
Listening for Solutions in Hypnosis

Utilisation after Erickson

Robert McNeilly



Dedication

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

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Listening

Listening is recognised as an essential part of effective counselling, but what is listening? What are we doing when we are listening? What is effective listening? Rafael Echeverria claims that we usually think of speaking as the primary component of language, with listening taking a secondary role, whereas when we listen, speaking can follow seamlessly. He claims that listening is primary, with speaking following.

Martin Heidegger spoke of us humans as “The always, already listening that we are.”

I take this to be an observation that we all have an automatic place we observe [listen] from, and often this is transparent to us just as the air we breathe is transparent, and the water a fish swims in is transparent. This automatic, transparent experience allows us to move easily through our living without needing to attend to our context, leaving us free to explore and play. As long as our living is functioning well, the transparency is best left outside our awareness. However, if there is an interruption, or a block to the smooth running of our living, then attending to this transparency

can open additional options and possibilities for us. It is with this concern in the background that I offer my observations about our transparent experience of listening so we can increase our options as therapists, and assist our clients to increase their options.

Some clients will tell their story and go away cured. What was missing for them was to have an opportunity to relate their story. But it's more than them just making noise, or they could have spoken their story to the wind.

Whether it is recognised or not, a major factor is the client's experience of being “heard” or what we might prefer to call “listened”. If they experience us as bored, or judgmental, they are less likely to be helped than if they feel we are genuinely interested, accepting, and appreciated.

Our listening can be a healing gift for them.

Other clients want something more or different. And the only way we can be useful is to explore, with them, just what they are wanting. This exploration will happen from our listening.

These are just 2 ways that listening can be a crucial contributing to our healing art.

Even after listening is recognised as an essential part of effective counselling, communicating, relating we are left with some questions:

What is listening?

What are we doing when we are listening?

What is different when our listening is effective or ineffective?

Rafael Echeverria of Newfield Consulting claims that we usually think of speaking as the primary component of language, with listening taking a secondary role, whereas when we listen, speaking can follow seamlessly. He claims that listening is primary, with speaking following.

When we listen, we also build a story about the future

This is taken care of by addressing the question about the speaker's concerns. What is at stake here is the way the listener listens to those actions as affecting his/her future.

In a conversation, "fusion of horizons" or "fusion of stories,"

As therapists and human beings, how can we put ourselves aside so the other has an opportunity to appear and be heard [listened]?

how can we listen ... ?

how can we
listen ... ?
we can listen
all too well
to our own thoughts-self
all too easily loud
to our own self-aware
how can we
listen ... ?

how can we
listen ... ?
through our deafening
head-machinations
through our half-remembered
half forgotten petty-worries
how can we
listen ... ?

how can we
listen ... ?
to the silent screams
through others teeth-clenched
to the silent smile
through others' mouth corners-u-turned
to the silent laugh
of others' eyes corner-smiling
to their soul moth-flapping
against our mumbled ears
how can we
listen ... ?

What is needed for listening to happen? - some observations ...

acceptance that others are different from ourselves.

acceptance of the other as a legitimate other

we share a common way of being [human being]

same being, different selves

dismissing the other, questioning their legitimacy, claiming superiority, claim privileged access to the Truth, will restrict our listening

Walt Whitman pointed to this when he said "I am large, I contain multitudes." We contain the possibilities of any other human being. The Roman, Terence once wrote: "Homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto" ("I am a man: nothing human is alien to me").

Observations for developing effective listening include context / mood / personal background / trust - sincerity, competence, reliability, [engagement] / from historical background in which we live [usually transparent]

Rafael Echeverria wrote "Listening is not a simple phenomenon. Many factors intervene in the way we listen and in the way we are listened to. However, from our old understanding of language it is difficult to grasp what listening is really about. We claim that in a world with the diversity of ours, listening has become a major issue in ensuring effective communication. Today we must learn to listen better to be able to live together in harmony. This is necessary when we relate as couples, in communities, at work, in the marketplace, etc. It is valuable to develop a new understanding of what listening is about. This will open for us the possibility of competence in effective listening."

Listening TO / FOR / FROM

Listening TO:

We usually think of listening as related to hearing, a function of tuning in to sounds or noises and making sense of them. We think of listening as an action of listening TO someone or something.

