

Utilisation in hypnosis

Building on an Ericksonian approach

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An enhanced ebook

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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Front cover image

The image from the front cover, “The Old School Tie”, utilising recycled sheet metal and string is courtesy of the artist - Loris Waller.

Introduction

I have viewed much of what I done as attempting to assist people to connect with, reconnect with, or learn, some experience, resource, or ability that they have lost awareness of, forgotten, overlooked or not yet learnt. I have found this to be useful for healing, or making whole again, as well as restoring mutual and self respect and mutual and self trust.

I have grown to appreciate the unpredictable expansiveness of conversations, the grounding benison of humour, the humanising release of absurdity, and my incurable forty-five year love affair with hypnosis.

On a personal level, the experience has been generally enlivening, mostly satisfying, frequently joyful, all too often humbling, and has always been a gift which I am grateful to share with other interested people.

Preamble

Along with many others who learnt with Erickson, I consider utilisation to be central to effective therapy and like many others who learnt with Erickson, I have evolved my own approach; my own translation; my own interpretation of what I saw after my time with Erickson. He cautioned people to not try to be like him [“You couldn’t even if you tried”] but rather to follow their own path. What follows is an articulation of my response to his invitation, and an invitation to you to also make your own translation to more effectively follow your own path.

The central theme of this book is utilisation. The process of utilisation bypasses any requirement to explain and formulate a theory, protocol or process to be applied. Instead it invites a simple, radically different experience ... observing and responding ... but more of this later - Joseph Campbell famously invited his students to follow their bliss only later to comment that perhaps he should have said follow their blisters!

There are many excellent textbooks already available about hypnosis written clearly by world experts with decades of clinical experience ... scholarly works with definitions, explanations, research data and multiple cross-references to other published writings.

In this publication, I am wanting to offer a different focus ... not about theories, explanations, techniques or my supposed expert status and wisdom. My observations and reflections are offered humbly, with a clear emphasis that they are a function of me, as an expression of what I have learnt over more than 30 years using and teaching the benefits of utilisation. Then you, the reader / listener / viewer can have your own unique individual experience, create your own interpretations, your own learnings, which you can then bring to your own clinical work. My sincere wish in providing this experience is to encourage you to take anything useful and make your own translation; to try out, play with, or do the opposite, anything that may seem relevant; adapting to your own style; to refine what you are already doing in your work to add to the efficacy of what we are about ... helping people to restore and reconnect with their trust in their own abilities to get on with their life, with all its vicissitudes, so there is less suffering and more joy.

Some people like to know beforehand where they are going, while others like to jump in and discover their experience in the journey, so reading what I’ve written might provide an introduction to the mood and feel of the book, but if you’d prefer, you could go straight to the video examples and the clinical session, or listen to the audios. In viewing the session, would it be useful to read the transcript as you watch, or would you prefer to be an observer without the distraction of the transcript? Again, you might prefer to join the client in their hypnotic experience and see what happens for you as a person and then view the session more objectively.

Although this publication is divided into chapters, in a sequence, the sequence is artificial. The chapter on utilisation and hypnosis leads on to utilisation in hypnosis, then the session and transcript and finally reflections and invitations. You could just as usefully begin with the session and transcript, then utilisation in hypnosis, then utilisation and hypnosis. You could begin with the chapter on reflections and invitations. You could even dip into random chapters and allow the experi-

ence to form like a mosaic. My invitation is to play and enjoy the playing.

For decades now, some therapy texts have had an accompanying audio tape, CD, or DVD. This publication is the reverse of that. The video of the hypnosis session is primary, with the accompanying text, audio and video examples only serving to introduce and compliment it ... to provide a context for your learning. In the same way, your experience is primary, with my contribution only serving to complement your learning.

I'm reading from page 39 of Disclosing New Worlds 1999 Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus

“This book, then, is attempting to develop sensitivities, not knowledge. Once one has a sensitivity to something such as good food, decency, certain kinds of beauty, or even the pleasures of hiking, one is already on the path of refining and developing that sensitivity. One sees food, decent behaviour, beauty, and hiking trails in a new light. They draw one to them in a way they did not before. As one is drawn, time and time again, one then continuously develops one's skills for dealing with what one is sensitive to.”

Disclosing New Worlds 1999 Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus p39

Some personal background

One of my favourite quotes is from Grouch Marx - "I'd never want to belong to any club that would have me as a member" and when I read Jay Haley's comment that hypnosis hangs out with marginal people, I felt I was in the right place. Stephen Gilligan's comments from his early meetings with Erickson about how comfortable Erickson was with his own weirdness, gave him [Gillian] a lot of permission also resonated.

I was born into a working class family, lived in a working class suburb of Melbourne, Australia, and then went to a prestigious secondary school. I was still living in that working class suburb while I completed my medical degree before going into general practice in a prestigious Melbourne suburb.

This dichotomy shaped my teenage years. I was interested in the exotic - The Rosicrucians, yoga, Latin, exotic cars, but when I showed interest in hypnotism, my mother was adamant in telling me that I should never have anything to do with it as I would never be the same again. I hope that my dedication to the use and teaching of hypnosis for most of my adult life is more than a teenage rebelliousness.

On reflection, the way I happened to keep on the fringe, away from any orthodoxy found expression in my learning. Most of my important learning experiences aside from my time with Erickson, came from outside medicine and therapy ... from the personal development programmes of Werner Erhard's EST and The Landmark Forum; The Hoffman process; Humberto Maturana's biological perspective; from three other Chileans who created ontological coaching - Fernando Flores, Julio Olalla and Rafael Echeverria; from the writings of self-proclaimed curiologist Heinz von Foerster; from Lao Tzu's Tao te Ching;

as well as the soul nourishing experiences of music, being in the wilds of the Australian bush, and my family both close and distant.

I learnt some practical principles of working with wood from my father, who left school in Scotland to come to Australia when he was fourteen. He couldn't read a plan, but could craft a complex chair or even a wheelbarrow, with all its intricate angles. He taught me about planing wood ... to work with the grain, not against it; to saw wood without pushing the saw which would only jam it ... just letting the weight of the saw do the work while gently guiding it. He was by necessity a practical, self-taught man as well as being at home with his ordinariness. Even though he died more than thirty years ago I continue to be inspired by his generous personal unimportance.

From that background, when I saw Herb Lustig's "The Artistry of Milton H. Erickson" in 1976 and then met Erickson in 1977, I felt at home with his down-to-earth practicality, and his dismissal of any unifying theory of therapy as ridiculous. He said he learnt more from his polio than from any text book on therapy, and recurrently relied on his own experiences over the decades as a therapist rather than some text or theory. He demonstrated an intense curiosity in observing each individual to disclose their individual way of being in the world, and then, rather than imposing his ideas, preferred to evoke from within that unique individual a greater flexibility, a wider range of options, and learning, to connect with what was already uniquely there ... the very heart and soul of utilisation.

Erickson died in 1980, but his body was cremated, and his ashes were scattered on Squaw Peak [Piestewa Peak] in Phoenix!

Utilisation & hypnosis ... why? A foundation

Utilisation

Erickson told me "When a client comes to see you, they always bring their solution with them, but they don't know that they do, so have a very nice time helping that client to find the solution they brought with them, that they didn't now that they did."

Erickson's story " ... and make the most of it"

Erickson told me that when he was brought up on a farm he loved farming and was looking forward to being a farmer, but when he was seventeen or eighteen he had a near fatal attack of polio which left him very severely crippled, disabled, and he said "There's no damn use for a cripple on a farm." so he had to do something and a family friend said "Well, there's always work for doctors" so he enrolled in medical school and he completed his medical degree along with a psychology degree at the same time, and as part of his learn-

ing, a psychiatrist lecturing said "I don't know where you got your limp from, but it will be very useful to you to if you ever thought of becoming a psychiatrist, because it will somehow create rapport with women, bringing out the mothering in them and as a cripple you won't be a threat to men." and so he then went on and had psychiatric training.

He was doing experimental work using hypnosis and did some interesting, fascinating experiments and would have continued doing that but the funds ran out so he had to go into hospital practice and he'd been doing some creative innovative work in a psychiatric inpatient situation and things were going along fine but he had a cycle accident and was severely grazed in an area of the road where there was a lot of horse manure and the concern was that he might contract tetanus. And in those days Tet Toxoid was not available so he had the only option was Anti-tetanus injections which were horse serum and he was known to be allergic to that so they weighed up the pros and cons and he decided to have the injection and developed a very severe serum sickness as a result of that leaving him with a lot of hypersensitivities, a lot of allergies so he was advised to leave the hospital in the north of America and shift to Phoenix which was a desert place where there would be fewer allergies. So he shifted there and began to see clients, mostly families and couples and individuals and things were going along fine except that the polio caught up with him and he became increasingly disabled, and he so had to give up his clinical practice and resorted to teaching.

He started running teaching seminars running Monday to Friday and a large number of people from all over the world [I was one of these] spent time with him and learnt from being with him and hearing him and interacting with him and having therapy from him.

He said to me that if he hadn't had polio he would have stayed on the farm. If the funds hadn't run out he would have stayed doing experimental work. If the cycle accident hadn't happened and the serum sickness he would have stayed in hospital practice. If his health had continued he would have stayed in Phoenix seeing clients and not teaching. So he said "You never know what's around the corner, and you take whatever life dishes up to you and you make the most of it." What I appreciate about that man was that when he said something

like it was obvious that he was speaking from personal experience, not some abstract idea. A very genuine, a very solid comment.

Obviously utilisation is making use of what's already there. It rests on a foundation, a set of assumptions, an observation place of presumed wholeness and completeness.

The medical model is mechanistic and informed by the question "What's wrong that needs fixing?". This assumes that something is broken, defective or pathological. Responding to this question demands that we gather information so that we can classify the problem, diagnose it, so we can apply the correct treatment, then monitoring the response.

It brings with it an assumption that because the client / patient / mechanism is defective, the intervention by a more powerful expert will be required; one holding specialised knowledge which will be applied to a lesser being. Utilising defective material would be absurd. This approach also assumes a linear causality as an expression of Newton's explanations, where one event is the cause of another event, like so many billiard balls interacting.

When we have a broken bone, a car or computer that has broken down, it makes perfect sense to take our body, car or computer to an expert who knows more than we do about bones, cars, or computers. Trying to fix our own bone, car or computer might make the problem much worse.

Utilisation has a very different starting point. It is based on an organic principle of wholeness and self-healing. It assumes that the client / patient / mechanism is whole, and merely requires the assistance of a fellow human being, with no specialised knowledge. Exploration of what is there in the background, misplaced or forgotten then becomes an obvious resource to be utilised. Utilisation is informed by the question "What's missing?". When we explore what's missing for each individual; what they are overlooking; what they have become disconnected from; what they have not yet learnt, we can begin a search **WITH** each individual for this missing experience, resource, or learning; that in finding, rediscovering, reconnecting, they are enabled, restored, so they can continue in their living their individual human existence. This

approach also assumes a circular causality as an expression of Einstein's explanations, which assume circular and mutual causality. Einstein reportedly commented to a companion on a train "Does the next station stop at this train?".

If we ask an arguing couple "What's wrong?" we will generate the argument in our office since each knows what's wrong . It's the other person!

If we have "What's missing?" as our guiding principle, we can ask them "What's missing so that you be more peaceful together?" or "How did you used to get on peacefully?" or "How will you feel different when you will be getting on better?" or "If we could do something today that would help to resolve this, what would be different?". Questions like these don't provide explanations, but rather create an experience - an experience of connecting with whatever the missing experience was that was preventing them from a peaceful relationship; utilising their own experiences, resources, abilities.

If we try to take the expert role, we can very easily become exhausted with the pretense of knowing what is best for them. Many of us have enough trouble managing our own troubles, without being "wise" enough to fix anyone else's. If we assume that the client is the expert and is having problems because they have lost contact with their expertness it can be such a relief. We can be an authentic support, co-traveller, colleague and as Freud coined ... one of us ordinary neurotics.

