

Clinical applications of Ericksonian hypnosis #3

“pushing buttons”

After a 9 year old boy’s aggressive behaviour

by Rob McNeilly



dedication

*This book is offered as a humble gesture of appreciation of the continuation of
Milton Erickson's heritage into the future.*

RM



“pushing buttons”

In this playful conversation, an 11 year old boy, who was in trouble for threatening a teacher and threatening to break a chair, is increasingly engaged in experiences that he likes.

His mother said that people were “pushing his buttons”.

Reading Harry Potter and playing with a toy - a “Bionical” - so that he is introduced to ways to have more control over his experiences and be less reactive.

Finally, in a conversation with his mother, he is offered an indirect opportunity to learn this skill, and both he and his mother explore more fun ways of dealing with the normal interactions that any mother and son are likely to have.

After this short session, his behaviour was no longer troublesome, even some months later.

You are invited to view this session, with or without the transcript, and explore your experience.

There may be some aspects that appeal and that you can readily include in your own work.

There may be others that don't appeal that can clarify what different approach you may prefer.

The session is offered as an experience, not in any way as a claim for how a session should be.

“pushing buttons” a session



To watch this demonstration

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Transcript:

Rob: Well, thanks for being willing to come along and be part of this. I appreciate it from both of you. We are all learning here, learning how to work with kids to help them to get over some troubles and be more the way they want to be and stuff like that. So I appreciate your willingness to come along and help us with that and let's hope that we can do something that might be useful for you.

Client 1: Yip.

Rob: What have you been doing lately that's been fun?

Client 1: Nothing much.

Rob: Nothing much? What sorts of things are fun when you get to it, sorts of things?

Client 1: I don't know.

Rob: Don't know? How old are you?

Client 1: I'm 11.

Rob: Oh, yeah. What, what grade are you in school?

Client 1: Four.

Rob: Oh, yeah. How's it going?

Client 1: Good.

Rob: What do you like about it? You've got some subjects that you -- some bits of it that you like better than others?

Client 1: Reading.

Rob: Yeah? Oh, okay. What do you like reading?

Client 1: All kinds of books.

Rob: Oh, yeah. Are you reading something at the moment?

Client 1: I was reading Harry Potter.

Rob: Oh. Which book are you up to?

Client 1: The Goblet of Fire.

Rob: Okay. You have to refresh my memory. I haven't read that for a while. Which one -- which book is that? Is that the last one or the second last?

Client 1: The second last.

Rob: Second last, okay. So you're reading that or you've read it, you're starting it?

Client 1: I've read it, but mom took it off me.

Rob: Oh, did she?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: Fair enough. So, you might be looking forward to getting it back sometime, I guess?

Client 1: Yip. I've got a few pages to go.

Rob: Only a few? Okay. And you read -- you haven't read the last book?

Client 1: Haven't read the last book because I haven't got it.

Rob: Okay. You must be looking forward to that, too.

Client 1: Yip.

Rob: So, how would you get the last book?

Client 1: Get it for birthday.

Rob: Oh, okay.

Client 1: Christmas.

Rob: Oh, okay. Someone might give it to you?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Okay.

Client 1: Or I get it from the library.

Rob: Oh, yeah. Oh, you've got a number of options there.

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: That's good. What do you like about Harry Potter?

Client 1: I don't know. It's...

Rob: Pretty cool.

Client 1: Interesting.

Rob: He is interesting. He gets up to some stuff, gets up to some things. So if we could do something here that would be useful for you, would be helpful to you, what would that be?

Client 1: What was it again?

Rob: Just, just give me...

Client 1: [inaudible] in a way.

Rob: Give me a -- Huh?

Client 1: I mean, behave in a way, stop like...

Rob: Some behaviour that you're getting into trouble or something?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Oh, yeah. What, what sort of things have you been doing that's been getting you into trouble? I just want to check and see whether you're doing the same things at your age that I did when I was your age.

Client 1: Before I went to school, I was going to -- I did some things to a teacher.

Rob: Oh, yeah.

Client 1: And...

Rob: What did you do to the teacher?

