg, 1948). Shapiro's report that hypnotic testimony may not be eligible in court proceedings is valid in states that disallow hypnotic testimony. The claim that EMDR appears to be eligible for legal proceedings failed to provide legal citations to support Shapiro's position.

Boyne's (1987) hypnotherapy training involved use of an initial sensitizing event (ISE), an original experience in which a traumatic event and maladaptive decision began to influence a person's behavior. Subsequent sensitizing events (SSE) are built upon the ISE and strengthen the maladaptive behavior. Shapiro (1995) used the term nodes to describe memories linked to emotions, thoughts and decisions that are stuck in maladaptive patterns. The same process of finding the earliest experience of dysfunction is used in both hypnotherapy and EMDR. NLP eye accessing cues (Brooks, 1989) appear to be the foundation for the eye movements of EMDR. The second half of the NLP smear technique (Thom Hartmann, personal conversation, 2003) involves similar bi-lateral movement of the eyes that appears in EMDR. The swinging back and forth of a voice in bi-lateral stimulation was a hypnotic deepening method taught by McGill (1987) who integrated his Western concepts of hypnosis with

Eastern traditions of spirituality and meditation. The EMDR suggestions to blank out and breathe are all introductions of new thoughts, a hypnotic method of direct suggestion to clear the mind. Young (1995) indicated that hypnosis is not thought to demonstrate such predictable, rapid trauma resolution as EMDR clients report. As a hypnotherapist in private practice for a quarter of a century, I have observed rapid resolution of trauma, but these clinical findings are anecdotal and lack empirical evidence.

The methods Shapiro (1995, p. 175) proposed to decrease client distress during abreaction using visual alterations are strategies known to NLP practitioners as submodality shifts (James, 2000). It is common in hypnosis to begin a session with basic relaxation using progressive relaxation, a creative visualization of creating a safe space, a body scan to identify the body's wisdom for directing uncovering, and the NLP strategy of future pacing by asking what will be possible when a problem is resolved that can't be done right now (Geers, 1994).

Shapiro wrote, "many psychological modalities dovetail in EMDR" (1995, p.51), and a review of her writing revealed the integration of many hypnosis strategies without giving credit to other authors and educators. As a practicing hypnotherapist and hypnosis educator, I will attest to the difficulty of teasing out where a specific method originated when learning what works in hypnosis and NLP conferences, weekend trainings, and in personal conversation with other hypnotists. Hypnosis education involves learning to identify, practice, and articulate innate healing modalities that have existed throughout human history. Just as the processes known as mesmerism were rejected until these natural phenomena were renamed hypnotism, Shapiro appears to have integrated the best of what works in hypnosis and NLP, integrated the best of what works in the traditional models of therapy, and renamed it, making it more palatable to those who might otherwise be turned off by the word hypnosis. Hypnosis in its many forms are natural processes which are observable to those who are trained to recognize and use the phenomenon.

The peer reviewed literature regarding hypnosis for treating combat trauma lacks a transpersonal or spiritual perspective. These issues tend to resist scientific discourse

and study due the challenges of integrating spiritual concepts into an empirical design. The modern trauma literature (Herman, 1992) mentions the dissociative capacity of a human to observe one's own body being violated. What is not discussed is the mechanism that is occurring with this changed vision of self. How did the perspective shift from a within skin, to outside the skin perspective? What / who is watching the body? Is this evidence of the soul? How does the person regain a perspective from within the body? If a human does not regain an inside the skin perspective, how does the dissociated aspect watching what is going on exert influence or control over the bodily functions? What happens if / when the original inhabitant of a body is not in full possession / control and use of the corporeal body?

Some individuals have a "felt sense" (Ehlers, 2006, p.135) of deceased people still being present. Intrusive images of the dead are some of the most disturbing effects linked to what is referred to as PTSD in Western society (Tick, 2005). Ehlers proposed that this is one of the symptoms of complex grief triggered by environmental cues, a symptom Ehler's proposed is best extinguished. Some cultures do not believe a dead person leaves the community upon death of the body. In the Mayan society of Guatamala, thirty-six years of fighting with ninety percent of the dead being male, and seventy five percent of those being indigenous adult males, re-internments from mass graves has allowed people to re-establish relational links with the dead that had been ruptured through violence (People, n.d.). Tick described the Buddhist traditions of Vietnam, and the concept that dead relatives have a century of lingering to help and guide the family, four generations of helping. After this time of helping has passed, the soul is free to move on with its karma into a spirit world. This cannot occur when a body did not receive proper burial. The lost souls are perceived in shadows and sounds. The Vietnamese build a "windy tomb" (Tick, p.146-147) on the family plot to house the spirit of the one whose body was not properly buried, attempting to help the wandering soul on its karmic journey.

Ehlers (2006) observed that in treating veterans, they are often distressed at the idea of letting go of the intrusive memories of the dead, that it is an offense or dishonor to the memory of the deceased, and that these experiences are difficult to resolve with

cognitive processing alone. Ehlers' argument that it is important to resolve the automatic retrieval of memories of the dead through breaking the connection between the external trigger and the memory reveals the Western science bias of materialism and reductionism. The materialistic assumption is that biological death is the end of living. Tick (2005) described how the Lakota believed that when a person killed another, he became responsible for the dead one's soul. If the soul of the dead was properly tended, their powers become an aid to the survivor, if not properly tended, it turned against the survivor and caused him harm. From a spiritual, transpersonal, non-Western, non-materialistic perspective, embodied life is just one aspect of human living and physical death is not an end of life (Baldwin, 1988; Baldwin, 2002; Fiore, 1987; Hickman, 1985; Hickman, 1997; Ingerman, 1991; Wickland, 1924).

Spirit Releasement Therapy (SRT) (Baldwin, 1988; Baldwin, 2002) has concepts that run parallel to the studies of dissociative identity disorders, and the older term, multiple personality disorders. The issues of most relevance in the study of PTSD are that of evil known as demonic and the possibility that the spirits of dead war fighters are not just figments of a veteran's imagination. The assumption of SRT is that the body dies but the soul / spirit does not. A physically dead person may not realize he is dead, or if he does, may want to continue living and attach to or step into another person's living body (Fiore, 1987; Wickland, 1924). True heroism includes acknowledging one's experiences, not denying them (Ingerman, 1991; Levine & Frederick, 1997).

Western science does not adequately address issues of the soul, moral aspects of war, or the nature of evil. A discussion of the nature of war, trauma, and treatment are incomplete without mention of soul treatment. In my hypnosis practice, audio and visual recording failures are common during transpersonal and spiritual occurrences. These phenomenon exist outside of the scientific model, rely on anecdotal evidence, and are beyond the scope of this article.

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Chapter 17 - Hypnosis Purism and Integrative Care

Monica Geers Dahl, is a doctor of education (Ed.D. counseling / psychology), and licensed Florida mental health counselor (FL MH13153). As an IMDHA member for three decades, and educator since 1994, her dedication to this field resulted in her receiving the 2010 IMDHA Educator of the Year and the 2013 IMDHA Fellowship awards. A free copy of her basic hypnosis training manual can be downloaded from hypnosisalliance.com.

Florida is a State with a dual track in hypnosis; certification and licensure. Adding licensure broadened my legal scope of practice.

When I first integrated biofeedback (EEG biofeedback aka Neurofeedback) into my clinical practices, it was a replacement dissertation topic. The initial dissertation plan was a qualitative, thematic analysis of a decade of my most interesting hypnosis audio and video records. Hurricane Wilma damaged my archival records, and neurofeedback emerged as a viable replacement thesis. Biofeedback often receives the same criticism from some scientific researchers that hypnosis receives, “It’s all placebo.” I was curious to observe what limiting my direct suggestions in session would yield in terms of positive outcomes relying primarily on the neurofeedback technology.

One of the developers of the technology I use asked me, at the end of my first round of basic neurofeedback training¹⁴, one of the technology developers pulled me aside to ask, “How much benefit from neurofeedback do you think is suggestion?”

A lot of it.

We are always influencing others and being influenced by words, ideas, open ended direct questions and inferences. Direct suggestions and repetition are the foundational tools of all learning.

My own hypnotherapy style is highly directive (a lineage through Mark Gilboyne who studied with Fritz Perls). While a single intense emotional experience can lay down

¹⁴ EEG Info. (2008). Basic Neurofeedback. Instructors: Siegfried, Sue, and Kurt Othmer. Woodland Hills, CA.

a powerful learning track in human life, and I take delight in people who make amazing transformations in one session, most folks shape themselves more slowly toward their ideals and goals.

During the dissertation, I limited my suggestions as best I could to the simple directives taught in the basic neurofeedback class for collecting information relative to our goal:

Are you awake or sleepy? Clear or foggy? Tense or relaxed?

The goal of neurofeedback training is to experience, recognize, report and practice being awake / clear / relaxed. The brain is always looking for movement, change, and patterns. The questions we ask steer the person's attention, drawing things at the periphery to the center, decentering things irrelevant to the task at hand.

I got to observe rapid systemic responses that exceeded the speed and range of positive outcomes I have observed in hypnosis sessions during which I take the role of hypnosis purist.

It appears to me that the average neurofeedback practitioner is eclectic, integrating suggestions with their technical stuff. Customary suggestions at the end of a neurofeedback session are, "Pay attention to how to you go sleep tonight. Notice the quality of your sleep. Pay attention to your mood, and how you feel when you wake." The language skills of the neurofeedback clinicians tend to be excellent patterns of suggestions for improving self-regulation and awareness.

Once the doctorate was complete, I integrated my full hypnosis skills into the neurofeedback sessions. I had already been blessed with two decades of participating in miracles on demand (to quote Charles Tebbetts¹⁵). The neurofeedback allowed me to deeply touch folks for positive change in a way I hadn't been able to reach with hypnosis alone (stroke recovery, ADHD, PTSD, autism). I am overall a better clinician because of my hypnosis training; building expectancy and rapport, goal setting, the

¹⁵ Tebbetts, C. (1985). *Miracles on Demand*. Glendale, CA. Westwood Publishing.

power of suggestion, suggestibility response, awareness of state and recognition of state changes, harnessing the power of abreaction, and celebrating successes.

When a new neurofeedback program was released by the developers containing creative visualization, I initially let them run to explore someone else's lovely suggestions and soothing voice. Then I turned them off. I don't need a third party clinician stepping in to do the suggestions in my sessions. Personally, I prefer to do co-therapy with a live person, instead of a pre-recorded clinician reading a lovely script.

During a clinical conference¹⁶, a neurofeedback researcher boldly stated that neurofeedback was "meditation on steroids". I thought of the many clients and friends who have expressed their lack of conviction to me, "I don't know if I'm doing this right," referring to self-hypnosis or meditation. Some folks want / need an external measure of rightness. The scientific, rational, logically minded subjects we call "refractory" or "difficult" tend to respond well to technology and active measures of their own brain activity. By the 3rd or 4th session of neurofeedback, the person is usually commenting on how he or she is controlling the game, the sound, some of the activities on the screen, and the vibrating of the stuffed rabbit on his or her lap. This tends to resolve the question of, "Am I doing this right?"

At another clinical conference¹⁷, I encountered a passive infrared¹⁸, a headband with three sensors positioned equally distant from the forehead. This gadget came with only the instructions, "Use it for 10 minutes before the neurofeedback." I strapped the dive mask like pIRx3 device onto my head, and lost track of time. A marvelous, intense, informative, heated discourse ensued between the research clinician handling the demo, and another conference attendee who walked up allegedly to just watch. I noticed when twenty minutes had passed. No harm, just happy. I had so much fun that night, I bought that gadget the next morning to add to my options in client service. The developer, Eric Carmen, is someone I know of only through reputation as a research

¹⁶ EEG Info. (2013). Advanced Clinical Summit. Educators: Siegfried, Sue, and Kurt Othmer. Woodland Hills, CA.

¹⁷ EEG Info. (2009). Advanced Clinical Summit. Educators: Siegfried, Sue, and Kurt Othmer. Boston, MA.

¹⁸ Carmen, Eric. pIRx3. Passive Infrared Hemoencephalography headband

clinician who uses his development exclusively, with an original focus on headaches / migraines. His training is on my bucket list.

Now the issue of hypnosis purism.

During a hypnosis conference a few years ago, I offered a colleague free neurofeedback sessions for an issue he had voluntarily told me about. He was uninterested in using technology when he knows that he can heal beautifully with suggestion, focus, intent, and sufficient time. I concur, science of mind power strategies are marvelous. As an integrative, cross domain research clinician, I also know that some things benefit from additional resources.

Hypnosis was helpful in coping with pain and drawing me to the right information and people to help during the spiral of punctuated declining health I went through from 2014 to 2016 in coping with flouroquinolone toxicity (allergic response to Ciprofloxacin aka Cipro). I had to be open to receiving what was needed, hypnosis kept me relaxed through change. Biofeedback technology was good, but not sufficient. Massage, tai qi, acupuncture, good but not sufficient. A simple lab test ¹⁹ analyzed my nutritional state, and I got a great report with information on which nutritional supplements would be of benefit in restoring clarity of thought, and reducing or eliminating the adverse impact of Cipro on my body.

Is hypnosis at the root of all my healing? Yes.

Hypnosis is any process that creates alignment between the conscious and unconscious intentions and actions. It is sufficient unto itself? Only when I consider the actions I take, including cross domain networking with other professionals and other specialties, to be a part of my hypnotic experience.

For my own health, and for my professional service for clients, an integrative approach to human health, learning, growth, and development is often needed to understand, and address sustained health and well-being.

¹⁹ Great Plains Lab. Organic Acids Test (OAT). <https://www.greatplainslaboratory.com/>

Chapter 18 - Hypnosis with an Accident Victim

The young man in the street in front of my house was screaming and banging his head. His moped was destroyed, his foot was hanging by the Achilles tendon and flap of skin, backwards. The car that hit him had stopped; I had already called 911.

My nephew said, "His foot looks like the pizza we just had for lunch." I was not able to look closely, it was too gruesome.

I told my nephew, "That's a poor suggestion for healing. We can do better than that. Go upstairs, get two thick towels. Come back quick so we can put it beneath his head. We want to protect his brain and skull." I was holding his hand so he didn't feel alone before the ambulance arrived. I did not try and remove him from the busy street, other bystanders diverted traffic until the police arrived to take over.

I glanced at his mangled foot out the side of my eye, and heaved, the top of the foot was opened up, it did look like a regurgitated extra pepperoni pizza. It had been torn off at the ankle, I was amazed that it was still connected, only the tendon and a flap of skin holding his foot to his body. I heaved but did not barf, promptly redirecting my attention on the eyes and hand of the young accident victim.

I told him, "Squeeze my hand as hard as you like, any time you notice any discomfort, and it will release the discomfort." His shock-dilated eyes locked on mine, he stopped screaming, and began to flinch his hand in mine. It was so light; it was like butterfly wings. My nephew arrived with thick towels that we placed it beneath the accident victim's head. I asked what day it was, who the president was, what year it was, and what town he was in. He had accurate answers. I didn't think to ask his name. His mind was open.

Every time his eyes moved toward a look at his foot, I pointed to my eyes and said, "Look here, stay here with me. We've got help on the way." I wanted to keep his attention on me, my eyes, away from his mangled foot.

"The ambulance is coming. They are going to take you to the hospital where your body is a willing and eager part of the surgical team that is going to restore full use of your foot. Your medical team is excellent, and you are the best part of the medical team. Your body is open to full restoration, full recovery. Your body does everything that is needed, controlling blood flow, restoring connections, limberness, and well-being. You heal so quickly that you blow your doctor's minds. You heal so thoroughly that you blow your doctor's minds. You find yourselves in the hands of the most wonderful medical team. Your body heals completely."

OK, I added a stupid suggestion in my own chaos dealing with this unexpected event, "And it just won't go fast enough for you. You are going to blow your doctor's minds with the speed and thoroughness of your healing, and it won't go fast enough for you."

He did not scream the whole time I held his hand, kept his eyes focused as best they could in their shock state to mine. I waited what seemed forever until the ambulance arrived, delivering what I perceived to be comforting suggestions, direct suggestions of healing, for excellent medical care and full recovery. Then the ambulance arrived, and I stepped back. The young man did not scream again until the first responders covered his foot and it was totally obscured from his sight. Then he resumed screaming. I puked in the hedge on the edge of my property.

I put that accident out of my mind for six weeks.

When I saw him, again, he walked by me at a restaurant. What? I recognized him by his lips, he had a cleft top lip. He was walking, no cast, no cane. Maybe he had a twin in town?

I waited until he seated himself, got his order in, and then excused myself from my table to investigate.

I approached his table, said, "Excuse me, you look like a young man who had an accident on his moped in front of my home six weeks ago. No cast? No cane?"

He affirmed, "Eaton Street? That was me."

I asked, "Do you remember me?"

"No."

"I held your hand until the ambulance arrived. Do you remember that?"

"No."

I asked, "You look marvelous. No cast, no cane? What happened to give you such speedy recovery?"

He said, "I had the best medical team. They were great. My body healed so fast it blew my doctor's minds. It just isn't going fast enough for me."

I said, "Wow. That's amazing. Congratulations!"

What we say to people in shock goes right in.

Chapter 19 - Love and Happiness

Mark Gilboyne aka Gil Boyne, was the highest paid stage hypnotist in Las Vegas the year I was born, 1959. By the time I met him, in 1987, he was known as hypnotist to the stars in Los Angeles. I attended his first annual American Counseling of Hypnotist Examiners (ACHE) conference, and his pre-conference class in hypnotherapy. The large room was full. At the end of his presentation, he asked how many in attendance were hypnotherapists who had never been hypnotized themselves. Two hands came up. Gil Boyne put the challenge to us, "Make sure that these individuals experience hypnosis before the conference is over." He was convinced that to be a better hypnotist it is helpful to experience hypnosis subjectively. I agree, I enter trance with each person I hypnotize, and thereby deepen the rapport between us.

I love a challenge, and was on it. I was the first to approach both of those individuals and ask if they wanted to experience hypnosis subjectively. Both said, "yes." I used rapid inductions: the Dave Elman two finger technique with one, and the Elman handshake technique with the other. I did not know that Gil Boyne was watching from across the room as I shared my enthusiasm for the topic, until he approached me to ask where I had learned those techniques.

"Dave Elman."

"You are too young to have studied with Elman."

"I listened to his audiotapes."

Gil Boyne educated me that he was the publisher for the Elman book, suggested I pick up the book from his book table, and offered me a scholarship to come spend a month at his school in Glendale, CA.

That summer my skill set took a huge leap. The setting was inspiring with photos of young stars lining his walls. The image of Sylvester Stallone was from a time when he was a B grade actor. Gil Boyne encouraged him to write about something he knew, they were both from rough neighborhoods in Philly, and we got Rocky.

During one of our meals together, I asked Gil Boyne if there as a source or foundation of problems.

“Yes.”

“Will you tell me what it is?”

“It is the fear of being unloved or unlovable in some form. Once you have a person talking about that fear of being unloved or unlovable, you are at the core of the problem.”

He then asked, “What is most important to you? Money, power, love, or recognition?”

“What about happiness?”

“There’s no such thing. You can’t wear it like a shirt, move it in a wheelbarrow, weigh, measure or buy it. Happiness is a byproduct that comes from doing what you want to be doing.”

I spent the next year chatting up friends, discussing these ideas. At the end of a year of eating, drinking, singing, dancing and discussing topics of interest, we concluded that we were happy without or without money. Money made food better, clothing and living quarters nicer, but we could be happy walking along with a friend without a penny in our pockets. Power was a double edged sword. It was great to win an argument or debate; it sucked to lose a friend over it. Recognition was also a double edged tool. It is great to be known, business is easier when people recognize you and send you clients because they know of your skills. It is difficult when walking from one side of the island to the other for a meal, in a town where you are known, and chat up friends along the way, making you late for the planned meal. And Love? Without Love, we felt dead inside.

Then a friend added, “I am not happy when I am not healthy.” So, I got back with Gil Boyne to ask if he thought health was needed for happiness.

“No. You can be sick or dying and still be happy.”

Recently, a woman with the stage name of Nightbirde got the golden buzzer on America's Got Talent. She has a 2% chance of survival with the cancer issues she is dealing with. Her comment about happiness was a poignant reminder of the debate Gil Boyne stirred up with my friends from 1987 to 1988, "You can't wait until life isn't hard anymore before you decide to be happy."

References

Nightbirde. Song: It's Ok. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZJvBfoHDk0>
America's Got Talent 2021.

Post Script

Jane Kristen Marczewski, December 29, 1990 – February 19, 2022. Aka Nightbirde died at age 31, four years after a cancer diagnosis. Her music is inspirational.

Chapter 20 – Make Me Drunk

I met a WWII veteran who had an amazing tale of how hypnosis helped during his time in a German POW camp.

He was a medic, his plane was shot down, and he survived. When he was captured by the Germans, and taken to the camp, he was in the company of Canadian and U.S. pilots. He was the only one with medical training, so the guards gave him a private room, allowing him privacy to provide care for the other prisoners, “All those zero error, arrogant young military pilots.”

There were no medicines available for the prisoners. When new prisoners arrived with injuries, he had to provide care without medication. One of the German guards was familiar with the potential of hypnosis, and gifted the imprisoned medic with a hypnosis book in German. He received instructions from the guard in what the book said, and through the translated instructions began to practice hypnosis for pain relief and accelerated healing.

One day, another prisoner said, “I have been to hypnosis shows. I have seen people do strange things, like become drunk drinking from imaginary cups of alcohol. It was funny to watch. Does that really work?”

The young medic said, “I don’t know.”

The other prisoner said, “Let’s find out.”

It was easy. All those Canadian and U.S. pilots were familiar with what it was like to get drunk after work. Accessing their memory banks to revivify an alcohol buzz was easy, and the prisoners were highly motivated. Getting drunk on hypnosis worked just fine.

The prisoners began to line up outside the private medic room at the end of the day to get a hypnotic buzz.

This caused the guards to toss the medic's private room, regularly, looking for his still. They were convinced that he was brewing some kind of hooch in his private quarters.

The guard who provided the hypnosis book never suspected that the source of alcohol in the men who looked and acted drunk was purely from hypnosis. They elicited getting drunk from their own imaginations.

Not only was the U.S. medic able to reduce pain, set bones and stitch wounds without anesthesia, reduce the time for healing, he was able to provide his fellow prisoners with a source of pleasure that the guards couldn't take away. It came from their own memories of what it meant to be drunk, happy, carefree.

In 1985, I took my first hypnosis course for certification with Jerry Kein and Reverend Jack Mason, at Omni Hypnosis in Ft. Lauderdale. I had the hypno-fever. I talked up hypnosis and asked if I could practice with anyone who would listen. During a lunch break, I was sitting at a beachside bar, having a sandwich, and a drunk man at the bar got friendly. He wanted to know who I was, where I was from, what I was doing all by myself. When I said I was on break from a hypnosis class, he taunted me, said he couldn't be hypnotized. I offered to teach himself hypnosis, and he was a great subject.