We can listen to

Ourselves - our self talk, thoughts, judgements, reactions,

The client - what they are saying, not saying, feeling, not feeling, doing, not doing.

Their concerns, who the ARE.

Listening FOR:

If we attend to our experience when we are listening, we can notice that we are also always listening FOR something.

A car mechanic will listen TO a car engine, listening FOR particular noises, FROM his embodied experience so he can fix a problem.

In a problem solving approach, we will ask “What’s wrong?”

And will then listen for

Information, understanding, pathology

To construct a diagnosis

So we can fix / treat

A clients language - words, phrases.

In a solution approach, we will ask “What’s missing?”

and we are then more interested to listen for

Resources, strengths, times when the problem is less intrusive or even absent

Ways to reconnect the person with this missing resource

so they can get on with their lives.

Whatever approach we use, we will always be listening FOR something.

Listening FROM:

Heidegger spoke of us humans as “The always, already listening that we are.”

We are always listening FROM our selves

our structure,
our past, present, future,
our culture,
our beliefs.

In a metaphoric sense we can also say that we are listening FROM different parts of our body.

We can listen FROM

our head [with our intellect],
our heart [with our emotions],
our gut [with our intuition],
our totality [with our soul].

So we can now say that we are always listening To something, FOR something, and FROM somewhere, and seeing this opens an area of observation and learning. Since we humans have the capacity reflect, we can listen to out listening. We can listen to what we are listening to, for, and from and learn.

Openness: the fundamental posture of listening - repeating ...

What is needed for listening to happen?

Acceptance that others are different from ourselves.

Acceptance of the other as a legitimate other

We share a common way of being [human being]

Same being, different selves

Dismissing the other, questioning their legitimacy, claiming superiority, claim privileged access to the Truth, will restrict our listening

A session

To watch this demonstration

[Click on this link](#)



A transcript

Rob: So thank you for being willing to come and be part of this.

Client: That's alright.

Rob: And I will do my best to do something useful, something beneficial. I know I know nothing about you so maybe we can start. Would it be okay to just tell me a little bit about yourself? What sorts of things do you like to do and what sorts of things have you been doing recently that have been okay, enjoyable; maybe not just today, but, you know, in the recent past or?

Client: I've been getting together with my friends, sorting out things to try and get custody back of my children because my children and my partner left on the 3rd of January. And I've sorted out my whole house be-

cause it was a total putrid mess, you could say. And it took me four and a half tons worth of skip and four trailer loads of rubbish to clean it up and now I've got it into this shipshape condition that I want it in for my children.

Rob: That's quite intriguing.

Client: And that sort of thing. It's taken me three months to do, but I did it and there [**inaudible 01:14**] protection trying to state that my children don't want to be anywhere and that sort of thing because of allegations that my expartner's brother has made against me, which is all completely false. And now I've got custody like visitation rights every Sunday, which I've just got back from, which today's didn't happen because of certain things. So I'm not very happy in the - at the moment.

Rob: I can imagine.

Client: And that sort of thing, considering last Sunday was one of the best visits that I've had with my two daughters and that sort of thing because, before that, it was all like virtual stay away from Dad. Dad's the bad person, you know, all this. And last week was them jumping all over me, doing puzzles with me, my youngest one was and all this sort of stuff. And then, suppos-

edly I had a phone call on my message bank saying that they weren't coming. But I showed up to the visit and I get told that they're not coming when I get there.

Rob: That's today you mean?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Okay. And before all this - now it sounds like a war zone. You've been through like horrendous times then.

Client: My whole, my whole life practically has been a war zone because my epilepsy was caused by my father, kicking me around the head with steel capped boots under the age of four months old. So therefore it's a brain injury, not hereditary or anything like that. It's a bruise on the left temporal lobe of my brain and that's where I fit from and that sort of thing.

Rob: You survived. You know, you coped with being hit around the head and you...

Client: And I got - I was also, when I got put into care at four months old, I had a broken ankle that had re-healed into the same position and they had to re-break that and put it into a cast and it formed back into the normal shape that it should have been.

I was also taken off them because I was malnourished. I wasn't fed for a week, I wasn't changed for a week or anything like that. And I was also drowned by my mother under the age of four months old. I was sold for sexual doings between the ages of eight and 12 when I was put back into their care.