Client 1: They say that I threatened to punch her and raised a chair.

Rob: Okay. You threatened to.

Client: Mm.

Rob: But you didn't do it.

Client 1: But I didn't do it.

Rob: Okay. How did you stop? What was it that you must have felt like doing it? They say that you threatened her, but what stopped you actually doing it?

Client 1: I don't know. [Inaudible 03:44].

Rob: Huh?

Client 1: I don't know.

Rob: It's nice to know that you can feel like doing some things and you don't have to do them. Now I wonder what other things -- you feel like reading Harry Potter and you're not doing that. There are a lot of things that we feel like doing that we don't get to do. I'm just trying to warn you. Sometimes we have to wait for a bit. So, if you do -- weren't getting into trouble with that kind of behaviour, what would be different? If you, you know, if we did something here, if we had a -- something happens so that things were more the way you want them, what would be going on? If you didn't have the bad behaviour, you didn't have the behaviour that gets you into trouble, if you had some behaviour that was okay for you and for others, what would that be like?

Client 1: Being good.

Rob: Good?

Client 1: Sensible.

Rob: Sounds a bit boring. What does good mean for you?

Client 1: Being nice and stuff.

Rob: Nice, okay. Well, okay. How about if, instead of being good all the time and nice all the time, you were just kind of good enough and nice enough so that you didn't get into trouble?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: Because I don't know about you, but most people, in fact, I think any person I've ever met hasn't been totally good, haven't been totally nice. I'm not going to bore you with all the things that I've done that are not good and totally nice, but you know, we've all done some stuff that's not good and nice, you know. We all do that.

So, but it would be -- would you prefer it if you were good more of the time or nice more of the time or -- okay. And when you are good and you're not getting into trouble, when you are kind of behaving nicely, what's -- how do you do that? What's different than when you -- what you're up to, when that's going on?

Client 1: Probably happy.

Rob: Okay. And how do you, when you're happy, what do you -- what's going on? What are you thinking, what are you doing? What are you saying?

Client 1: Having fun.

Rob: Okay. Now, this brings me where we came in, what do you like having -- doing for fun? You like reading Harry Potter? What else do you like doing?

Client 1: Playing Bionicles, Lego.

Rob: Playing...

Client 1: Bionicles.

Rob: I don't know what that is.

Client 1: It's sort of a Lego thing and they move.

Rob: Oh, okay. How do they move? Is it like, with like a machine, like?

Client 1: Well you make the thing and there's a little thing that goes tst, tst.

Rob: Oh and you -- like a motor?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: And you wind it up?

Client 1: Yeah and you -- no you don't wind it up. You just do that, keep on doing that and all its hands will move or its feet move or...

Rob: Oh, okay. Like a, like a robot or something.

Client 1: Yeah, in a way.

Rob: How big is this?

Client 1: Can be that, can be that.

Rob: Oh yeah. And you -- can you put it together?

Client 1: Can be like that.

Rob: Okay. Can you put it together?

Client 1: Yip.

Rob: Can you...

Client 1: Yip.

Rob: Oh, okay. You put it together and somehow when you do that, that makes hands and things move.

Client 1: Yeah. It's like hands can move to hold weapons or the feet move to make them run or...

Rob: Okay.

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Sounds great. What's it called again?

Client 1: A Bionicle.

Rob: Bionicle.

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Okay. Bionicle.

Client 1: And Lego. I like playing Lego.

Rob: What do you like doing with Lego? What do you like making?

Client 1: Building things, Star Wars Lego. I like Star Wars.

Rob: Star Wars.

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Oh.

Client 1: And Harry Potter.

Rob: Okay.

Client 1: I haven't got any Harry Potter Lego.

Rob: Okay. The Star Wars, what do you build with that? Do you build spaceships or...

Client 1: Yes, spaceships and bases and...

Rob: Oh, yeah.

Client 1: Things like that.

Rob: Do you have weapons and stuff like that there, like ray guns and [inaudible 07:32]?

Client 1: Yeah, like that.

Rob: Okay. Alright. And you like reading.

Client 1: Yeah. Reading's my favourite subject.