A clinical example of solicitors out of court

A couple wanted some help with their relationship. They were both solicitors [lawyers] in a country town and they wanted to have some help away from their home because they were concerned about their reputation. So I asked them what the trouble was, what they wanted to do, and each spoke in a very stilted way as if they were in court, and then each would respond “Well with respect, but actually ...” and then they would cross-examine and the way they were presenting their problem I found myself thrust into the role of judge and jury which of course is not going to satisfy anyone. So after a while I asked them what did they used to do when they were first together; what did they used to do as a couple that was enjoyable, that was fun for them, and they looked at each other in a stunned silence and then one remembered that they used to go out to the movies or go out to dinner and they said they hadn’t done that for years, and they were kind of confused about the fact that somehow this had slipped passed them. That’s what they used to do and they hadn’t been doing that.

Now because they were away from home, I asked them what plans they had for that evening, and they said they were going to have dinner together and they might go out to see a movie, and the mood within the couple, between the couple was palpably different. Instead of being oppositional as if they were in court, they were on the same team, they were on the same side of the situation. Now I didn’t see them again so I don’t know whether that was helpful, but certainly the mood that they brought in would have made any resolution totally impossible, and the mood that they left in certainly created a context where something new and different and useful could happen.

by Responding to “What’s wrong?” requires explanations and theories

- Information gathering;
- The formulation of a causal linking of the information;
- The abstraction of the process into an explanatory theory;
- The application the theory to any situation;
- In a mood of being right and detached.
- We are wanting to fix something that’s defective.

served; Responding to “What’s missing?” requires observation by

- Recurrent experiences of connecting with what is being observed;
- Responding to the observation;
- Observing the result of the interaction;
- Adjusting the action;
- Observing the response;

Theories abstract ... utilisation connects

Theories may inform us about why, but utilisation informs us about how.

*“Pilgrim, pilgrim, pilgrim
There is no way, there is no way, there is no way...
You make the way, you make the way, you make the way
By walking, walking, walking...”
[Anonymous - attributed to an ancient Aztec or Inca
poem courtesy of Marilia Baker]*

“What are you doing! What are you saying!” #67 in 101
Zen Stories in Paul Repp’s Zen Flesh Zen Bones

The Zen master Mu-nan had only one successor. His name was Shoji. After Shoji had completed his study of Zen, Mu-nan called him into his room. “I am getting old,” he said, “and as far as I know, Shoji, you are the only one who will carry on this teaching. Here is a book. It has been passed down from master to master for seven generations. I also have added many points according to my understanding. The book is very valuable, and I am giving it to you to represent your successorship.”

“If the book is such an important thing, you had better keep it,” Shoji replied. “I received your Zen without writing and am satisfied with it as it is.”

“I know that,” said Mu-nan. “Even so, this work has been carried from master to master for seven generations, so you may keep it as a symbol of having received the teaching. Here.”

The two happened to be talking before a brazier. The instant Shoji felt the book in his hands he thrust it into the flaming coals. He had no lust for possessions.

Mu-nan, who had never been angry before, yelled: “What are you doing!”

Shoji shouted back: “What are you saying!”

“The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice ... and because we fail to notice that we fail to notice, there is little we can do to change; until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.”

R. D. Laing.



Could this sign also be “Beware of Invisibility”?

We are in love with our explanations, and live in an increasingly technological, information worshipping culture. While these have brought wonderful advances, there has been a cost to our soul. Utilising, and the observing that utilising requires can complement this and restore some balance, wholeness and humanity. The personal development guru, Werner Erhard commented that it is a problem being half-assed whichever cheek is missing.

The number of therapy schools has grown from about 60 in the sixties to over 400, and all have their underlying assumptions, theories, and processes. Each is internally coherent, valid, but as Lambert’s and Wampold’s meta-analyses show, they share “common factors” and no one approach is more efficacious than any other, despite the strident claims of some.

*Lambert and Wampold also alerted us to “client factors” as being by far the most important in generating change ... 40% [Lambert] and 87% [Wampold] which demands the attention of anyone seriously interested in assisting our clients. This is where **UTILISATION** comes into its own.*

Instead of looking for the best theory or therapy approach, which will contribute 15% [Lambert] or up to 1% [Wampold], we have the opportunity to observe what is happening in each individual client’s experience, and by disclosing what’s there, what’s been overlooked, we have the opportunity to help a client to “see” what had been transparent to them, they have the opportunity to connect with this and make good use of it ... utilise it!

Erickson commented that to think there could be one theory which would adequately explain all problems for all people, of both sexes, all ages and backgrounds in all situations was absurd. He had an alternative as quoted in the lead up to the first International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy in Phoenix in 1980 - “Each person is an individual. Hence psychotherapy should be formulated to meet the uniqueness of the individual’s needs, rather than tailoring the person to fit the Procrustean bed of a hypothetical theory of human behaviour”

Is there an alternative to the search for the theory that will explain everything?

One of my favorite jokes, and Irish joke, which I can tell with the blessing of my Irish ancestors is When the Irishman first saw a steam train, he said “I can see it works in practice, but does it work in theory?”

Erickson was asked what were the most important things for us to learn, and he answered that the three most important things for us to learn are to observe, to observe, and to observe. His invitation leads us to a direct connection to the client’s experience and avoids the tortuous and sometimes torturous path of explaining, theorising, applying that theory ... and instead allows for us to be with the client in their experience ...

There is something respectful and affirming when we humbly and respectfully observe a client’s experience. This contrasts with the cold mechanical process of applying some abstract theory which only serves to distance us from the client and a client from themselves, their experiences and their resources.

In my medical training, I learnt to ask questions to elicit “symptoms” of disease and then to examine the patient for “signs” of this disease. A diagnosis was the aim, so relevant treatment could be administered and monitored. The process was useful but had a mechanistic mood aiming for classification of diseases which is to fit this patient into an already existing taxonomy of illnesses. Any patient who didn’t fit into a specific diagnostic category would frequently be labeled as psychosomatic. It was years after I graduated that I realised that I not met any people in my six year university course or my two years as an intern. I had met patients, illnesses, conditions, syndrome, other doctors, but no people! I was shocked and saddened noticing what I had missed out on. I also felt regret that my clinical manner which may have been very useful at times, also had a coldness, an inhuman element which must have had a limiting influence on the patients’ healing.

When I first learnt about hypnosis this medical approach was my starting place. Someone having trouble sleeping would have to be diagnosed as suffering from anxiety or depression or even insomnia before hypnotic treatment could start by reading scripts instructing such a person how to get over their anxiety, depression, or insomnia. This approach was useful sometimes, but not enough to satisfy me, and I found the repetitiveness boring and sometimes had trouble staying awake myself as I was instructing someone to relax their toes, relax their feet, relax their calves, etc., etc., etc., ...

This all changed after my time with Erickson. During my second visit with him in 1978 he began a day’s teaching with a group of about 10 of us with a statement that when a client came to see you, you need to find out about their family background, their educational standards, their ethnic background, whether they were brought up in the country or the city, and so on. The next day he began the day’s teaching with the same group by stating that when a client comes to see you, you don’t need to worry about their family background, their educational standards, their ethnic background, whether they were brought up in the country or the city, and so on ... you just work with what’s in the room.

This flexibility was characteristic of his approach from my personal observation and was unsettling but enlivening. Unsettling because the certainty and security of basing our work on a solid structured theory was gone. Enlivening because we could then begin an adventure.

Everyday activity

SECTION 2

Utilising clients' experiences ... within the session

Erickson told me “When a client comes to see you, they always bring their solution with them, but they don't know that they do, so have a very nice time helping that client to find the solution they brought with them, that they didn't know that they did.”

This delighted me in principle, but left the problem of how do we do that?

I have noticed that when anyone does something they like to do, they have all the resources they need to be in that activity, to adjust to any problems that happen, to correct any mistakes. When there's a problem they deal with it, otherwise they would hardly like the experience.

If we then begin a hypnosis session by asking what a client likes to do, and as they explore their likes their mood predictably lifts. We then

find ourselves as two human beings exploring some enjoyable activity in a mood of resourcefulness.

Further, inviting a client to recall their liked activity can provide an experience which can then allow for focus and absorption and so an invitation into hypnosis! We can comment on the physiological changes that we can observe ... their stillness, slowing of and deepening of their breathing, alterations in their blinking, etc.

We can add to the texture of their experience by asking them for details about what they can see, hear, smell, taste ... all the senses ...

This leads to the delightful discovery that whatever may be missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for a client in their problem situation will always be present in their likes.

So with a client focused and absorbed in their likes, we can ask them to look around and find whatever had been missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for them.

It can be a real delight when we witness a client finding this resource, like an extension of finding the missing car keys, book, or telephone bill, not because what was missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference was deeply buried but because it was so obvious and surface that it was overlooked, it was transparent!

Clinical example ... the traveling teacher.

A teacher told me he loved to travel each summer holiday. He would go to a place he'd never been to before, find his way around and it was always a wonderful experience. What he liked about the process was that it was a sense of adventure. Not knowing was so exciting for me; so enjoyable to him; so enlivening, and of course he enjoyed the fact that he could trust himself to do what was needed; do what was required; and adapt to what was there.

Now - he had a problem. He'd reached a stage in his teaching career where he was unsure about where to go. He wasn't sure whether he should go back to university, get some more degrees, whether he should learn some business skills so he could become a school principal; whether he should stay in the classroom. He had this problem of being undecided about what to do; where to go; he felt somewhat lost.

So it was very easy for him to go into hypnosis. Just invited him to remember the experience of arriving somewhere recently or some years previously and to recall as much as he was able to of the feeling of being there, and as he became focused on that experience and got more absorbed in the memory of it, his face softened; his whole mood lifted; had a faint smile on his face. He was really enjoying the experience, and then as he told me more about the journey and how he enjoyed the unfolding of what happened, something very pleasing happened to him. He looked like he was really enjoying himself.

Then I asked him to notice how that felt. The experience of not knowing where he was going; trusting himself; the sense of liveliness; the sense of adventure; and although he already knew that, he'd had that

every year for a number of years, somehow just sitting with it; spending time with it allowed him to get to know it just that little bit better.

It was then easy for him, having learnt that; being reacquainted with that; having got to know that sense of adventurousness; that aliveness; that trusting; having got to know that just that much better to very easily to bring that same feeling of trusting, adventurousness, liveliness into his teaching career dilemma.

As he made that connection there was a huge alteration in his body. He just ... his shoulders went down; his face relaxed even more. It was obvious to any observer that he was experiencing a tremendous amount of relief. And so all I need to do was to ask him to just sit with that and get used to that and get more acquainted with that feeling of adventure; trusting; liveliness in relation to his teaching career.

After a time, he came out of hypnosis and I asked him what was different, and he said "I don't have a problem with my teaching career now. I don't know exactly what I'm going to do; where I'm going to go, but it's like an adventure. I can trust myself and I feel so relieved. I don't have a problem now."

Now there was no wise input from me. There was no explanation offered to him. It was simply an experience for him where he could explore something that he liked to do; find the resource that he needed and bring that to the problem area. It was an experience of connection. Not so much solving a problem as dissolving it, and after that experience he actually didn't have a problem. He just had an adventure waiting to happen

I love Ogden Nash's little ditty -

*“The centipede
When asked which
Leg it would move
Ended in a ditch”*

... and it points so beautifully to the way in our everyday activity we have learnt to move and interact with the world and with other people without the need for any explanations at all.

When we first learnt to walk there was a process where you move a foot and you're not quite sure whether that foot is being lifted high enough; moved far enough; not far enough; when to move the next foot; how high to lift that; how big a step to take. So like a trial and error you take a step and then you find the response to that. “Does that work? Oh OK. Oh that didn't work. Oh, I'll do something different.” So it's a way of taking an action, and then somehow responding to the result of that action and then responding to the result of that response in a recurrent circular manner. All of this happens without any explanations.