When we completed our self-hypnosis demonstration, he complained. His buzz was gone. He had been drinking all morning. He was on vacation, was annoyed with me that he had spent all that money on booze, and one experience with hypnosis took away his buzz. I suggested that because he was such a GREAT hypnotic subject, that with the next sip on his drink, he would get twice as drunk as he was before he learned that he could be hypnotized. I emphasized that the more intelligent a person was, the better the response they would have to suggestions that they found pleasing, and in fact he was a GREAT hypnosis subject. He took a sip on his drink, and fell out of his chair. His ability to shift his state was able to first reduce, and then amplify his sense of "being drunk."

Chapter 21 - Meeting Irene

I heard Irene Hickman's voice from an audio tape recording during my studies with Gerry Kein and Jack Mason in Ft. Lauderdale, at Omni Hypnosis, in 1985. She had this distinctive voice as she spoke about how the soul swirls into the body shortly before or after birth, carrying with it all the garbage and glory of its many lives. This was not part of the normal basic hypnosis class training, but I had a spontaneous past life regression toward the end of the basic hypnosis class. Jack Mason wanted to be sure I was properly educated about what I had just experienced.

I spent the next several years looking for Irene so that I could study with her. The IMDHA annual conference flyer came out with her as keynote speaker, which is what brought me to IMDHA. I am not usually at a loss for words, but when we met, I got stumble tongue, handed her my business card and asked, "Please let me know when you are doing your next training." She sent me an invitation to take training with her shortly thereafter.

Driving to her home in Kirksville, the weather blew in harshly. Stopping for gas, a young station attendant asked what on earth I was doing on the road in that bad weather. I was on my way to learn about entities and attachments, and found my mouth saying, "I'm on my way to learn exorcism." Where did those words come from? Arriving at Irene's place, the sun was out on her property. All around her place, the weather was intensely disturbing. Irene was sitting in her kitchen making rosaries, she had a basket full of rosaries in little zip lock bags, "Take one," she said, "we'll be using them."

Dr. William Baldwin was the guest speaker.

Most of the other students came through her kitchen, selected a rosary, and continued on into her home. I got stuck in the kitchen, I couldn't bring myself to touch the basket of rosaries. Another student arrived who had the same hesitation in touching the rosaries that I did, he was an OB/GYN physician out of Chicago. We finally agreed to count to three and touch them; 1, 2, 3. We both touched the basket and began looking at rosaries. I finally picked one that was purple and yellow beads. My new friend began to do tug of war with me over the rosary I had selected. Irene rose,

slapped my hand and gave my selected rosary to the young doctor from Chicago. She pulled an identical rosary out of the basket and handed it to me.

Entering into her home, I met a most amazing man, Father Marty Patton. He identified himself as the “catcher” for the program. He had been working with Bill for some time and said he didn’t travel by plane with him because the weather patterns would slow Bill’s travel. Marty would travel by car and arrive before Bill did.

William Baldwin had a most hypnotic, deep voice. He had started his professional life as a dentist, and encountered odd phenomenon when he had to anesthetize patients. Sometimes men’s voices would come out of women’s bodies, sometimes women’s voices would come out of men’s bodies. When he retired from dentistry, he went into theology to explore what it was that he had been witnessing in his dentistry clients. He got additional training from Edith Fiore (author of *The Unquiet Dead*), and developed a style of hypnosis training that was fascinating.

While Irene and her husband sat on the balcony overlooking our classroom, Bill gave us a Friday night of past life phenomenon, a Saturday of recognizing spirits of the dead, and on Sunday, he discussed the issues of spiritual compromise to humans. Entities and Attachments was the name of the program.

Irene’s big place on the water was wonderful. We all got places to sleep over if we wanted to stay at her place. She instructed me to put my bedroll on her sitting balcony for my sleeping space. What a beautiful home on a lake. Our classroom was in her two story foyer with two stories of glass looking over the lake. She had a small waterfall built into her home. Sleeping in the room where we were practicing entity recognition and release, I slept restlessly, every bump and thump in the night bringing me out of my light slumber. The great excitement of one night was when her cat jumped on me and I about jumped out of my skin.

Three days of training with William Baldwin, Marty Patton, and Irene Hickman changed the way I interacted with my clients, accelerating the speed at which they achieved their goals.

I learned to ask, “How many are in, on, or around your body?”

Most clients answer, “How many what?”

I didn’t say that part, just the first number that comes to mind.

Then, “How many are you?”

This allows for a Parts Therapy approach to asking how old each part is, what caused the splintering, and if it would be ok to be reunified with the original soul self.

But sometimes there were parts that were not part of the client. Sometimes there were things in, on, or around the person that were other than that person. Perhaps it was a memory from someone else early in life, or maybe memories of a dead person.

“How many have been human?”

If we had remnants of another human, say a stray thought that wasn’t a good fit, or a kidney problem that occurred after a relative died of kidney failure, we would send that part, or memories of that person home to the light.

“How many have never been human?”

This was the oddest part of the training at Irene’s home. But she, William and Marty had a strength of presence that moved through the strangeness of spiritual aspects of hypnotherapy with grace and strength.

I returned to my private practice with new tools, and a speed in resolution coming from releasing things that were not a part of a client, integrating the parts that were lost parts of that person, and confirmation that we are more than just animals. We are spiritual beings with a spark of Life / Light that transcends the limits of material life.

Recommended Reading:

Baldwin, W. (1992). Spirit Releasement Therapy

Fiore, E. (1995). The Unquiet Dead;

Hickman, I. (1985). Mind Probe Hypnosis;

Hickman, I. (1997). Remote Depossession

Wickland, C. (1924). 30 Years Among the Dead: The Supernatural is only the natural not yet understood.

Chapter 21 - Meeting Peter Blum

I met Peter Blum at the annual IMDHA conference. He was hosting a musical event and I attended. The room was packed. I started out in a chair, but at some point, after my eyes closed and Peter's sounds began to permeate the room, I found myself on the floor, on my back, on my side, turning in circles.

When my eyes opened at the end of the musical ceremony, I looked at Peter with eyes of delight. This amazing man, who transformed himself before the ceremony began with a breath and a kerchief, had given me an extraordinary experience. He had such a HUGE volume of instruments, what I remember were the singing bowls, the whistles, all performed by Peter. I felt transformed in a blissful way for the remainder of the conference, Thank You Peter.

Due to his comment about his free musical session always being packed, it inspired me to offer the free basic hypnosis training for attendees at a subsequent conference. As professionals, meeting new professionals and greeting old friends, it is lovely to offer gifts to the community, performances of curiosity and gratitude for the abundantly shared knowledge and tenderness of intimate growth and development that the IMDHA helps hypnotherapists share with each other.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with Peter during an All Stars presentation in my hometown, Detroit. Being back to my roots allowed me to reconnect with people; my kindergarten teach, my deceased brother's son and his own children, and a visit to my grandmother's grave. I was already feeling connected and pleased to be in Michigan, when Peter asked for a volunteer. Oh yeah! I always have something to work on.

As I sat on the stage area, Peter began his pretalk, telling the audience what he was going to do. I knew the next step was to tell me to do what he had just told the audience he was going have me do. Beautiful. These are the basic steps of hypnosis.

What I didn't expect was the energy emanating off Peter. As he spoke, I could perceive rings of energy emanating from his body. It was like being in the presence of a living, breathing singing bowl. As he spoke, he walked in circles around my body, enhancing the feeling of the energy rings emitting from his physical body. When my eyes closed, I could still see the energy rings emanating from the sound of Peter's voice as he moved in circles around me. With my eyes closed they were golden rings of energy encountering each other like waves in water.

Did he really move in circles around me? I think he did. I know that when I was in his musical ceremony, my own body moved in circles on the floor, responding to the resonance of his music. Peter Blum is an energy worker extraordinaire.

When the session was complete, I commented on the energy emitting from Peter's body. I don't think other people visually observed the same things I did. I wanted other people to know the amazing experiences I have in the presence of Peter, the profound healer.

I have been seeing energy fields since a head injury in fourth grade on the playground, leaving me unconscious for at least half an hour. To this day I can adjust my eyes and see the energy fields, the auras. Is this what Anton Mesmer was referring to with his theory of animal magnetism? Whatever it is, Peter Blum emits it just by breathing, talking and being. If you haven't had a chance to meet Peter Blum, he has Youtube videos and recorded music that brings me similar calmness.

References

Peter Blum <https://www.soundsforhealing.com/>

Chapter 22 – My First Failure

During my first hypnosis class, Jerry Kein introduced us to the recordings of Dave Elman. Dave's son, Larry, later told me that Jerry was a recording person for his dad. Listening to Dave Elman put a foundation beneath my formal hypnosis training. One of the useful suggestions he gave was that it is useful to have failures in the beginning of one's career as a hypnotist. The point is to learn that all hypnosis is self-hypnosis, that the hypnotist isn't doing anything to the hypnotic subject, and has no amazing powers. If a person has one success after another, that hypnotist will eventually meet a person who does not respond to hypnosis. If a hypnotist has a long history of success before encountering a failure, the hypnotist might get discouraged, and give up the practice of hypnosis, thinking, "I've lost my touch." This is because the hypnotist who experiences success after success begins to believe that they really do have something special, something that makes them so successful. This is one of the myths of hypnosis. The truth is that the power is within the hypnotic subject.

I was eager to practice hypnosis with anyone would let me explore the powers of suggestion. One person agreed to let me practice, and I asked him to go into trance using the Dr. Flowers Induction. The person being hypnotized is asked to count from 100 on down, closing and opening his eyes with every number. The person began to count, and never blinked. He got down to 0 and I didn't know what else to do, so I asked him to start over at 100, and count down again. He counted down to 0 again, and I gave up "trying" to get him into hypnosis. When I returned to class, I reported, with great satisfaction, that I had my first failure. I described my experience.

Jerry said quietly, "Your subject didn't blink."

"That's right. I couldn't get him to close his eyes. The Dr. Flowers Induction didn't work with him. I wasn't sure what else to do, and I didn't have time to try a different induction before coming back to class."

Jerry asked, "The man didn't blink or close his eyes?"

"Right."

Jerry smiled and said, “No one in waking state could have kept their eyes open for a count from 100 down to 0 two times.” Ouch. I was in my first class, and I wasn’t skilled in recognizing the state through the some of the obvious signs that any skilled hypnotist would have recognized, “the stare, the flattened facial features, the deepened breath.”

It was several years later that I had my first failure. I lost rapport with every person who entered my office that day. Each client bolted from my chair, and raced from the room. Gone. I paced the floor at the end of the day, thinking, “I lost my touch. I guess I’ll have to find another career path.”

That night, over dinner, I flashed back to Dave Elman’s voice telling his hypnosis students that he hoped they had a lot of failures in the beginning. We learn more from our mistakes than from our successes.

When a WWII medic in Chapter 15 used hypnosis to get the POWs “drunk”, the German guards never found the still in the medic’s room. They didn’t know what they are looking at in the prisoners or looking for in the medic’s quarters.

“Wonders await those who study the mysteries of the mind.” (Irene Hickman, audio recording in the Omni Hypnosis basic hypnosis class, Summer, 1985)

Chapter 23 – Neurofeedback

Introduction

Neurofeedback aka EEG Biofeedback (Western style meditation on steroids)

I came into contact with biofeedback technology (mind / body brain training equipment with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic feedback) at New Age conferences from 1985 until 1995. I was on the hunt for “what works” in hypnosis and NLP. That knowledge was embedded in a New Age movement for alternative modalities. Many of the New Age conferences had an eclectic blend of education including heavy metal toxicity and chelation, magnets, light therapy, biofeedback, pinhole glasses, aromatherapy, parasites, candida, food allergies, raw foods, biofeedback and neurofeedback.

I remember the first time I had an opportunity to sit down with a brain machine, and light goggles. As soon as the patterns started, I felt myself lift off. I was rising above my body into the column of light. I was not aware that my body had started doing kriyas, the spontaneous movement of ecstasy. I was vibrating and rocking in the chair. The technician yanked the goggles off me. I asked, “Why did you do that?”

“You were having a seizure.”

“No. I was having an ecstatic experiencing entering into oneness with the universe.”

“You were having a seizure.”

“Was a moving?”

“You were having a seizure.”

And it stopped when you yanked the goggles off me?”

“Yes.”

“I doubt it was a seizure, that won’t stop from removing goggles. I’ll bet it was the spontaneous movements of ecstasy that come with meditation, trance and dance. Oh yeah, and with orgasmic response. Put the goggles back on me.”

“No.”

I stalked the booth until the person tending the booth changed, and went in for another experience. No such luck. It wasn't the same euphoric, orgasmic, kriya response of my first experience with a mind machine.

The year I completed writing the hypnotherapy training manual (Geers, 1994) of what works, I met the Canadian brain mind scientist Hal Myers, founder of Thought Technology. He invited me to get wired up at the Key West Winter Brain / Mind conference organized by Rob Kall. I had electrodes put on my head, and was thoroughly razzed by the young engineers about being a hypnotist unable to create significant amplitude of alpha wave activity. After half an hour of not being able to produce “alpha waves,” an older engineer came by, looked, said, “Put theta on the main screen.” My theta amplitude went off the screen. The young engineers immediately stopped razzing me about being an incompetent hypnotist, and accused me of “cheating” because I was breathing from the belly. Yes. I was a kinesthetic dominant, belly breathing perceiver. They appeared to be chest breathing, visually dominant logical thinkers.

I was invited to bring back clients the following day, wire them up, and watch the activity of their brain as we did hypnosis sessions. I observed that I could sense a state shift in my client about three seconds before the computer registered and reported it. Then I learned that by simply touching my client, holding the hand, I could shift that person's state to a more relaxed level with increased theta wave amplitude. I was intrigued.

In 1995, I was in college when Rob Kall called to ask where I was. He was in Key West again with his conference, and was hoping I would be there. He has some special guests he wanted to tweak with my skill set. I got permission to be late for a final exam, meaning I agreed to blow my 4.0 average by missing a scheduled exam. That freed me from my grade fixation, and I was able to speak more freely in all the remainder of my undergraduate classes with the striving for perfection removed. Excellence is sufficient, perfection was no longer possible.

One of the amazing characters I met was Siegfried Othmer who invited me to use his version of neurofeedback with his wife Sue Othmer as clinician. Sue placed the electrodes on my head, and Siegfried said, "Now close your eyes."

Sue said, "She's already doing it."

Siegfried looked at the screen, looked at me and asked, "How do you do that?"

"Do what?"

Hal Myers was with us, and said, "Close your eyes and show them what you do with your brain."

Ok. I closed my eyes and did a deep dive. I imagined I was standing on the earth, and a hole in the ground opened beside me. I dove in headfirst and went down down down. When I reached the bottom, another hole opened in the earth, and I dove into that one head first, down down down. I kept going down until I was asked to open my eyes. They had taken samples of my brain activity and Siegfried asked, "How did you do that?"

"Do what?"

Siegfried said, "Let's try this."

He had me lean forward in my chair and places a vibrotactile pillow he called a "sacral pillow" at the small of my back.

I had an immediate, spontaneous, delicious orgasm.

I turned bright red, and told them of my orgasm, and that it was uncommon for me to experience that sitting upright with my clothing on in a room full of people. Very pleasant, strange, and a bit embarrassing.

The next morning Siegfried invited me on a long walk and talk. He was a physicist. He was working with the defense industry when his wife discovered neurofeedback. His oldest son was seizure prone, and neurofeedback helped reduce his seizures. He left the security of a government job and became a cutting edge technology developer in the field of mind machines. His wife was an amazing

collaborator, working clinically with technology and bringing home tales of miracles and wonderment. Their personal story that called them into this field is poignant (Othmer, 2013), their technology was more appealing to my senses than most of the other machines.

My favorite biofeedback system for “getting it” was Maxwell Cade’s Mind Mirror. Anna Wise had her Mind Mirror team at the conference in Key West in 1995. I had read about it years earlier, and the ability to demonstrate the interactions between both sides of the brain in the same display. She died before I had a chance to spend time with her learning how to work with her technology.

When I entered into the academic world, I planned to finish a doctoral degree plan in seven years. I met my second husband, David, during the second semester of undergraduate training. Going lateral into a love affair, instead of the four year degree fitting into a two year plan, it took three years. Love and marriage pulled me lateral into a sixteen year academic journey. One small detour after another put me in the right place to have all my archival data erased by a natural disaster, Hurricane Wilma. When my beloved husband was deploying for what was supposed to be his last hardship duty station, the military shippers moved all my data to the floor of the garage three days before Wilma the Wet put a storm surge across the island, under our home and through the garage, October, 2005. What was supposed to be a qualitative evaluation of that luxurious decade in private practice for my doctoral dissertation was wiped out by storm surge. I thought those records were safe in the second story closet.

A month later, the doors to the garage were still too waterlogged to open. One of the men from the base offered to go through a window and cut a new doorway through the wall so that we could haul the garage contents to the curb for FEMA pickup. That’s when I discovered the boxes of my audio and video recordings covered in salt grime, mud, seaweed and dried pinfish on the floor of the garage. I wept for five minutes, my long term plan of leaving archival records for my tales of hypnosis wonders were gone. Anecdotal evidence, such as those in the compilation of articles in this book, do not carry the same weight for scientific study. But my home was dry, when so many homes on the island were destroyed.

I support the idea that I am in the right time to do what it is that I am here to do. I needed a new dissertation topic.

I knew what kind of results I could expect from hypnosis working with veterans, all those records were gone, and I was time limited. I didn't expect a dissertation committee would be interested in the spiritual phenomenon I often encounter in this particular clientele. I had to find a different topic. First I studied the juggling program in town, learned to juggle with the middle school kids, explored what measures would be useful for a research study on the impact on human growth and development. The bilateral thumping of the juggling balls, the movement of the eyes from side to side, following the flight of balls in the figure eight movements. Would it be reading comprehension? The visits to the principals (or reduction thereof)?

I took juggling balls to a conference where I was intent upon recruiting a dissertation committee. I had lined up the chair and statistician, I needed one more member, and then I sat through a presentation by a former Marine. He was discussing the tsunami of veterans returning home with PTSD. The difficulties they faced. My father was a POW. My brother was U.S. Army. My second husband was USAF PJ. I put my juggling balls away, made some calls to people I neurofeedback, and changed my topic. I gathered a dissertation committee and an Internal Review Board (IRB) who approved the use of the Othmer Method and technology to explore if the hyperarousal criteria of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) could be reduced or eliminated with neurofeedback training.

Neurofeedback (NF) is authorized by the FDA as a medical device to reduce stress. Stress is a powerful element for health impairment, the antidote is learning to relax. Neurofeedback is "Westernized meditation on steroids with immediate feedback about whether it is being done right or not . . . No need to spend a lifetime on a mountain top to gain awareness and control over internal states" (Siegfried Othmer, Clinical Summit, July 20, 2013). Based on a theory of arousal and brain dysregulation, NF training is designed to teach the nervous system how to relax through play. Electronic sensors / leads are placed on the head to record brain wave activity. The brain plays computer games with audio and visual feedback, a vibrotactile toy gives

kinesthetic feedback, “look ma, no hands”. Restoring an innate relaxation response is predicted to allow the brain to engage in better state regulation and overall health. There is the direct suggestion in the questioning, “Are you awake or sleep?” “Clear or foggy?” “Tense or relaxed?” The goal is to restore internal awareness of state, and to aim for that delicious sense of being physically relaxed, mentally clear, and fully awake / alert, ready for anything. The initial sessions of an established twenty session protocol is intended to restore a sense of self in body and space, to strength and stabilize the nervous system. A forced choice symptom tracking steers additional lead placements on the head using the International 10 -20 system of lead placement.

Alpha / Theta (A/T) training comes after the nervous system shows signs of quiet strengthening, it is intended to resolve traumatic memories in a non-invasive manner without the narrative used in some hypnotherapy methods such as regression to cause. Instead of eliciting the Freudian abreaction and catharsis, the behavioral game playing of infra low frequency (ILF) neurofeedback slides below the conscious mind and restores the nervous system’s ability to relax without triggering the Freudian concepts of defense mechanisms. Using NF training to restore brain function to a more relaxed state is like hitting control / alternate / delete on a computer to get unstuck. The use of A/T allows for a rapid release of residual tension without telling a traumatic story. This strategy reduces the possibility of retraumatizing the client or student, and helps prevent secondary trauma in the clinician. Clinician burnout can be indication of secondary trauma. NF training is a fun, game filled psychoeducational strategy that places minimal distress on the student / client and the clinician.

In the post graduate use of NF, I no longer limit myself to the simple directives, I incorporate all my hypnosis skills while working with clients.

I met Hanno Kirk, who invited me to write a chapter for the book he creating as an educational tool for infralow neurofeedback using the Othmer Method. I agreed, and published chapters in both the first and second edition. During our collaboration, I learned of his visit with the Dalai Lama. The holy man asked him if it was true that the neurofeedback was like meditation. Yes.

Western minds are not interested in spending twenty years cultivating meditative practices, like the long meditating Buddhist monks. Neurofeedback gives close to immediate feedback to a brain for when it is “doing it right.”

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- © Monica Geers Dahl, 2013. Dr. Dahl is an hypnosis educator for IMDHA. She provides demonstrations of “what works in hypnosis” at the annual conference, and provides pro bono services to veterans as part of the homecoming4veterans.org volunteer group. Dr. Dahl provides a twenty session NF protocol pro bono to one veteran a month. If a veteran does not fill that slot, she provides the service to a victim of rape, domestic or criminal violence, accident, or natural disaster.

Chapter 24 - On Being Congruent

During undergraduate training in Human Development, we studied family systems theories as part of the liberal arts program. During a hypnosis training in 2020, a graduate student in mental health said he had only studied Bowen. Not Satir?

Virginia Satir (June 26, 1916 – September 10, 1988) was the only woman involved in the field of family therapy at the founding of Family Systems therapy. She was one of the group of thinkers who gathered at Esalen, in California, during a fertile time of theory development. Virginia and Milton Erickson are two dominant names studied by the founders of neurolinguistic programming (NLP), including Bandler and Grinder.

Having turned over my extensive library last year to the Hypnosis Alliance, I did not have any books to use as references, so I have (chagrin) started buying books again. Ok, I'm not a book addict, I'm a bibliophile.

For my birthday in March, I gifted myself with the Meditations of Virginia Satir edited by Banmen and Banmen (1991). In the middle of reading these wonderful meditations (no, she claims they are not hypnosis), I began to have lovely light epiphanies of joy. This was as my students and cohorts started showing anxiety about the quarantine during this time of great awakening and healing opportunities. I asked my students if they would participate in reading the meditations, sending them back and forth on Whatsapp, to focus our minds on a positive slant.

It was lovely.

Then I looked into other writings of Virginia Satir, which I have been pouring over with delight. The one I am most wrapped up with in my head is Well-Being Writ Large: The Essential Work of Virginia Satir by Barbara Jo Brothers (2019). According to Brothers, Virginia was at first pleased to be studied by the NLP developers, and then became off put by the strategizing of her methods, claiming that the heart and soul was taken out of her work.