Rob: Reading is your favourite.

Client: Mm-mm.

Rob: Alright. Well, when you read something, do you -- and you like it, it's your favourite, do you find that when you read it, it's like you can really get into the story? It's like almost like you're there. Do you like doing that?

Client 1: You don't know in a way.

Rob: You don't know, no.

Client 1: You're just reading and reading and reading.

Rob: You're just reading and reading and reading. And if you, if you had, ever had it where you're sitting reading, reading and time goes and you don't know how, you know, you've been there for a while?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: Yeah. I think you sound like someone who can get really absorbed with things. Yeah, you can really get into it. Does the same happen with Bionics? No, I've got the wrong word?

Client 1: Bionicles.

Rob: Bionicles. So, when you're doing the Bionicles, do they -- can you again get in there and spend quite a bit of time doing that?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah. Okay.

Client 1: Depends what I'm doing with them.

Rob: Yeah. So when you get into doing things with them that you, that's fun, that you like doing, what's the best things that you do with the Bionicles?

Client 1: How they move and stuff.

Rob: Oh, yeah.

Client 1: It's [better] they move and stuff.

Rob: Oh, you really like that.

Client 1: Yeah. It's easier that way.

Rob: Yeah and I guess it's more fun, too. You can kind of do things with them and have some say over what they do and don't do, yeah?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Okay. Alright. Could we play a game using your imagination? Would that be agreeable? Just say yes. Don't be difficult for me.

Client 1: Yes.

Rob: Thank you. It's the middle of the afternoon. I've been working hard all day. You've got to make it easier for old people, you know. But what I was hoping you might do is imagine that, that you could be -- we could have a story that you are reading, maybe something like Harry Potter. And if you could just imagine that, that there's something going on and can you imagine what it would be like if you, if Harry -- someone's try-

ing to make Harry Potter do something he doesn't want to do or trying to get him to be like someone he's not.

Client 1: Well he in a way can't.

Rob: Maybe in a -- well, he's a, he's a wizard, so wizards can do stuff that other people can't, which is always good. So, could you -- could we make up a story together about how Harry Potter is in a situation. I think in [inaudible 10:25].

Client 1: He lives with a Muggle family because they're unmagical.

Rob: Okay. So he's in a Muggle family, be under the stairs.

Client 1: Not all the time.

Rob: Not all the time. Not all the time.

Client 1: [inaudible 10:40] he goes to a spare bedroom of Dudley's.

Rob: He goes to Dudley's room, okay. And just imagine, can we pretend that Dudley is trying to get him to, to do something that he doesn't want to do, trying to annoy him. And what about -- what's the Muggle's -- what's Dudley's father's name? It doesn't matter, you know the book, I mean. You know how he's, he always tries to annoy Harry, tries to get Harry to -- he says, don't you behave badly, don't you behave, none of that wizardry stuff around here. You've got to behave properly. Yeah?

Client 1: He can't help it.

Rob: He can't help it. But he's, Harry somehow learnt that if he does -- except for that time where he gave Dudley a tail, he lost it that time. Do you remember that? That was in one of the early books.

Client 1: That was Hagrid.

Rob: Oh, was it?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Oh, okay.

Client 1: He gave Dudley -- he put a...

Rob: Oh, Hagrid did that.

Client 1: Snake on Dudley.

Rob: Oh, okay. Alright.

Client 1: And he [inaudible 11:39].

Rob: Okay. So, so can you imagine that, that either Dudley or Dudley's father is trying to, trying to get Harry to behave in a way that he doesn't want to behave? Try to -- we're just pretending here. Would that be alright? Can you imagine that? Don't like this very much. Does it sound silly or does it sound okay?

Client 1: Weird.

Rob: A bit weird. But is weird okay or not? I mean, Harry Potter's weird, so that's all right.

Client 1: He's not weird.

Rob: He's not weird?

Client 1: He's not weird.

Rob: Okay. Alright. You must be pretty weird if you don't think Harry Potter's weird. He does pretty weird things. He gets in cars that flies, he gets, he gets into a train through -- what's the name of that platform?