You learn to drive a car and you don't know quite how hard, how fast to turn the steering wheel when you want to go to the left or the right; how far or how fast to push down on the accelerator to go faster; on the brake to slow down, and by recurrent interactions with the brake, with the accelerator, with the steering wheel we learn to respond to that through our observations, not necessarily consciously observing, but somehow in our interactions, and we make use of the response that happens to what we do.

When you watch people who have been dancing together in a partnership for some time, and ask them “Who's leading? How do you know when to take a step?” All these interactions happen by the mutual observation, the mutual interaction, the mutual learning and there is no need to explain whether the music when they are dancing is three four, four four, six eight. None of that is of any importance at all. Just as when someone is learning to put their foot on the accelerator or brake or move the steering wheel of the car, there's no need to talk about the circular force, about the force on the foot or on the pedal; the friction between the brake pad and the brake drum; there's no need to talk about hydraulics that might have something to do with

the steering or the acceleration. None of that is of any importance, and clearly a child learning to walk doesn't need to know about gravity; doesn't need to know about friction on the floor; doesn't need to know about how the joints move. None of those things are important. That learning happens; that everyday experience happens for any of us; for all of us without any need for explanations, and rather through the process of taking action and observing the response and then recurrently refining our response through observations.

So as with everyday activity, so it is working with hypnosis. We can make a beginning and observe how someone responds, and we can adjust our next move to their response and see how they respond to what we've done, and so on, and all this can be like a dance; it can be like a mutual interaction; a mutual learning and there doesn't have to be any explanation at all, in fact the explanations can get in the way. Any time we look at an explanation, it's actually, if you look at the timing of it, the explanation always follows the activity, then we can very easily say “Oh - that happened because ...” The explanation follows the action and then we use it as if the explanation preceded it.

So ... “The centipede When asked which Leg it would move Ended in a ditch” ... but if no-one had asked the centipede to put its attention on trying to work out in any explanatory way what it can do with all those legs, it's just fine; it works perfectly fine. Just like my favourite nursery rhyme about Little Bow Peep “Leave them alone and they will come home”. There's no need to explain where they've gone or why they've gone, they can “come home, wagging their tails behind them.”

Allan Marshal, the Australian author of “I Can Jump Puddles” commented in a TV interview that he was with his granddaughters in the Australian bush when they were excited looking at some delicate native orchid. He caught himself giving the orchid its Latin botanical name. Catching himself, he knelt down and joined in with the children's joy, appreciating the beauty of the flower. After that he vowed to always approach any situation as if he were seeing it for the first time.

“Anyone who has been captivated by an activity such as chess or by a person who has exercised an irresistible attraction will recall that in the course of the captivation the world comes to look different. The game or the person draws out ways of acting that are disharmonious with our workaday lives, and we investigate the tensions of these new ways of acting by playing the game over and over again or by seeking every possible opportunity to be with the person. We make every effort to get the game right or the relationship right. That is, to get in tune with what it means for us, and we draw on skills we have not normally used. For example, we see possibilities for moving pawns in new ways or using the queen earlier or for taking hiking trips or going to concerts. In enacting these formerly passed-over possibilities, we not only perform them energetically but feel a mood of joyful personal involvement in what we are doing. This greater sense of involvement is part of what makes us see new possibilities in life when captivated by a game or a person.”

Disclosing New Worlds 1999 Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus p66



Paul Watzlawick quipped that statistics are like bikinis; what they reveal is fascinating, but what they conceal is vital. Any label we use has its uses but also obscures so much.

*“There is a place beyond theories and techniques. I’ll meet you there.”
After Rumi*

“Even Pigsy knows that certainty is just another illusion” - Monkey by Wu Cheng’en.

The gift of hypnosis ... beautifully natural, gently healing, easily learnt

What is hypnosis?

What Hypnosis isn't:

Hypnosis has kept strange, mysterious company over the eons, in particular magic, sorcery, and more recently anaesthetics. No wonder issues of control, and being overpowered have generated a mood of suspicion and fear.

Magic is seen as a function of a magician who is someone wise and mysterious, steeped in knowledge of the occult. The mystical power is a function of the person of the magician. It was the magician who performed the magic on a passive subject. Magic continues to influence some tradition circles of hypnosis, where the powerful hypnotist is in charge, puts the increasingly passive client into hypnosis, instructs them, and then wakes them up.

Sorcery is different. The power of sorcery is in the words themselves, and anyone who uses the words, can have an effect, again on a passive subject. Someone, anyone, could find a book of sorcery and begin the

create havoc, hence the need to keep such documents secret. Sorcery continues to influence through standardised scripts, as if the power was in the words of the scripts, and so these needed to be kept out of the hands of unscrupulous power hungry, opportunistic charlatans, and stay safely in the protection of the educated professionals who knew how to administer this potent force. Books of hypnotic scripts are still in use today, and could be recommended only if clients were also standardised.

Hypnosis became popular again in the early 20th Century when general anaesthetics appeared, and much of the anaesthetic jargon found its way into hypnotic conversations. There was talk of hypnotic induction, going to sleep, going under, being put under, going deeper and deeper, being unaware, even unconscious, and then waking up after the psychic surgery had been performed. This brought some of the fears around anaesthesia into hypnosis. Will it work? Will I go deep enough? Will I lose control? Will I wake up in the middle? Will I wake up?

People learning hypnosis report that when they tell their friends or professional colleagues, their friends routinely avert their eyes. It is as if they are frightened that the “hypnosis” will sneak out of the eyes of the hypnotist and into their mind or brain and make some terrifying change without their knowledge.

Utilisation allows us to move away from this notion so the subject or client can begin to take their rightful place as the source, the centre, the site of their own experience. They can say “No” to an authority, however well “qualified”; dismiss any incantations as irrelevant, if they so wish. In doing this the client can reclaim their own authority, their own authorship over their experience, and by being an active participant in the conversation, their strength and dignity are restored – a beautiful aspect of any healing process – and utilisation in hypnosis can generate precisely that experience.

Erickson said in Lustig's "The Artistry of Milton H. Erickson M.D." videotape "Although I am talking, this is your experience, not mine. It is taking place in you, not in me. It belongs to you, not to me. It is for you, and just for you. It's a learning."

Thankfully the bad press that hypnosis has had is fading somewhat, even though some whispers remain in the wings. It saddens me to offer hypnosis to someone and to have them refuse the benefits they might have, not out of an informed choice, but because of misinformation.

What then is Hypnosis?

There are many different opinions about what hypnosis is ... a different state, a different way of being. Freud likened it to falling in love. Milton Erickson thought of hypnosis as a special form of communication, or relationship, between the hypnotherapist and the subject and spoke about it as being a way of mobilising expectancy - something that will be relevant to any processes of adapting to change.

Although each individual experiences hypnosis individually, there are some recurring descriptions. There is frequently some comfort and relaxation; some altered perception in vision, hearing, physical changes such as heaviness, lightness, or some dissociation; time seems to go slowly, or quickly, or stands still, and the descriptions are usually pleasurable.

Rather than trying to tie hypnosis down to a rigid definition, I prefer to offer a description of what we can observe when we are observing hypnosis.

If we observe the client, when we say we are observing hypnosis, we can observe an **experience of focused attention**, leading to **increased absorption** in that experience, and which is **mutually agreed to be hypnosis**.

Erickson spoke of hypnosis as a special relationship between client and therapist so if we explore this relational aspect between client and therapist, or client to themselves, we can discover a greater experience of connectedness, what Douglas Flemons calls "concordance" or being of one mind.

Erickson also spoke of hypnosis as mobilising expectancy, and so we can expect to observe a mood of openness and wonderment, often peaceful, and frequently denoted as relaxation.

Beautifully natural

The traditional approach ... fixing what's wrong.

The older, traditional approach to hypnosis is based on this medical mechanical model, and assumes that there is something wrong that requires an external expert to diagnose and fix what is broken, defective and pathological. From this perspective it would be absurd to trust the "patient" or "hypnotic subject" to contribute to their own treatment. How could something broken and defective be a legitimate contributor to fixing itself? The idea is ridiculous. The solution must be beyond the "patient" or "hypnotic subject" and by necessity **must** be imposed by some external expert. It is the expert's duty, then to impose a solution, which as an expert, he has as a function of his power, wisdom, and superior experience.

This relationship is expressed in the language of the traditional approach as a language of directing; "Look at this spot; listen to me; follow my instructions; go deeper and deeper; you will get over this problem, etc." The direction of the language is exclusive. "From now, you won't do this, you will do that", purposely limiting the options to exclude the problem.

In traditional hypnotic approaches, hypnosis is “induced” [note the anaesthetic metaphor] using a variety of “techniques” including focusing on a spot, relaxing the body, attending to the breathing, imagining some scene, resulting in eye closure [sleep metaphor] and then given instructions to go deeper, perhaps with instructions to walk down some stairs or counting down from ten to one.

Such standardised approaches work when they do, but since we are all individuals, we can expect individual variations.

There are many so called hypnotic induction techniques. Eye fixation, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, the eye roll. The list is unending, but if we were to examine any of these, they each involve focusing and becoming absorbed.

With the traditional eye fixation technique, a client is asked to fix their gaze on a particular spot or object and then instructed to focus on that, and begin to notice [become absorbed in] a tendency to close their eyes. When anyone begins to focus on relaxing their feet, legs, or whatever, there is a natural tendency to becoming absorbed in that experience to the exclusion of other sensations.

In a guided imagery “induction” a person is instructed to close their eyes and imagine walking along the beach or through the bush, etc., and then instructed to notice the sounds, sights, smells, etc., so in response to these instructions, there is a natural focus on the sounds, sights, smells, and just as natural an absorption in the experience. It seems absurd to me, that if we asked someone to look at a spot on the floor, focus on it, become absorbed in it, to then call it “Looking at a spot on the floor hypnotic induction technique.”

Managing the defect is the best that can be hoped for. Certainty and control set the mood.

Erickson’s invitation

Erickson also spoke of the *common everyday trance*. Anyone can look out of a window and daydream; become focused on a movie or a book and lose track of time, not notice someone come into the room; become so absorbed in an activity such as driving a car that we don’t notice the time or even how we got to our destination. These are common, everyday experiences, and if we think of hypnosis as an extension of such experiences, it becomes an ordinary, everyday kind of happening without any need for weirdness and fear.

This book builds on Erickson’s solution approach. Instead of applying any standard techniques, we can invite someone to focus on something from within themselves, become as absorbed as they do, and find their own connections as an experience that is evoked from within themselves, not suggested from the exterior.

Gently healing - Evoking not imposing

One of my sons is a gardener, and likes to let one of each of his vegetables go to seed each year. He says that these seeds find their way around the garden and then have an opportunity to take root and grow in an environment which will suit them best. Erickson commented that “Life isn’t something you can give an answer to today. You should enjoy the process of waiting, the process of becoming what you are. There is nothing more delightful than planting flower seeds and not knowing what kind of flowers are going to come up”.

This approach to gardening, to life in general, and hypnosis in particular is in sharp contrast to the mechanical medical model.

Example of a generic trance ...

The utilisation approach ... finding what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference

If we start from the utilisation approach, which Erickson created, used, taught, and lived, we can assume that any individual's "problem" is due to some disconnection from a resource or loss of trust. Disconnection from some resource or experience can be seen as part of any problem. It's almost a cliché for any of us to look back after we find a solution and see that we knew this, but didn't know that we knew it until we did by remembering, revisiting, or learning. For clients, loss of trust. Trust in themselves, their body, their relationships, the world can be explored with them as well as how this trust might be legitimately and solidly be recreated, reconnected with, relearnt.

This approach creates a more solid relationship with the therapist and, what is more important, with themselves. The assumption that this individual human being is suffering, not because of some defect, but because there is something they are overlooking, something that is transparent to them, have lost touch with, have forgotten, or not yet learnt, rightfully puts the individual in the driver's seat, back in charge of their own experience, and relegates the therapist to a role of facilitator, guide, co-traveller, partner. It is the therapist's role to remind the client, to assist them to see what they, as a complete and whole human being, have overlooked, to explore possibilities of what has been missing, or would make a difference for them. A solution is then evoked

from within the "patient" or "hypnotic subject" as a function of them, of their authority, their native and nascent wisdom, from their expert knowledge of themselves and their unique experience.