As she spent so much time traveling the world, practicing family systems according to her seed model of growth and development, she did not take time away from her work to write much. Her seed model is based on the idea that we are all growing. Ideally, we removed obstacles and inhibitions to growth and allow a seed, or a human, to follow a natural process of growth. Sometimes the growth defined in traditional talk therapy is viewed as maladaptive, when it may be the best response a being, or a seed, can have to the environmental pressures that distort its natural tendency for growth and development. Our goal is to remove the things that inhibit a person's natural processes of growth and development. Then we can stand back and watch the blossoming of what was inwardly awaiting expression, and what is outwardly connecting with people in context.

According to Virginia, there are five communication strategies to watch for in relationships; four are dysfunctional, one is functional. The functional communication model is congruence; trusting the inner resources of what we see, hear, feel, smell, taste, touch, think, decide, and choose. The maladaptive communication strategies are blaming, placating, super reasonableness, and irrelevancy. Looking at communications from a perspective of you, me and the context, there are three areas of value to observe. If I value you, value me, value the context and trust my senses, we have an opportunity for congruent interactions. If I value me, devalue you and value our context, I will use blaming as a communication strategy. If I value you, devalue me, and value our context, I will use placating as a communication strategy. Blaming and placating are complementary communication strategies which create discomfort in both parties over time. Hyper reasonable people devalue you, devalue me, and value the context, "It's my job, I have to do it (whether I like it or not). Irrelevant communications devalue you, me and the context, nothing is worth anything, nothing is of value (have you ever tried to hold a conversation with someone who refuses to stay on a topic of mutual value?).

After the a round of hypnosis classes for certification was complete, a participant said, "I do think we are magical."

"Ok. Tell me."

He explained his perception that we, as hypnotists, have a unique and magic power and that is listening. AHHHHH! Every time I teach a class, I learn something new. It is true. We listen intently. We listen not only to what is said, we listen for the deeper messages, the feelings. We give attention with our listening. When we listen to our clients, we have an opportunity to help them develop self-confidence, self-worth, and self-love. When a person develops comfortable relationship within self, it is easier to develop comfortable relationships with others.

Carl Rogers is an American Humanist, who used a process of active listening. This means being fully present, fully attentive, with unconditional regard for the person speaking.

We, as hypnotherapists, know that we need to provide self-care for ourselves in order to be in the best shape to provide care for others. Being congruent means valuing ourselves highly, so that we can value others highly, and honor the context in which we are interacting.

Practicing self-hypnosis or meditation at least once a day is a healthy part of being a professional providing care for others. I am in my third round of reading Virginia Satir's meditations, and I am again sharing them with clients and friends on Whatsapp.

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Chapter 25 - Out of Body

Being embodied is something that we normally take for granted. An embodied human life is incarnate, in the flesh. There are things that can happen to dislodge a person from being embodied. It can be heard in language.

“I passed out.”

“I got knocked out”

These are incomplete sentences. They omit what we passed out or got knocked out of; the body.

The perception of being dislodged from the body can occur in a variety of situations, such as a physical altercation, torture, rape, assault, an accident (car, playground), a high fever, illness, or a near death experience.

When Hilda (not her real name) had an aneurysm break in her brain, her son was three years old. They were walking on the sidewalk of a crowded downtown area beside a high traffic street. She collapsed, went unconscious, and did not let go of her toddler's hand. The rescue team had to pry her hand off of her son's hand to load her into the ambulance. At some level, she was still aware, a protective mother.

Emergency brain surgery put a tube in to connect the two intact parts of her blood vessel that broke, and she did not wake up. Her husband was distraught. He spent the next year by her hospital bed when he wasn't working or caring for their son.

A year into the tragedy, the physicians told him there was nothing more they could do, and recommended he put her into a long term care facility for humans in vegetative states. He refused. He found a surgeon willing to reopen Hilda's head. The bone was removed from a softball sized diameter section of her skull and had not been replaced. The surgeon removed the splice and pulled the undamaged sections of her blood vessel together. She woke up in recovery. Hilda had to relearn to walk.

I asked Hilda's husband for permission to come and visit, interview her about her experience, a month after she got home.

She asked if I wanted to touch the side of her head that had no bone. No thank you. I could see the pulsation in the indentation where her brain was no longer protected by bone. She said she would eventually get a metal plate installed for brain protection. She was relearning to walk wearing a bicycle helmet to protect her head.

I asked if she remembered anything about that time. She looked puzzled. I asked more specifically, "Where did you go when your brain experienced the burst blood vessel?"

She smiled, "How come no one has asked me that question before you?"

"It's not scientific. It's not medical. It is a question of curiosity for me. Do you remember?"

"I do."

She described staying near her body while her hand stayed gripped to her son's hand. The traffic was heavy, she didn't want him running into the street and getting hit. She remembered floating around the body when the first surgery was happening. She didn't get back into the body after that first surgery. Then she started floating away from the body. It was boring hanging out with a body she couldn't get back into. She started visiting other people in the hospital. She said she could slide into other bodies; newborns, and other people in comas. Then she found herself floating among the stars.

"One day, I woke up and was Hilda, again. I don't know how I did that."

In an article I wrote some years ago for the IMDHA, a similar out of body experience was reported by a torture victim. After being beaten to the point of saying, "I'm outta here," he abruptly discovered himself floating at the ceiling of the barn where he was being tortured. He reported looking down at his broken body, thinking he was dead. The torturers let him go, and his body was functional, but he wasn't able to work, play with his children, make love with his wife, eat or sleep properly. When asked the right question, "Did you ever get back into your body," that medical doctor was astounded. At first he didn't understand what I was asking, then he asked how come no one ever asked him that question before.

It's not medical. It's not scientific. It is based on my own observations of being knocked out of my body, and getting back in, again. I've had a playground accident that left me unconscious for more than 30 minutes in fourth grade. I've had car accidents, and "spun out" of the body. I've had near accidents where I had the hallucination of being far above the roadway, watching the vehicles approaching each other, my body was in one of those vehicles and I remember thinking, "This is going to messy. I'm going to be like a bug spat on the front of that big car. And the cars are going to pile up behind me. It will take a long time for the tow trucks to get the vehicles off the bridge and get to my body on the grill of that big American car."

Somehow, that accident didn't happen, and I found myself in the body, watching the car go by me, to my surprise.

I've found myself floating above my body during surgery, and when giving birth.

It is my subjective experiences that cause me to ask people questions pertaining to their connections between the body and the Authentic Self / Soul Self.

Recently, I had the opportunity to work with Angela (not her real name). Angela was sold for drug money to men for sex between the ages of 6 and 11 years old. Angela was now a married, middle aged mother struggling with depression and anxiety she couldn't shake. She had been in and out of therapy for years, and had come to peace with her now deceased drug addicted parents. She was rescued from that life by an aunt. Her trigger for therapy this time was that her aunt had died, and Angela was swirling in loss and distress.

We practiced progressive relaxation, mindful body awareness, and direct suggestions, "I am safe. Right here. Right now."

We talked to the feet and legs, the hands and arms, and the neck with those direct suggestions. Angela found that helpful.

At our next session, Angela reported that she wanted to be able to enjoy relations with her husband, father of her children. He was attentive to her needs, respectful of her boundaries, he knew about her history. She had obviously been

intimate with him, she had given birth to his children. She had never been able to enjoy sex with him.

I asked, "Where are you in relation to your body?"

Angela looked confused, which is a typical response to that question. She asked for clarification. I asked, "Let your hands show me where you are in relation to your body." She paused for a moment, and then indicated that she was located in the top part of her head.

"How does it feel to be all in your head like that?"

She said it was crowded. We spent the rest of the session stretching her out to the tips of her fingers, the tips of her toes. I used the metaphors of gloves and socks. Imagine sliding on her body like sliding on gloves, shirt, pants, socks and shoes.

The following session, Angela reported that she had startled her husband when he came home from work the day after our session. She ran up to him coming in the door and kissed him. A first.

The following session, Angela reported that she had bought a little outfit to play with her husband. He was again confused. He had lived 20 years respecting her boundaries, not approaching her without her consent. Here she was approaching him with a flirtatious, fun loving manner, initiating sex.

We need full body engagement to appreciate and enjoy life.

When I was asked by a law enforcement agency to help with witness recall from a pizza delivery woman who was taken at gunpoint and raped, they were only looking for information about the perpetrator. I also addressed her out of body experience. She reported that during the assault a part of her went and hid behind a tree, another part splintered to hide behind a rock, another part splintered to go float up in the clouds and get away from the pain, another part hid behind her car and kept looking out to see if the body was being killed. We had to ask all those lost parts, those fragments of herself, to return to the body so that she could stop living with a sense of traumatic injury, and initiate a healing.

Clients who have been physically abused, battered, tortured, have had medical issues, or accidents, can sometimes find themselves disconnected from their physical body in a way different from what they experienced prior to their traumatic incident. Knowing to ask the right questions can lead to rapid positive responses of restored health.

Chapter 26 - Procrastination and Ikigai

Procrastination.

What is it?

What does it mean to you?

What does it mean to me?

When working with clients, I look for patterns, themes. Last year, a common theme was, "it is what it is." This year, I hear people say a long litany of things and punctuate the words with "I don't know." I don't know will be the topic of another article.

An area of interest for me is procrastination. Last year, a client arrived with a shopping list of things to achieve, #4 was procrastination. When a client comes prepared with a shopping list of goals in like this, I take down the full list, and then ask what the person wants to work on first. Sometimes working on one thing will take other things off the list, the linkages are interesting. With this client, we did not work on procrastination first, it came up in the order presented, the fourth issue to address.

I find it useful to ask, "What does that mean to you, procrastination."

I recently read an article that proposed the fork and knife approach, cut a big project down into bite sizes so that the project is digestible. I refer to it as the pizza model. Do we eat the whole pizza by stuffing it in our mouths, or do we take it slice by slice, bite by bite. Overcoming procrastination can be done doing things a bit at a time. I find cleaning a car to go easier if I start by telling myself I am going to clean the inside of the windshield and wipe the dash. Then I find myself on the glove box. This usually gets me primed to finish cleaning the interior of the car, including vacuuming it out.

I also have lists. The things that aren't on the A list. Or even the B list. Or even the C list. When do I drop them off the list of things to do? My journal has post it colors that indicate where I have made a list of things I want to do, projects, and their subparts. Before I look at the older lists, I like to make a new list of goals. Then I review the older lists to see what, if anything, has dropped off.

For me, the process of procrastination is an organic thing, the project is not ripe, the baby is not ready to be born, the flower is not ready to open. I can't blow on the flower to make it open before it is ready. Sometimes I need a pregnant pause. Time for contemplation, marination, rumination, deciding. There is an organic unfolding process. There is a time of gestating, laying fallow. Then I am moved. Flow happens and I engage, I am moved to do something.

Sometimes procrastination is doing nothing. The human brain is meant to have time doing things, active on the outside work, and other times being, resting, reflecting, recharging. The brain is VERY busy during the time of doing nothing. The default mode network is VERY busy when you are doing nothing.

When teaching, I take breaks of 5 – 10 minutes every 90 minutes. The brain is shifting. Realistically, for every 90 minutes of active “doing”, I feel good with 90 minutes of “being”. Balance.

My life and its processes are like an octopus with many legs. Last Easter, I was meditating, praying, daydreaming. Easter, rebirth, what is next? I found myself making a list of things / plans for things I wanted to do. I was astounded to discover that my octopus was not just an 8 legged creature, it had 48 legs in spring of 2021, all pulling me in different directions. I can't do them all at once. Sometimes I finish a project, that is done, and another two grow back. Sometimes legs appear out of nowhere that need immediate tending. Sometimes legs die off. Sometimes I finish the pull of one leg, and the pull of other legs are spontaneously addressed. Discomfort can occur when the legs of my octopus draw me in different directions simultaneously. I can't do it all right now, and now is all I have. Sometimes I need to do nothing, lay fallow.

I like to ask “procrastination” clients, “Do you work well under pressure?” They invariably say, “yes.” “Do you miss deadlines?” “No.” “So it's not procrastination. It sounds like you are beating yourself up, putting on a mental whip to move faster. I wonder what would happen if you stopped trying to move faster and let things / projects mature more organically. Taking time to let it mature, and you get it done.”

A machine model of performance, with deadlines and tight schedules, can create a sense of dread for an organic person seeking to perform according to a machine model.

Perhaps procrastination is a word used by ambitious people to beat themselves up about not “doing” more, and more quickly.

A client recently asked me if I was practicing *Ikigai*, as the work we were doing reminded her of it. I was ignorant, and delighted to look it up. Your passion is what you Love. Your mission is what the world needs. Your job is what you are or could be paid for. Your vocation is what you are good at. One of the practices of *Ikigai* is to adopt a slower pace of living, to put urgency aside.

I think “procrastination” is a verbally abusive method for driving ourselves or others to do things faster, before the time is ripe.

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Chapter 27 - PTSD

26 September 2012: A Case Study

Bob (not his real name): All the stuff that's left on the list is pretty . . . minor. It was all overshadowed by the other stuff.

Me: What stuff?

Bob: The exaggerated startle response, the anxiety, the agitation, the explosive rage, comparatively, the rest of it seems pretty minor. I feel picky picky picky talking about it. This is nit picking stuff. This kind of stuff is life. That's normal.

M: So, would you say you have found some kind of normal, again?

Bob: I don't know if I'm there, yet. I'm getting there.

M: How do you feel with the experience you have had with this (Neurofeedback)?

Bob: Hmmmm. Here's a good metaphor for you, right? It makes me realize the terror that a grub goes through before it becomes a butterfly. . . . It must be terrifying. It's scary.

M: What's the scariest part of it?

Bob: Letting go of what you had become.

M: You just used dissociative language.

Bob: Yup. (Laughter.) Don't want any part of that.

M: What was the most profound part of it?

Bob: Not being terrified anymore.

M: What do you experience instead of the terror?

Bob: (Big sig.) Um (long pause) being a part of the community, again.

M: Is there anything else in particular you would like to comment on?

Bob: I don't know, ask another insightful question.

M: That was pretty vague, wasn't it?

Bob: It was.

M: Well Mr. intelligence trained military man, as a hypnotist, I am trained to give you open ended questions that are deliberately vague to fish for and gain your spontaneous revelation of what is meaningful, relevant. I am deliberately vague to discover what you would spontaneously reveal. Obviously, you have been trained to answer only the questions asked, and to avoid revealing any additional lateral information that may be relevant, but that I don't know enough to ask about. So, your military training is excellent for that work, and that rigorous mental screening can make it difficult to engage in healthy, spontaneous, intimate relations. Revelation is a part of vulnerability. Being vulnerable doesn't mean being killed in civilian settings, it means being open, expressive, spontaneous, authentic, real. Some people view vulnerability as a weakness to be exploited. In predatory situations, it can get you killed, and when you have strength and skills, you can handle the predators efficiently. When you are strong, you can be vulnerable, show your throat and belly, knowing you can handle the hostiles, and the endearing folks will come closer and engage more fully. Opening yourself to others, a sense of being vulnerable, can allow you to establish a greater unfolding creativity with those around you. Vulnerability in a civilian setting does not always mean that you are going to get killed, unlike the scenes you described for me in your narrative about the images that re-occur for you, your repeating memories of your time in service to our nation.

Bob: Vulnerable I can't do. I can give you relevant. That strikes a chord in me. Relevant (long pause), to get down to brass tacks, if you've gone through a lot of trauma, there's no way for me to explain that you should do this. There is no convincing that I can do. Essentially, you have to sit your ass in the chair.

M: Be motivated enough to show up.

Bob: That's it.

In the neurofeedback method we used to help Bob address his 20 year battle with post-traumatic stress, we committed to a standardized 20 training sessions, plus intake and the QIKtest for assessing nervous system functioning pre and post training. Every five sessions, we gathered self-reports of 151 symptoms that have been reported to be resolved or reduced in severity using neurofeedback training. This includes 149 symptoms defined by the developers of the technology I purchased and use, and two of the PTSD hyperarousal criteria (DSM-IV-TR) that were not included in the existing symptom tracking list.

There are seven established categories for symptoms (sleep, attention and learning, sensory, behavioral, emotional, physical, pain), and an open ended category for the client to self define symptoms that person experiences as relevant to their situation. An intake lasts around 2.5 to 3 hours. The first data sweep includes demographics, and then a forced choice model with yes / no responses. A measure of internal validity for this individual's self-reporting is done with the next forced choice paper / pencil symptom tracking list using Likert like measures from 0 to 10; with 0 being no problem, and 10 being a big problem. The second measure can take a little as 8 minutes, and as long as the patient can ponder "well, that depends", which indicates to me that the person has a symptom that comes and goes in severity. In those cases, we recorded "t/d" (that depends) and a range (ie. 0-7). I used the highest number in the excel spread sheet for the bar charts used for ongoing comparison of reporting over the course of the training. Lead placement in neurofeedback, and reward frequency, are determined by the self-reported symptoms.

Quantitative data about attention, impulse control, speed of response and consistency of response is collected using a hand held computerized device called QIKtest. The format is a go / no go pattern of pressing a button for the target and not pressing a button for the non-target. The unit plugs into a computer with installed software, preparing it for a 3 minute pre-test to remove the learning curve, and then a 22 minute test of nervous system response to stimuli. The findings are forwarded electronically to an existing data base where a report is generated comparing the client

to a person of that gender and age range. This measure is repeated after 20 sessions of neurofeedback training to provide quantitative measures of training efficacy.

I am using the Othmer Method. The first half of the neurofeedback training addresses the hyperarousal criteria as we use reward frequencies referred to as infralow (ILF, below .01 Hz). A majority does well with these reward frequencies, a minority does not, that is the topic of another article. The first ten sessions focus is upon strengthening and stabilizing the nervous system with leads on the temporal lobes (specifically T3-T4 in the 10/20 system) and restoring awareness of one's place in the world, one's place in the body with leads on the right side temporal and parietal lobes (T4-P4). Other lead placement sites are targeted based on the self-reported symptoms and goals of the client. A protocol guide with a helpful decision tree provides strategy for lead placement.

My many years in private practice as a hypnotherapist are applied in a limited manner of direct suggestions during most neurofeedback sessions. I am very specifically addressing physiological state regulation, and for the person to become aware of and able to articulate, "Are you awake or sleepy? . . . Clear or foggy? . . . Tense or relaxed?" The goal of the training is to strengthen and stabilize the nervous system in a state of recognizing and being able to sustain feeling awake, mentally clear, and relaxed.

After approximately ten sessions, we use an alpha / theta protocol (PZ, 7 and 10 Hz) which is proposed to resolve emotionally traumatic memories without the emotional venting of traditional abreaction and catharsis. Alpha / theta training was first proposed to be addressing issues of alcoholism when Eugene Peniston reported his findings to neurofeedback colleagues. His colleagues took notice, insisted he hadn't cured alcoholism, he had resolved PTSD. His pragmatic approach was, "I'll take it. Anyone want to do follow up studies?" Paul Kulkosky did follow up research with him. Same great findings. These research findings failed to gain the VA support, even though the original work was done in a VA setting. Alpha / theta is unique in that it saves both the client and clinician from exposure to further emotional stress, and reduces the possibility of secondary trauma.

The second ten sessions of neurofeedback may need to address issues of under arousal that emerge as the hyperarousal calms and the nervous system learns to function in a less reactive manner. The total time for training using this method is approximately 23 hours. For someone living in close proximity, sessions twice a week provide a slow, smooth transition. The full protocol is complete in 10 weeks. One session a week appears to be less conducive for the residual, progressive effects to be observed. For someone living at a distance, the psycho-educational process can be absorbed in 2 weeks, twice a day with an hour off between sessions, and a weekend off.

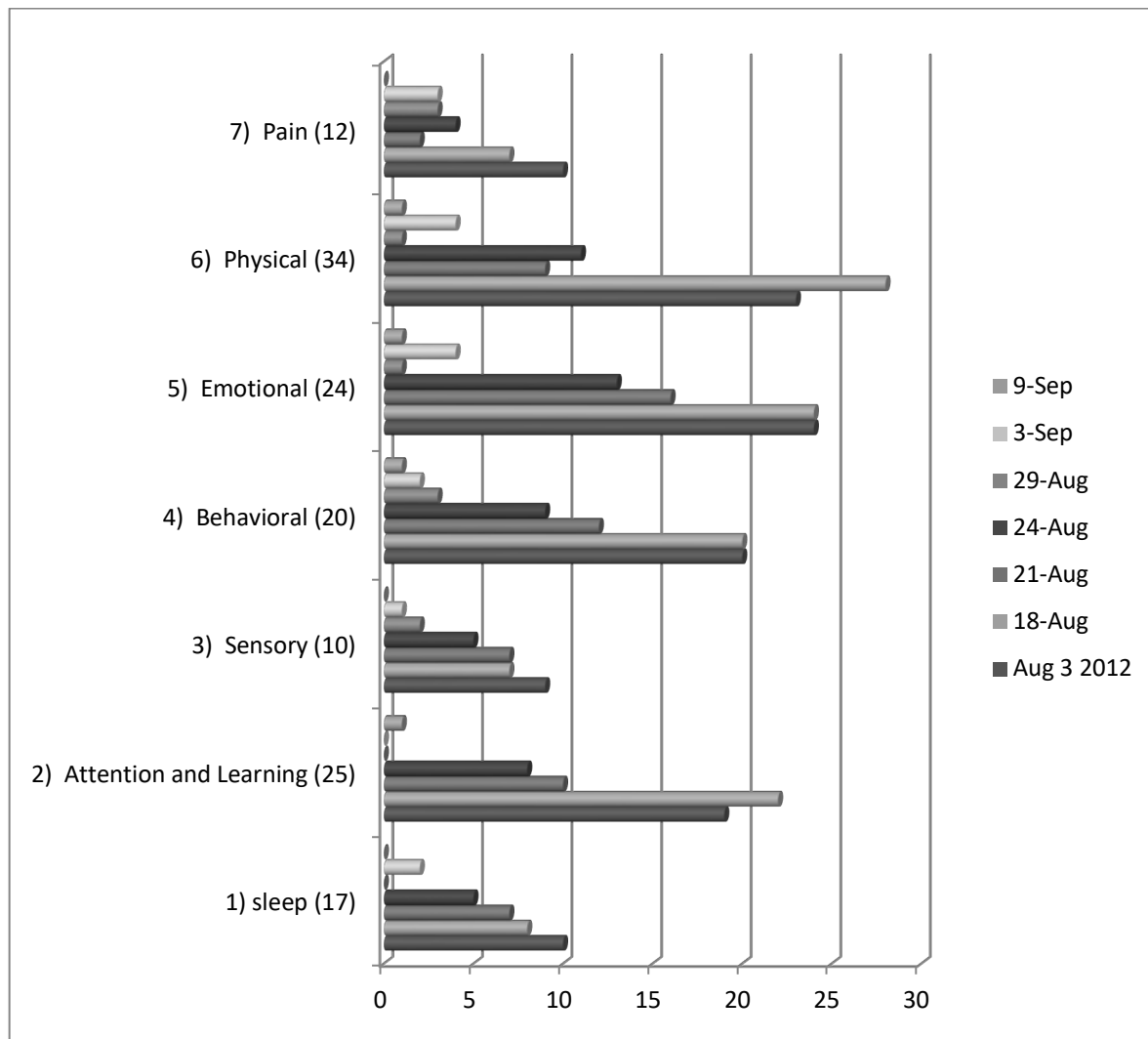
Neurofeedback targets stress reduction through psycho-educational exercises for timing nervous system activity. When the nervous system explores, attains, and practices being awake, clear, and relaxed, many seemingly intractable symptoms melt away.