Client 1: [Inaudible 12:21] nine and three quarters.

Rob: Nine and three quarters. I mean, and that's not weird? I think that's weird, but anyhow. So, if you were reading a story about Harry Potter where someone's trying to get him to behave badly and he doesn't want to behave badly because he doesn't want to get into trouble. And he's not going to behave perfectly because he's a kid, you know. Kids are not allowed to be perfect or they wouldn't be kids. But someone's trying to make him do something that he doesn't want to do and he want, he doesn't want to get into trouble. So what could Harry do so that he doesn't just do what other people want, but he doesn't get into trouble, either?

Client 1: Try to do it.

Rob: Okay. So let's just imagine that that's there in the books somehow and we're going to put that aside. If you were to make a Bionicle and you're going to make this Bionicle that has got weapons?

Client 1: Yeah, has swords.

Rob: Swords. And it's got feet that can run. And you can make Bionicle so that you can make his hands go, make his arms go, you know, make the sword do things.

Client 1: Swords, they usually have two.

Rob: Okay. So, you can make those swords do something and you can make them do something or you can not make them do something. And you can make the Bionicle so that he can fly with swords or he can run. Can you imagine that?

So could we pretend that we've got a Bionicle that you have made? Maybe it's even a Bionicle that you could make in a particular way, a special way, that you could bring in even a bit of wizardry. So we could have like a Bionicle that was somehow part of the Harry Potter story, only the Bionicle is being made so that the Bionicle wants to use his swords and fight and cause trouble. But you, you've got a way, either by turning that whatever...

Client 1: Knob.

Rob: That knob or maybe you can imagine you could use some wizardry. You could do it somehow at a distance. But you can make that Bionicle either hit something with his sword or not. Could you imagine that?

Client 1: In a way.

Rob: Alright.

Client 1: Use remote control.

Rob: Okay, use remote control, very good. So what -- how big's this Bionicle? Alright. Is there anything that you can do to imagine that you could make that Bionicle bigger? Just imagine it.

Client 1: When it unfolds itself.

Rob: Just imagine that it can unfold itself and it gets bigger and then it gets bigger until it's the same size as you. Just imagine having a Bionicle that size. How would that be? That you could control.

Client 1: Cool.

Rob: Yeah, with using remote control. And you could control that Bionicle and you could make it either hit things and fight with a sword or not. Maybe you could even...

Client 1: Climb up things.

Rob: Climb up things? Yeah. He could run. He could even put his swords down and shake someone's hand.

Client 1: Well, in a way they can't. If they put their swords down, they've got these like these like hand things and they hold [inaudible 16:28].

Rob: Oh, okay. So, but he could put his swords in somehow so that they weren't dangerous. And then he could shake someone -- and you could make him bring his swords out or put his swords back because it's remote control and you're controlling it. Yeah? Now if you've got a remote control, can you imagine that on that remote control, there are some buttons that you can push?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: And some switches, maybe.

Client 1: Turn it off and on.

Rob: Turn it off and on. And there are buttons that you can press that are making, sticking swords out and another button that you can press to make them pull their swords back.

Client 1: And walk forwards and walk backwards and walk side to side.

Rob: All those things. And yeah, there might be another button that you could press that would make him run and another button that would make him sit down.

Client 1: Or duck.

Rob: Or duck. Okay. Alright. So you imagine you've got this Bionicle and you've got the remote control and you make him do all those things, yeah. Can you imagine that?

Client 1: In a way.

Rob: In a way. Well, we're not -- we're not doing it really. We're just imagining it in a way. It's just a way of imagining it. So let's say that this Bionicle, because we've made it the size that we've made it and we're just imagining it in our own way. And let's imagine that this Bionicle looks not so much like a robot, not so much like an ordinary Bionicle, but it actually looks like a boy. In fact, because we're imagining this, we can make it look any way we want, it's going to look like you. And

we might even call him Chris. So, we've got Chris the Bionicle and we've got Chris the remote controller, yeah.

Client: Mm.