And now I'm going under Alan Harris to go and get the proceedings done for the things that I was between - it happened at the age of eight and 12 because I was told that if that ever came out, that I'd be harmed or I'd be killed by my father because he was getting the sum of \$2,000 to \$5,000 every time it happened because I was told that I was getting taken to McDonald's and I wasn't. I was getting taken up behind Fraser Primary school.

And if I have already had nine strokes, why is it that I can forget my daughter's second birthday, but not forget something as harsh as that and as harsh as what I've been through and that sort of thing. And I just can't understand why I was told that both of them that did it to me was dead. And I've just not only found out that one of them is still a live and a full-blown drug addict in [inaudible 04:57] village.

Rob: Now you've been through unthinkable, unimaginable, horrendous experiences, horrendous, and

there's nothing that I can do about what has happened has happened. And I'm wondering if there was something that could happen here, in our conversation, if there was something that could happen that could make some difference, however small, to your experience, if something could happen here to be useful, what would that be? What could that be?

Client: Just for a better peace of mind.

Rob: Peace of mind? Okay.

Client: So I wasn't thinking about it and stressing about it all of the time like I do because every night I lay there and think about wanting to go around and do something to my father. But I know that if I was to do that, that it would end up in a total manner that I don't want it to happen and...

Rob: Yeah, it's completely understandable that you want to do that, but if you did, you'd be...

Client: Because my children are my number one and that's what I think they are every time I think of that horrible thought.

Rob: Yes, but that would prevent you, if you went ahead with that, that would get in the way of you in the situation.

Client: Exactly.

Rob: Okay. So when, if you look back, you know, in between some of those, God, they're just unimaginable things, was there anything in, in amongst the mess and just horror that there's been in any way enjoyable, in any way...

Client: The only enjoyable things out of my life was the birth of my two children.

Rob: Okay. At the actual birth-giving when they were actually born or the fact that they have been born.

Client: Both the fact that they have been born and I was able to raise them like I wasn't because I never treated them the way I was treated.

Rob: Yes, yes, yes.

Client: And that was my main goal in life was to treat my children the way I wasn't treated.

Rob: Okay, yes, I would not wish your experiences on anyone. I wouldn't wish that on anyone, but there's something your children in some way, get a benefit from that.

Client: And that's it because my brother has gone down the exact same path as my father and that sort of thing.

Rob: Who's gone down that path?

Client: My brother.

Rob: Your brother?

Client: And it's only just myself and my brother in the family and I have taken a total different cycle and a total different road to my brother because there is such a thing as you take the same path as your father and your family history or there's another path that is free and open that you take your own choices and that's the path that I took.

Rob: Yeah, if you take the path that your family's taken, you end up in the same place that your family's in.

Client: And that's it.

Rob: Yeah.

Client: And that's how I see it.

Rob: So you have to take a different path.

Client: Because I looked back on my history and there was 10 fathers before my father that had done the same thing and there was no way I was going to do that.

Rob: When you say family history, what do you mean by 10 fathers? You mean...

Client: My father's father and...

Rob: Ten generations back?

Client: Ten generations back sort of, yes.

Rob: Yes. That's what I thought you meant, but I wasn't [**inaudible 08:36**]. Yeah, so there's a well-worn path towards that same...

Client: That same click of...

Rob: Yeah. And you - how did you manage to not take that same path because it must have been like a deeply - like the path was going to cut deeply. It must have been easy - it would have been easy to have just followed that path. Something...

Client: It would have been majorly easy for me to follow that path, but as soon as I got put back into their care at the age of eight, I only stayed with them for four

years and then I put myself back into care at the age of 12 and then I got back out of their care two days before.

Rob: Okay. So you took a step to get out off that path.

Client: Yeah, and put myself back into care at the age of 12 and then I got put back into their care at two days before the age of 16. And then on my 16th birthday, he tried to slam me again and he was also trying to punch into my mother and my mother has the after effects of polio. So she has a cripple left hand and she can hardly walk properly. And in my eyes, you don't hit women. It's a disgusting thing that you do especially a disabled woman and I don't...

Rob: You've got, you've got very high standards about these things, haven't you?

Client: Yes, and I have...