This relationship is expressed in the language of the utilisation approach as more invitational. "Perhaps you could ... look at this spot; you don't need to ... listen to me; it might be useful for you to ... follow any of my instructions that are useful to you; you can go only as deeply into this experience as is relevant for you; you can find your own way to ... get over this problem, etc." The direction of the language is inclusive. "You might notice that the problem is not there, or looking back that it wasn't there, or you might not even notice that you were feeling better than you expected to." We might purposely increase the available options to even include the problem. "You might find yourself experiencing the problem for some time yet, although it may be less intense, of lesser duration, or less often, and as you prepare to let it go, it may even feel worse for a short time." By including as many possibilities as we can any seeming setback can be included as part of the solution.

Healing [making whole] becomes possible. Curiosity and expectancy set the mood.

It can be such a massive relief for a therapist to step down from their throne of supposed expertness, where they have to pretend to know so much. We all know how limited our knowledge is, however many years of experience; however many workshops we have attended or even taught; however many books we have read or even written. I know from my own personal experience that what I know about myself is so limited, and I have been reminded of my limitations countless times by clients when I forget this. I am grateful for their recurrent reminder of the importance of my humility as therapist.

It is precisely because of the process of evoking from within the individual, rather than imposing from an external agent, that the utilisation approach is experienced as respectful, gentle, and efficacious.

Easily learnt ... from memorising to observing

In the traditional approach to hypnosis, we are required to learn theories, techniques, even scripts to deliver to a passive recipient. This requires a massive amount of effort to memorise it all. My personal introduction to hypnosis was through this approach, and after two years of training and reading several textbooks, I finally completed my training with the outcome that hypnosis was dangerous, and should be kept safe from anyone not “professionally” trained.

After seeing Lustig’s video *The Artistry of Milton H. Erickson* all this was tipped on its head. It became obvious to me that what was important was how to observe how this individual client was, what this individual person was doing, thinking, believing so that I could best connect with them, and so assist them to reconnect with themselves and all the possibilities that they are; all the resources they have that they may not know about; all of the potential that was there within waiting for an opportunity to find expression.

I found this frightening and inspiring, resulting in increased insecurity and increased engagement. Instead of having to try to convince a client that they should follow some plan that I, as an experienced “professional” had and could use to explain why they had a problem, my job was to convince myself of the client’s wisdom and expertise and explore with them how they could usefully find their own solution. Instead of being caught up in what was right and proper according to some hypothetical theory, I could be curious with each individual client, and explore with them how best to resolve or dissolve their present dilemma.

This shift in focus required a shift in our learning. A shift from memorising and being arrogantly right to humbly observing from a position of profound ignorance about the experience of another human being.

Erickson said that when we listen to the words of another person, we can’t know what their meaning is. So we have to listen for their meaning, not from ours. Maturana claims as a biologist that we don’t have the biological structure that would allow us to know how another person is. We can only rely on our observations of how they are, and these observations are a function of us, and our ability to observe and not what is really happening for the other.

This book, then, is an invitation for you as the reader to put aside for the moment any certainties, theories, techniques and knowledge, so we can explore, together, the flexibility and curiosity of observing in wonderment, as we can witness the expansive experiences that then become possible.

Utilisation in hypnosis ... how?

If we take note of words that a client uses; phrases that they repeat; stories that they tell; their values; their concerns; their doubts, we can speak these back to the client. By using a client's own words, phrases, etc. We are literally speaking their language, and this allows for an easy translation of the session into each client's unique experience. Instead of them having to translate what we say into their own language, they can more directly, more easily, more transparently embody the experience as their own and so it is available as their own experience immediately.

Whatever is missing for a client can be spoken about throughout.

If what is missing for a particular client is *trusting themselves*, as we invite this person into hypnosis through their focusing and becoming absorbed, we can refine our invitation by mentioning that they can *trust themselves* to focus on what will be useful for them; to *trust themselves* to become only as absorbed as is helpful to them; to *trust themselves* to listen to us only as much as is relevant to their learning; to *trust themselves* to learn in the experience at a rate that is beneficial to them; to *trust themselves* to recall anything helpful and let the rest go.

At every available opportunity, we can speak of *trusting themselves* throughout the hypnotic session, coming out of hypnosis, and after hypnosis. As a client is preparing to come out of hypnosis we can invite them to come out of hypnosis in a way and rate that feels right for them, *trusting themselves* to do just that, and also after they come out of hypnosis we can invite them to discover that they can *trust themselves* to let the benefits of the hypnotic experience appear in any way that will be most beneficial to them.

If what's missing is *confidence, saying no, relaxing, or literally anything else*, then any of these can be included instead of *trusting themselves*.

Exercise: When you're next working with a client, take note and perhaps write down what's missing for **the client**, *what they like doing*, any key words, phrases, stories that **the client** uses.

SECTION 1

Utilising clients' experiences ... in the invitation

If we begin with the assumption that hypnosis is an experience that involves focus and absorption that is mutually agreed to be hypnosis, we can simply invite someone wanting hypnosis, to explore their own way of focusing and becoming absorbed.

This uniquely individual way can begin by us noticing any naturally occurring signs of trance, inviting a continuation of whatever is already happening, or imagining some pleasing experience, recalling a previous hypnotic or focused absorbed experience, beginning to meditate [including mindful meditation].

Examples of invitations into hypnosis

However the invitation begins, we can then look for any physiological changes that are helpful to the process. Often there is a slowing of the breathing, bodily stillness, a smoothing out of the facial muscles, etc. We can utilise the client's unique responses and by commenting on them, ratify and enhance them. Each individual person will then feel more resourceful, more enabled, with an enhancement of their self dignity and self trust.

We are simply utilising whatever is already happening, and inviting through focus and absorption, a richer, more textured experience, one which will be more memorable, more readily learnt, and so be more accessible to each individual. This allows a person to have their own personal experience that is evoked from within themselves, not imposed by an external agent.

If you're interested, you could listen to the following invitations, and notice your experience. There are also several video examples of how this might look.

Naturally occurring ...

If we look, we can often see signs of focused absorption in many everyday experiences such as people walking along the street, driving a car, thinking about something and in a clinical setting.

Continuing what you are already doing ...

If we invite someone to continue doing what they are doing, begin to focus on anything of their choice, and become increasingly absorbed in their experience, only to the degree that is useful to them, and close their eyes only if they find this helpful to their experience of focus and absorption.

Likes ...

If we invite someone to experience an activity that they like such as riding a bike, walking in nature, soaking in a warm bath or anything that is pleasing or satisfying for them, where they feel more themselves, it can be so easy for anyone to be present to such an experience, and just as easy to become naturally focused and absorbed.

An example of utilising likes as an invitation into hypnosis



Previous hypnotic experience

If someone has had a hypnotic experience previously, we can simply ask them how they like to go into hypnosis or how they went into hypnosis last time, and since the experience of remembering includes emotions, body and physiological memories, a natural focused absorbed experience is evoked.

Previous non-hypnotic experience

If there has been no previous formal hypnosis, we can ask what someone does to relax, or what they like to do to have time out, and the whole memory can then be recalled in a richly textured experience. There is an example of this in the video below “utilising a client’s words, likes, experiences, doubts ...”

Meditation including Mindful Meditation.

Since both require focus and absorption, they each have much in common with hypnosis, and can provide an easy and respectful bridge into hypnosis.

If someone is a meditator, we can ask if it would be OK for them to meditate and let our voice be part of the meditation. If someone practices mindfulness, instead of offering a Mindfulness Guided Meditation [MGM] we can offer a Mindfulness Interactive meditation [MIM].

Meditation.

Mindfulness meditation.

Utilising likes as a way into hypnosis to find something useful
[Repeated from above]

Utilising clients' experiences in the session

If we take note of words that a client uses; phrases that they repeat; stories that they tell; their values; their concerns; their doubts, we can speak these back to the client. By using a client's own words, phrases, etc., we are literally speaking their language, and this allows for an easy translation of the session into each client's unique experience. Instead of them having to translate what we say into their own language, they can more directly, more easily, more transparently embody the experience as their own and so it is available as their own experience immediately.

An example of utilising a client's words, likes, experiences, doubts ...

In the twenty minute video below, some words that I noticed and repeated were *harmony, parts, family, sense, get it right, cry*.

What's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference included *time with singing and family, doing more of what she wants?*

From within the session I noticed *peace within, calmness, Captain Hook's clock from Peter Pan [the client's name is Wendy]*,

At the end of a session *good, peaceful*.

The client said "It would be good." I heard a doubt and said "Yes, and if you were to imagine that you actually ..." to assist in resolving her doubt.

As you watch this video, what other words did you notice that I used? What other words could I have used?

Exercise: When you're next working with a client, refer to your notes that you wrote down about what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for *the client, what they like doing*, any key words, phrases, stories that *the client* uses, and include these throughout the session.



Utilising stories ...

Scientists wanted to use a supercomputer to find the meaning of existence. They gathered data from every possible source ... historical, biological, anthropological ... having explored every possible avenue. They fed in all this accumulated data, taking many days and nights, sometimes wondering if their task would ever be finished. Finally, when the last bite of information was entered, they set the computations going, and left the mega machine to do its work. After what seemed like an eternity, the computer completed its superhuman task, and printed out the answer to the problem that had been eluding philosophers from the earliest times. The words appeared on the printout "That reminds me of a story."

Stories are an ancient and deep part of humanity. Human beings are deeply embedded in stories and archaic explanations of our place in life and what it all means to humans to be human. Our individual and social identities are constructed and perpetuated in the stories we tell about ourselves and live individually and socially. We are our stories and our stories are us. They give meaning and purpose to our lives.

Indigenous cultures are everywhere in their death throes and can only have the chance to rise out our their own ashes like a phoenix by breathing new life into the ashes. By giving voice to the indigenous stories and sharing them with the young people, their culture can be reconstructed.

How can we find a story so the client can utilise it?

Michael Yapko told me years ago about his concern that all too often, stories are left, like unwanted babies, at the doorstep of the client's unconscious, hoping to be taken in.

When I first became interested in Erickson's approach, stories seemed to be central. I also thought that there were two kinds of people in the world; those that could tell stories, and those that couldn't. I placed myself firmly in the group that couldn't. I read books, attended workshops, but my difficulty persisted until I saw that the theme of finding what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for each individual client gave me a powerful clue. I could then tell a story about someone or something finding what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for this client, then there was the likelihood of relevance for the client, and a whole world of stories opened up for me.

My Irish ancestors say that if you don't know where you're going, you'll end up in the wrong place. Knowing where we are going [finding what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference] allows a good chance that we can end up in the right place; right for the client, that is.

Clinical stories

"I had a client not unlike yourself who ... [describe client's problem including what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for them] ... and [describe solution where what was missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference is found]."

Life stories

Tell some stories about life outside the therapy room including stories from nature, films, books, or anything that is of interest to this particular individual] where what is missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for this client is found.

Some common themes:

Choosing

The Swami Beyondanada wrote in Beyondanews -- December 2002
“One of my favourite stories recently is about a Native American grandfather talking to his young grandson. He tells the boy he has two wolves inside of him struggling with each other. The first is the wolf of peace, love and kindness. The other wolf is fear, greed and hatred. "Which wolf will win, grandfather?" asks the young boy.
"Whichever one you feed," is the reply.”

This is very different from simply saying that we have a choice about our future. The message is there, but when we read what we read, we make our own conclusion, and don't feel instructed or preached to about what we should do.

At the same time that stories are so crucial to us humans, and as they shape our very being, they are also “just stories.”. In the presence of a story, we take and leave what we want. We can relate the story to our

own individual circumstances, perhaps in a compelling way, but there is nothing forced or imposed. It is this powerful combination of a compelling invitation to relate to the story with an openness to take up the invitation or not, that provides such a relevance to the hypnotic experience in particular and learning and experience in general.