Rob: And I don't know whether this is okay, but what I'd like to do is for you to imagine that you're invisible. You could make yourself invisible. You can use some wizardry. You're invisible. You've got the remote control. That's invisible. And Chris is there, but you're controlling him. And people don't see you because you're invisible. They just see the Bionicle. And it looks just like you and they think it's you.

He looks like you, but you've got the remote control and you can make that Bionicle do anything you want, yeah. So just imagine that Bionicle goes up to the teacher and you've got the remote control so you can make that Bionicle, we're going to call Chris, threaten the teacher and talk about breaking a chair. Can you imagine that?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: Okay. Now, have a look at your remote control. No-one else can see it. And imagine that you have Chris go up to that teacher and be nice to that teacher, say something nice to the teacher, maybe shake the teacher on the hand, you know, something like this. You can imagine shaking hands like that. Yeah. You could shake hands. How would I shake hands? Just like that? Okay.

So we could shake hands like that, so here's -- can you imagine you've got this Bionicle called Chris. He goes up to the teacher, shakes the teacher by the hand, he's nice to the

teacher and the teacher says something nice to him. What does the teacher say to him?

Client 1: Hello, how are you doing?

Rob: Hello, how are you doing? Okay. Now, what does Chris the Bionicle say?

Client 1: Good.

Rob: Oh, good. Now, when Chris is finished talking to the teacher, let's take him to some other situation where he could get into trouble and you can have a look at your remote control and you can know that there are things that you can do to press this button or that button, this switch or that switch, to make him do different things, yeah. Can you imagine that?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: Okay. So you got a remote control so press the button so that Chris now is going to behave what you mean like nice and good, you know, he's going to behave and watch him do that. How does that look? Does it look alright?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah, it looks alright. And now let him, let him do something and press the button so that you make him do something so that he gets into trouble. Yeah. Okay, now press the buttons to make him do something so that his behaviour's good and he gets rewards.

Client: Mm.

Rob: Okay. Now I want you to get the feeling, get to know how, where these buttons are and to know that you can make him do anything you want, yeah.

Client: Mm.

Rob: Okay. And the good thing about that is that any time this Bionicle, Chris, who looks just like you, any time he's behaving too well, too good, he's too nice, you know how to press the buttons a little bit and make him just a little bit naughty because it's important for him to be just a little bit naughty, at least sometimes. You don't want to be perfect. He'd be boring, wouldn't he?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: I reckon. Got to do some things that are a bit off, sometimes, yeah?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Okay. So you're pressing these buttons. You've got the remote control and the Bionicle called Chris looks just like you and people probably even think it is you. He's behaving really well. Does his mom give him the, give him the Harry Potter book back?

Client 1: Maybe.

Rob: Maybe, what do you think?

Client 1: Probably.

Rob: Probably. Okay, let's see what happens if you make all the buttons -- press all the buttons so he behaves badly. Does he get the Harry Potter book back?

Client 1: No.

Rob: No, certainly not. So if you want -- if he wants that Harry Potter book back, you know how -- which buttons to press which switches to flick so that he won't get it back, definitely. And you know which one's to press so that he's more likely to get it back, not certain, but more likely.

Now, did you know, you probably did, but did you know that you actually have got those buttons and switches in your brain? We've all got them. Mostly we don't know that we've got them, but we've all got them. And everyone has all those buttons and switches inside them.

And a lot of people don't know that they've got them and even when they discover that they've got them, they don't know exactly where they are so it takes a little bit of practice. It takes a little bit of time learning where the buttons are and what happens with this button and what happens with this button and what happens with that button. Like when you first started making Bionicles, you had to learn how to put it together.

Client 1: Usually you have instructions or...

Rob: Yeah. You have to kind of find a way. It takes a little while, yeah, to put it together and to...

Client 1: It depends. It depends what sort. If it looks like...

Rob: Okay, sometimes it happens very quickly?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Very easily.

Client 1: Sometimes.

Rob: Sometimes and sometimes it takes a bit of time.

Client 1: Once I got one, I could hardly build it.

Rob: Okay, yeah. So you don't know until you start to put it together whether it's going to be easy or whether you think you won't be able to. And you thought you could hardly build it, but did you build it or not?