Rob: And seeing how those high standards have come, is a reaction - from what I'm hearing, is a reaction to the very low standards that your father and his father and his father and his father and his father and somehow, out of that, like out of that mess that was in your house and all the stuff that you cleared out, and not only cleared out the mess in your

house, but cleared out some of the mess in your family history.

Client: Yeah.

Rob: So that's where your high standards have come from.

Client: And that's it because I don't want to turn out like him and I don't want to turn out like her either.

Rob: Yes and that, that must make the pain of not being able to see your kids even more acute.

Client: It does.

Rob: Because you know your life is about them.

Client: And that's it.

Rob: So there's nothing we can do here to somehow magically make that okay. You'll know that...

Client: And that's it.

Rob: Yes. But if you could somehow be more peaceful about that, more peaceful in yourself, so that you could be somehow more connected with your standards and what you know is important rather than reacting against what your father's doing and what the

courts are doing and what [**inaudible 11:18**] which you know will be unhelpful. It's natural, but unhelpful.

But somehow, if you were able to be more peaceful and connected with you and the feelings you have for your two daughters and being more peaceful about that, it seems to me that, you know, that would be saying that would be helpful to you.

Client: Yeah.

Rob: And my guess is, and it's only a guess, I can't know, that that might make it just at least a little more likely that you'd be able to see more of your kids.

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Do you think that's right? Am I hearing your right about that?

Client: Yes.

Rob: See. Okay?

Client: And it will be less strenuous on me as well.

Rob: Yes.

Client: And...

Rob: Less strenuous on you, yeah.

Client: The less stress that I have is more better for me.

Rob: And, and fewer chances of being with your kids.

Client: And my chances of being with my kids and...

Rob: And when you are with them...

Client: With my epilepsy as well.

Rob: And with your epilepsy.

Client: Because stress is a very big, major factor in my epilepsy.

Rob: Yeah, of course, of course.

Client: And considering that, since my partner and that has left, I have not had any sort of [turn] for four months and my doctor is now saying that it's all under control and I have not been in hospital now for almost 19 months with my status epilepticus fits.

Rob: You're really, really making some progress with that.

Client: And that sort of thing.

Rob: Yeah.

Client: They are all saying that I'm keeping my stress levels to the state that I should be having them and that sort of stuff.

Rob: Great. Well done.

Client: And my epilepsy is now under control and that sort of thing with the medication that I've pushed to be put on because I was on Epilim and that was not working for me.

Rob: Okay.

Client: As they were saying that I was getting like - what's the word - resistant to most my medication. I got put onto 3,000mg of Keppra and 2mg of Rivotril a day and I was also on 2,000mg of Epilim a day. And I fought for four and a half years for that to get taken off and they kept on taking me off it and putting me back on, taking me off it, putting me back on it. And then...

Rob: What [**inaudible 13:36**].

Client: I've got and saw Professor [**inaudible 13:39**] and I said, now, I can't live like this no more. It's just beyond a joke. I have children. They are seeing me fit. I am screaming because of the oxygen levels that I can't like get into my system while I'm fitting. Therefore

they brought an oxygen tank in to stop my screaming while I'm fitting because I wasn't getting the oxygen.

And that helped a little bit and then they took me off the Epilim, wouldn't replace it with nothing else and then I started fitting again. They put me straight back on the Epilim and I said no, it is not that. You need to exactly take me off the Epilim and put me on something else.

And then they ended up finally taking me off the Epilim, putting me on 200mg of Topamax, a full 1,800mg [job] of medication and since I've been on that Topamax, I have not had that status epilepticus fit for 19 months almost. And that's where I was fitting two to three hours at a time.

Rob: You're really very in touch with what works for you. You know that the Epilim wasn't it.

Client: And that's it.

Rob: And you know that the stress isn't it. And you knew that the way that your family was doing things was not it. So and you know that being more peaceful is going to further help you what was the stress so that, as you're even less stressful and more peaceful, that that's going to be beneficial to you and your family and

your children, and, you know, your daughters and your relationship with them. So you really know that.

And when you bring in that determination that you have to take charge of your life and your experience like you've done with the custody, with the - when you were younger, with the rubbish in your house, with the Epilim, with so many things, when you make up your mind about that and you know about that then I think you're going to have a very good chance of having peace that you know is going to be useful to you and beneficially you and your relationship with your daughters and your future relationship with them and their future relationship with each other and their children and their children and their children and their children.