Stories are also entrancing by their nature. From childhood we have been spellbound by stories of magic and heroic adventure.

Overcoming fears

A long time ago, before humans walked on the earth, all the animals lived in harmony with one exception. Nose Monster was causing increasing fear because he would walk up to an animal and stick his hard spiky proboscis into their soft underbelly and suck out all their blood, leaving a shriveled up bag of skin.

Desperate to find a way of protecting themselves from this monster, the other animals called a meeting and coyote was elected to take charge because he was so cunning and clever. Coyote ordered the animals to go into the forest and bring back garlands of prickly bushes and spiky branches, He ordered other animals to cook up two huge vats of blood soup, which he placed, steaming hot in the meeting hut. He organised the animals to decorate the doorway with the garlands of prickles and the spiky branches, and then went looking for Nose Monster.

Before long coyote found Nose Monster who was looking wide eyed with hunger and wanted to get close to coyote. Coyote told him about the two huge vats of blood soup and offered to escort Nose Monster to the hut. Nose monster was very keen.

In the hut, Nose Monster rushed up to the first vat of steaming blood soup and greedily stuck his spiky proboscis into it and noisily sucked it dry. He looked pleased, and was beginning to feel full, but the other vat was too tempting so he stuck his proboscis into that vat and noisily sucked up every last drop of blood soup. He was so full he could hardly move. He was so bloated, that he could hardly stand, but he was Nose Monster and so, greedy for blood as ever, he turned towards Coyote. "Now it's your turn" he said, lunging clumsily at Coyote who deftly stepped aside so that Nose Monster rolled onto his round bloated stomach. He struggled to get to his feet and lunged at Coyote again, and again Coyote easily stepped aside. Each time Nose Monster lunged, Coyote moved closer and closer to the doorway of the meeting hut, until, just as Coyote stepped into the doorway, and Nose Monster feared that his next blood meal might get away, he made a super huge attempt to get Coyote and his body, hugely bloated with all the blood soup, fell onto the prickles and spikes lining the doorway, and exploded into a million pieces ... and that is how the mosquito came into existence.

Is this story about overcoming fear, dealing with problems before they become large, starting small with any endeavour, finding the right strategy, working together, being realistic, giving up greed, lightening up? It might be about any of these, or a combination, or something totally different. The story is a story, and each individual has the opportunity to remind themselves of anything that is relevant to their individual situation. The speaker might even find out what the story was about after the listener responds.

Creating Possibilities - by utilising role models

An adolescent may have been inspired by Superman, Mighty Mouse, or Grace Kelly.

An adult might be moved by modern heroes like Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Stoltenberg or ancient heroes like the Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad, Lao Tzu. Reading stories about these people create the possibility for a listener. Something which may have seemed impossible becomes possible. If they did it, it must be possible. Perhaps I can do it also. When we hear the stories of these people, we may change the direction of our own lives. When Mandela spoke the importance to him of his small patch of garden in prison, anyone listening may spend more time in their garden and feel more gratitude as well.

Leaders are strong leaders by creating strong stories to make sense to their followers. Unfortunately not all stories are helpful, and some of the worst atrocities have happened from atrocious stories about ethnic differences whether they claim superiority or inferiority.

Self trust - A Sufi Tale

A man thought to be dead was taken by his friends for burial. When the coffin was about to be lowered into the grave, the man suddenly came to life and began to bang on the lid of the coffin.

The coffin was opened; the man sat up. "What are you doing?" he said to the assembled crowd. "I am alive. I am not dead."

His words were met with stunned silence. Finally one of the mourners said, "Friend, both the doctors and the priests have certified that you are dead. The experts can hardly be wrong."

So the lid was screwed on again and he was duly buried.

Acceptance

The American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied, only a little while. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish?

The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs. The American then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos, I have a full and busy life."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats, eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "15-20 years."

"... but what then?"

The American laughed and said that's the best part. "When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."

"Millions. Then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

Exercise: When you're next working with a client, refer to your notes that you wrote down about what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for *the client*, *what they like doing*, any key words, phrases, stories that **the client** uses. Tell a story about a client who had a similar problem to this client and who found what was missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference and resolved their dilemma. The tell another story related to what your client likes where someone or something found what was missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference and solved their problem.

Utilising early learning

For some clients, exploring what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for them is enough for them to get unstuck and move on in their life. For others, discovering what has been missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for them is the place the therapy can start from so they can have some assistance in reconnecting with their missing resource or experience.

Sometimes, however, seeing what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference provide a clear direction for a client, but the gap between where they are and the experience of being reconnected so they can be more fully who they are is paralytically massive. It can be like looking across a chasm. Not all of us have what Indiana Jones had when he took that step into what looked like nothing, and risked falling to his death. That step [a leap of faith] revealed for him a bridge which was not previously visible, but for some clients this is too much to ask of themselves; it is way too big a risk.

This is where a special kind of story, one which speaks of an earlier learning, can bridge this chasm, and allow for some tentative steps towards the other side.

When we first begin to learn anything new, we have our own individual ways of beginning to make sense of that experience. If there is any initial struggle, it usually falls away, and before long we find ourselves making good use of the learning, with ease, and even pleasure, with no need to be burdened with the memory of any past difficulty we may have had. Milton Erickson used to say that the learning dropped into the unconscious, and we could say that it becomes an automatic learning, not requiring that we even recognise that we are using that learning, even though we are.

An early learning story invites a client to recall a childhood experience, or acknowledge that such an experience may have occurred, in which a

relevant and desired experience was learnt. It can be useful in a general sense to seed the idea of learning itself, and so help to set up the mood of learning in the hypnotic experience.

Even if a client can't recall the memory of learning to walk, if they walked into the session, they are demonstrating that this skill has been learnt by them, and if they can't recall learning this, then there is a strong implication that there are many other skills that have been learnt without the need to recall the experience of learning them either.

It can be helpful, in choosing an early learning story, to speak about the client's likes. If they like walking, then it will be safe to speak about learning to walk. If they like swimming, then learning to swim will be relevant. Asking about likes avoids the pitfall of talking about learning to do something which has not been learnt, or which may be associated with a trauma. Mentioning learning to swim to someone who almost drowned will be unhelpful, and learning to ride a bike won't connect with anyone who never learnt that skill.

The wonderful result of early learning stories is that they transform a paralysing "leap of faith" into a process, one which can, like any learning, take its own time, find its own way, come and go until it is solid, be forgotten and remembered, but which, and this is the pivotal point, has been learnt! There is a strong implication that follows, since you learnt to walk, swim, write your name, you can also learn to connect with what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference and heal.

If a client wanted to overcome anxiety in a performance, they might distinguish that the missing experience as confidence in the presence of a potentially critical audience. If the client tells us they like reading, we can safely and usefully speak about the experience of learning letters and numbers. So we might say "When you wanted to learn to write your name, you had to get used to making some mistakes and correcting them. When a stranger came into the room, it may have felt impossible to write your name even though you had just written it by yourself. It didn't take long before you were feeling very confident about

your ability to write your name, no matter who was there, no matter where you were, no matter what the circumstances, because you realised that that ability was within you, and had nothing to do with anything outside yourself. It felt so good to discover that, and can feel good now to use that discovery in any way you need to or want to.”

If a client wanted to go to the supermarket without panicking, they might identify the missing experience as a sense of security in previously distressful circumstances. If they enjoy going for walks in the country, we can safely and usefully speak about walking as a relevant skill which has already been learnt. We might say “When you first learnt to walk, you probably did some falling over. Falling over is an important part of learning to walk for any individual. How did you get past that falling? How did you get past the fear of falling? Did you just forget about it? Did you persist until it became easier? Then you were able to feel secure within yourself knowing even if you did fall occasionally, you could cope with that, you could handle that with a sense of achievement and accomplishment because everyone has their own ways of overcoming difficulties.”

The use of an early learning story is yet another way that we can work respectfully and coherently with clients, to speak to their competences, since they have already learnt many skills, and evoke the mood of expectancy which can be so delightful as a way of generating change which is fitting and relevant to the individual client.

By asking about their likes, we are inviting more of them into the therapeutic conversation, and the more of the client is present and available for conversation, the more resources we have access to, and the smoother the learning to embody the solution can be.

An example of utilising early learning and a clinical story

*As you are attending to your experience in any way that you are, you could ... continue doing that. You may be aware of your experience, or you may notice that you are not aware of everything that's happening to you, so you can allow yourself to ... **do what's best for your learning.***

... and as you continue, there may be some changes already happening. It's so unimportant that you ... notice the stillness ... or some flattening out of your facial muscles. Perhaps it will be the changes in the temperature of your skin that will be most noticeable. It may be that the deepening and slowing of your breathing, and even a tendency for you to ... close your eyes ... if they haven't already, to assist you to ... learn something useful here.

When you first learnt to do something that you now enjoy, it may have been difficult or burdensome ... but now that you have learnt it ... it is so much ... a part of you ... and any difficulty that you may have had ... can so easily and naturally ... be left in the past where it belongs ... and you no longer need to have any concern about the ... ease and value of that learning. All that's important now it to ... enjoy the experience.

A client came to see me who was not unlike yourself. They had a problem, and in spite of their best attempts, they felt stuck, and unable to

resolve it. After they experienced a pleasing and useful hypnotic session, they were delighted to discover that ... they had many more resources to draw on than they had previously recognised, and they were able to begin to ... make the adjustments that lead to the resolution of their problem, with a sense of relief and satisfaction.

Someone told me that they were having trouble getting some of their vegetables to grow. Peas were fine; tomatoes did well; but the lettuce ... such a disappointment. They discovered that the lettuce they had planted were from the wrong climate, and when they planted a variety that suited their climate, the new lettuces were so lovely, and there was enough to share with neighbours. They could hardly believe the difference finding the right kind of lettuce made.

As you are continuing with your experience, you could ... become even more absorbed ... in whatever you are already experiencing, and as a part of that, there may be something pleasant or useful that you could ... notice ... memorise.

*It's not important to know that you are memorising the experience ... because you can experience ... memorising an experience without needing to know that ... **you are memorising it.***

... and you can remember remembering an experience ... or not need to remember that ... you have remembered it, so that when you are ready, and only when you are ready, you could ... bring that experience back with you as you ... reorient yourself to your external experience.

Exercise: When you're next working with a client who is paralysed by the enormity of the change they see is required, refer to your notes that you wrote down about what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for *the client*, *what they like doing*, any key words, phrases, stories that **the client** uses, and include these throughout the ses-

sion. Tell a story about the process of learning that they went through to learn to shift the problem to something they now like, as a process which took time; in other words, **a learning process.**

Utilising in ending the session

As we invite a client to complete the session, this provides another opportunity to utilise this clients language, their words, phrases, etc. so if what was missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference was *confidence* we can invite them to be *confident* that they can come out of hypnosis in their own time, *confident* that they will come out of hypnosis in their own way, *confident* that they will open their eyes at just the right moment, *confident* that will recall anything from the session that will be useful.

Exercise: When you're next working with a client, refer to your notes that you wrote down about what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for *the client*, *what they like doing*, any key words, phrases, stories that **the client** uses, and include these into the invitation to reorient to their external experience.

Utilising after the session

As we complete the session and set up a link to their living, this provides yet one more opportunity to again utilise this clients language, their words, phrases, etc. so if what was missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference was *a feeling of security* we can invite them to

be *feel secure* in bringing their hypnotic experience into their every day living, *feel secure* that they will recall anything useful, *feel secure* that they will deal with any doubts or minor challenges.

Exercise: When you're next working with a client, refer to your notes that you wrote down about what's missing, been overlooked, or would make a difference for *the client*, *what they like doing*, any key words, phrases, stories that ***the client*** uses, and include these in setting up expectancy after the client returns to their everyday living.