In the following bar chart, a combat veteran in his mid-forties accepted neurofeedback through the Homecoming4Veterans program. His case reveals the typical impact of neurofeedback as a helpful psycho-educational process for restoring a more healthful nervous system equilibrium for humans experiencing a need for stress reduction. Data was collected during the intake on August 3, 2012. Neurofeedback training was engaged from August 13 until Aug 29, 2012. On September 3, we collected data and Bob asked for an additional 5 sessions in the ongoing hunt for an optimal reward frequency. Although we failed to identify a stable state optimal reward during our originally planned 20 sessions, transient state training still allowed us to achieve quantitative and qualitative shifts in Bob's functioning for the better. With 115 initial symptoms, by the end of the 25 sessions, there were 4 remaining symptoms being reported. Bob said he was being really picky by that time, point out little nitpicking things. He also showed a small rise in number of symptoms in the first week following his accelerated training schedule.

Between August 21 and 24 we used the Alpha-Theta protocol, which is theorized to resolve traumatic issues without full narrative, abreaction and catharsis of talk therapy. Bob's self-report of symptoms reflects the typical response of combat

veterans to neurofeedback training, a reduction or elimination of the post-traumatic stress symptoms, and a resumption of the connection in community.

	<u>8/3</u>	<u>8/18</u>	<u>8/21</u>	<u>8/24</u>	<u>8/29</u>	<u>9/3</u>	<u>9/9</u>
1 Sleep (17 issues)	10	8	7	5	0	2	0
2 Attention and Learning (25)	19	22	10	8	0	0	1
3 Sensory (10)	9	7	7	5	2	1	0
4 Behavioral (20)	20	20	12	9	3	2	1
5 Emotional (24)	24	24	16	13	1	4	1
6 Physical (34)	23	28	9	11	1	4	1
7 Pain (12)	10	7	2	4	3	3	0
Totals:	115	116	63	55	10	16	4



Neurofeedback targets stress reduction through psycho-educational exercises for timing nervous system activity. When the nervous system explores, attains, and practices being awake, clear, and relaxed, many seemingly intractable symptoms melt away.

Monica Geers Dahl, Ed.D., has been a member of IMDHA and IACT for more than two decades. “These organizations are marvelous venues bringing together diverse minds in an open discourse about what it means to be a human unlimited by the social and family training that targets human use in context, rather than the intrinsic creativity of human potential.”

Chapter 28 - PTSD: Call to serve.

Introduction

This article is the first of a series exploring psychoeducational strategies useful in working with veterans to reduce or eliminate the symptoms known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This traces my path into private practice as a hypnotherapist. The second article describes my entry into neurofeedback as a research clinician, and includes references to the two editions of a book compiled by editor Hanno Kirk (get citations) in which two case presentations are used to illustrate the progress and post traumatic growth which is possible. The third article presents spiritual methods useful in working with veterans.

The Calling

My father, Franz, fought for Hitler. It was toward the end of the war, and he was 15 years old. He had an intuition, and joined the Kriegsmarine the day before the army came and took the rest of the farm boys. His childhood friends died of hand to hand combat and starvation at Stalingrad. The vessel he was on as cabin boy was torpedoed and sank. He said he was one of three that made it off alive, and he swam in the North Atlantic for 24 hours before he was picked up by a French fishing vessel. He was a POW of the French for three years after the war ended, helping with the rebuilding of France. He got his growth spurt in a POW camp, growing from 5'9", 120 lbs. to 6'4", 120 lbs. He said that one of the reasons he was able to survive the camp was because he could reach the bugs and twigs outside the razor wire that the boys with smaller arms couldn't reach.

I was raised in the home of a man who I can now identify as suffering from the effects of his WWII experiences; migraines, nightmares, exaggerated startle effect, difficulty making emotional connections with others. I asked him what life in the camp was like going through puberty. There was a long pause before he said, "We didn't talk about girls. We had no drive for any of that. We talked about what foods we would have

our mothers and grandmothers cook for us if we made it home alive, and they were still alive.”

I promised myself I would never marry military. I broke that promise when I married my second husband, USAF pararescue, 6’4”, 225 lbs., blonde haired, blue eyed, Norwegian descent. He was a younger, thinner version of my father. Freud was right, we marry our parents.

When my parents divorced because my mother dared to apply for and get accepted into a nursing program at the University of Michigan, the White Catholic farm community upbringing of my parent’s marriage gave way to a Black welfare neighborhood in Ann Arbor. We moved to a townhouse in a new development just across the street from an elementary school and middle school. There was a playground, undeveloped wooded area, and fallow farm lands. My mother could stand in the kitchen window to see us walk to school, play at breaks, and come home. Not that she was there much, she had two jobs and a full time degree plan.

By the time my mother was teaching at the University, my older brother had become a poster child for the long veil of trauma that can follow the children of men traumatized by war. Jose da Silva was touring campuses with Silva Mind Control. The methods were intended for academic, personal, and professional peak performance training. My brother was in trouble with the law, other kids. My mother enrolled him in martial arts and the Silva courses in an attempt to effectively harness his intelligence and energy. I was pesky younger sister reading all the literature that came into the house from Jose da Silva’s program. I practiced everything I read, had mind expanding experiences, all positive. That was my initial exposure to self-hypnosis and the wonders that await any human willing to learn to use his or her mind in a certain way.

My Catholic upbringing ended with my parent’s divorce, and the Silva methods yielded a viable value systems of how to creatively function as a productive human being. I was already steeped in the Western model of productivity being the ideal to strive for. The ideas of innate health, manifestation, co-creation, being one with something highly intelligent, able to open and receive, indwelling intelligence, wisdom, creativity, healing, all these ideas were embedded in my life toward the end of grade

school and through middle school. My atheism that arose following my folk's divorce (how can there be a god so cruel as to allow a father to petition the church to declare his marriage annulled and his children bastards so that he can resume communion?), yielded to agnosticism. There was something there, but I couldn't articulate it as God. Not the God of my Catholic early childhood.

I returned to my father's home in a rural community for part of high school. Racial unrest and violence between blacks and whites were increasing in the Ann Arbor school system. Riots and fighting had no appeal for me, I am called to live and study in a non-violent environment. My brother's ongoing delinquent behavior got him more than one visit to the court system. Eventually, a judge offered imminent prison, or the U.S. Army. My brother was in Panama doing jungle training at the same time I was trying to drive through the Darien in 1976, and we didn't know it at the time.

My brother spent his military time after bootcamp in Korea, where he punched out an officer. The officer was demoted for provoking an enlisted man, my brother got a general discharge.

Since I was a bastard in the eyes of the church, the two and a half years of high school in my father's beautiful home on the lake had freedom to continue my meditative practices. I was free to wander the nature reserve adjacent to the lake. During those years I began to crystallize a sense of self and values I could articulate. I am a spiritual monist, an animist, which means I think nature is minded and I am a part of it. We are all one. If we are listening, we can hear each other's thoughts, sense each other's needs, serve each other with kindness. I was most free on Sunday mornings when my father and his second wife went to church. I enjoyed my freedom.

After high school, I became aware that my free time was being tied up helping others in need. I couldn't stop myself, it was ever present, an unfolding calling of need in the world around me. I wasn't married, had no kids, my mind power methods were helpful and word spread. This continued into my mid-twenties when I realized that in order to have free time for my own rest and relaxation, I needed to serve others as an occupation, earn my income in that way.

Entering into the field of hypnotherapy as a professional in private practice was a transformative process. Basic hypnosis was a four weekend, 100 hour experience in 1985 from Omni Hypnosis in Ft. Lauderdale. Gerry Kein and Rev. Jack Mason were my first certification instructors for the American Council of Hypnotist Examiners (ACHE). I encountered my first incremental life regression in Gerry Kein's Basic Hypnosis class when he asked for a demonstration subject for what he was going to be teaching in the intermediate class. With Gerry's guidance, I went through the incremental regression, that delightful experience of remembering, returning in my mind to different ages in school. What a surprise to look around in my memory and seeing all my old class mates from public school, then Catholic school. Then something changed, I was no longer me, the Caucasian female. With my eyelids closed, my inner eyes were open and the images I was perceiving had a life of their own. I seemed to have dark skin, and was much smaller than my grown up Caucasian German American woman body. Gerry left the room to get Rev. Jack who was responsible for this part of our education.

Jack talked me through the hypnotically induced bleed through of other lives. I was discovering that these types of spiritual phenomenon are ever present possibilities in hypnosis sessions, transformative experiences filled with subjective meaning. It didn't meet my heaven / hell / purgatory background, and I wasn't even a practicing Catholic after my parent's divorce.

I was stuck, that's the technical term, "STUCK!"

The cultural foundation embedded in my first eight years of living firmly framed my view of the spiritual world. My subjective experiences were challenging those old assumptions. Rev. Jack steered me toward the work of Irene Hickman (1985), and Jerry Kein steered me toward the audio recordings of Dave Elman (1964) to expand my understanding of what works in hypnosis.

The first two years in private practice, all of my clients demonstrated past life phenomenon. All of them. Slap me in the face, I didn't believe in it. I learned to let myself follow the lead of my clients. They were unfolding phenomenon that made no sense to me and made perfect sense to them. They taught me a lot, everything I know

about what worked in hypnosis during those initial years. I had to get out of my own way and bear witness.

Mind Probe Hypnosis (Hickman, 1985) was my manual, "Go to the cause of the problem." Hickman's pinpoint method supported my foundational assumption that each person has an indwelling spark of intelligence, an innate wisdom. With this assumption comes the idea that the person in front of me is a highly intelligent being who already has a wisdom and understanding as to where he / she is stuck and what he / she needs to feel better. First, I studied from hypnotists who claimed to know what works, then I practiced those methods with clients who verified or disproved the claims of the hypnosis educators.

After two years of clients' emergent narrative involving multiple incarnations, I found myself at the Shrine of St. Mary, candle in hand, lighting it in prayer, "Dear God, I don't understand this past life stuff, but it works, so I accept it as valid and meaningful." My acceptance of something I had no control over, other than a bit of steering mechanism for therapeutic benefit, brought that transformative learning experience to an end. By that time, I was known as the past life person in town. What a letdown for the seekers of multi-incarnational journeying when they showed up for an appointment, we induced trance, I said, "Go to the cause of your problem," and they went to an experience in early life, in utero, no more past lives. The third year in private practice brought a cluster of battered women, and that's another story.

Another shift in 1987 was the punctuated evolutionary shifts in hypnotherapy skill development following the February ACHE conference. It was Mark Gilboyne's first annual conference, and I got exposure to dynamic hypnotists who gathered to share their wisdom under the umbrella of Gilboyne's charismatic presence. He didn't have enough staff to handle the number of people who showed up, so I volunteered to help his assistant, Pat Barton, with registration. I got to meet most of the attendees as they passed through registration. What an honor! I owe so much of what I do today to Mark Gilboyne, Ormond McGill, Charles Tebbetts, Winifred Lucas, and Peter Siegel. I met young, upcoming dynamic educators of hypnotherapy, Roy Hunter and George Bien.

Gilboyne's colleagues all affirmed the habit of paying attention to what the person says in the first few minutes of the interview. Gilboyne taught me the simple internal test of validity for the client's initial report. Elicit hypnotic response, deepen it ideally to somnambulism, ask, "What are you really here for?" All the practitioners under the ACHE umbrella affirmed for me that it's my job to inspire the other person to reclaim his or her innate wisdom, re-empower themselves from within.

Gilboyne asked the group of hypnotists at his first conference, "Is there anyone here who has not experienced hypnosis, and is practicing hypnotherapy with clients?" Two hands went up. Gilboyne said, "Make sure you have a hypnotic experience before you leave here this weekend." I caught up with both of them, used the Elman Two Finger Technique, and both were fine subjects. Gilboyne was watching from across the hall, and it resulted in him giving me a scholarship for initiative. He called it the "hypno-fever." That summer, I got to spend a month with him in Glendale, CA. My study buddy was John Kalec, the Case of the Chicago Stutterer (Miracles on Demand, First Edition, Charles Tebbetts, 1987). Kalec had relapsed to stuttering, his case follow up was sweet, poignant, endearing.

Lunch with Gilboyne was always educational. One time he asked me, "What's most important to you? Money, power, love, or recognition?" I pondered for several bites before asking, "What about happiness?" He responded, "There's no such thing as happiness. You can't put it into a wheelbarrow, you can't weigh or measure it. Happiness is a byproduct that occurs when you are doing what you want to be doing."

I returned home and presented Gilboyne's theory of money, power, love and recognition to a group of cohorts. We met a year later to discuss our observations of that theory on our personal and professional lives. We are happy with and without money, money often made life easier with better food, living / work environment, clothing, and travel options. Power was a double edge, it was fine to win a fight, it could also result in loss of friendship. Recognition was a double edge, it made it easier to get things done in the community, and it could slow the progress from one point to another with the friendliness of small towns in asking, "Hey, how are your sweetheart and kids?" One of our cohorts said, "Without health, I'm not happy." We added that fifth element

into an effective framing of what is needed in order to recognize those ever present options and capacity for happiness, joy.

One afternoon, coming close to the end of a month in hypnotherapy training, I was fully infused with the hypno-fever. A month of extraordinary hypnotherapeutic demonstrations, lectures and practice, miracles on demand, I got it. Excellence in human development is an exciting strategy for living in one's personal and professional lives. Gilboyne presented it as his daily fare and his works lifted me into a different understanding of what it means to be called to serve. He was strolling through the audience speaking from the cuff, stopping long enough as he passed to slap my notebook shut on my hand and pen, ask, "Do you think you'll get all my methods?"

"Every one you do in front of me I will."

I think it was Gilboyne who suggested that a four legged stool was helpful for human balance and well-being: work, play, love, and worship.

Gilboyne told me that in his entire time working with hypnosis, he never saw a past life regression in his clients. We all have different gifts. He infused me with the therapeutic Gestalt model of one of his teachers, Fritz Perls. I didn't realize how strong that influence was in Gilboyne's work at the time. With academic training, I can now identify my own theoretical orientation: I'm an eclectic / pragmatic, existential / humanist with a strong Gestalt frame of reference, and a foundation of behaviorism. I was surprised to learn that hypnosis is considered a tool of behavioral science, and it makes sense because hypnosis works.

The second stuckness I experienced in following the calling into hypnosis was in keeping my day job, office manager in a law firm, for the first few years of my private practice in hypnosis. I practiced manifestation (Spangler, 1981), and still hesitated. Riding on the edge of letting the cornucopia of abundance, I was open without having a foot in the "real world" of salary, health insurance, paid holidays. After the 1989 Entities and Attachments workshop at the home of Irene Hickman there was no going back. My eyes were open to the spirit world, it wasn't a corner of the eye phenomenon anymore. I let go of the so called job security of the law firm, forget about law school, put both feet

into my private practice, and have been self-employed ever since. I am in the right place at the right time to do everything I am here to do. In a marketing class, I was asked where my clients come from. I do good work; the rest is word of mouth.

In 1990, I found my way to Eckerd College through a friend who claimed a friend of hers couldn't be hypnotized. He was her massage therapist, and he was willing to exchange sessions if I was willing. Yeah, sure, let me at him. I hadn't met a person I couldn't get some kind of hypnotic response from. Tom West was a student of Ida Rolf; we flipped a coin to determine who would get the first session. I won. I had this misassumption that Rolfing was going to be something gentle, like cranio-sacral massage, asked that I be given the luxury of my massage AFTER he experienced hypnosis. That is a story in itself.

Tom recruited me to Eckerd College over four years because he claimed that no one did hypnosis the way I do it. I had studied with the best names I could find in the field outside of academia, applied what I learned, what my clients demonstrated that works through my application of what I had studied. Everyone I knew in ACHE and IMDHA was practicing hypnosis the way I do it. I learned, after several semesters, that Tom had been the head of behavioral science for the State of Tennessee around the time I was born. He was one of the founders of Florida Presbyterian aka Eckerd College. This behaviorist was out of touch with "what works" in hypnosis as I knew it. I have been called to those hypnosis educators who could best polish me to serve with tools of hypnosis because hypnosis works.

Three hypnosis training manuals (Geers, 1994) were drawn from notes taken in the first decade in private practice. Subsequent revisions added citations, index, and a shift from WordPerfect to Word, with all the glitches that come from changes in format. An emotional diagram that serves as a "compass" in working with clients developed organically as I was passing through the post-divorce turbulence of my failed first marriage. Gilboyne's focus on the fear of being unloved or unlovable as the only problem behind all problems was the foundation for my diagram. Through self-reflection, I discovered how to walk myself away from painful emotions toward loving and joyful living. The emotional diagram steers my line of questions, peeling the onion,

probing what is stuck between a person and his or her ability to love him / herself fully right now.

I couldn't articulate the lineage of "what works" until I started taking theory courses in formal academic settings. I already knew it was the "what" not the "why" question. I had the AHA experiencing of rediscovering that this comes from Fritz Perls. It is the Gestalt way to avoid "why", it only draws the mind into explaining and rationalizing (ie. why am I fat?!). Better to ask "what", "where", "who", "how", "when"; questions that steer the mind differently.

What is going on?

When does it happen?

What does it remind you of?

Where does it occur?

When / Where did you first notice it?

Who is involved?

How do you feel about that?

What benefit are you drawing from that at this time? Is that what you want?

What would you prefer?

What will you be able to do when this is resolved that you can't do now?

How will you know that you are successfully beyond all that stuff?

What will you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste that lets you know you are beyond the successful resolution of all that stuff?

I had accumulated a decade of interesting cases; my intention was to refute the "anecdotal evidence" argument with video and audio recorded sessions archived for a qualitative evaluation. I wanted to circle back around to my pre-academic skill set, back to my "wild and free" roots of mind power methods. Love, and all her archetypal power, sent me on a lateral path of marriage with USAF pararescue man (no he didn't have

that green tattoo). Going lateral into love added another decade to the academic plan. It also positioned my archival records for the dissertation in the perfect place to be erased by the ocean. My plan to analyze the hypnotic style of my interpretation of “what works in hypnosis”, reconnect with my hypnosis roots, was wiped out when Hurricane Wilma the Wet put saltwater under my home and through the garage. My second husband departed February 15, 2005, for what was supposed to be his final assignment, he was scheduled to return in fourteen months, retired. He returned with the military shippers in October of 2005 to relocate the USAF Liaison office from Key West to Panama City.

During my stint as a military spouse, I got to watch sparring between the USAF and US Army over resource use at the Fleming Key dive school. The USAF liaison office found itself in our garage after that internal clash led the USAF to co-locate with the U.S. Navy in a new dive school in Panama City. When the military shippers relocated wasband #2 three days before Hurricane Wilma, I didn't realize that had taken all the video and audio recordings of hypnotherapy I planned to analyze thematically for my dissertation out of their cool, dry storage in an upstairs closet, and left them on the floor of the garage. I thought they were still safe and dry in the air conditioned closet when Wilma the Wet gave us a six foot, twelve hour saltwater bath that passed under our home, through the garage.

Key West was damaged by four hurricanes from July through October of 2005 (Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma the Wet). Key West residents learned that FEMA really stands for “Forget Everything Move Away”. Eighty percent of my friends departed the devastated island for communities with functional schools, clean homes, open stores, and safe public buildings. With the rebuilding of home and community I was working 80 - 128 hour weeks, sleeping every few days, falling forward with the doctorate. My husband got held stop / loss after telling me how he'd met the woman of his dreams, she was the perfect instrument, every note he played on her was right. He wanted me to meet her, she was wonderful. I wasn't interested in meeting the woman of his dreams, I thought that woman was the one looking at me in the mirror when I brushed my teeth.

The majority of the community rebuilding was done by 2008. I had to scramble to find a new dissertation topic since all my data had been destroyed in the hurricane storm surge. I asked the Southernmost Shrink what topic he would recommend, and he suggested evaluating the juggling program at the middle school. Ok. I learned to juggle with the middle school kids. What was I going to measure for that study? Reading skills? Hand / eye coordination? A reduction in the number of visits to the principal's office? I took the juggling balls with me to a conference to recruit the dissertation committee, and heard the keynote speaker describe the tsunami of veterans with PTSD coming home. Dr. Charles Figley was a former marine. I put the juggling balls away, thinking, "In a military town, if I am focusing on helping the kids, and they are going home to an unstable parent, I am looking at the wrong target for intervention."

I reached out to the neurofeedback community. The divorce was done in August of 2010, I argued oral defense and received the Doctorate of Education in Counseling Psychology in September of 2010. My Christmas present to myself that year was to replace the sewer lines that had been damaged by the storm surge in 2005. Oh, the joys of a toilet that flushes down with the first flush.

I haven't been in the military. I am the daughter of a German WWII POW, sibling of a U.S. Army man, ex-wife of a USAF pararescue man. My home life has been steeped in the behavior of military men, and I have lived through natural disasters. I have learned from veterans of WWII (German and American), Korean War, Vietnam War, Canadian service members (including UFO stories), and U.S. veterans from the current wars (Iraq and Afghanistan) about what works in helping them sleep and heal or rehabilitate from the adverse effects of war. I am familiar with the long dark veil of trauma.

The spiritual methods that work with veterans will be presented in the third article in this series. The next article in this series will describe my initiation into neurofeedback training, and how it serves to reduce PTSD symptoms. Two of my case studies can be found in *Restoring the Brain: Neurofeedback as an Integrative Approach to Health* (Ed. Hanno Kirk, chapter 10 first edition, chapter 13, second edition). The

case study of Jackie O. (not her real name) will demonstrate neurofeedback efficacy in reducing the symptoms known as PTSD.

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Chapter 29 – PTSD: Civilian Symptom Reduction with Neurofeedback

Case Study: Mary (not her real name) agreed to let her story serve to inspire others in their growth and development. At the time, Mary was 43, single, Caucasian, and worked in the food service industry as a short order cook. This is her story:

Neurofeedback has led me to experience massive transformation in self-perception. I'd been in recovery for three years, left an abusive/battering relationship and lived in shelters for a year and a half. When I got a job in a grocery store deli, it was not a friendly environment, but it was work. I got a lot of ridicule from my coworkers about my weight. I was morbidly obese, and an outsider in a small town grocery store where most of the employees were born here. I was a mess when I started neurofeedback training. After working long hours in a hostile work environment on Thanksgiving to make sure other families got their holiday dinners, I spoke my mind to my boss and got fired.

I accepted a pro bono series of neurofeedback to help me overcome the post-traumatic stress I developed from repeated experiences of violence and betrayal from people I had thought I could be safe with. When I lost my job, I hit a wall of fear that I was going to find myself back on the street, living in shelters. Two weeks after I lost my job and started neurofeedback training, I found a better job, with a bit less pay. What a change after working long hours, with no expressions of appreciation, and no raises or employee evaluations for over a year, to get a positive job performance evaluation and a raise in the first 60 days on the new job. The raise brought me back to what I was earning in the hostile work environment.