So this is a really important kind of pivotal point for you. It's a really important time in your life to have other direction. And I wonder if it would be okay and if you were to just close your eyes for a moment and remember the time last week when you were playing with your daughters and when you were playing those games, when you were doing those puzzles and whatever else that you were doing that was so connecting for you, so useful, beneficial for you, for each of them, for both of them, for the three of you.

And if you could in some way just allow yourself to begin to focus on some part of that time that you had with them. Even though it wasn't a lot of time, it's that much more precious because it was limited time. But just, without needing to choose something, to find yourself focusing on some part of that time with them when you were doing that puzzle, when you were playing, when you were - whatever you were doing.

And somehow, as you begin to focus on that to just naturally, because it's so precious to you, allow yourself to become more absorbed in this experience of being with them, having fun with them, being peaceful with them, enjoying them; them enjoying each other and you and whatever, not that it was perfect. It doesn't have to be perfect, but just find yourself then being more naturally, peacefully absorbed in the experience of being with these two precious daughters of yours.

And, as you are in this experience, as you are focusing on it to whatever degree that you are, as you are allowing yourself to be as absorbed in this experience as you are, to somehow be in it even more connectedly, even more in the experience.

And I can tell, just from my experience, by observing the way that you are able to respond to this idea with the stillness in your body, with the subtle change

in your breathing and the way your facial muscles are smoothed out, the way your breathing is just so, my experience tells me that you are someone who can be very responsive to this way of exploring this way of learning, this way of finding what you want that you know that you want that you want that when you know that you can have it, is going to really make such a difference to you.

And, as you are in this experience as if you really are playing with these girls, really are in this puzzle with them and doing whatever you're doing, that's so enjoyable. Without disturbing that and by allowing yourself to be in it perhaps even more as you speak about it, to let me know what, when you focus on this and get absorbed in this experience, if you could just leave your eyes closed so that you can be in it for the time and tell me what is it that you're doing at the moment? What are you - is it puzzle, are you reading? What are you doing with these girls? What's happening that's so [inaudible 20:18] for them and for you? Can you put it into words?

Client: I'm playing with Lillian and cuddling her.

Rob: Playing with...?

Client: Lillian and cuddling her.

Rob: Lillian. How old is Lillian?

Client: Eight.

Rob: She's eight. Oh. And cuddling her?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah. And how is it for you to be cuddling her? How does that feel for you?

Client: It's the most awesome feeling in life.

Rob: The most awesome feeling, yeah. And as you can, if you would, just allow yourself to be in this experience of cuddling her and feeling how awesome it is, can you allow yourself to notice how you can also feel peaceful? You're cuddling her. This is what your life is about, this connection with her, being with her. And can you let yourself feel how peaceful this is for you? Can you notice that peaceful feeling?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah. Good. And what's your other daughter doing?

Client: She's sitting there playing puzzles asking me to come over.

Rob: What's your other daughter's name?

Client: Odessa.

Rob: What's her name?

Client: Odessa.

Rob: Odessa. And how old is she?

Client: Just turning five.

Rob: Just turning five. She's about to turn five?

Client: Just has.

Rob: Just as turned five. Ah. And she's doing, she's doing a puzzle. What's the puzzle?

Client: The puzzle of Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch.

Rob: Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch. Okay. And she's asking you to help?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah. And what's it like for her to - what's it like for you to be there and she's there doing this puzzle and she wants you to help her. How does that feel?

Client: Amazing.

Rob: It's amazing, yeah. And can you feel that connection with her so peaceful? She's there; she's sitting

next to you, not cuddling her. She's actually sitting next to you, but can you feel that connection and how amazing that is?

Client: **[inaudible 22:56]**.

Rob: Yeah. And also, can you also notice how peaceful you feel?

Client: It's very peaceful.

Rob: Very peaceful. And if you would, I'd like you to notice how it is for you to really feel peaceful, to let yourself be amazed by the experience of feeling peaceful with Odessa sitting there with that puzzle of Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch and feel how peaceful that is and really feel that. And also to notice how peaceful you feel because Lillian you're cuddling, it's so awesome to feel that connection and feel peaceful then.