Utilising potential interruptions

Hypnosis used to be thought of as a rather delicate state, something to be protected, and so should happen in a quiet, climate controlled environment, with soft lighting and peaceful music playing in the background. We now see that hypnosis is not like an anaesthetic, and more like an experience of focused attention, familiar to all of us in our everyday life, and so we can look to see how we can facilitate attentiveness and absorption rather than avoiding any minute potential distraction.

While some find focusing on reading, learning, etc is easier in a silent environment, others don't mind or even prefer some background activity. My son does his homework better while watching TV. Also the quieter the environment, the louder *any* noise seems, so it can be useful to have everyday experiences including potential disruptions and noises be part of the hypnotic experiences. If someone comes in from a hot day into an air-conditioned office, enjoys the coolness and has to return to the heat, how long does the coolness last. My preference is to connect the hypnotic experience to everyday life with as much as texture as possible, and for most of us, this includes noise, concerns and a multitude of potential distractions.

Utilising potential distractions is a wonderful expression of the underlying principles of the Ericksonian approach – accept what the client brings and use it – and extends the acceptance and utilisation to include potential external distractions, client and therapist concerns.

It is a process which can achieve an acceptance and inclusion of external sounds, and concerns of the client and therapist. Instead of being disruptive, they can become part of the hypnotic experience. When more potential disruptions are included as legitimate components of the hypnotic session, the experience becomes fuller and rounder, making the translation and transportation of the experience with us into their own living smoother and more real. This can keep the therapist alert, and so add to their attentiveness and delight.

Utilising external distractions:

We can offer a direct invitation that the louder the external sound becomes, the more absorbed the client can be in their experience of hypnosis. This can be helpful when we know something is disturbing, but risks introducing a disturbance by bringing a client's attention to it when they may not have noticed it. We can be more indirect and playful by alluding to an experience [phone ringing] with comments such as "This experience can ring true to you" or "Your learning can go to a higher plain [plane overhead]."

Utilising client concerns:

Clients have concerns which can distract them from their experience. They might be thinking “Am I doing the right thing?” or “How should I be behaving?” or “Is this hypnosis?”. We can reassure individuals if these concerns are expressed or we can pre-empt them by inviting them to “Feel free to do what you need to do at any time, recognising that you will at any moment be doing exactly what you need to do to achieve what is useful to you” or “Hypnosis is different for different individuals. It’s more important for you to have the experience you are having so you can learn what you need to learn, so you can be unconcerned”

Should a client say they don’t understand, we can say “Your understandings are yours, and you can reach them in your own time, at your own pace, in any way that feels right to you.”

If a client expresses fear about losing control, we can offer “I’m talking, but this is your experience, and you can respond in any way that is helpful to you. I can suggest that you close your eyes, but you can let your eyes close when you are ready.”

If someone is worried they might not remember the content of the session and so lose any benefit, we can invite “You can be unconcerned knowing that you will only recall what is relevant to you and your learning.”

Concerns about going deeply enough can be addressed with “You will only go as deep as you need to.”

Utilising therapist’s concerns:

As therapists we find ourselves getting stuck, having doubts, feeling uncertain. We could just suffer, stutter, and hope; we could say “I’m stuck” or “I’m uncertain” etc, and while this may provide some personal respite, it is hardly helpful to the client. It can, however, be extremely helpful if we express our concern, externalise it, but in a way that can aid the process rather than hinder it.

If we are thinking “What do I say next?” we can say “I don’t need to talk all the time.”

If we are stuck on what to do next, we can offer “What I do is much less important than the way you can use this experience for your own benefit and betterment.”

If we feel uncertain about how we are doing, we can articulate “You don’t need to attend to me except [accept] in ways that can be useful to you.” or “This is your experience, not mine; it is happening for you, not for me; so you can look forward to discovering how you can make your own good use of this experience.” which can be a relief to us AND benefit the client.

Utilising is not meant to be a disclaimer for the therapist to abrogate responsibility for what they say and do, but rather to take care of the mood, so a potential block is averted, doubts are averted, and the hypnotic process can proceed towards the client’s goal with mutual satisfaction.

Utilisation is not just for trivial concerns

I have noticed that some people recognise the value of utilisation for minor, day to day problems, but when there is a more substantial issue, they revert to “proper therapy” - a pathologising and treating approach.

An outreach worker was asked to visit an Aboriginal man living in isolation near the northern tip of Queensland. There was a concern because he was hearing voices and might be having a psychotic episode. The outreach worker drove the long distance to speak with this man, and asked him if the voices were voices of his ancestors, thoughts that were spoken to himself, or did they seem to be coming from some outside source. The Aboriginal man said that some of the voices were ancestral voices, some were his own thoughts, and some were from outside. It was these outside voices which were the main trouble, but he had noticed that when he visited his sister who lived some distance away, they didn't seem to trouble him much at all.

The outreach worker replied that he wouldn't want to lose the ancestral voices, as they would continue to be so important to him, as with all of his people; he didn't need help with the voices coming from his own thoughts, as these didn't trouble him; and if those external voices were ever a problem, he could visit his sister.

The Aboriginal man was relieved, and was able to continue with his living of his usual life without needing any further assistance.

I continue to be impressed with the respectful, possibility enhancing, solution generating benefit of this utilisation approach to all of our human dilemmas.

A session

How can we learn utilisation? Some possibilities.

In the session that follows

Listening to the first 15 minutes of the video for:

The words the client uses [perhaps write them down]

The phrases the client uses [perhaps write them down]

To what the client says is important [perhaps write them down]

For what skills the client has [perhaps write them down]

For examples of the client learning [perhaps write them down]

Then

In the remainder of the session, listen for the use of these words, phrases, values, skills, and to learning as part of the solution.

A session



A transcript

Rob So. Glad you could come along today. See if we can do something ... useful for you.

T Yeah, and I think it's interesting. I like to learn, so.

Rob Yeah.

T Yeah ???

Rob And Mark mentioned that we were wanting to make a video of this for future teaching purposes.

T Yep. That's fine.

Rob Some people are interested to learn how to ... use hypnosis in their practice ...

T Mmm hum

Rob And learn about it. ... And I'm going to do of course what I can to make it useful for you, but at the same time that's why we're having the recording so it can be useful for other people as well as you.

T Good. That's fine.

Rob Thank you for that.

T That's OK.

Rob So T can you, I haven't met you before, can you tell me a little about ... um ... you. What sorts of things do you like to do? What sorts of things are ... pleasing to you, enjoyable to you?

T I think I like to take time out to ... life, I have a small business and three small children.

Rob Probably need time out [laughs] So how small are the children

T Six, sixteen and three, oh just turned four.

Rob Six?

T Four, six and sixteen.

Rob Four six and sixteen. Mm.

T So there's

Rob Yeah

T I'm managing all the ????

Rob Yes, I feel tired just thinking about that. And you're running a business? What sort of business.

T I work as a mortgage broker.

Rob OK.

T I go out most of the time at night to meet clients and then ... it's good because it has flexibility with the hours.

Rob Yes, yes, yes.

T So what I do try and do is exercise. Um. I've got a dog, so ... we do a lot of walking up the mountains.

Rob What sort of dog do you have?

T Um. It's a pound puppy, but it's a Ridgeback Bull Mastiff cross.

Rob Ridgeback ..

T Bull Mastiff.

Rob Oh ... goodness.

T She's a really, really, really gentle dog. And of course she's older. Just a wise old soul.

Rob Beautiful.

T So I do that, um, like to read ... and listen to music ... that would probably be ...

Rob What sort of reading do you do?

T Um .. murder mysteries ...

Rob A little bit like mortgage broking ... and maybe find the criminal and find the ...

T Exactly right.

Rob You're the detective there too.

T Yeah ... I think you need to have insight into nature and be able to read what you don't necessarily hear.

Rob In other words, do you know that film, ah ... The Bone Collector?

T Mmm.

Rob You know "I'll be with you every step of the way".

T Yeah I don't want to do that. I like to have an eight week relationship with most people.

Rob Ah hah.

T Hopefully they'll come back ... three of four years lateT when they re-finance.

Rob And you've got not quite like a crime scene quite, but there's something there that needs some sorting and you do that

T Yeah

Rob and do that over the eight weeks and

T And a lot of the time because I have to take the story to the bank as the client is there's a bit of investigation. You need to look at ... have they disclosed everything to me ... you know ... and usually you have to look at their transactional history ... so yeah

Rob So you look for evidence there

T Occasionally.

Rob Occasionally. And musically ... what sort of music?

T Oh, everything.

Rob Yeah?

T Yeah.

Rob Any particular kind of everything?

T No. Everything.

T It's good. I think it's food for the soul.

Rob Yes, yes. And that's part of what you're saying about escaping ... time out ...

T Mm. No phones.

Rob And that's , yeah. Phones are not necessarily good for the soul.

T No.

Rob They might be good for the bank balance.

T For the pocket.

Rob Yeah. Walking in the hills with your dog.

T Yeah.

Rob And Music.

T Yeah. My thing.

Rob Mm. And um ... ah ... mark did say something I think about what, what you wanted to have happen here, but I'm blessed with a bad memory so just assume that I know nothing and you'll be pretty close to the ...

T Sure.

Rob What would you like to have happen here? If we could do something, what ...

T I think ... I try ... I've done a fair bit of hypnosis with Mark ... and most of the time we've had ... um ... I've had really positive outcomes and the way i describe it is ... you spend your whole life running ...and ... what it allows me to do ... is ... the same thing that we do when it comes to running those ten miles, but you kind of slow down and stop

to look at things you hadn't noticed before in a different way. Um ... and ... I tried in one session to tackle something too big and that was to look too far ahead ... because I've um ... I'm in a position where I want to ... be able to be independent. I'm separated but living in the same house ... so i had always thought I need to find another partner to help support me and then I'll be able to sort of ... I don't know ... shed the old skin and start again ... um ... but I'd come to a point, when we looked too far into the future, I actually felt quite panicked. I couldn't picture it. And then when I'd broken it down, in another session we were able to break it down into smaller pieces - three months, six months, twelve months and then come back out, talk about it, go further ahead, then I was able to create a plan, understand the things that were blocking it and come up with solutions that I had not considered. Um ... and that was really positive but one of the things I wanted to tackle was the ability to ... feel OK as an independent thing, not to feel ... and we all come into this thinking we have to have the perfect relationship, the perfect family and all that nuclear stuff ... and um ... my mum's been married three times and she's always sort of walked from one place to another. And that was what I'd been brought up to believe was how you, I don't know ... especially when I had a family. When I had those children I thought I needed someone else there ... so ... being able to know I can live independent without having to have someone else there ... and that would be a blessing if it were to occur, but I would be OK. That I would be able to manage. That's what i'd like to have more confidence around because I'm still uncertain about that. I stay, I think I stay where I am because I'm not 100% sure ... that I'm strong enough to not ... yeah.

Rob Very understandable.

T Yeah

Rob It's one thing if it's just you ..

T Mm. Mm.

Rob But you've got a sixteen year old, and a six year old and a four year old, and a dog.

T Yeah yeah. She's a very redeeming feature.

Rob What's her name?

T Tzar.

Rob Tzar?

T Yeah.

Rob And you said she's not a young, she's not a pup?

T She is when you first pull the lead out. But no, she's not.

Rob Yeah, we've got one of those. We've got a Labradoodle.

T Oh. They're supposed to be really good.

Rob So three, going on six months. But she's ah [laughs] but also she's a lot more settled, but bring out the lead, and she's just ...

T They're like little babies. Really cute.

Rob Yeah yeah. OK so this idea of being able to **be** OK ...

T Mmm

Rob ... independent of another, of a partner, ... and be able to be like that, and ... support

T Mm

Rob ... your three kids ... and your dog ...

T Yeah

Rob and your lifestyle ... and your work, and that's not like a trivial thing, is it? It's not like finding a glass of water or something.

T No.

Rob It's ... and I can also imagine when you first look at that it can seem like ooooh ...

T Yes.

Rob It's almost ...

T It seems OK ... it's like when people go "I can't sell my house until I've got another one that I want to buy".

Rob Yeah.