The positive changes neurofeedback started in me were obvious almost immediately. Even though I was working irregular hours during training for the new job, filling in where they needed me, I was able to rest fully and handle my fears. The neurofeedback training has taught me to stay calm under pressure. I

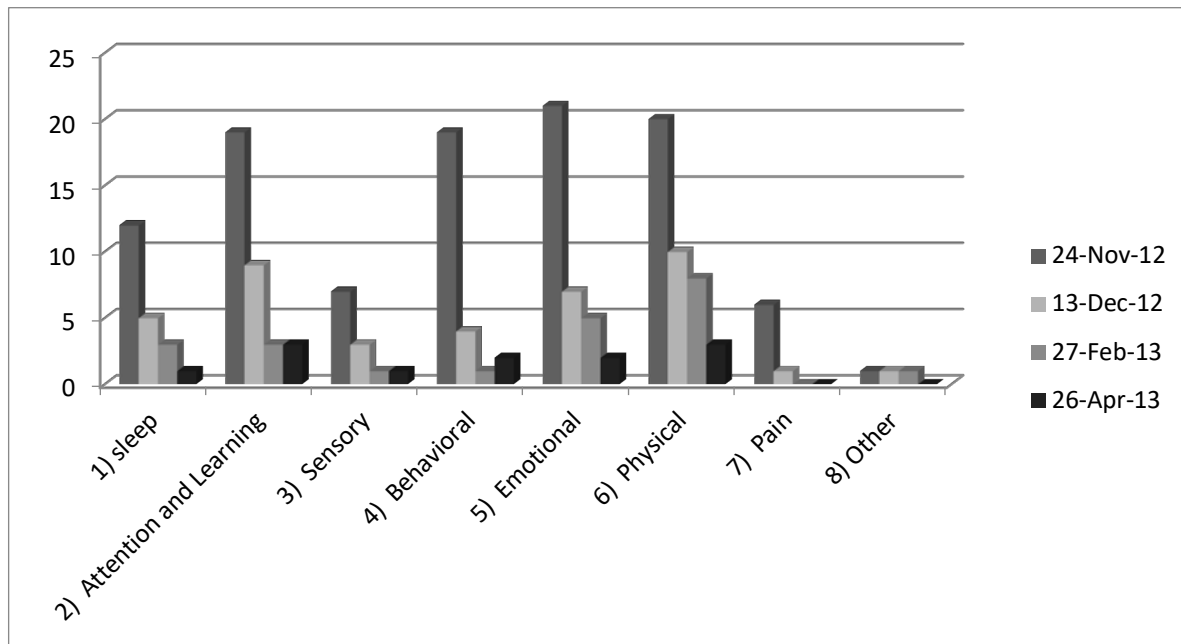
am more aware now of what it means to be relaxed and stay calm under pressure. My sense of humor has re-emerged, along with a sense of confidence in knowing I can do what is needed to be productive. It's easier to be with people now that I can relax, and the people I find myself around are people who are safe to be with. I'm presently working as a short order cook, and have surpassed records on many of the shifts I've worked over the past two months.

I've also learned that physical nutrition is just as important for mental health as the brain training. I have been overweight for 30 years. Neurofeedback helped me become more observant of my body's responses to what I put into it. This led me to removed sugar, aspartame, high fructose corn syrup, sodas, and most processed foods from my diet. I still smoke cigarettes, but now I take walks while I smoke, and am smoking less. The changes in my behavior have been gradual and progressive, resulting in a 40 lb. reduction in my weight in the past five months.

I can now perceive myself living a more balanced, healthier lifestyle that includes resuming my slender, strong, flexible shape. The changes have been so profound in such a short period of time.

Mary allowed the presentation of her data as a tool of self-empowerment. Narrative is part of the process some people need to use in identifying their own strengths and survival skills. Mary found it empowering to clearly articulate a coherent narrative of self. The courage that comes from within during the challenges of living with a batterer, in surviving to tell the tale, and the ability to find words sufficient to capture meaning, can serve to transform the pain of surviving into the joys of thriving. Mary wants to inspire other abused humans to use neurofeedback to address the many issues of domestic violence in a gentle, highly effective manner.

Symptom Tracking Summary: November 24, 2012 – April 26, 2013



Note. #1 - 105 symptoms 24 November 2012. #2 - 40 symptoms 13 December 2012. #3 - 22 Symptoms 27 February 2013. #4 - 12 symptoms 26 April 2013, our final session of a 20 session PTSD protocol.

	#1	#2	#3	#4
1) Sleep	12	5	3	1
2) Attention and learning	19	9	3	3
3) Sensory	7	3	1	1
4) Behavioral	19	4	1	2
5) Emotional	21	7	5	2
6) Physical	20	10	8	3
7) Pain	6	1	0	0
8) Other	1	1	1	0
Total	105	40	22	12

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About the Research Clinician: Monica Geers Dahl, Ed.D. has been a member of IMDHA since 1987. During her time in Key West, she offered pro bono neurofeedback services for one veteran a month (20 session protocol) as a provider for the homecoming4veterans program. When that pro bono slot was unfilled by a veteran, she made that time available to civilians: victims of accidents, domestic violence, rape, natural disaster, violent crimes and traumatic brain injury.

Neurofeedback is a medical device authorized by the FDA for the purposes of stress reduction. If a large percentage of illness is stress mediated, learning to relax can systemically restore a more healthful, resting state of living. Neurofeedback was described by one of its developers as “Western style meditation on steroids. . . we give immediate feedback to address the question, ‘Am I doing this right?’ . . . It is no longer necessary to retreat to a cave or a mountain top to gain insight into self-regulation of internal states” (Siegfried Othmer, July 2013 Clinical Summit, Woodland Hills, CA).

Chapter 30 - PTSD Complications: Entities and Attachments

Introduction

This article will present a brief introduction to spiritual methods used in working with veterans, survivors of rape, domestic or criminal assault, accidents, and natural disaster. These strategies are useful with veterans to reduce or eliminate some of the symptoms known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The first article in this three part psychoeducational series traced my path into private practice as a hypnotherapist, the second described my entry into neurofeedback (NF) as a research clinician and a NF case study.

I have learned from veterans of WWII (German and American), the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and occasional members of other services (Canadian, Israeli, South American). I've heard ghost stories, near death and out of body experiences, meaningful coincidences, events and perceptions that stood out in service members' memories as important to their war making and present state of mind. Each taught me "what works" for them to feel better, sleep better at night, function more optimally by day.

Observing, listening, perceiving and bearing witness to an unfolding narrative, it is my job to regulate my internal state to one of relaxed well-being. In that way I establish a sacred space within which something bigger than me and the veteran / client / student can emerge within the session. If my anus goes tight, I've just shifted from a relaxed state of parasympathetic nervous system functioning, into sympathetic fight or flight. I need to reboot my nervous system, make a note in the margin of the client notes that I have stumbled across one of my own unresolved issues, things I need to address with my own therapist. I can only give my full attention, create that sacred space for organic unfolding, when I am in a relaxed state of well-being. If I fail to notice what triggers my own fear / stress response, I may use an automatic silencing strategy to avoid my discomfort. Silencing is a form of client abandonment.

When I am able to self-regulated and sustain a state of relaxed well-being, I have witnessed phenomenon outside of the scientific model of what it means to be human. I

have borne witness to things that appear miraculous, epiphanies, AHA experiences, spiritual emergencies, memories / spirits of the dead, dark / demonic energies, lost and fragmented souls, entities and attachments, spirits of love and healing. I know it is more polite to refer to the discarnate beings as “the visitors”, I generically refer to them as “the ghosties”.

Prior to my exposure to the Silva Mind Control methods, I had a school yard accident where the other children put me into a game I didn't want to join. They tossed me up in the air, my head found the concrete surface before the body did when I came down. I was unconscious for 30 minutes, and have seen things differently since then, like the moving shadows around everything that I later learned are “auras”. Jose da Silva's methods gave me a language and skill set to cope with the multi-dimensional world of muses, spirit guides / helpers / healers / educators, angels and demons. Learning to move through the spiritual realms is the same as learning to move through all cultural environments, we are not alone. These entities can be viewed as thought forms, fragmented emotions, or as discrete beings unto themselves. They are similar to all other human contacts; some are pleasant, some are not. Veterans who find me are often able to reduce or resolve physical and emotional pain, restore lost memories, and resume enjoying life. I like to use what works. If these phenomenon frightened me, I wouldn't be able to do this work. I've got a defective fear gene.

I have lived my life surrounded by people who have known military service. As a daughter, sibling, and spouse to military men, I know what it is like at home. Some veterans look upon their service as a shining chapter in life, some of these high octane men and women have difficulty reintegrating into the civilian world. I am familiar with some of the patterns of behavior that set military men apart from most humans.

One of the interesting phenomenon is the desire to go invisible, lean back against anything and disappear.

“If you were seen by the guards in the POW camp, it was bad . . . better to become still like a rabbit hiding in plain sight” (WWII POW).

“If you don't go invisible in the jungle, the snipers will find you” (Vietnam Vet).

This is not a knack limited to veterans of foreign warfare, I was out to dinner with a detective and his wife late one evening, and he dropped out of sight as we left the restaurant. I lost track of him in an empty, dark night, city street. I stood with his wife, wondering where he had gone, couldn't perceive him until he moved, detached himself from a wall and approached us. I asked, "How do you do that?"

"I had to do that when I was doing surveillance, otherwise the bad guys could catch me."

There appear to be skills developed by humans who specialize in warfare, both the foreign, and the criminal activities of the home nation, that transcend the skills of most humans who do not work in these arenas.

Wise Practice: Grief and Forgiveness

One of my assumptions for healing is that the practice of forgiveness is an important part of loving oneself, healing wounds. Forgive and let go. I'm not saying forget it, I'm saying forgive it. Forgive oneself and others. Some veterans refuse to forgive, "I'll never forgive Hitler." Ok. I accept that some folks are contented with their inner states, it doesn't bother them to call something like "Hitler" an evil that can never be forgiven. Some veterans struggle to forgive themselves for doing what they did, seeing what they saw, and surviving when others didn't. Sometimes we have to forgive those who died for doing what they did, saying what they said, and even for leaving us behind, alone. Leave no man behind, sure, yeah, all alone, no one to talk to.

Grief takes its own time. In the era of Achilles, the warfighters took time to grieve the dead: withdraw from war making, build the funeral pyre, place coins on the eyes to pay the boatman for passage across the River Styx into the land of the dead. Modern war fighters are not given the same organic capacity to withdraw from battle to tend to the fallen, grieve the loss. I observe ungrieved loss as a destructive influence on the human capacity to feel anything, much less compassion for another person. A loss grieved organically, in its own time, can harness the individual's power to overcome obstacles, as Achilles did when he finished grieving his loss of Patroclus during the siege of Troy.

Grief and forgiveness have a common element, I need to practice both until I am done. Both are organic. Both take their own time. I perceive refusing to forgive as a toxic. I consider it to be a choice of self-hatred. I have to practice loving myself to practice forgiveness. If I fail to forgive, it is like I am eating poison and expecting the person I refuse to forgive will die from my poison. A more realistic assessment would inform me that I might be better off adjusting my state of mind, changing my thoughts, selecting more upbeat feelings to run in my life, and seeking out the environment within which I find a goodness of fit. The best environment has a goodness of fit with my gifts, talents, skills, and desires. I'm a hedonist, a pleasure seeker. I prefer to engage with emotions that polish me up, rather than those that grind me down. I don't serve others for altruistic reasons, I do it because it feels good, there is a goodness of fit, it's usually fun, and I like it. I do it because I am so called.

Learning to listen closely, follow the calling even when it is only a whisper, or the path is hard, I have evolved into a spiritual monist. In my theistic, existential humanism, I believe we are all one within a divine presence. Taking a less Christian more Eastern perspective, there is that balance between light and dark, male and female. The polarization of knowing discussed by the pre-Socratic philosophers is still used today in qualitative research; if I hear about the mother, I remember to ask about the father. If I hear about only sorrows, I notice the absence of joys and ask about them. Polarizing thought allows us to fill in the blanks to find a fuller range of what it means to be human. In the Buddhist traditions, things are not this or that, God is present when things are this AND that. Evil is real in my world. There are aspects of my work with veterans striving for freedom from the adverse effects of symptoms known as PTSD that require a less scientific, more esoteric approach.

Spiritual Monism: Esoteric Methods Useful with Veterans

We humans are so provincial in holding human existence at the center of all that is known or knowable. I view myself as a part of a larger organic highly intelligent being. This skin is filled with a swirling soup of DNA that is the highly intelligent source of all organic life on this planet. It is smart, and my human peanut brain is often overrun by my body's wisdom. For example, what is it that makes me turn and look at someone

sitting behind me, someone I feel is staring at me, so I turn to meet their stare? How is it that I know someone is in a dark room, waiting for me, before I turn on the light? Is it the quiet sound of the breathing? How about knowing who it is when the phone rings, how does that happen? In my Christian explorations after being ex-communicated by the Catholics, I discovered the concept of being one in the body of Christ. It's easy. We are all sparks of the Light. My whole system of living and being is structured as a highly responsive organic instrument of perception with an automatic reset to an indwelling love and joy.

Mark Gilboyne was my first punctuated evolution in my ability to serve veterans with hypnotherapy methods. The second emerged with Irene Hickman's face in the IMDHA conference catalogue, keynote speaker, and then hosting William Baldwin to teach a weekend course in entities and attachments at her Kirskville, Missouri home. She had a rambling place on a lake with an inside, two story water fall. I was there to study with her. My previous hypnosis educators were male, I wanted to discover the views of a woman in this field. It was a brief disappointment when I learned Irene was not going to be teaching. I was given the balcony in the room with the waterfall to lay out my bedroll for the weekend. With all the spiritual hypnotherapy practice we did that weekend in that room, it made for a couple of nights where odd things binged and banged around the room all night. I slept, but not deeply. The only thing that actually "touched" me was when her cat jumped on me and I bolted up.

Fr. Marty Patton was the catcher for Baldwin's training that weekend, he caught me when my partner bailed on me, guiding me through a release of many little dark seeds. I'm not out to "prove" these things are "real", I will say that thoughts have power, and with the departure of those things we released, whatever they were, I felt light hearted and happy for the first time in years. When I returned home from that training, a newspaper man stopped, stared, and said, "You look like you've been to Lourdes, what have you done?" I had to look up Lourdes to learn it was a place of miracles. Thank you, Fr. Marty! My early years of drinking hard liquor had opened my aura to the infestation. Why do you suppose hard liquor is also known as "spirits"?

Veterans who are stuck in war trauma may report that they do not want to let their dead buddies go, “I don’t want to forget.” I don’t ask them to forget, I am looking for the forgiveness and release of sorrow, loss, grief. To gather the individual’s awareness to the splintered aspect of self, I ask, “How many are in, on, or around your body?” The normal response is, “How many what?” “I didn’t say that, just give me the first number that comes to mind.” From a Christian perspective, the correct answer is “ONE”. There is one soul that inhabits the skin.

Discarnate influences can disrupt the innate homeodynamic processes between life inside the skin and the goodness of the environmental fit. If they have a darkness about them, they can even be plugging into the human energy systems, taking energy for cents on the dollar, resulting in a sense of overall fatigue. They are evident in feelings of anger, fear, sadness, shame, guilt, and the longing for revenge. When I am connected with my inner Light, a joy and happiness infuses my entire Being, radiates out into the world. Which emotional set do I wish to play / use in my life? The negative ones that wear me down, or the positive ones that polish me up?

When I ask, “How many are in, on, or around the body, if the veteran responds anything other than “ONE”, I ask, “How many are YOU?” If the person responds with a number more than one, we can start practicing integration strategies, collecting the shattered or fragment aspects of self back into a loving place within the heart. If the person indicates that there are some that are not oneself, I ask, “Have they ever been human?” If yes, we start a process of opening the door to the Light, allowing a Light connection from within the body:

“Look inside, is it light or dark inside you?”

Once we have established a perception of inner light,

“Look up, as if you are looking up through a window in the top of your head. Is it light or dark above you?”

We strive to find the sunny sky. If the individual struggles to find a sunny sky, I ask, “Have you ever seen dawn?” An easy “yes” with military folks.

“What’s it like?” Wait for the response.

“Have you ever been to the beach at noon?” A usual “yes.”

“What’s that like?”

Then we make the connection, “Is the light within connected with the light above?” If no, “Breathe in the light, breathe out the darkness, let me know when the light within is connected with the light above, just say ‘I got it’.” If there is still hesitation, I may suggest, “Have you ever played with a mirror in sunlight, flashing it at someone’s eye to get their attention?” That will usually get a “yes”.

“Ok, Imagine that within you is a mirror, and you are aligning it with the light above, the light within is a reflection of the light above. Tell me when those lights are connected. Breathe in the light, breathe out the darkness, tell me when you’ve got it.” Once we get this alignment of the inner and outer light, I ask if it ok to allow the light to come through the body and vacuum it out.

For veterans who carry thoughts, behaviors, attitudes of the dead ones, and shift in their behavior as if another person were present in the original inhabitant’s skin, the older diagnosis would be multiple personality disorder, the newer diagnosis could be dissociative identity disorder. A common diagnosis for veterans who report ongoing contact with their dead buddies is paranoid schizophrenic, it may find its way into the recovery / rehabilitation discourse as survivors’ guilt. I didn’t diagnose or prescribe, I painted images in the mind intended to harness the innate gifts of healing. I want to remove the spiritual shrapnel so that the incarnate human can recover or find the best form of rehabilitation. My goal with these veterans is to help them release the thoughts, behaviors and attitudes of their dead buddies. When dealing with things that don’t appear to be a part of the client in front of me, we engage in a dialogue about going home to the light, home to their loved ones. We establish that light within / light above imagery, and the connection between light within and above. I suggest:

“Healers of the Light, Warriors of the Light, stand strong against the powers of darkness that would interfere, open the doors to heaven wide. Songs of whales

and dolphins, spirits of whales and dolphins, sing and dance around these lost souls, open the doors to heaven wide.”

Sometimes that’s all it takes, the face of the veteran will lighten up, the individual will describe a strange and much appreciated quietness inside his or her head or body. I might suggest:

“Breathe in the light, imagine that the light is filling your body, cleaning and polishing, clearing out all things that are other than you, loosening things that are too tight, tightening things that are too loose, dusting and airing out the entire body in a lovely beaming of beautiful Light, taking all things other than you home to the light, home to the place of healing.”

I may suggest:

“Your loved ones are waiting for you. You made a terrible mistake getting stuck here when your body died, it’s time to go home to the Light. There is no time or space in the Light, everything is done. All things are forgiven. You are already forgiven for everything you have ever done. Everything is done. Everything is forgiven. There is no time or space in the Light, all things are done in the Light.”

Sometimes it is not so easy, and I use a “rights” argument:

“This is a planet of free will, the original owner of the body is in need of full use of the body. Would it be alright to go home to the light now, home to the loved ones?”

Sometimes a Christian imagery is useful:

“Archangel Michael, bring your sword, net and shield. Put your shield around this one _____ (name), like the Starship Enterprise captain saying, ‘Shields up Scotty’. Pass your sword around the edges of the shield and trim off everything that is other than this human _____ (name). Cast your fine linked golden net and draw it through this human _____ (name) like a fisher casts for bait fish, draw your net through this person from the tips of the toes, through the body, right out the top of the head. Take that net full of everything and everyone other

than the original inhabitant of this body home to the light, home to the place of healing.”

A Buddhist practice called Feeding the Demons (Allione, 2008) can be useful. There are many different cultural strategies for identification and release of things perceived to be other than “self”.

When folks suffering from the symptoms of PTSD report that they have something in, on, or around self that is other than self, has never been human, the words that person uses to describe their perceptions include spirit guides, angels, demons, healers, teachers, muses, friends, ancestors, holy ones, parasites, and mischief makers.

For those who have been tortured, raped, attacked, there may be aspects of their sense of “self” that splintered off, “broke”, fled from the body during the trauma. Persuading a splintered aspect of self back into the body is not found in the counseling / psychology text books. It is described more fully in the article I wrote for Subconsciously Speaking (Geers, 2010) about a tortured Central American physician. Although his physical body healed thoroughly from being beaten, he still couldn’t sleep, eat well, make love, play with his children, or work. This changed after we got to the point in his narrative where he described being beaten until he “broke.” He had obviously survived all that, I needed to move him forward from surviving to fully engaged thriving.

“And then what happened?” (using past tense to imply survival)

“I was floating at the ceiling of the barn.”

“And then?”

“I saw my broken body on the ground.”

“And then what happened?”

“I was sure I was dead.”

“Did you ever get back into your body?” His blank face answered my question without words leaving his lips.

“Where are you in relation to your body, let your hand show me.”

His arm rose up, his finger pointed up.

“Did you ever get back into your body?”

He shook his head as he said, “No one ever asked me that question.”

“Would you like to get back in your body?”

“Yes. How?”

“Slide back in like a hand in a glove, like a foot in a shoe.”

He found it easy because there were no extras in the body. He followed up with me once, a year later. He was doing fine, back to work, eating good, making love with his wife, able to play with his children. After suffering for several years before he found me, he resolved his problematic PTSD symptoms in a session that lasted less than an hour. I was willing to discuss his non-scientific experiences with him, and offered a strategy that worked for resolving his problematic symptoms.

For those who have a frame of atheism, these concepts can be viewed from Jungian concepts of the Shadow and Archetypal knowledge. I do not intend to argue the reality of entities and attachments, I will argue that these methods are useful. Whether the emergent phenomenon are simply aspects of a human imagination, or more complex aspects of a creative living intelligence from which the human life emerges as one thread of being in a universe of plurality and multi-dimensional existence is for the reader to explore and decide for him or herself. I take the position that there is more to the world and human experiences than science can currently explain.

The weekend with Hickman, Baldwin, and Patton led me to Edith Fiore (1987) and Carl Wickland (1924). Wickland wrote about how spirits of the dead will rustle

things to get the attention of those who still inhabiting biological forms. Do dead friends, family members or even adversaries continue to visit / haunt / influence the living?

In Eastern religions, it is common to view the family member as serving the family for generations after the physical body dies (Tick, 2005). The Vietnamese build windy tombs in the attempt to bring home the lost spirits of those whose bodies who were not put into the family shrine with honor. They claim that lost souls are seen in the shadows, in the corners of the eye, and can be heard in the rustling of the wind. According to Tick, in some of the Indigenous cultures of the Americas, the soul of a human who is killed in battle has to be honored, and in so doing it joins in the energy of the successful warrior, giving added strength. If a dead enemy is dishonored, or desecrated, its spirit will adversely impact the physical victor.