And if you would somehow allow yourself to really feel that peaceful feeling and you can feel that peaceful feeling, can you not? Yeah. And you can be amazed by that. You can be in awe about that and you can feel that peaceful feeling. And you can feel your peaceful feeling at this time in this place even then you - they know in this room here, Odessa isn't with you, Lillian's not here, but that peaceful feeling of knowing that

they're not far away in your experience, knowing how important it is for them and for you and for the three of you, for you to have this peaceful feeling.

You can bring that peaceful feeling of being with your two daughters, you can bring into this room, you can bring it into your experience here, now because it is your feeling of peace because it is important to you for you to be able to feel this peaceful feeling. It's yours. You can bring it here; you can take it anywhere because it belongs to you.

And I can say, and I've got no way of knowing how you can make sense of this that a lot of what's happened to you in the past has been so horrendous and it can be like the rubbish that was in your house. You can clear it out. You can put it in a skip bin. You can get rid of all of that, anything of that that you no longer want so that anything that is there in the past that you no longer want, you can throw it out.

I'm not saying you should, but if there's anything in your path that can get in the way of you being on the path that you want to be on, you can get rid of it. You can throw it out. Now I'm saying that and I've got no way of knowing how you're going to hear that, no way of knowing how you can make sense of that, no way of

knowing even if that makes - if that seems useful for you.

So I'm just saying that in case some of it could be useful, knowing that you will know what to keep, what to give away, what to throw away, what to do so that you can stay on your path that is going to lead peacefully into a future - and it's already started - into a future where you can be peaceful.

And just drop anything that gets in the way of - just let go of anything in the way that you need to feel with that so that you can then, in a peaceful way, which is a function of you, can allow you to be on your path and not on that other path that your father and his father and his father and his father with all of that aggression and all that violence and all of that getting back and all of that, you know, resentment and all of that bitterness, all of that awfulness. That's their path. It's not your path.

And so if there's anything that's their path and that stuff, you can get rid of it and that feeling of peace that is so important that you can then be determined to take the peaceful path which can have you be connected with your daughters and then with you.

I know when my eldest son was in his early 20s, he and I were very close and he went overseas and was overseas for more than a year. And I didn't see him all that time, but I know and he told me that he knew that, even though we didn't see each other, there was a very strong sense of closeness and connection.

Now your daughters are not in this room, but they don't have to be here physically for you to feel that strong, precious connection with them, to feel the awesome connection with them; that amazing connection with Odessa. And to feel that connection, just how beautiful that is, how important that is for you, how special that is for you and feel it here and now that you can have that peaceful feeling and connection, even if they are not here at this moment in this place, you can have that connection.

And you can take it into the future and you can follow that peaceful path into the future and you can look forward to having more time with them, not necessarily today. I don't know about next week, but because you can be peaceful, you can expect there will be more quality time, awesome time, amazing time, connecting time with them and them with you. Does that make sense what I'm saying?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: And, as you are experiencing what you're experiencing, what happens when you - so that you can see that you can be even more peaceful than you already are becoming. What happened to you as you see that?

Client: Because I need to clear away the trash.

Rob: You need to clear away the?

Client: Trash.

Rob: Trash?

Client: All the bad people in the world.

Rob: Clear them away, yeah. But you don't need to hit them, you don't need to hurt them, you don't need to get revenge on them; you can just ignore them. You know they say the best revenge on someone that's hurt us is to live a peaceful life. Does that make sense for me to say that? So you can get rid of them by making them irrelevant. You don't have to literally put them in the rubbish. You can just ignore them because otherwise they'll be in the way.

And what do you think it's going to be like when - is your other daughter, bad memory, did you say her name was Lilly or Lillian?

Client: Lillian.

Rob: Lillian, yeah. So when Lillian is, I don't know, in her 20s and Odessa would be, I don't know, her late teens, something like that or early 20s and you are with the two of them, the three of you, having a very nice time, having a very peaceful time, having a very playful time, a very close time, how's that been feeling for you to have this experience that they are now adults and you're close with them and they're close with you. How does this feel?

Client: Like the best feeling in the world.

Rob: The best feeling in the world. And you already know at least some of that best feeling in the world because you felt that with their birth. Though that best feeling in the world is something that you know and know and can look forward to in the future.