T Yeah, it's like I can't leave that until I've got something else to move into and I don't want to do that. I don't want it to be that a relationship is premeditated. Or, yeah. So I want to be able to walk away from that ... safely ...

Rob Yeah. Well that's an interesting idea about safely because ... um ... I mean you know way more about this than me but if you put in a good application to the bank and you can't guarantee that it will be accepted

T No

Rob ... so there are no guarantees because whenever you make a change, there's always a risk. But I guess, is the risk manageable?

T Yes, that's what I

Rob If it's not too large ... a risk. Not too ... um ... OK ... [pause] ... and anything more you might want to say before you go into hypnosis?

T No. I think that's ... I think I'm good at looking at what happens as a result and how ... inside my head ... so yeah.

Rob Thank you for making my job so easy.

[both laugh]

T It's just nice to have a bit of control over it.

Rob I think so, and sometimes, um ... I imagine that in your work ... er ... sometimes when you are going through something, some process with someone they might say, "Oh, that's kind of obvious but I hadn't thought of it."

T Yeah.

Rob And sometimes in our conversations it can be like that ... just like ... it's not highly complicated ... just an opportunity to ...

T Slow it down.

Rob Slow dow.

T Yeah.

Rob. So you have a chance to see what's there ...

T Yeah.

Rob That ... not seen when you rush it.

T That's right.

Rob We were having a cup of coffee before ... and I got excited about something ... waving a thing ..and spilt some coffee, and I'm looking "Where's the tissues? Where's the tissues?" I was looking so frantically ... it was just there ... but ... you know ...

T It's exactly like that. Exactly like that.

Rob Maybe in the session you might be able to help me with my ...

T Find the tissues.

[laughing]

Rob ... just to slow down ...

T OK. OK.

Rob Because this is a human condition, a human activity 'cause it's what we do. [pause] Alright ... so ... um ... do you have any particular way that you like to go into hypnosis?

T No. I don't find it that hard.

Rob. I can see that. You're very able, very apparent to me even though I haven't met you before, it's very apparent to me that you have that capacity to really focus ... really get absorbed, really get into something ...

T Yeah.

Rob And um, of course ... ah ... that's a mixed blessing.

T Yes.

Rob Because it depend what you get into.

T Right.

Rob If you go into panic, you know, well ... look out.

T Absolutely.

Rob So, it's it's a skill ...

T OT obsessive compulsion.

Rob Yes. But it's just a matter of where you direct it.

T Yes. Yeah

Rob It's a matter of how you ...

T I think I need more training on that one. Another time, another place.

Rob Well I don't know. I think this might be very much exactly what ... what's happening here.

T Mm

Rob And once you've learnt that, you may be able to apply that at any other time and place.

T Yes.

Rob So I guess in that way it might be useful for you since it's so easy for you to find a way of taking the process slowly ...

T Yes.

Rob It would probably be very easy for you to just close your eyes and get lost in something ... but if you for this experience just to intentionally ... that's it, just take it slowly ... and already as all those changes starting so you can perhaps notice how easy it is to close your eyes but just ... take it slowly ... kind of ease back on it you know. Don't panic about it ... that's right ... and even though you could ... just allow all those changes ... the stillness in your body ... that's it ... changes in your breathing ... that's right ... your eyes have closed ... and you can let your mind ... drift ... slowly and easily ... and in this experience provides an opportunity for yourself ... and to take some time out ... and see yourself ... and by intentionally allow yourself ... slowly ... little by little ... just settle into your experience ... and it may be a little bit like ... taking your dog for a walk ... Tzar?

T [nods]

Rob It might be when you first start, you take out the lead, there may be some kind of wanting to rush things like I'm sure that she does ... she?

T Yes

Rob But then ... even if there is that initial kind of rush ... which might even look like a panic ... just imagine that you ... can take yourself for a walk ... you can take the lead ... you can go for a walk ... Tzar might be there with you ... there might be others ... but in particular ... it could be useful ... if you could know that **you** are taking **you** for a walk ... and you said that you walk on a mountain?

T [nods]

Rob And as you are doing that ... I wonder if it would be OK for you ... to ... walk more slowly ... to maybe even stop ... and look around ... I don't know if you would normally do that ...

T [shakes head, no]

Rob Tzar would probably be more interested in going on than stopping and looking ... but just for this experience ... I wonder as you are walking ... if you were to actually slow and and stop and look around ... I wonder what you might see ... T ... can you imagine?

T Mm

Rob What are you seeing at the moment?

T She's on the road and I have to hold her because I'm going ????????????

Rob Yeah, you have to hold her so she doesn't go near it.

T Mm. And it's really green.

Rob Really green. And ... tell me about the green ... Is it a bright green, dark green or yellowy green?

T No, it's an Australian green.

Rob Oh, it's a bluey green.

T Yeah.

Rob Mm

T And it's got this smell ... gum trees ...

Rob Ah. Tell me about that. What's that smell?

T It's damp eucalyptus.

Rob Yeah. [pause]

Rob And would it be OK to just sit with that for a moment? And let yourself absorb ... the dampness ... the eucalyptusness ... that particular greenness ... and is Tzar on the lead still?

T No.

Rob OK. So you have to keep an eye out for that road ... so you want to be independent ... and let her be independent of you ... At the same time ... you need to keep an eye out for ... 'cause she's a dog ... and at the same time you want to allow yourself to smell that damp eucalyptus smell ... see that green ... and do you notice how you can ... be really aware ... of the greenness and the eucalyptus smell and the dampness ... and you can out of the corner of your awareness you can notice where Tzar is.

T [nods]

Rob And is she looks like she's going to get too close to the road you can forget about the trees for the moment ... and you can pay attention

to her ... and then at other times ... you can just be aware of her that peripheral awareness ... and see the green and smell the smell ... and I'm inviting you to play with that ... to see how you can ... just let your attention ... kind of flow ... You don't have to just ... notice Tzar. You don't have to just notice ... what's there ... but you can let your attention ... how can I say? ... drift or meander from one to the other and you know exactly how much and where and how ... and as you're doing that ... again ... I'd invite you to take your time to notice how it is for you ... to be able to let your attention ... go to where it needs to go ... and not stay fixed ...

T It's hard because she's running fast.

Rob Yeah. Yeah ... Well ... it might be nice, do you want to go for a run?

T [nods]

Rob OK ... It's nice to know you can do that too ... but my invitation is that as you go for a run ... but somehow notice that as you run and you can pay attention to the ground ... and make the adjustments ... with your feet ... so you don't trip over ... and I'm wondering how, as you're doing that ... you could also let yourself be just that little bit more aware ... of your surroundings. To have that double take. Do you know what I mean? ...

T [nods]

Rob It may be something like when you're working with clients ... you have to take a double take about wanting to do what's tight for them and what's right for the bank ... not just one or the other. You have to balance that ... My kids, when they first learned to run ... they were so busy focusing on where they were going they'd trip over ... and there are other kids that are so attentive to where they put their feet that they ... don't even go an inch ... and I don't know whether your kids are all the same ... all runners or trippers or they all go slow and then ...

T There was one slow one ...

Rob Ah hah.

T One of my kids started to walk before she could almost do anything else and was covered in bruises ... the next one ... I thought he was never going to walk. He just sat there then one day he just stood up and walked ... so people all learn in different ways but ... but with you ... it's easiest for you to kind of rush and run ... and having the balance now which you may not always have had ... to be able to run and ... take care of your feet so you don't trip ... and ... look around ... not only ... to take care of Tzar ... not only that but including that ... but also I'm wondering as you're running if you can ... again start to notice something about ... the surroundings ... almost as if no matter how fast you're actually going, you could feel as if you're going really quite slowly ... know what I mean? ... No matter how fast you are running ... to have your attention wherever it wants to be ... and again I've got this question. What are you starting to notice. Perhaps more intensely or more ... strongly than you might normally.

T It gets very windy when you get to the top.

Rob Windy.

T Yeah. ...

Rob And ... how is that for you? ...

T Oh it's good because you're really puffed and hot.

Rob OK so if you could notice ... you're at the top and you're puffed and hot and it's windy ... and what do you start to notice as you look around? ... You can feel that you're puffed, that you're hot, you can feel the wind ... what do you start to see?

T Just so still.

Rob Ah ... and there's something about that stillness?

T Yeah ...

Rob Something about that stillness ... because we know it's not really still. There's a lot of activity there but you can have the feeling that it is still.

T Mm.

Rob And is it that stillness that is part of what feeds your soul?

T Yes. It's pushing myself past where I want to be ... and get there.

Rob Yes, and you've done that ...

T It really feels good do it ...

Rob Yes. ... and as you're pushing yourself ... to get through that, to get to where you've got ... and you know it's going to feel good, how do you keep going? ... 'cause there must be a feeling like ... if it's anything like me I could stop now ...

T 'Cause I know how good it feels to be at the top and know how it feels you'll get there. The first time was terrible.

Rob I had to learn that. You might say you had to train yourself ... to get through that ... because the first time was terrible ... and then you kind of got through the terrible and you knew how good it felt ...

T Yeah

Rob ... once you'd broken through that, got through that you were at the top you ... ah ... you take a breath. It's like it feels that good.

T Mmm.

Rob Mmm ... almost if I'm hearing you right ... it's almost some satisfaction that it wasn't easy ...

T Yeah.

Rob ... that you had to get through that ... there was a challenge there in some way.

T Yeah.

Rob That's my word but ... somehow ... and now ... when you're running up there ...

T It still hurts ...

Rob Yeah.

T but it's going to be really good when you get there.

Rob OK ... and I'd like you to pay attention to that experience that you're speaking about in your running ... and really notice ... how that feels for you ... I can't know how it feels for me and that doesn't matter because you know ... how that feels for you ... and just as you were able to stop before ... and really smell the eucalyptus and the eT dampness and see the green would it be OK to look at the stillness that's around you so you could really allow ... this feeling ... almost to be instilled in you almost to be embodied so you can learn it ... if you could have that feeling ... ah ... feels so good ... and while you are just letting yourself soak that up I'd like you to be up at the top there and the wind be blowing you don't need to do anything ... the wind cools you ... the satisfaction satisfies you ... the nourishment nourishes yourself ... and that can happen and just as ... what is happening to you now is happening ... I can talk about some things but you don't need to pay attention ... some things that I say that might be useful for you ... if there's any that doesn't make sense just let them drift off and just past you ... because I want to remind you that ... when you first started to do that work with ... with er ... mortgages ... that it may have taken a little while ... to

learn how to do that ... It may have been hard and difficult ... and I don't know if at some stage you may even like I don't know if I want to continue ... but somehow you got through that difficulty ... and if though there is no guarantee of a good result somehow you the satisfaction at the end of that eight weeks ... and maybe even to see someone in their home and know that they're in their home ... there's satisfaction that makes all that hard work ... worthwhile ... And ... also ... that as you learn that with that person ... the next person, the next client is that much easier ... and the next one is that much easier ... Maybe a little bit like when you first met Tzar from the pound ... it may not have been easy ... however beautiful she may have been then ... there may have been you had to get through something ... Was she frightened when you first met her?

T Very little.

Rob Very little ... mmm ... and were there some difficulties early on? Getting her house trained?

T Yeah.

Rob. Yeah ... I remember an experience when one of our dogs was ... my toes have a good memory of that.

T [smiles and laughs]

Rob But you get through that ...

T And your nose.

Rob Yes. And you get through that and now you now it was worthwhile and look back and think oh ... I could say that it would have been terrible ... if you had not gone through what you went through ... so that she could become who she is ... And if you'd allow me I could say that it would have been terrible if you hadn't persevered and gone through what you went through ... with learning the mortgage work that you do ... because you've got the satisfaction of that you've got the flexibility of

that you've got all the benefits of that ... and it would have been terrible if you hadn't persevered and gone through with that ... and it was hard ... it was a challenge ... could even have been exhausting at times ... and what I'm wanting to suggest to is that ... what you're wanting to make in moving your life is just and I don't want to make little of it it's just like ... one more mortgage application ... Finding a way financing a house, finding a way of emotionally ... financing your soul your life ... it's not easy ... and I think it might be nice if you could look and I'm not asking you to believe me ... but from my perspective that's what I'm saying ... Now how you do that. How you ... this is just like running up this hill. Just one more hill. ... Now you don't have to run up it all at once ... it might be overwhelming ... particularly the first time ...