A Vietnam veteran articulated the “corner of the eye” phenomenon when he complained bitterly about the “rats in the corner of his eye.” He was shooting holes in the floorboards of his home trying to kill those rats. He was a crack shot, but he never hit any of those rats. Fiore (1987) proposed that seventy percent of her clients reported spiritual phenomenon that did not yield to traditional talk therapy. Anecdotally, I agree. Integration of spiritual methods of spirit release and soul retrieval transformed my work with the majority of my clients and students, accelerating the process of human healing, growth and development. When an Army medic got past her tendency to isolate, and we had released several layers of whatever it was that was clinging to her, she found herself going out at and enjoying events. One day she reported, “I was out in this little bar last night, listening to a band, and in the corner of my eye I saw five humans dressed in black hurrying past me. I had to look twice, they came and went so fast. I wasn’t sure I saw them.”

“Real humans?”

“No. Ghosties.”

From that conversation, we were able to start the conversation about how painful it was to handle the dying soldiers, and how even entering a place where people died filled her with an overwhelming sense of pain and grief.

The therapeutic part of helping the veterans articulate these phenomenon is that they stop being afraid of what isn't physically present, start thinking and behaving in a way to feel safe. For those who have been sensitized to the spirit world, those who have stood too long on the edge of living and dying without crossing the River Styx, the veil may be thin. The Greeks were not averse to mentioning the "shades" of those who were departed. In order to serve veterans effectively, I have to be open to these discussions and have tools that are useful to reduce suffering and improve feelings of well-being.

For those who have been sensitized by trauma, and have had the veil of "what is normal" ripped away, there are multi-dimensional aspects of living that can no longer be ignored once they have been brought to our awareness. It's impossible to go halfway into awareness of the multi-dimensionality of life, and then pretend that these other things / beings / thought forms / entities are not there. Just like carefully picking the human friends with whom we invest our time, humans sensitive to multi-dimensional reality need to practicing identifying who / what is desirable, preferable, who / what is kind, and who / what is not. It's pretty easy. I ask three times, quickly in my head, "Are you from the light or from the dark?"

I ask three times, quickly in my head, "Are you warm or cool?" The light, warm, loving ones never hesitate, the dark chilly ones often hesitate. In the physical world, when something warm is put up against something cool, the warm thing will get cooler, and the cool thing will get warmer. It works the same in the spirit world. I prefer to cultivate the assistance of warm, loving, Light beings, whether they be thoughts, emotions, angels, muses, or other humans.

Some of the veterans I have spoken with were quite articulate about the dark, red eyed rage that kept them alive in battle, a seemingly superhuman sense of perception that allowed them to survive while those around them died. Some have described looking down at that broken body, his / her own body, and how surprising it was to wake up inside the skin, again. When I encounter the energetic presence of a dead enemy during hypnosis sessions, I want to send those entities home to the light just like I seek to send the energetic entities of the GI buddies home to the light. This is not always so

simple. The war fighter in front of me may have a different attitude, “I’m not helping the enemy. Fuck the gook. I’m not helping that one.”

Negotiations for freedom can be challenging when attempting to create internal peace years after a war was officially declared “mission accomplished”, or, “done.” These negotiations may involve taking a close look at what values are underlying the veteran’s requirement to voluntarily carry the dead enemy into his / her own personal and professional post war life. Perhaps they just need to be given some more effective options; forgiveness and release are at the top of my strategies list. Robert Monroe (1992) developed strategies and programs for helping himself and others negotiate the multi-dimensional realms.

Not all ghost stories are scary, some are poignant and meaningful. A WWII U.S. veteran who went to war with all his brothers, five or six of them, sought me out to confess his story before he died. He was in a convoy, at the rear, got a flat. He took so long getting the tire changed that he lost sight of the convoy, all his brothers were in trucks ahead of him. As he got back in his truck cab, he found one of his brothers in the passenger seat. “How did you get here?”

“Doesn’t matter. Don’t turn right up there, go straight.”

His was the only truck of supplies to make it to his destination. As he hopped out of his truck, the troops ran up and asked, “How did you make it through that ambush?”

“My brother had a different route,” he turned to point to his brother in the truck cab, and there was no one there. All his brothers died in the ambush. This old veteran looked at me intently at the end of our session, “What do you think of all that?”

“I think your brothers loved you. One of them made sure you were here to carry on the family name. What do you think?”

His face lightened up as if a heavy weight was lifted from him.

Veterans who come to me rarely hesitate to discuss their spiritual phenomenon, I comment on the unfolding phenomenon when I observe it, I don’t ignore it. I do not add things to their medical files at the VA, I don’t diagnose or medicate. I accept the

veterans' statements as valid and personally meaningful; it doesn't frighten me into silence. The spiritual phenomenon is something to be dealt with, not silenced, or medicated into marginality. Silencing a client is a form of professional abandonment.

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homecoming4veterans.org volunteer group. If a veteran does not fill the 20 session pro bono time she makes available, she opens the time for a victim of rape, domestic or criminal violence, accident, or natural disaster.

Chapter 31 - PTSD: Torture Victim

Trauma – Fragmented / Splintered Soul © revised 2016

A young Central American M.D. trained in the U.S. presented numerous problems that had been bothering him for several years. He had physically recovered from being tortured three years earlier, but hadn't been able to sleep, eat, work, make love with his wife, or play with his children. I did not question the way he reported his symptoms pre and post session, the young MD had obviously been getting enough sleep and food to survive. I sought to meet him where he was, enter his world enough to help him relax enough to reboot his own innate wisdom and healing capacities. I asked him to tell me the whole story. He reached a point in his narrative when he said, "And then I broke."

I sat silently waiting for him to continue. Obviously, he had survived, I wanted to hear the rest of his story. He didn't volunteer anything more so I asked, "And then what happened?" Often, I will use present tense to keep the person attached to the emotional load that is in need of being released. In situations like this I use past tense to help the person detach from the intense emotions and embed the inferred message that they survived.

He told me the part he didn't tell to the medical doctors who had treated him, "I was floating at the ceiling, looking down at my broken body. I thought I was dead."

Silence. Then I asked, "Did you ever get back into your body?"

He said, "What?"

"Did you ever get back into your body?"

"No one has ever asked me that."

There is spiritual phenomenon that exists outside of the scientific paradigm. To overlook it is to abandon the client. It is omitted from the traditional allopathic medicine

and theories of mental health and psychology in the Modern Western Traditions of accredited education. The academically trained healers do not ask questions relevant to soul fragmentation, loss, retrieval, and reintegration.

I asked, "Where are you in relation to your body?"

He asked, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Let your hand point to where you are in relation to your body."

His arm rose up, his hand extended above his head, his fingers pointed above him, "I'm still up there."

I asked, "Would you like to get back into your body?"

He asked, "How do I do that?"

I said, "Slide back in."

He asked, "How do I do that?"

I said, "Like putting your hand in a glove, or your foot in a sock and a shoe. Slide back in."

He did. The total session was perhaps 20 minutes. Easy case. Not all cases are easy. I was approached in public a year later by a young boy who stuck out his hand to shake mine, and said, "Thank you."

I asked, "What did I do?"

He smiled, "My daddy plays ball with me, again."

His father, the MD, stepped out of the audience. He said he was able to work, eat, sleep, make love with his wife, and play with his kids.

Humans subjected to rape and incest will comment on how they "left the body", "floated at the ceiling" while the sexual assault was occurring, or "a part of me went and hid behind the rock, another part of me went and hid behind the tree". Calling and retrieving splintered sparks of self are necessary for living a more fully embodied life.

Attending a presentation from a former refugee, I heard her use of dissociative language to describe her experiences of being displaced, the difficulties of the refugee life, relocation to the United States, and the challenges of adapting to a new culture. She appeared to be acculturated, had obtained a degree and was a professor at a university. I joined her as she walked out of the presentation and asked, "Did you ever get back into your body?"

She responded, "That is not a part of a CACREP accredited program."

"But it is a part of the process of recovering from trauma."

"You can't get back into the body until you know it is safe."

This therapeutic approach to resolving a spiritual / soul aspect of traumatic response is not a part of the formal educational processes for licensure in the United States. It is a part of an advanced hypnotherapy training syllabus (Geers, 1994, Hypnotherapy, [HYP300]) e-copies to be available in 2018.

Dr. Dahl is presenting a 3 day pre-conference basic hypnosis [HYP100]) course free to those who pre-register for the International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association (IMDHA) annual conference in Daytona Beach, limited seating for this filmed class www.hypnoalliance.com. A 100+ page e-syllabus of what works in basic (directive) hypnosis is available for free download from the hypnoalliance website.

Chapter 32 - Round Robin

Group hypnosis is a helpful way of providing hypnosis services at an affordable price. It is common to see hypnosis groups for smoking cessation and weight control. I like providing a free form hypnosis “jam session”, using a Round Robin approach for group hypnosis. We initiate the circle by asking participants to clarify what they want to achieve with this session. We go around the group and ask, “What are you here for?”, or, “If I could wave a magic wand over your head, what would you want from today’s session?”

We capture the participants exact words, and then practice editing suggestions by examining it from five ways to structure positive suggestions taught by Mark Gilboyne in 1987 (found in my training manual Hypnotherapy: Basic Hypnosis (HYP100) p.66-68):

1 - Use Positive Statements.

State what you want, instead of what you don’t want. Take a moment to envision your desired outcomes, the solutions, rather than the problem itself.

2 - Awareness is Crucial.

Whatever you are most aware of is what you attract. When you put mental energy into something, you tend to find it everywhere. Use your affirmations to focus on the result you desire, or the method of attaining the results, rather than the problem.

- I am in control of my appetite. (*incorrect - this sounds harmless, but it claims an appetite that needs controlling.*)

+ I eat as much as I need to sustain my body perfectly. (*correct*)

3 - Use the Present Tense.

- I will diet until I lose _____ lbs. *(incorrect - this gives you the opportunity to do it later and it implies that you are losing something. You may trick yourself into letting yourself lapse today by this wording.)*

+ I am more and more slender each and every day. *(correct. The conscious mind knows that this suggestion is future based, but present improved. The subconscious can make is comfortable use of open ended life affirming ideas.)*

4 - Be Specific.

Carefully state exactly what you desire, avoiding slang or wording with multiple meanings.

- I am losing 20 lbs. *(incorrect - my mind goes nuts when I lose things. I do not want to lose weight and find it, again. I must shed, reduce, discard, take off, eliminate, get rid of, throw away.)*

+ Each and every day, I am closer to my goal of _____ lbs. (or size _____).
(correct)

5 - Use "I Am".

Identify who is doing what. Be sure to include yourself. The action, behavior, thoughts, feelings, and responsibilities are things for you to do or experience, not something you want someone else to do.

- Each and every day, more and more relaxed. *(incorrect - who is doing it? There is power in the words, "I am." They are the same words used by the voice from the burning bush, with Moses. Write your affirmations in the first person, in the present tense.)*

+ Each and every day, in every way, I am more and more relaxed.
(correct.)

One of the fascinating aspects of a free form group hypnosis, is that a cluster of individuals together create a body of positive suggestions of benefit to the entire group, often with interconnecting expressed needs.

After a person has agreed to a sentence to reflect what he or she wants from today's session, with it being specific, written in the present tense, ask the participant to select a keyword to anchor the affirmation. The word or short phrase symbolizes the entire goal toward which the person is striving. This means that instead of reading the affirmations 50 times a day, a keyword or phrase can represent the entire body of positive suggestions. This keyword (aka anchor) is a trigger for the memory banks to review the entire selection of affirmations you have prepared.

Regarding a weight issue, one might key in with: slender, sexy, shapely, attractive, trim, slim, etc. . . .

Once the person has selected a trigger word, ask that person to close their eyes and say the word. Does it feel right? Once the person is satisfied with the way he or she feels about the key word, write it down.

(Read your affirmations and then think,) "Whenever I say, hear, see, or think the word or phrase _____, it automatically reinforces all of these positive affirmations.

Have your group get comfortable, use a progressive relaxation induction, then read the compilation of the suggestions built upon the participants stated desires.

I generally read each set of suggestions, plus the keyword, three times. Then I move on to the next person. This way we have set a keyword (anchor) for each person in the group. Then I go around the room two or three times saying the keyword for each person three times each round. Then I suggest a minute of silence for processing:

"In a moment, I will be silent for sixty seconds. During the sixty seconds of silence, allow your subconscious mind to review all the thoughts, ideas and feelings stirred up by these suggestions. Become aware of anything else that you are resolving today with these thoughts, ideas, feelings, and keyword. Allow yourself to find new solutions to those old problems. During my silence while all those thoughts, ideas and feelings resonate and settle into the deep subconscious for resolution of anything that needs resolving in order to achieve those goals, allow this or something better to emerge from your creative self deep within. And it may be that there is something else

that you really came in for, but remembered to forget to mention, and I respectfully request the subconscious mind to notice that and find new solutions for those old problems, too. And then to remember to forget again, allowing all those thoughts ideas and feelings to be in perfect alignment for your good and well-being. Curious about the easy, simple relaxation, becoming more and more relaxed and at ease, peaceful, calm and serene, opening to positive health, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually in ways that surprise and delight, and good, and excellent.”

When the sixty seconds are done, I resume:

“And Good, and Excellent. When you practice your self-hypnosis, think of the word or phrase you have chosen, breathe deeply, knowing you have triggered your subconscious mind to mentally review all that stuff, just like all the affirmations you have prepared, reviewed and accepted. That’s right. Think of your keyword or phrase several times a day. You may want to put 3 X 5 cards or post it stickers containing your key word on the fridge, in the bathroom, in the car, in your bedroom, in your purse, in the book you are reading, on the edge of the tv or computer monitor, on your smart phone as a background, anywhere that you will bump into it regularly. As you practice educating your mind with self-hypnosis, you may select for a keyword a common phrase or word, something you can use in daily conversation. Once you have reached that desired goal, you can reuse that one word key or trigger phrase.”

Then I repeat the keywords again, 3x per person, and initiate emergence:

“When you are ready, tell me about that.”

Practice a round robin asking the members what they experienced.

Facilitating a weekly group hypnosis program is a good way to introduce quality hypnosis service to the community at an affordable price. It helps build community awareness of hypnosis, and is useful in promoting a private practice.

Chapter 33 - Submodalities

Visual:

Brightness
Perspective
Associated/dissociated
Size
Black and white or color
Framed or unframed
Balance or unbalanced
Shape
Distance
Location
Clarity
Contrast
Focus
Duration
Moving or still
Steady or intermittent
Speed
Direction
Flat or dimensional
Sparkly or dull
Vertical or horizontal
Texture
Magnification
Digital or analogue
Symmetry / asymmetrical
Lighting direction

Strobe effect
Opaque or transparent
Dense in pixels or sparse
Tilt / spin / orientation
Ratio aspect of height and width
Panoramic or framed location
Multiple images or single images
Self in context
Foreground or background

Auditory:

Distance
Contrast
Clarity
Number
Pitch
Tempo
Rhythm
Location
Duration
Consistent / intermittent
Associated / dissociated
Timbre / tonality
Stereo / mono
Internal / external
Number
Symmetrical / asymmetrical

Auditory continued

Clarity / foggy
Figure / ground
Continuous / interrupted
Volume
Rhythm
Tempo (speed)

Kinesthetic:

Pressure
Movement
Location
Duration
Intensity
Texture
Hot / cold
Shape
Size
Intensity
Duration
Frequency (tempo)

Tactile: skin senses

Proprioceptive – muscle senses and
other internal sensations

Evaluative meta feelings

about feelings, perceptions or
representations

Olfactory and gustatory

Sweet
Sour
Bitter
Salt
Burnt
Aromatic
fading in and out
changes in intensity and duration
odors and tastes are powerful anchors
of state

Chapter 34 - The Hook

The wonderful thing about taking a course again is the opportunity to perceive it with senses that have changed over time. A refresher course in basic hypnosis allows the skilled hypnotherapist to review and rediscover.

Learning is an interesting process. It starts with the idea that I don't know something, and I don't know that I don't know it. Not a problem, I am only ignorant. But then I learn something and become aware that I know that I don't know something, and that can lead me to feel like awkwardness incarnate. What is it that I don't know? When I learn it, and get better at it, becoming aware of something for which I was previously ignorant, I reach a point of competence in which I know that I know something. This can be awkward, too, because I am consciously paying attention to how I do it, or know it, and it hasn't yet become a smooth process. Ideally, I learn something so well that I stop noticing that I know it, I don't know that I do know.

Have you ever tried to tell someone what you are doing while you are doing it and find yourself suddenly confused or stumbling in performance? That is what can happen to me when I try to explain something that I do automatically.

I enjoy when my automatic, smoothly flowing thought and actions are effective and timely; not too much, not too little, follow the middle road. In life as in therapy I need flexibility, lovingly adapting to the changes in emergent conversations, emotions, opportunities to respond from a balanced center of endearment with self and others.

Writing the hypnotherapy training manuals started in 1989. In 1994 I registered my compilation of "what works" in hypnosis with the U.S. Library of Congress. I was stirred to write it because of local physicians asking me, "How are you getting such great results with my patients?"

Hypnosis.

They didn't believe it because it was not the hypnosis they knew, or thought they knew.

Then I got pressed by a graduate student, Siobhan, who was already trained in traditional pathological psychology. She selected a person, Carl (not his real name) from our weekly hypnosis jam session and asked if I would be willing to demonstrate hypnotherapy with that participant individually. Carl agreed to sit with us so that Siobhan could watch the unfolding hypnotherapy. About forty minutes into the encounter, we hit the wall, Carl was stuck and I was done. "Now you know where YOU ARE STUCK. It gets nothing but worse until you CHANGE YOUR MIND." I thanked Carl for his time and suggested that when he was ready to continue this process of growth and development, come back to see me. Carl left the studio.

Siobhan asked, "Do you expect closure in every session?"

"I do. That doesn't mean that I get it, but I do hold that it is possible in my mind and strive for that ideal. If I don't assume that it can happen, it is less likely to occur because what I expect tends to occur."

Carl stuck his head back into the studio and said, "You changed my life." I responded, "You changed your life, I got to bear witness to your capacity and desire to change. Come back when you are ready to finish this process." Carl left the studio, again.

Siobhan said, "You achieved with that guy in 40 minutes what takes me 9 months in traditional therapy."

I asked, "What is it that you observed?"

Siobhan said, "That guy is psychotic, out of touch with reality, and you got him talking about feeling unloved or unlovable."

"Oh that. My hypnosis training is that the fear of being unloved or unlovable is the root problem behind all problems."¹

Carl again stuck his head into the studio, "You changed my life." I responded, "You changed your life, and now you know. We're done for today. Good bye." Carl left again.

Siobhan, “Yes, but people don’t talk about that in a first session with a therapist. I want to know what you are doing.”

“Hypnosis.”

Siobhan, “Give me an outline of what you just did.”

Oh wow. Siobhan wanted an outline by the weekend. She was a high powered New Yorker who had stopped to think, “How much is enough,” and retired at the top of her game to pursue a calling. After going through her own therapy, she felt called to serve through counseling. I had to bring to my conscious mind something I was doing automatically. I had to know something I knew but I didn’t know that I knew. How easy would it be to bring up to the surface my automatic processes? An effective hypnotherapist is nimble in being able to integrate different approaches to the clients’ presenting issues. How does a hypnotherapist choose what approach to use?

The hook.

But I didn’t know that then, so I didn’t write about it in the training manuals.

I didn’t even recognize that aspect of hypnotherapy until after a four year break from hypnotherapy to tend to my own health. The IMDHA annual conference in 2016 was my last agreed upon public event, and then I took a summer off to discover how I could resolve my declining health. That summer stretched into four years, including a service dog to help me relearn how to walk.

In 2019, I received a call from someone who wanted to know how to get the test graded from the Hypnotherapy, Vol. I: Basic Hypnosis (HYP100)²a manual IMDHA provides on hypnosisalliance.com. I agreed to grade the exam. He wanted to see all of my volumes, get certified with IMDHA, and start teaching. He suggested we call the material compiled in my manuals The Dahl Method. I agreed to train him how to teach from my manuals, and in January 2020 resumed the joy of teaching hypnosis.

I got the delight of rereading the material cobbled together by my much younger self, ancestress to the old woman I am now. All those memories, people whose shoulders I stand upon, notes of classes, experiences in groups, and with individuals in

sessions. At the end of the second (HYP200)³ of three classes that meet the requisite 220 hours (150 live interaction) for certification with IMDHA, I was stumped. The students were in their final practicum, throwing hypnosis strategies at their demonstration subjects without any observable reason I could perceive for selecting a particular strategy. It was like watching someone throwing a plate of spaghetti at a wall hoping something would stick. They had learned the techniques but were not implementing them when and where I would have. Hmmm, I was left wondering what I left out of that training. What was missing from my manuals?

1 - Absent from the first training in 2020 was the weekly support group that all my previous classes have had available for practicing the skills they were learning in our classes. I think it is necessary for a student of hypnosis to practice, practice, practice until the language and behavioral patterns of hypnosis are automatic.

2 – Missing from the training manuals was my own behavior that I hadn't yet articulated, "the hook."

How do I find the hook? I listen. The client will tell me what the problem is.

I ask, "What are you here for?" Listen.

Ask, "What do you hope to accomplish with the use of hypnosis?" Listen.

Ask the Miracle Question, "If a miracle was to occur and your problems were to be resolved as you sleep tonight, what would be different in your life tomorrow?" Ideally, the person is now using a "moving toward" language that makes a direct suggestion recording for home practice effective.

I listen and collect the person's words. Ideally, I collect the exact words the person uses to express his or her desire(s). Then we apply Gilboyne's five rules for structuring effective suggestions.⁴ Before the end of the first session, I like to create a customized hypnosis recording with the individual's own words juiced up for positive influence. I ask the client to use it once or twice a day for 10 - 28 days. The smartphone has recording capacities. Gmail and Whatsapp have shown themselves to be effective for delivering customized hypnosis recordings.

What else do I listen for? Gil Boyne proposed that there were seven reasons for psychosomatic problems,^{5,6} three of them are: self-punishment, past experience, and inner conflict. These hooks help identify interventions.

As a person speaks, I am listening for the words with intense emotion which are the indicators of “look here, the problem is here!” This hook is suggesting use of a regression to cause: a linguistic bridge or a somatic bridge regression or a combination somatic-linguistic bridge with intense emotions on a given set of words⁷, or Hickman’s pinpoint method.⁸

When I hear a client talking about past experience(s), or observe what appears to be secondary gain, or there is a physical manifestation of distress (numbness, stiffness, pain, etc.) I hear the hook “regression to cause.”

When someone says, “There is this part of me that wants to do this and there is this other part of me that says it is impossible,” I hear the internal conflict, and the hook reveals that “Parts Therapy”⁹ is an option.

When I hear the person talking about anxiety, I hear the hook for “breathing.” The person with anxiety may be a shallow breather, check the breathing. I ask the client to put a hand on the belly and another on the chest and then breathe so that I can easily observe how they are automatically using their lungs. I mirror the behavior on my own body; one hand on my lower abdomen, one on my chest. I watch for and mirror the rising and falling of the hands, and I breathe as that person breathes. If the person is breathing only with the top 1/3 of the lungs, I ask the client to notice how my hands are rising and falling. Then I say, “I want you to breathe like this”, and I breathe letting the belly lead. Ask the shallow breather to practice breathing from the belly daily. Belly breathing relieves a lot of anxiety through integrating movement of the lower 2/3rd of the lungs. Greater oxygenation gives a greater sense of thriving, where shallow breathing is an intellectual process of surviving. Also, ask about water. Some clients reporting anxiety are chronically dehydrated, 6+ glasses of water a day are proposed to result in better health and happiness.