Client 1: Yeah, I got to it in the end.

Rob: You did? How did you feel when you got to it in the end?

Client 1: Exhausted.

Rob: Exhausted. It was hard work.

Client: Mm.

Rob: Was it worth it?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah. Sometimes things are hard work and sometimes it is pretty exhausting. And it can be worth it. But sometimes they're easier than you think. Now, if you were to find that putting this Bionicle together, this one called Chris, the one that's

-- so that you could learn the buttons and switches, if that happened easily, would that be okay?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: And would it be okay, would you be willing to enjoy playing with that and learning how to use the buttons, learning how to do the switches, learning how to -- because I'm just talking in a way to, how can I say, sort of let you know that you probably know more about how to get into trouble and how to behave well than you know that you do. If I said to you, could you behave badly tomorrow and get yourself into deep trouble, you could probably manage it.

Client 1: Mm. Could.

Rob: Yeah.

Client 1: It would be easy.

Rob: We all could, we all could. It would be easy for all of us. And also, you know more about how to behave nicely and good in a way that, you know, can keep you out of trouble. You probably know how to do that pretty well too. And sometimes it takes a bit of practice just learning how to do this one or that one and a bit of practice can be, can be exhausting, but sometimes it can be easy.

Now, if it were to be easy, would that be okay? I'd hate to make this too easy for you. If you were to go away from here and discover that you can behave well and nicely, good and nicely or badly and bad behaviour, get into trouble any time you want, you just need to know which buttons to press

and you know, you're kind of pretty cluey about that, pretty well know. If, after this, you could just go and behave as well as you wanted and as badly as you wanted, any time and it was easy, would that be okay?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: So what do you think? What's different now for you as we're talking than when you arrived? What are you learning here?

Client 1: Things.

Rob: Yeah. It's a bit hard to kind of put it into words exactly what it is, but the things that you're learning in some ways, you already knew that. So what you're learning, I'm just somehow kind of reminding you of some stuff that you knew that you didn't really know that you knew. And I think you've got a very good imagination, very.

Client: Mm.

Rob: And I think you are pretty good at learning things when you want to. And if you're anything like me, I'm very bad at learning things that I'm not interested in. But if I'm interested in something, I can really concentrate on it and learn it pretty well. And I think you can do that too.

Client 1: It depends what it is.

Rob: It does depend, exactly that. If it's something you want to learn then it's going to be a lot easier to learn than something you don't want to learn. And you do want to learn how to find the right buttons to press for things because you want

to learn how to get the benefits of that rather than the punishment, I think.

Client: Mm.

Rob: Yeah. Like, if you're like most of us, I think that's the case. Now how do you think it will be for your mom if, as a result of this, you start behaving really well?

Client 1: Good.

Rob: Do you think she'll be able to cope?

Client 2: Yes, please.

Rob: Do you think she'll be able to cope?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: She says please. She thinks she'd like that. But do you think it will be alright for her? She won't have any problem if you start behaving well pretty well all the time?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: I think it's really important, Penny, that you know that you have a son. And anyone who has sons will tell you, they're not perfect. And if they were, you'd be in deep trouble because most of us human beings are just a little smidgen less than perfect.

Client 2: Yes.

Rob: We've all got a little touch of humanity somewhere. And this guy's got one.

Client 2: [Inaudible 28:14].

Rob: And I hope he keeps it because he'd be a pain to live with if he was perfect. We can't stand perfect people. They are really painful. But he's going to play with this. I'm thinking he's got better access to those buttons now and switches, better access than he realised. He's kind of got a sense of where they are and probably knows about them actually better than he realises. He's always known about them, but didn't kind of quite know how to put his finger on it, so to speak. But I think now he knows more about how to do that.

Client 2: He's always when he's been good, he's been good and when he's been awful, he's been very awful. So it's just been [inaudible 28:54].

Rob: Yeah, there's a nursery rhyme about that. He's got a little curl down the middle of his forehead too. I used to have one of those. Do you know what I did with mine?

Client 1: What?