And when you look back from that time when they're adults, was it worthwhile clearing away the people that could have got in the way? Was it worthwhile putting all that nasty vengeful stuff, putting that aside? Was it worthwhile making sure that you stuck to your path of being peaceful? Was it worthwhile?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah because you are a very determined person. In a number of areas, you have stuck to what you knew was right for you and you can stick to what's right for you and for them and it doesn't have to happen immediately. It didn't happen, with, with that doctor, with that specialist, but it did happen.

And you are persistent. You didn't clear out those four and a half tons of rubbish in five minutes. You had to be persistent with it. You had to work at it, but you did it and I can imagine that you would really good that you have done it; satisfied. I can imagine, yeah.

And you can also look forward to having that satisfaction of having done what you needed to do to follow that peaceful, your path, a path that you can share with Lillian, with Odessa, that they can share with each other and they can share with you. And you don't have to see them all the time to have a close feeling with them.

Even if they are living with you, just with you, they would be going to school. They wouldn't be with you all the time. They'd be playing with their friends. So you don't need to be physically with them all the time to have that feeling of closeness that you can have right now and you can look forward to more of that in the future. Would that be agreeable?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Yeah, good. So what's, what's happening - as we're talking about it, what's happening for you?

Client: Well I guess I'm thinking about what can become of the future for my kids or myself.

Rob: Yeah. And as you think about that, what sort of future do you find yourself thinking about?

Client: My kids coming back to live [**inaudible 37:56**] again.

Rob: Yes. And you don't need to be a perfect father. Just look after them as best you can. That's all anyone can do.

Client: There's no such thing as perfect.

Rob: Exactly. So you can look, look forward to looking after them as best you can without having to be perfect. Now how does that feel to you? How does that seem to you? How does that sit with you? Does it seem okay? Something to look forward to?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: And how real does this experience - how real is this for you? Is it just like a wishful thinking or can you see how it really can happen?

Client: I can see how it can happen.

Rob: Yeah. And can you see how you can help it to happen?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Ah, that's marvellous. Well I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to meet you. I am genuinely in awe of what you've managed to get through and not only survive it, but actually make some important changes because of it. I think what you've been able to get through and what you've been able to turn around for yourself is truly awesome and inspiring.

When I try and imagine what it would have been like if I had been in those situations, it's hard for me to even begin to think how I could have even started to deal with it. But you've not only survived it, that you've taken charge of the situation and made changes that a lot of other people wouldn't have had the strength and determination to do.

I think what you've done and what you're going to do is truly inspiring. Now it's a real pleasure for me to

have the opportunity to be part of helping you to simply do what you're going to do. And if this conversation can be in some way helpful for you to - so that you could be clearer about what you are going to do then that will be a real pleasure for me.

So I'm wondering, Adam, is there anything else that you might want from me. There's a lot more that we could talk about, a lot more than could happen, a lot more than we could do, but I'm wondering, does this seem enough or is there something more that you might want from this?

Client: [inaudible 41:19] am I doing the right thing for myself.

Rob: If you were to ask yourself that question, what would your answer be?

Client: Asking within myself if I am?

Rob: Yeah, yes.

Client: With other people around that are around me still.

Rob: Yes.

Client: That are talking bad things about me.

Rob: Yes.

Client: I don't want. It puts me down a little bit and I'm just not that 100% certain who I am.

Rob: Okay. Well I, we can't ever, ever be perfectly certain about anything, but for what it's worth, I think you're doing a great job. I think you are doing the right thing. And, listening, I don't know you. There's so much I can't know about you, but what I've heard you say is that you are very accurate in observing what is going to be best and to follow that up and do it.

And I think that you follow your own path as best you can, you're going to end up pretty well alright later. It's the way it seems to me. I don't know what - how you hear me saying that. Does that make any difference? It does? Oh, good.

Client: It makes a whole lot of difference because it's coming out of a person that I don't know.

Rob: Ah, well thank you. And, you know, I found that whatever we do, there will always be some people who are critical. And whether you know that old saying you can please some people all the time or all the people some of the time, but you can't please all the people

all the time. No matter what you do, some people are going to try and put you down.