In a first session, I will probably use a progressive relaxation (from the toes up or from the head down), and then ask the client to tell me where in the body, if any, there is any residual tension. That tension can often be released with breathing. Breathing the relaxation in, breathing the tension out, perhaps into a beautiful box that collects all that tension and takes it away to the creative intelligence of the universe for processing into fertilizer for the plants when the session ends, "is that acceptable?" If the tension in the body doesn't dissolve with breathing, I hear the hook for a somatic regression to cause, "Go to the first time you ever experienced that feeling." I also hear the hook for "Parts Therapy", to get that part communicating about its purpose.

If I hear a particularly emotional / poignant set of words, I capture them as accurately as I can (some clients talk faster than I can write), they are a hook for a semantic regression to cause, "Go to the first time you ever heard or said those words." They are also a hook to somatic awareness, "Where do you feel that feeling in the body?" This is a set up for somatic regression, or parts therapy.

When there is apparent self-punishment, I ask, "Are you punishing yourself for something?" This often leads to the practice of forgiveness. Forgiveness comes to play in many situations; of self, of others, of God. Sometimes the person is stuck, unwilling to forgive, and I ask the internal judge and jury to assess if time has been served.

When I hear the client is experiencing stuckness, I ask the client to say, "I'm stuck." When the client says the words, I ask, "Is it true? Are you stuck?" When the client affirms that he / she is stuck I use Gilboyne's suggestion, "Now you know where YOU ARE STUCK. Now that you know where YOU ARE STUCK it gets nothing but worse until you CHANGE YOUR MIND. You might even have some bad dreams until you CHANGE YOUR MIND."¹⁰

I listen for the person to talk about feeling unloved or unlovable. Ahhh, we are at the core of this problem.¹¹ I hear the hook for a regression to the cause of this decision of being unloved or unlovable. I hear the hook for forgiveness. I hear the hook for parts therapy. I hear the hook for "root sentences":¹²

“I will love myself when I . . .” (10x finish that sentence).

“I will know I love myself when . . .” (10x).

“In the past I felt love when . . .” (10x).

When practicing hypnosis and hypnotherapy, reflective and active listening are required for the client to feel heard, understood, believed and assisted in personal growth and development. Part of active listening is noticing what is not being said, the hidden and deeper structures of the message being offered by a speaker. I make assumptions about what must be true in order for those words to be offered by the speaker.

When the client throws words at us, we have to listen for the hook, or the hooks offered, and decide where we are going to bite the hook . . .and which one . . . and when.

Just because we set one hook and start to play that thread of thought like playing a fishing line to keep a fish hooked, sometimes the hook slips. Sometimes there is something else that comes up, another hook that redirects the interaction with a different intervention strategy.

An effective hypnotherapist cultivates a variety of intervention strategies and uses active, compassionate listening. When the client throws hooks that we recognize, we can choose an appropriate intervention strategy with which to bite the client's hook.

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Chapter 35 - Therapist in Relation

Being a trained therapist, with a decade of hypnotherapy practice prior to returning academia for the formal degrees, I have practiced using myself as a tool of therapeutic purpose. My body holds lots of memories. I can choose which resources are most beneficial at the given moment: seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting, touching, choosing, deciding, intuiting, inferring, connecting, disconnecting, and behaving.

I lived in a large home which I bought originally planning to be a retirement home with room for classes and office downstairs, and upstairs living quarters. Just after buying the home in 2003, the four hurricane season of 2005 put saltwater through the garage where the military shippers had put my hypnosis records meant for the dissertation. All the audio and video were destroyed in the saltwater bath of Hurricane Wilma. I had to redirect myself to complete the doctorate, and found my feet on a path of service to U.S. veterans using Neurofeedback.

As Robert Frost says in his poem, *The Road Less Travelled*, “And knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back,” I found myself on a different path than what I originally planned. I was called in a different way. The hypnosis classes didn’t happen here, instead, this home became a place where veterans who were struggling, some living in the mangroves, came to bathe, rest, sleep, restore a sense of self, and sometimes resume communication with family members. This home has been through many transitions in the sixteen years it has provided me with a safe haven in an amazing community.

I’ve been asked, “You have never been assaulted by these men you work with?” Nope. I am from a father who was a POW, a brother who was U.S. Army. They were 6’4”, 240 lbs. of lethal human beings. I treat large, lethal humans with love and respect. Trust is a primary issue in caring for others and being cared for. For veterans, I knew we were winning trust when the man would ask if I would help him get a birth certification, which was needed for an I.D., along with a letter from me with a statement of residency so that the man could start to re-integrate to life “on the grid”. My home

was listed as a residence for folks who needed to get reconnected with the modern world of work and community. This wasn't my plan was when I attached myself to this big property with space of sanctuary for myself and others, but something bigger than me called me into service. Here we are. I have a large home with housemates.

During the initial COVID pandemic lock down, by the third week, people began to get irritated. During post hurricane rebuilding, there is generally a spike in domestic violence. A similar rise may have occurred during the initial pandemic lock down. By the fourth week, one of the most lethal of the housemates, Jack (not his real name) picked an argument with me about bread and water. Someone was stealing his bread and water. Oh my. This is a man who has been in and out of jail, and was comfortably ruthless with his hands and feet. He has sobriety now, and was actively working the 12 Step program. Jack had left his bread on the communal space, and someone else took a slice. He left a case of bottled water in a communal space, and other people took some of those little plastic bottles of water. My home had a community "share" counter for people to share things with housemates. By putting his bread and water in community areas, Jack inferred an invitation that was really a large mouse trap to allow him to snap and vent steam about a bogus problem he created because he needed an excuse to blow off steam. I was relieved that he was venting over bread and water free from his old patterns of hurting a person physically.

My first response to Jack's explosion of anger and venom was that it triggered my memories of all the little things he had done in the preceding week that annoyed me terribly. I wondered, had he been doing all those things to provoke me, hoping at some level I would chastise him so that he could have an excuse to verbally vent some of his steam at me? I had to remind myself that my goal is to maintain a peaceful place inside myself, a loving attitude toward others, and ability to move into the unknowing with all my resources of being able to see, hear, feel, smell, taste, choose, decide, change my mind, and act in ways that are beneficial for myself and others. Over the time of this lock down, I have practiced more verbal self-restraint, I have deliberately put a gag on my mouth along with the face mask. I am in control of my state of being and my mouth.

When Jack repeated himself about the theft of bread and water, louder, I felt a strong urge welling up inside me to point out to him the many things he had been doing for the previous week that annoyed me. I had a machine gun full of negative stories about him in my back pocket that I could feed into my weapon tongue, matching him fire for fire. Is this the time for matching rapport? I restrained myself, reminding myself that it was my job to keep a calm center. That is my source of health and strength at all times, more so now. When Jack stopped yelling, and ran out the screen door, slamming it behind him, I yelled, "Are you done venting, yet?" Jack continued running and yelled back, "I'm not venting, I'm just telling the truth."

I remember Viktor Frankl, and his opinion that we are in charge of how we engage in the world around us, no matter how difficult the environment. I'm remembering his words about how having something to live for makes it more manageable to sustain ourselves through difficult times. My goal, as it has been since a cancer scare in my early twenties, is to sustain a calm center in the middle of this great unknown. We like to think we know what is coming next, and then something like a virus shows us our vulnerabilities as a species, and how life is a great unknowing. At this time, the best I can assume about the future is that what comes next is another breath, and then another. I breathe best when I maintain a calm center that allows me to use all my resources.

A week later, Jack was more relaxed, and I broached the topic of bread and water. I wasn't done processing it yet. He had a quick trigger; it was also a fight he hadn't concluded satisfactorily. We both had it rolling around in the periphery of the nervous system like unresolved issues have a tendency to do. This time, when he puffed up and started spouting about the thieves in the house, I interrupted his quick flash anger pattern. "You had your bread and water in a common area. I wanted to throw ugliness back at you, pick the fight back, and I had to practice self-control to maintain my calm place, that's my primary purpose at this time in life. Calm center, looking for the opportunities to be kind."

Jack shifted so quickly I felt my head whip around 180 degrees, "Really, I got to teach you something? That's cool. I got to teach you to keep your cool when someone

else is acting badly. Just because someone else is behaving badly doesn't mean I've got to stoop to that level of behavior myself. That's really cool."

It can be easy to fall into the rhythms and tides of other people and the world around us, losing a sense of centered calm. As therapists, we have ideally got lots of practice maintaining a center of calm and authenticity which allows for a more relaxed timing of healthy communications and relationships with oneself, and with others.

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Chapter 36 - Time

Daytona Beach, Florida 2012 Conference



Photograph by Michele Strub

In our social foundation, we have concepts of past, present and future and language to express these forms of time. In our society, it is common for stories to have a beginning, middle and end. Some societies have the idea that there are only two forms of time, Now and all other time. Even calendars differ from society to society.

You may notice more than one way to measure time, such as by a clock, another manner for measuring time is by subjective experience. Remember when you were a child? Time seemed to stretch out forever. As an adult, there isn't enough time in the day. Your perception of time changes. As a child, you must focus on the task at hand in order to learn how it is done. As you get older, you do more and more on "automatic". Once you've learned to do something, often you do it the same way for as long as you do it, unless something or someone comes along to teach you how to do it better. As long as you are doing it automatically, you don't have to pay attention and that moment of automatic activity eats up a bit of time.

This experiential learning will be an invitation to identify an area that you feel "stuck", to identify the emotional load attached to the stuckness, to practice mindfulness and release of stuckness through exercises that shift memory / time / space perspectives.

Come prepared with a project that you want to achieve and have not yet conquered, and explore how you can shift your level of motivation toward greater action in achieving your goals using time strategies.

"Now is the only time over which we have dominion." - Tolstoy

This presentation has four goals:

1 – identify and measure a goal or objective that you have not yet achieved.

2 – explore the concepts of time as it pertains to hypnotherapy.

3 - release four negative emotional clusters most common in holding you back from achieving those goals to that you are freed from negative emotional entanglements that have been preventing you from living the life you dream of.

4 – develop a skill set useful for immediate application in personal and professional life.

In modern Western culture, our social foundation includes concepts of past, present, future and language strategies to express these forms of time. In our society, it is common for stories to have a beginning, middle and end. Some societies have the idea that there are only two forms of time, Now and all other time. Even calendars differ from society to society.

You may subjectively notice more than one way to measure time, such as by a clock, another manner for measuring time is by subjective experience. Remember when you were a child? Time seemed to stretch out forever. As an adult, it seems as if there isn't enough time in the day. Your perception of time changes. As a child, you must focus on the task at hand in order to learn how it is done. As you get older, you do more and more on "automatic". Once you've learned to do something, often you do it the same way for as long as you do it, unless something or someone comes along to teach you how to do it better.

I assume that as long as you are doing something automatically, you don't have to pay attention and that moment of automatic activity eats up a bit of time. I perceive

time to be moving faster as I get older. When I am more mindful, time seems to slow to a more leisurely pace for me.

Time can be plotted in our memory banks with a line, ribbon, thread, or film (Herman, 1992; James, 1988). These images can be used in an effective manner to create rapid therapeutic gains (James, 1988 & 1989).

Write down something you want to achieve, something that you have not yet started, applied yourself to, or completed to your satisfaction, for whatever reason.

Give your motivation about that project a score between 0 – 100, with zero meaning I am not at all motivated (and I know I need to do it), and 100 (I'm completely motivated, and still find myself stuck).

_____ Now put that aside.

Zikkr – 33 times (Houston, 2011)

Storing Time

Your memories and experiences are recorded in several ways. One is emotionally, as we have explored with ISE and SSE. Another is by reference, say the sight of a horse chestnut tree in the fall, triggers a memory of the tree you used to stand beneath on cold mornings while awaiting the school bus. Another way is sequentially, just like consecutive pictures (32 frames per second) produce movies (*moving pictures*) and notes strung together and played in a certain order create familiar music. This movement from moment to moment in a linear manner can be used to represent the movement you perceive from the past, to the present and into the future.

This is a cultural bias, as some cultures view time in a circular order of now, being surrounded by all other time. But to use our cultural bias, it is helpful to explore how you have threaded time through the magnificent equipment called *the body*. How do you thread the concepts of time through, on or around your being? Once you understand this, you have a tool to help you plan your future, clear up old ideas and

recreate the now. It can be used for content or non-content techniques of therapeutic value. Our cultural bias gives us an ability to measure time from the moment of conception, in a line, to death, (*and beyond*) (Hickman, 1985).

Group Induction:

"Imagine now, if you would, that you can rise above that line of time, float far above that line of time you call 'My Life' and leave all that behind. Leave all the feelings and memories where they are down there. Float up, way up into the middle of nowhere. My voice goes with you wherever you go and all the way through to the other side. Now surround yourself in a bright white, silvery or golden light like sunlight. Imagine the creative intelligence of the universe is surrounding you, soothing you, bathing you. Notice how good you feel, to be above all that, then come all the way back to the body and open the eyes. Notice how good you feel."

"Now close your eyes and think, for a moment, about something pleasant that happened in your teen years, don't tell me what it is, just tell me when you've got it."

(Wait for response)

"Then something from pleasant from childhood."

(Wait for response)

"And then think about something you have planned for next week."

(Wait for response)

"And then something that you have planned to have happen a year from now."

(Wait for response)

"Which way did you look for the past? Left? Right? Up? Down? Front? Back?"

(Wait for response)

"Which way did you look for the future? Left? Right? Up? Down? Front? Back?"

(Wait for response.)

"Does that create a thread of time, a line of time that stretches from the past from the future?"

(If yes,)

"Does that line of time pass in front of, behind, above, below or through the body?"

Time Travel

"Close your eyes. Float way up above the line of time and stretch that line of time out straight. Put a flag on "Now" and notice the color of your flag. Now tie a string to your toe and tie the other end of the string to the base of that flag, so that you can easily find your way back to the now. Then float out toward the future end of the time line as far out as you can. Go all the way out to the moment of death, if you can and pause. Notice how peaceful you feel . . . Turn and look back to the Now in the misty distance of time. Notice how relaxed you feel and Good. Then come all the way back to the Now. That was easy, wasn't it?"

"Now float into the past, back as far as you can go. Go all the way back to the moment of conception, if you can. Notice how you feel, there at the beginning of your time in this body . . . And good . . . then come back to the Now only as fast as you remember something wonderful from your childhood, something you thought you had forgotten a long, long time ago. Coming all the way back to the now only as fast as you remember something wonderful from childhood, something you thought you forgot a long, long time ago. Then come all the way back to the now and back into the body, only as fast as you remember something wonderful that you thought you forgot a long time ago. When you are back in the Now, just allow the eyes to open and close and go deeper into the knowing . . ."

(wait for fractionation)

"Easy, wasn't it? Did you remember something that you haven't thought of in a long time? That means you are doing it."

(if yes)

"You are traveling through time along the thread of your life. This thread or line of time is how you store time internally. Everyone has one, most people aren't aware of it or don't know how to use it productively. It is something anyone can learn. You can learn how to use it. Now you are curious, and you are becoming aware that YOU can CREATE YOUR FUTURE, just AS EASILY AS YOU have CREATED YOUR PAST memories."

Time as a Diagnostic Tool

"Close your eyes, breathe deep and listen to the sound of your breathing. As soon as you notice your breathing, float up into the middle of nowhere and become surrounded by the creative intelligence of the universe. It soothes, bathes, permeates and penetrates every muscle, cell, tissue and fiber of your being, and beyond. Let my voice go with you wherever you go and trust yourself completely. Look far beneath you, Notice your time stretching from the moment of conception to the moment of death. Notice how it feels to BE ABOVE ALL THAT. Imagine that you can just stretch it out in a straight line, if it isn't already, getting all the kinks and angles out, so that it stretches out like a straight cord, rope, thread or line from the moment of conception, to the moment of death and beyond it all is the light.

Float way up, up into the light, the creative intelligence of the universe soothes, bathes and permeates you, protecting you in love, light, truth, warmth, peace, humor, joy, serenity and the perfect blueprint of health. Leave all the thoughts, ideas, feelings and memories down there as you float up into the middle of nowhere and notice how peaceful it is. Let the creative intelligence of the universe fill every muscle, cell, tissue and fiber of the being. Watch, feel, hear the creative intelligence of the universe fill

every part of you...your spirit, your mind and your innermost being and notice how much more relaxed you are than a few short moments ago.

Now look down on that time and notice if the length of that line is the same color, intensity and brightness throughout the entire length, or if there are any shadows, gaps, knots, snarls or dark spots anywhere. "

(Pause and wait for response. If the line is bright throughout, go on to the next exercise. If the line has any gaps, dark spots or shadows:)

"Now tell me, how many spots, shadows, gaps or dark spots do you perceive on that line of time?"

(Wait for response)

"Those spots are symbols of times and situations in which there are still unfinished emotions. Times that are too painful to remember, so you've taken time and energy to remember to forget those things, isn't that so?"

(Wait for response).

"In fact, in those times, were times of limited choices, choices that you found unpleasant and unsatisfactory at that time. Isn't that so."

(Wait for response)

"In your mind is a warehouse of knowing of what works and what doesn't work. You know what I mean. By trial and error, you have made many decisions in your life, isn't that so?"

(Wait for response)

"Would you like to take the learning of what worked and what didn't work in those situations, times and places and put the learning into the warehouse of learning of what worked and what didn't work?"

Turning up the Light

"Have you ever used a dimmer on a light switch? Imagine that you can just **TURN UP THE LIGHT** in those dark areas. You can do them one at a time or all at once. Let me know when they are all bright."

(Wait for response. Once the thread of life is light in its entirety:)

"Then come all the way back into the body, letting the line of time rearrange itself in the way that is most comfortable and powerfully positive for you. Now take a good deep breath, open the eyes and notice how good you feel. Things are much brighter. Brighter than you've felt in a long time and it just keeps getting brighter and clearer and brighter and better and good and excellent."

(Sometimes a dark spot, gap or shadow on the line is particularly stubborn.)

Release #1

"Close your eyes and float way up into the middle of nowhere. Imagine that the creative intelligence of the universe is filling every part of your being. A bright, white, silvery or golden light soothing, bathing, permeating and penetrating every part of you. Notice how good that feels. Then float out to the moment of conception and imagine that bright, creative intelligence of the universe floating through your being, flowing off your fingers and your chest onto that line of time . . . filling that line of time with a bright, white, silvery, or golden light of the creative intelligence of the universe . . . filling that line like a garden hose is filled with water . . . as you turn on the spigot . . . and that line of time fills and swells with the warmth and smoothness of the wonderfully nourishing fluid of life flowing through that line of time . . . filling every part with a wonderful feeling of well-being, a brightness and clarity, warmth, strength, persistence and the vital relaxation of the creative forces of life.

Fill the entire line and when you are done, notice that life force flowing beyond that line of time, as if into a beautiful garden. When that thread of life is completely

filled, permeated and penetrated with that warm and beautiful feeling and brightness, float all the way back to the now and notice how good you feel about all that. Look down at that line of time and notice what you perceive, what does that line of time look like now."

(Wait for response, if it is all clear:)

"Come back into the body, open the eyes and notice the difference. Notice how much brighter and clearer it is."

Release #2

"Close your eyes and float way up into the middle of nowhere. Imagine that the creative intelligence of the universe is filling every part of your being. A bright, white, silvery or golden light soothing, bathing, permeating and penetrating every part of you. Notice how good that feels."

"Now pick a time, a time of neutral energy, a time that just was. Notice how every time is a small dot or vignette on that line of time. Pick one out that isn't particularly important, an innocuous time. And drop kick that dot of time into the sun. Notice what you perceive when you DO THAT. Tell me about that."

(wait for response)

"Now pick out that snarl, dark spot, tangle, cloud, gap and drop kick it into the sun, filling the place it used to be with sunlight. Tell me about that."

Release #3

"Now, close your eyes and float up above the line of time and this time I want you to float way up, up into the middle of nowhere, up so far that you are looking down on the entire continuum of past, present and future. Some people like to put their eyes way

up there because it is easier to visualize that way, but whatever you do is fine, imagine gaining some distance. Be above it all, looking down on the past, present and future."

(pause)

"Notice how good it feels to be above all that. Now tell me, are there any spots, shadows, gaps or dark spots on that line of time?"

(response)

"Those spots are symbols of times and situations in which you experienced limited choices, choices that you found unpleasant and unsatisfactory at that time. Isn't that so. . ."

(response)

"In your mind is a ware house of knowing of what works and what doesn't work. You know what I mean. By trial and error, you have made many decisions in your life, isn't that so. . ."

(response)

"If you could, you would go back to those places, those spots that you've taken the time to remember to forget and make them go away, but you can't. It is important that you release that knowledge from those times and let them be filed in the warehouse of knowledge of what works and what doesn't work. That way you can remember to USE WHAT WORKS and avoid what doesn't work. Would you like to do that? "

(wait for affirmative response)

"Float over to the most important spot and notice it turn into a movie, As I count from 1 to 5 it comes on like an old time movie in black and white and goes in high speed from that first scene to the time of most intense emotions. Ready?"

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, now see it going high speed in black and white until it reaches the scene of most intense emotion and freeze frame it there. Tell me when you get there,

to the scene of most intense emotions and freeze frame it. Open and close the eyes to let me know you are there and go deeper into the understanding. . ."

(wait for eyes to open and close)

. . ."and white it out, white it out, white it out. Turn up the brightness until the picture is fuzzed out with light. When you get there, let the eyes open and close so that I know you've done that and you go deeper into the understanding."

(wait for eyes to open and close)

"As I count from 1 to 5, again, the movie starts again, this time you are in it and it is in full color, running backwards, at high speed from the scene of most intense emotions to a time five minutes before that feeling ever happened, or even five minutes before you thought about that feeling happening, or even five minutes before you thought you'd ever have to think about having that thought of that feeling. Going all the way back to a time before . . . and when you get there, let the eyes open and close so I know you are there. "

(wait for eyes)

"Notice how you FEEL NOW. Where is that old feeling now?"

(The usual response is "gone". If it is not gone, replay the scene as many times, black and white forward high speed, disassociated, until the scene of most intense emotions, freeze frame the scene of most intense emotions, white it out, then full color backwards, associated, until the feelings related to the spot are fully released. Once the feelings are purged:)

"Now file that memory in the line of time and notice how IT'S CHANGED. Notice how everything around it has LIGHTENED UP as you've released all that old emotion and memory to the warehouse of knowing. Now Tell me, how does the thread of life LOOK NOW?"

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Chapter 37 - What is hypnosis, and why do I do it?

It seems like only yesterday, really, it does.

My first hypnosis conference was the first annual American Council of Hypnotist Examiners (1988, ACHE) convention in Anaheim, California. Gil Boyne had his front person, Pat Barton, at the helm of the registration table.