Rob: I shouldn't tell your mother this. I cut it off. I got into awful trouble one time. I was a lot younger than you so I didn't know how to behave well, but I had a curl there and I was so embarrassed about it. And I got the scissors and cut it off because I thought I was a -- looked like a sissy or something. I cut it off and I got into trouble about that. You've got a bit of a curl there, but so you know how to be good.

And I'm glad to hear that you know how to be horrid because, if we don't know how to behave badly, we don't really have a choice. And knowing that you can behave badly and

get into trouble and you can behave well and get the rewards then you've got the choice.

So how long do you reckon this fellow should behave well enough before he gets Harry Potter back? I don't think you should give it back to him today. You probably think he should get it back today, do you?

Client 1: Mm.

Rob: When do you think, given you know, what's been going on, when do you -- how long do you think you should behave like you were saying nicely and good, before your mother gives that book back? What do you think would be a fair thing?

Client 1: Until Monday.

Rob: Until Monday? What do you think, mother? So how, how can you make sure that you behave the way you want to between now and Monday? What's today, Tuesday?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: No, yes, Tuesday. Tuesday. Oh, my goodness, you've got to behave really well for six days. That's a big ask. Do you think you should be allowed any bad behaviour in six days?

Client 1: In a way.

Rob: In a way.

Client 1: Maybe a little.

Client 2: Can have minor, minor discrepancies.

Rob: Minor -- so what would be, what would be acceptable? What do you reckon your mom will say, that will pass, that's okay, but you know what's going too far because you've got, you've got the remote control. You know which buttons and things and how hard to press them. Can you work that out between you?

Client 2: He was pushing my buttons, trying to make me angry before I came -- before we came into see...

Rob: Oh, okay.

Client 1: Gabrielle last week.

Rob: Alright so if you're pushing your mother's buttons and she gets angry then that probably makes it a bit less like you'll get Harry Potter back, yeah.

Client 1: I was doing it for the fun of it.

Rob: Fun of it. Well, you can have your fun by pressing your mother's buttons or you can have the fun of reading Harry Potter. I guess the choice is yours then.

Client: Mm.

Rob: Yeah. So what do you think? Would it be worthwhile not pressing your mother's buttons and learning how to press your right buttons, your good buttons so then you can get Harry Potter? Do you think that's worth it, or not?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Okay. Well, how about you give it a try. I don't know whether six days is a bit much. I'll leave that to the two of you to work out. If he only makes five and three quarters or five and a half, you know, that might be near enough. Now what do you reckon about this last Harry Potter book? When's your birthday?

Client 1: Oh, it's already been.

Rob: Oh, yeah.

Client 1: It was September the 20th.

Rob: September the 20th, okay. So you're just 11. Yes, I mean you're 11 but you're kind of not really, really settled into being 11. You're just a new 11 year old. It can take a little while to kind of get used to being a grown-up 11 year old. So, you know, you've only been that for less than a month now. So it might take another month for you to get really used to being a grown-up 11 year old. Now maybe by Christmas, do you reckon?

Client 1: I've got some friends who maybe will get me the Harry Potter. They got me them.

Rob: Yeah?

Client 2: He got them for his birthday...

Rob: Okay.

Client 2: The set up until the one which had taken off [inaudible 32:51].

Rob: So what do you reckon? How did you get them? Was that, was that a chance to press -- which button did you press then?

Client 1: I don't know.

Rob: It was a snarly button, that one. It's good to know that you can do that. Do it again. Give us that, give us that button and give us that snarly one. It was something like this. Is that where the button there is? You got it in one. It's fun to play with that, isn't it? And I don't know whether the two of you can have fun.

Client 1: No. She never has fun.

Rob: No? No, can't. But...

Client 1: She never has fun.

Rob: You know, people -- are you ticklish?

Client 1: Yes.

Rob: Yes?

Client 1: [Like she] and I am.

Rob: Your mother's -- are you ticklish?

Client 1: She is [inaudible 33:40].

Rob: We've got -- he's got some buttons here. Where are you ticklish? He's got buttons.

Client 1: I'm ticklish all over.