But if you know where you're going and why you're going there and the benefit of doing that, I don't like to see anyone trying to get in your way. I think you're a very determined man and your determination, now that it's connected to something that is really important to you, your future and your daughters' future and your future with them and them with you, that people can say what they want, you're going to stick to that path. That's my take on it.

What do you think? I think so. No matter what anyone said, because you know how important that is for you, that's going to be more important than someone else's opinion. And what else? What else would you [have]?

Client: Will I get through this on my own two feet? Are things going well with my children at the moment?

Rob: Are you going to get through it on your own two feet?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Do your children need you to?

Client: Yes, they do.

Rob: Well, there's your answer. You don't have an option. If they need you to, well, that's it because they and their future is what your life's about, what you're about. And when it's that important, what you've gone through already, it would have been - it would have stuffed most people. You've already shown that you can get through things. Well I don't know how you do that. Do you believe that when I say that?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Very proud to me. And what else?

Client: Nothing.

Rob: Okay. And I want to make sure, Adam, that - I want to make sure that even though we're talking about how you are going to get through this and it's going to be okay; less than perfect, but more than okay, you'll make sure that you know that I'm not trying to take in any way from how difficult it has been and there may be some difficulties in the future.

I'm not saying there won't be any difficulty, but it's very clear to me, and from what you're saying, I think it's getting clearer to you that you are going to get through it because you've got a reason to get through it.

And some of the reasons are Lillian and Odessa. Are they not - are they worth it? Are they worth making the effort?

Client: More than worth it.

Rob: More than worth it, exactly. So perhaps you can find a way of just letting yourself sit with this until that sense of determination, which is very [inaudible 47:47], has found itself to where it needs to in yourself so that you can get ready to get on and do what you need to do, take care of them, their future of you, your future of them.

And then when you have that feeling, that experience, that sense where you think, oh, okay. It's going to be - I know what to do now. I know how to do it. I know how to be around for them and with them. When you get to that situation then you can, with both your eyes open and look forward to getting out and getting on with the day.

That's it. [The lines are starting to flow], they're letting us know that you're getting ready to [inaudible 48:47]. That's good. Yeah. Well there's an emotion there. What's that? Do you feel sad or touched or?

Client: A bit of all.

Rob: Relieved?

Client: A bit of all of that.

Rob: What did you say?

Client: A bit of all of that.

Rob: A bit of all of that. Okay. Have you got something planned for the rest of the day?

Client: Well tonight I'm going down to [inaudible 49:25]

Rob: To?

Client: To Tasmania.

Rob: What flight are you on?

Client: On the Virgin Blue.

Rob: Okay, what time?

Client: At eight.

Rob: Okay. I might see you on the plane. I'm going 11 o'clock.

Client: I've got to go down and see my aunt [inaudible 49:40] who will be dying in like about a week.

Rob: Okay. So, yeah. Oh, I might see you at the airport.

Client: I might go [**inaudible 49:48**].

Rob: Okay [**inaudible**].

Client: I'll be going down there for five days.

Rob: And how are we doing?

Female: Okay.

Rob: What's different now?

Client: More of a sense of mind, more of a happy feeling.

Rob: Good. And I promise you that that's not going to last and be permanent. I promise you there's going to be pain, difficulty and challenges. I promise you. It's called being alive. But when you know that even through difficulties or trouble, you can get through them, well it makes them bearable. And if you know there's a reason to then that makes them very bearable, very doable.

So how about we leave it at that? [**Inaudible 50:42**]

Client: Thank you.

Rob: Yeah, it's a pleasure. Glad to meet you and it would be nice if you had a little bit of time to just sort of sit quietly after this and let what you connected with, kind of really settle in and [**inaudible 50:57**].

Female: I might take Adam home.

Rob: Huh?

Female: I'll take Adam home.

Rob: Okay. Very good.

Well thank you for coming along and letting me be part of your better future. It's very delightful for me to feel that I can have however small part in contributing to you and your family and for you being relatively part of our learning. I appreciate that a lot.

Shall we stop?

Client: Yeah.

Rob: Okay.

With thanks

I am indebted to the generosity of this man in sharing his experience with us. After all of his multiple traumas over all those years, he is demonstrating his heroic journey to create his own unique solutions.

Resources

Websites

www.cet.net.au

Email

rob@cet.net.au