You never know what you are going to experience when you imagine stepping into another person's shoes. It is helpful to take a moment to imagine what it is that they are experiencing, and further to wonder for a moment what you can do to help that person enjoy life more fully. I was raised to "Leave the world better than you find it. Look around. See what needs doing, and do it." Pat Barton was not able to rapidly process the large number of people who wanted to register for the hypnosis conference, her face looked overwhelmed by the number of people who showed up. So, I volunteered.

What a great introduction to the professional hypnosis folks with the "hypno-fever", as Gil Boyne called it. I had the burn. I felt the burn. I feel the burn of hypno-fever even today. It is an exciting, powerful part of who and what I am born to be. I was born with this capacity, all humans have it, not all choose to use it productively.

By paying attention to the emergent need at a hypnosis conference, by doing what needed to be done to create a more enjoyable experience, I got to meet some of the biggest names in the field, not knowing it at the time, while they were checking in. Ok, I was late for all the presentations because I volunteered between programs, too. By extending myself, I got invited to dinners, lunches, after hours conversations with drinks, snacks, and excellent conversations. My first hypnosis conference started me on a path of life long colleagues. The ongoing contact allows me to grow and develop from the growth and development of my colleagues.

What lovely people I find at hypnosis conferences. This year I plan to be a Michael Watson fan, and attend Linda Bennet's PTSD presentation. There are such amazing, inspirational friendships with people who share a vision of endearment, loving

being human, alive, participating in the mystery and wonderment of human potential, active growth and ongoing development. One of the fun things I learned from a daily practice of hypnosis, is to surround myself with uplifting people. Folks for whom life is fun, playful, filled with wonderment and delight at the mystery of life. Each year I can get to know another fascinating person and perspective on hypnosis.

What is hypnosis?

It is anything that creates alignment between the conscious and unconscious mind.

Why do I do it?

I do hypnosis because it is fun, the practice of hypnosis allows me to transcend the machine model of materialistic thought, engage my innate mystical qualities and prudent wisdom of creative intelligence to be more fully engaged in a thoughtful, sensual, delightful enjoyment of the embodied life.

“God is Alive, Magic is Afoot” - Buffy St. Marie ²⁰

One of the most fun things of attending the hypnosis conferences is encounters with similar phenomenon, as observed and articulated by other hypnotists. The presentation about Sleep-Talk (Joanne Goulding, 2015) at last year’s annual hypnosis conference in Daytona presented the same lick lip I use as a subjective indicator of my own depth. Subjectively, I know I am at a deep state of relaxation when I’m doing self-hypnosis because I smack and lick my lips. I used to refer to it as my “nursing reflex”. It feels so nourishing, comfortable to go into those deeper places of relaxation inside, the lip licking response is apparently an indicator of awareness from the older, deeper parts of the brain. Wonderful. What delightful learning I find with each passing year meeting new thinkers, and reflecting on the thoughts of the hypnotists who taught me when I was young. All those old timers, those free thinkers who showed me how to ride the lip of the cornucopia of abundance, allow for the unfolding of excellence and nourishment in my life, and ideally in the lives of all with whom I come in contact.

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhmeroR20lc>

As the annual hypnosis conference in Daytona Beach approaches this May, I am anticipating another vibrant hypnosis experience to nourish my hypno-spirit, and meet with the incoming generations of hypnosis-experts who feel the burn, the hypno-fever.

It is important to celebrate the successes as we reach them, that is a part of feeling fully human. This year, I am participating in a pre-conference basic hypnosis course, the video captured becomes part of the IMDHA / IACT planned growth into continuing education credits for licensed professionals. My first hypnosis conference brochure in 1987 was filled with faces and descriptions of who and what I was going to experience. I dreamed that I was one of those face, and have reached one of those lovely places, beyond the successful outcome of all that stuff. Yes, my mouth waters, the tongue flicks my lips and the lips smack that little bit. It is good! It is good to stop, express appreciation and gratitude for all the little things that led up to that place of successful outcomes.

We hypnotists live lives with gifts of an abundantly creative life riding the lip of the cornucopia of abundance. As I am at the end of my career arc, I look with Great Delight Upon the Incoming Faces that are You, the Experts of the incoming generations, and I Thank You!

Chapter 38 - Whatsapp: International Hypnosis

Some of the foreign exchange students who have stayed with me have expressed interest in hypnosis; my library and mind is open to them even when they return to their home countries. They get access for as long as they like.

My dear friend, Sapinho (nickname), fell ill a month ago. Sapinho is one of my sons from other mothers, I was his American mom during his stay in the United States. He studied basic hypnosis with me in 2003, never seeking certification, only to improve his management skills with his teams. He started in housekeeping, with a student work visa, and moved up quickly to team leader, then housekeeping management.

I got to hear his stories of growing success, a young man from a politically connected family in Latin America, willing to work at menial jobs in the United States to earn money to send home.

"I'll be able to go home a semi-retired man, with property paid for. My wife can work at her meaningful job, be ambitious, I can stay home and raise the kids until they are ready for school because I've bought land and built a home for us before the kids come. My grandfather was able to be paid off on his home at age 60, I would like to be there at age 25. My only expenses will be utilities, insurance, and taxes. When the kids go to school, I'll be able to do a job I love, even for a non-profit, because I've sacrificed some youth to gain a long term advantage from working with my hands."

He decided to return to law school two years ago, and be more active in his community. When he started feeling poorly, he went in for exams to find out why he was losing weight, getting enlarged lymph nodes, and feeling tired.

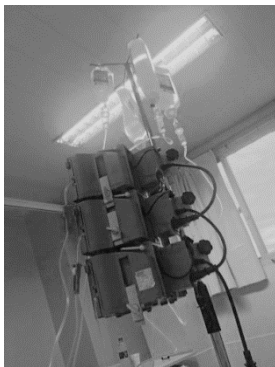
The only part of the medical process he has paid for, thus far, was when his parents didn't want to wait a couple weeks for results from the public hospital system, and paid a private clinic to run tests with results in 24 hours. The private labs suspicion was Leukemia. The one doctor immediately initiated a first IV chemo and overnight his

swollen lymph nodes were back to normal size. She was astounded, and told him he was responding amazingly well. He is basic hypnosis trained.

After two weeks in ICU, in a country with full socialized medicine, he was officially diagnosed with Leukemia on a Friday. Monday, he began IV chemo, 2x a day, for four days. This is a six month treatment plan to address an aggressively moving cancer, it is also a cancer responsive to the chemotherapy intervention. He is in a sterile inpatient ward for the next six months. Anyone coming in has to wear a mask, and frock up.

I asked if he lost his job, a new role organizing a new community school. He had already hired most of the staff. His job is being held for him and he continues to get his check.

He sent me a picture via Whatsapp of his first chemo bags.



The following is our conversation, which he agreed to let me write up using his nickname.

S: (~4p, Feb 25, 2019). Just started.

M: May the medicina go to all the places of error cells, and create the die off of cancer, leaving room for healthy cells to regenerate and grow.

S: 🙏

M: May your body automatically apply the medicina most efficiently, in ways that surprise and delight you. May the speed of your recovery blow your doctors minds.

S: 

M: I read about melaleuca honey being used in killing cancer cells. Do you have melaleuca trees in your country?

S: Yes.

M: Tea tree oil is made from it. From New Zealand, it is called Manuka honey. Maybe you can have your tea with Manuka or Melaleuca honey.

S: I'll look into it.

M: I imagine golden silvery light coming into your body with the IV drip, washing you out.

S: Ok.

M: (~7:15p, Feb 25, 2019). I imagine when the drip is done, the violet flame of St. Germaine is bathing, permeating, penetrating, soothing, healing every muscle cell, tissue and fiber of your being; turning all the maladaptive cancer cells into purple dust to be excreted into the universe as fuel for healing.

S: (~7:32p, Feb 25, 2019)  That was good timing. Last drop of my first chemo. Feeling good. My meditation is going to be in your words.

S: (~8:41a, Feb 26, 2019). I'm doing fine. I didn't understand that I would be taking two doses a day. . . . I had my second treatment today. They both went super well, just like a regular IV, no pain, no nausea, no strange reactions. My body has accepted all the suggestions. I re-read what you sent me and meditated on that before and during, and imagined the golden light coming in. Everything worked perfectly. I think everything is to be great. . . . There is going to be a different treatment on my spine. They are going to take liquid from my spine, some exams, analyze it, and then give me an injection directly into my spine. Then tomorrow the treatment continues, then there is a pause for seven days. Just antibiotics, IVs of other things. Then starts a different cycle. That one is stronger, but I think I'm dealing super well with everything. Meditation has

helped me, has been helping. I'm feeling great. I just took my shower. I am strong. I can go to the bathroom and shower by myself. Yesterday I had an exam, a heart exam, an echocardiogram. It was in a different floor here, they came with the wheel chair to take me there, and I asked if I could walk. They were surprised, "Do you feel like walking?" Yeah, I'm fine. So I went walking. It was kinda far, but I didn't get tired. I went all the way there and my heart was perfect. They examined all my internal organs; everything is working just fine. Things are really really going well. Thank You for your prayers. I thank you for your good thoughts. This has been helping me a lot. I feel strong, I feel ready, I feel this is a no brainer. This is going to be easier than I thought. . . . I'll keep you updated.

M: (~2p, Feb 26, 2019). What a thorough cleaning crew, coming in with the IV. You always had great team leadership with your cleaning crews.

S: Yes. 

M: even showed them through excellent leadership by example how to do proper gum removal from the grounds.

S: That's it. 

M: And getting outside to catch the tall windows other people overlooked.

S: Cleaning cleaning cleaning.

M: Then you dropped into engineering, and learned how to do the maintenance, repairs, changing locks . . .

S: Yes. Fixing, cleaning my body now.

M: And you helped get rid of old furnishings when newer, better stuff was needed.

S: That's it.

M: All your life experiences have prepared you for this critical role in cleaning, maintaining, handling the nightly audit, booking from the front desk, and HR interview. I love you.

S: And the hypnosis course has helped very much. The mind control method.

S: (~7am, Feb 27, 2019). 4th session of chemo going in, each clear drop going in makes its way to vanish all the cancer cells. I feel great! Everyone is amazed how I haven't had any of the side effects this far. There has been no pain for - no codeine / morphine needed. Thank Goodness.

M: . . . May your healing be rapid, thorough and complete. May you continue to blow your doctor's minds.

S: (~1p, Feb 28, 2019). Doctors here are so amazed with my recovery and my lack of adverse response to the treatment that they are discussing letting me go home today or tomorrow and recover at home, coming to the hospital only during the chemo cycles.



S: I'm super excited.

Sapinho knows that I pray, and that I have lit candles at the Shrine of St. Mary to pray for his thorough and complete recovery. He's been witness to the power of prayer his entire life. Integrating spiritual and religious practices into hypnosis interventions is a marvelous way to engage the indwelling spirit in both the hypnotherapist and the client.

Post Script.

Not all stories have happy endings. Sapinho aka Froggie was at the end of his chemo when the port being used for his treatment became infected with an antibiotic resistant bug, and he died. Hypnosis can help keep up mood and attitude be beneficial for quality of life for the ill, and the terminally ill.

Chapter 39 - What Next?

Whether you are using hypnosis training for personal growth and development, or for career development, you will most likely begin with a basic class that is structured around direct suggestion. Assuming you have studied and practiced basic hypnosis to the point of competence, you understand how to get a person into and out of hypnosis, meaning you are familiar with and can recognize state and shifts of state, plus you have gained fluency in building expectancy, cultivating rapport, and formulating effective suggestions.

When direct suggestions are insufficient to help a person achieve a specific goal, what do you do next?

After you have completed a basic hypnosis program, you may encounter hypnosis subjects for whom directive therapy is ineffective. This is the reason the Hypnosis Alliance team of educators are available to help you meet the hours required for certification with the IMDHA and IACT. We want our graduates to be highly competent hypnotherapists, able to draw from a range of effective intervention strategies. When you and a client are failing to get the desired outcome, you and the client are stuck. That's the technical term, "stuck".

I infer that stuckness indicates where the exploration of curiosity is most useful. There is something underlying the client's goal that is preventing the person from aligning with and achieving a goal or target of change. When you and your client are "stuck" using direct suggestions, you need to shift into a less directive, more inquisitive approach to uncover the stuckness, loose the freeze, restore the ability to adapt and accommodate for an ever changing world.

In order to broaden your skill set and scope of practice, hypnosis is a lifelong learning process. Cultivate a diverse range of theoretical approaches; such as non-directive hypnosis, hypnoanalysis, Ericksonian hypnotherapy, neurolingustic programming (NLP), emotional freedom therapy (EFT), prayer, and meditation. In order to be of best service to your clients, build a collaborative referral list that includes other

professionals in your community: medical practitioners open to complementary therapy, massage therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic, yoga studios, meditation groups, Taiji, martial arts, gyms, Twelve Step programs, community sponsored health and wellness options, and nutritional counseling.

This article will be contrasting two less directive hypnotherapy options: Gestalt with its focus on Now, and Regression or pinpoint in its temporal setting of past / present / future, abreaction and catharsis.

A less directive, more permissive approach is intended to lead a person into greater self-awareness, personal responsibility, accepting the commitment and willingness to change. Sometimes a client is stuck. Stuckness is most likely the reason he or she has come to a hypnotherapist seeking help. It is something for which their own level of awareness, perceptions and willingness has failed to achieve a desired goal. Sometimes a client wants to be stuck for some reason, which is called secondary gain. Something is more important than achieving the stated goal. This is an interesting lateral move into what is really motivating the individual to think, feel, and act in this matter. A stuck client may want to have you join them in stuckness, or even hope to sucker you into taking responsibility for their change and lack thereof.

In basic hypnosis, questions tend to be clumped at the beginning and end of the sessions, in Gestalt and regression hypnotherapy, the questioning tends to continue throughout the session.

Be Here Now

My style is based on some Gestalt concepts from the work of Fritz Perls, as taught by Mark Gilboyne at his California school in 1987. From the Gestalt perspective, change revolves around a concept of being authentic, genuine, and fully present right here right now. Perls was on a more directive end of the humanistic spectrum than Carl Rogers in the Existential – Humanistic model of therapy. My style is not completely non-directive, it moves at a fairly fast pace interaction. If I were to be a truly non-directive client centered therapist, I would set our sacred space, hold that safe space for the unfolding process of change with an attitude of unconditional regard, active listening of being fully present and

attentive to the other person, and limit my comments to, ““Mmmm hmmm”, . . . “tell me more.”

I'm more directive than the soft support of a Rogerian humanist. I do incorporate the client centered acceptance of a client for who and what he or she is. Realistically, if I'm not finding it in me to love my clients like a grandmother, I refer those folks to other clinicians in my community.

From my Gestalt based perspective, client centered hypnotherapy is an ongoing practice of being fully present, authentic about my state and response to the individual, holding sacred space for an unfolding greater than the sum of the two of us, and I am mirroring the client's interests, reflecting back questions intended to deepen a person's self-awareness.

Assumption #1 Indwelling Wisdom: The client has an indwelling wisdom, knows what is needed, knows what he or she is willing to do and be. The client knows what is liked / disliked / wanted or needed that have yet to be achieved.

From a basic hypnosis class, you may have learned that what the person says upon first contact, in the first few minutes, is what the person is really there for. Perhaps your basic class encouraged you to assess for conscious and unconscious alignment of purpose by asking again after a successful test for somnambulism (such as a number drop / loss, p. 106 - 108,²¹).

Ask, “What are you really here for?”

When the client is congruent, meaning what is said upon the first contact (phone or in person) is the same as what is requested after a successful test for somnambulism, the person has an aligned conscious and unconscious mission. Sometimes what the client says after achieving the depth of relaxation found in somnambulism is different from

²¹ Basic Hypnosis, https://www.hypnosisalliance.com/pdf_downloads/Hypnosis101.pdf
Available for sale on Amazon.

the first stated goal, indicating that the conscious mind and subconscious mind are not aligned with the same mission. This is a useful bit of information in client motivation, so I tend to initiate the quest into the issue that comes out after the test for somnambulism whether it aligns with the initial request or not. I trust the client's subconscious mind to give me information that the conscious mind may not be aware of.

From my Gestalt perspective, I prefer to follow the spontaneous unfolding moment of Now. This means the unfolding session is following the clues offered by the spontaneous moment. It may lead someplace different than what is expected.

If I want to shift the power of choice more fully to a client, be less directive, I can ask for a client buy in, "Which do you think is the most valuable trail to follow in your journey of growth and development first at this time, the _____ (first presenting symptom), or the _____ (second presenting symptom)?"

Figure and ground, foreground and background are Gestalt concepts of perceiving what is occurring in one's own life. The issue of interest is the figure at the foreground. The rest of the client's life is the ground, a background frame of reference to the situation at hand. The figure is in the foreground until it is resolved, or something emerges from the background to take the spotlight. When the issues in the foreground are resolved, or overwhelmed, they slide into the background, and a new, pressing matter / figure emerges that wishes to be addressed; perhaps a desire for a glass of water, or to relieve oneself. This unfolding, emergent sense of self is an ongoing, living experience, not a past tense memory.

From the Gestalt perspective, the plan is to restore a full awareness of this moment, the unfolding present, one's own response to it, from an authentic / genuine expression of self in response to this moment right now.

When there is a movement, or inhibition of a movement, such as a breath, encourage the client to do it again, exaggerate it. The previously unobserved clenched fist leads to awareness of the unarticulated anger that is oozing out the skin. Authentic anger and frustration can be expressed instead of bottled up. Authentic feelings are released and the body relaxes. Maybe the client becomes aware of the crossed arms,

crossed legs and feet pointing to toward the door, discovering that the body is always giving signals about what it wants, it is withdrawing and wants to leave. Words can lie, feet don't lie. Watch the feet.

The finger tapping, "If it could speak, what would it say?"

The body is wise, follow its lead.

Some folks get stuck in wanting to know "why". Get ready for the long haul, this is rarely a rapid transformation when the "why" question is being thrown around. Perls suggested that the "why" questions are a search for a rationalization as to what happened. Asking "why" involves a convoluted examination of self-inflicted reasons for doing or not doing what was done in the past, and may be used to justify the continuity of the behavior in the present. Avoid the "why" questions if the goal is to find a more rapid resolution of problems in favor of personal awareness, authenticity, and genuine responses to the opportunities life presents to live fully.

Change the question, change the frame of reference, shift the brain toward a different loop of understanding. Perls recommended that better questions for the full understand of self involve, "how," "when", "where", "who", and "what".

My goal as a hypnotherapist is to trap the brain into thinking for itself, perceiving in a different way, noticing that which was not noticed before. I want to help remove blinders that are preventing the person from perceiving his or her genuine, authentic response to the life opportunities at hand.

Hypnotherapy encourages the subject to use the tools of self knowing in situations not only related to the presenting problem, it tends to leave the person with working tools that can generalize into the rest of their lives as a benefit of their broadened self-awareness.

Back Then

Hypnosis has a capacity to open communication between the conscious and subconscious minds. The enhanced memory reported through the use of hypnosis is

known as hypermnesia. Some folks, such as the False Memory Syndrome theorists, propose that the so called memories are only creative license to understand by the unconscious mind, false memories. Hypnotically induced testimony is not eligible in Florida Courts of law. Since we are not doing forensic work in most of our clinical research and outcome goals, what is important is that what the person perceives is personally meaningful. All behavior is meaningful, at some level. The decisions are personally meaningful. The ability to re-decide is empowering.

In basic hypnosis, the goal is to recognize and avoid abreaction. In some aspects of hypnotherapy, abreaction is sought in order to achieve the relief of full catharsis. The deliberate use of abreaction and catharsis is one of the differences between directive and non-directive therapeutic applications of hypnosis.

When using a regression to cause, or pinpoint method, the pattern of change involves examining the past in decisions, how those decisions impacted a person at the time of the decision, and how that old decision is influencing the person today. This is a different approach from the Gestalt focus on being here now. Regression to cause, or a pinpoint method, or the future pacing of NLP, involve shifts in the temporal sense with a past / present / future frame of reference.

Hypnotherapy provides a rapid access for recalling and revivifying memories and emotions that have been buried inside for a very long time. The cause of a presenting problem is known as an initial sensitizing event (ISE). Once the ISE is identified, the subject is asked to review and understand what is going on from his or her adult perspective, and notice how that decision or those decisions influence the present behavior and decisions.

Review if that old decision is effective, and what, if any recommended change or corrections to one's own decisions and behavior is best to resolve the presenting problem or achieve a goal. An individual will rarely be willing to give up something perceived to be valuable, for something perceived to be less valuable. When an option is no longer perceived to be the best or ideal option, the individual is more inclined to make a new decision, something more appropriate for the current situation, age, relationships, values

and mature preferences. Reframing through applying adult understanding can shift everything quickly. Being “happy” can become a more natural, normal way of being.

When an initial event is contacted, it sometimes reveals its emotional attachments, the expression of those unresolved emotions is an abreaction. When a full catharsis of the previously stuck emotions is achieved, the person tends to report feeling remarkably good. When abreaction is done and catharsis is complete, you will see a shift in state evident in the body (posture, breathing, skin and voice tone), breathing, emotional expression, ability to articulate and relax fully.

Additional events that layer and deepen the personal meaning on a particular experience are called subsequent sensitizing events (SSE). There may need to be similar evaluations of each SSE to identify and release any additional maladaptive decisions and emotional loads.

Be flexible; expand your skill set and scope of practice with lifelong learning.

IMDHA Resources

<https://www.hypnosisalliance.com/imdha/>



The International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association can help you find hypnosis practitioners, training in hypnosis, events, a virtual library and an online store.

There are four types of membership providing access to tens of thousands of hypnosis and other articles for human health and well-being: associate, student, certified, and educator.

“The International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association is a Referral Service dedicated to providing the community with excellently trained Certified Hypnotherapists. IMDHA Practitioners work harmoniously with allied healthcare professionals to aid individuals in dealing with specific challenges and procedures.

Our objective is to help create a sense of peace and harmony within the individual so that the current challenge can be met and dealt with in a positive manner, thus making the journey toward wellness and peace of mind less traumatic.

Our goal is to reduce the stress the individual is experiencing as a hospital patient and / or surgical patient, etc. Less stress allows the body to focus attention on its natural course of healing. The method to be used is hypnosis.

In addition to medical challenges, all IMDHA members assist persons in dealing effectively with non-medical problems. Finding solutions to self-sabotaging habits leads to peace of mind and control of unwanted, negative behavior. Self Empowerment is the goal.

The International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association: Dedicated to Healing: Body, Mind and Spirit.”

M.G. Dahl has classes scheduled through 2026

Keywesthypnosis.com

Her training manuals are available on Amazon.

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Hypnotherapy, Vol. 2: Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy, Vol. 3: Electives

Her chapters (Chapter 10, 1st ed.; Chapter 13, 2nd ed.) regarding the use of neurofeedback for reducing the adverse impact of PTSD and mTBI are found in Restoring the Brain, edited by Hanno Kirk. Both editions are available on Amazon.

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