Rob: So instead of you getting annoyed by him, if he tries to push your buttons, instead of getting annoyed, you might want to play by tickling him. That and I don't know whether that's too cruel, but that might be a terrible punishment. Instead of saying you can't do this and you can't do that, to tickle. That is a cruel punishment. My brother used to do that to me. I hated it.

Client 1: I don't hate it.

Rob: You don't hate it. Do you like it?

Client 1: I know how to get away from it.

Rob: Oh, yeah.

Client 1: I don't like and I don't hate it.

Rob: Do you think that he can get away from you?

Client 2: He can certainly try.

Rob: He can. I wonder...

Client 1: I once in a while do.

Rob: I wonder what would happen if you were to lie on the floor and I were to get your mother to sit on you, do you think you'd be able to get away?

Client 1: No.

Rob: Don't like your chances. What do you reckon, Penny, if you were to sit on him.

Client 2: He isn't going anywhere.

Rob: Then he'd be captive. Then you could tickle. I'd better be careful what I say. I nearly said something I shouldn't say. But you could tickle him. You tickle him there, but you're not going to do that, I hope. Your mother's wondering about this. She's wondering whether, instead of punishing you, she might sit on you and tickle you.

Client 1: If she sits on me, I'd be crushed.

Client 2: Instead of punishing him, lately I've been spraying him with water. He had friends who would try and [inaudible 35:11].

Rob: So there's a bit of fun going on here. You've got some buttons here and some things you can press too.

Client 2: But he's not real keen on that.

Client 1: No, I don't like water.

Rob: Well, it's no good in trying to punish him with something he likes. That's not punishing. No, I reckon that's good.

Client 1: I hate water. It's clean.

Rob: So squirting him with water, tickling him. You've got some other things that you can do that can be fun. He can get the message, but it doesn't have to be, doesn't have to be too heavy, too bad. Alright, so you've got some buttons now and your mother's got some and you know how to press hers and she's finding out how to press yours. And you're finding out how to press your own. That's the main thing. You're find-

ing out where your buttons are. That's the important thing because, when you've got the buttons and you're pressing your buttons, you're in charge of your experience, instead of someone else doing it. It feels better, doesn't it? You don't know?

Client 1: Don't know.

Rob: Well, is it worth trying?

Client 1: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah, I think it might be. I think once you find out that you're in charge of your buttons and not anyone else, I think you're going to feel better about that. And I think there's going to be something in that last Harry Potter book that you're going to find very helpful. It's going to be really good for you.

Client 1: You've read it, haven't you?

Rob: Yeah. But I've got a bad memory. I can't remember the details, but I think there's going to be something really good in it that you're going to enjoy.

Anyhow, is there anything more that would be -- that you would like me to say or anything more that would be helpful for us to talk about? You don't know? I don't know either. But I do know that I'm glad to have met you and I think you're a very bright fellow and I think you're very willing to learn some stuff. And I think when you realise just how much you are in charge of your own buttons and no-one else, I think that's going to put you back in charge of your own experience. It could be easier for you than I think. So how about we leave

it at that? Do you want to shake my hand? I'm glad to have met you.

thanks

I'm grateful to the people who have generously permitted us to share their hypnotic experience, so we can learn to be more effective in our work.

Resources

Websites www.cet.net.au

<http://robmcneilly.com>

Email rob@cet.net.au

Other enhanced ebooks by Robert McNeilly [available on Amazon Kindle]

Utilisation in hypnosis - building on an Ericksonian approach

Utilising hypnosis with children - a girl returns from a dog phobia

Hypnosis in psychosomatics - utilisation after Erickson

Listening for Solutions in Hypnosis - utilisation after Erickson

The Poetry of Therapy - Creating effectiveness after Erickson

Coaching for Solutions

Connecting Hypnosis 1 After Erickson the Fundamentals

Connecting Hypnosis 2 After Erickson Demonstrations of the Fundamentals

Connecting Hypnosis 3 After Erickson Demonstrations of Experience of Hypnosis

Connecting Hypnosis 4 After Erickson Demonstrations of Clinical Applications of Hypnosis