T I don't want to have a second.

Rob [laughing] You've got to have a first ... and I don't know if you can guarantee but if you say "OK, I don't want a second. I want to get it right the first time." ... If you look at the first time you ran up that that hill ... what did you do or what could you do so that you knew you wouldn't have to have a second one? What would be helpful?

T I don't know.

Rob Same thing as training Tzar ... How did you train Tzar?

T Patient.

Rob Yes. Patience ... so it can take time ... and you found that when you worked with Mark that if you go too fast ... it just trips you up ... Going slowly ... even though I think you are an impatient person ... you like to get things done ... yesterday ... There are some things ... I planted some seeds ... some Tasmanian Blue Gum seeds ... about six weeks ago ... and watered them ... I call them "my babies" ... every morning I'd go out and look ... every evening nothing ... next morning nothing ... then one morning I went out and there were these little teeny green things popped up ... oh - that's the first baby ... I planted 25 seeds ... eighteen

little plants now ... about two or three inches high ... planted out some of them into larger ... pots ... looking forward to planting them into the ground ... a forest [laughs] ... In a few years they're going to be metres high ... but if I get one of those seeds that have just popped up and pull it to try and make it taller that's not necessarily going to help ... So you're right. it does take time. You do need to be patient ... and there are some things that you can hurry ... and there are some things that you can only experience by ... taking them ... really ... really ... slowly ... Now I don't know you, never met you before ... but my very strong sense is that you have already begun this process ... yep ... you've already taken ... more than a few baby steps ... along that road ... already on that path, already on that track taking you to the top of the hill ... and ... as you go up that hill ... some of it is going to be tough ... you're going to get puffed out ... you're going to get hot ... but when you get to the top ... and you see that stillness and you feel that wind ... how's that satisfaction? Was it worth it? ...

T Yeah.

Rob Yeah. ... It was ... There may have been some times on the way up where you wondered "Is it worth it?" ... but you're a pretty persistent woman, I think ... Once you make up your mind to do something ... I feel sorry for anyone or anything that gets in the way ...

T [smiles]

Rob And that's probably the reason that you're just holding back a little ... because once you know ... you are going to make that move ... there'll be no stopping you ... Does that make sense for me to say that?

T Yeah.

Rob So I think that it's really nice that you're holding back from making, letting yourself know ... you are going to do that. You have everything to do that. You're holding back from letting yourself know because once you know [claps hands] there'll be no stopping you. ... I feel

sorry for that hill ... you're going to be on the top of that hill ... and you're going to get that satisfaction ... and I don't know just how close you are to letting yourself know that you have already begun ... that process ... [pause] ... It's very apparent to me looking on as a strangeT ... that you've started ... and as soon as you are ready ... to really push to the top of that ... then, and only then ... you'll be ready to let yourself know that you're on the trail ... [pause] ... Now I want to be really clear, T that I ... I'm saying some things ... to you ... that I cannot know what's best ... to say, what's best ... that you need to hear ... I'm only offering some ideas ... I'm being like a er ... an independence broker ... offering some options here ... you can find your own ways ... and I'm wondering ... when you spoke about music ... and difference pieces of music have different moods ... some music when you listen to it you fell like sitting down and ... doing nothing ... ah ... you put other music on you just have to get up and dance ... so what sort of music is going to get you to the top of **this** mountain? ... What sort of music is going to have the mood that is going to get you to ... dare ... to realise ... your capacity to **be** independent? ... What sort of music is going to support that? ...

T Maybe ??? kind of music ???

Rob OK. You're not sure? ... is there any particular song or track that comes from that ... that would be particularly useful?

T Mmm sunlight.

Rob Um?

T A song called sunlight.

Rob Sunlight. You don't have to sing that song to me ... and you wouldn't want me to sing it to you ... but if you can notice the mood of that, maybe listen to it in your head ... OK ... and as you breathe ... it can be almost like you can breathe the mood of that music, breathe it into you ... not only into your body ... but actually ... breathe it ... into

your soul ... Ahhh ... Just feel that ... [pause] ... and are you feeling that?

T Mm.

Rob And even though the music ... has a rhythm and pattern it moves through that ... a kind of a stillness ... that can stay with you ... and as you listen to that music ... let your soul listen to it ... and I wonder what Tzar would say about that ... 'cause she's a wise soul ... If you were to ask her ... "Tzar, what do you think would be helpful for me in this situation?", what do you think she'd tell you?

T Exercise.

Rob uh?

T Exercise. [laughs]

Rob. Mmm So what kind of exercise is going to help you to ... have this satisfaction ...

T I just think any exercise.

Rob Oh, OK. ... Now you're already getting some exercise. You're ...

T Mm

Rob You're frowning at the moment. Is there something that's ...

T Going to all the classes. I can't do it.

Rob Oh. You're a very brave woman.

T So uncoordinated.

Rob Oh yeah. ... Were you frowning about that? Is it hard work?

T Yes. It's fun.

Rob Oh ... So here's the same question ... Is it worth it? ...

T Yeah.

Rob If it was easy ...

T It wouldn't be as much fun.

Rob It wouldn't be much fun for you. No pain no gain.

T No

Rob You have to make some things just a little bit difficult otherwise [indistinct] ... and so being independent, how discovering your capacity to be independent ... you have to make it a little bit difficult otherwise .. you know, it's not worth doing. ... I think you're succeeding at that quite well. ... If, if getting a mortgage was really easy you'd have no job. ... It has to be a little bit of difficulty ... Eh?

T I'd be rich.

Rob You'd be rich [laughs] Yeah but I think you'd be looking for another job.

T Mm.

Rob Mm so you've got to have the right amount of difficulty to keep you ... entertained ... yeah, yeah. ... So discovering your capacity to be, letting yourself know ... you **can** be independent ... you **can** do that ... it has to be a little bit difficult ... and i can imagine that it might be a bit of a relief for you to see that you're producing just about the right amount of difficulty to make it a challenge for you otherwise ... who would be bothered? ... you wouldn't be bothered ... [pause] ... What do you feel when I say that kind of thing because I'm saying it, I'm kind of making fun of you in a way but I hope you can hear I'm actually respecting what you do. I'm not making a joke at your expense. I hope you can hear that.

T Yeah, year.

Rob Mm.

T I just worry about things.

Rob Yeah. You do. Yes. You worry about things. You're a mother. Mothers worry about kids. That's part of your job specification. ... You introduce me to a mother who doesn't worry about her kids and I'll say "Nah, it's not the mother."

T Yeah.

Ron And ... you have to have just the right amount of worry. ... You don't want to be a mother who never worries ... Mm? That would be irresponsible. Because you love them. ... How do you have the right amount of worry?

T I just feel it's so selfish.

Rob Selfish?

T They're happier when there's two of us there. [pause] Because I'm not happy.

Rob No. ... I think it would be selfish if you stayed for that reason. The kind thing to do for your kids is to make sure that you're happy so that when you're happy they can be happy. ... It's the same thing as training Tzar ... If you're in a bad mood, you can't get anything done. ... If you're miserable and you're unhappy you can't train her. She'd be unhappy. ... Your first duty as a mother to your kids is to make sure that you're happy. Make sure there's just the right if there's too much struggle ... and they say "Oh ... that's what mum ... oh ... it has to be really agonising and you just have to put up with ... torture to get through it. I don't know that that's what you are wanting to do. ... and so ... helping them ... because you love them ... by showing them ... because you want the best for them ... that of course ... you want to look after them ... but you

need to look after you as well ... When you are running with Tzar and she's near that road ... you have to look after her ... but if you go chasing her to keep her away from the road ... that's not going to help ... Do you find that sometime when you run ahead that she follows you?

T Yep. [nods]

Rob Ah. ... but if you just got so worried about her, "Oh I don't want to be selfish and have a good run" ... I need to be worried about her all the time ... you'd probably end up putting here in the middle of the road.

T [chuckles]

Rob If she's anything like our dog ... So somehow ... taking the lead ... yourself ... getting out in front ... showing ... let them follow you ... Let's have this challenge. Let's get the satisfaction of doing it ... I mean Tzar could follow you on the run ... and your kids can learn from you in following you ...and knowing how much effort to make ... and that it's OK for them to look after themselves ... Do you know what I mean?

T Yeah.

Rob Do you think I'm distorting?

T No.

Rob I think that's a very important thing for kids to learn. ...

T If it were one of my kids doing what I'm doing I'd smack them.

Rob OK ...

T I wouldn't want them to be so unhappy. ... I'd shake them and say "Stop it." It's not about the grandkids, it's about "You've got to be happy." I won't ... no ... I've always wanted them to be happy ????? them to suffer for me to have that that.

Rob So should I smack you?

T [laughs]

Rob You don't have to smack yourself and you don't really have to shake yourself but in a way ...

T

Rob Maybe in this experience you can shake yourself ... just enough to shake off that

T guilt

Rob Yeah. 'Cause you can be happy and that can help to take care of them ... by being happy ... it's the biggest gift that you can give them... look after them from a position of happiness. You don't want them growing up thinking that life is supposed to be miserable. That's not a nice gift.

Now you can say that ... I can support you in that as an idea. What happens if you sit with that like you can sit with the smell of the eucalyptus, and the dampness and the greenness ... and the windiness ... and really let yourself feel that. You have a right ... even a duty ... and not only not be miserable, but actually take care of your own happiness. As you sit with that ... and let yourself breathe that ... really breathe it in ... into your soul ... and let it be there ... still ... so that you can really know ... and really feel ... and there may even be times where it is difficult to let go. You might have to push through that ... and how are you feeling at the moment?

T Now.

Rob Yeah. And is that OK for you?

T Yeah. You notice that you can feel better. It's OK for you ... **AND** ... it is actually better and OK for you and your kids?

T Yeah

Rob And it was hard for you to get to that ... because you care about them ... you want the best for them ... and you were feeling guilty ... but from my perspective that is just selfish ... That if you want to do the right thing by them ... and just getting held back by your own guilt ... when you can leave the guilt and misery behind and push through and get to that feeling of happiness and achievement ... well you can share that with them.

[pause]

Rob And you're looking a little serious at the moment, like there's something heavy going on. What's happening? I can't know but I just wondered.

T I think .. I think it's ... it starts to be real.

Rob Yes.

And I'm quiet, but it's still scary.

Rob Yes. You start running up that hill ... and somewhere along that hill it's ... yeah ... you know that feeling.

T Yeah.

Rob And if you have just a little bit of scariness ... it wouldn't be that

T Yeah

Rob ... buzz and the relief at the end of it. You've got to have the right amount. Just enough to make it so you get the buzz but not so that you get paralysed. Like getting the right interest rate.

T It doesn't happen.

Rob Everyone wants an interest rate of zero.

T Yes. So do I.

Rob Oh well of course. But uh, it's real ... but we want to get the right interest ... you don't want 90%. No-one wants that ... 50% ... so it's the same with the scary ... and it is real ... no-one want the interest rate but it's real ... no-one wants the scariness but it's real ... and ... you can manage a bit of scariness ...

T Mm

Rob and you have ... lots of times ... and there will be other things in the future by the way ... One of my friends says that when you've got a problem, it's the same damn thing over and over again. When you get out of that and into solutions it's one damn thing after another.

T I know what you mean.

Rob You solve one mortgage problem ... another one.

T Yeah.

Rob There's plenty more where that came from. And the important thing is not that it can be easy. The important thing is you really know ... and really know - no matter what ... you can get through it.

T Mm

Rob You're very resourceful. Very. Yeah. ... and you can make that effort and get through difficulties and scary things ... because you know ... you're going to get that satisfaction.

So, it sounds like you ... you're on the road ... yeah ... and like In said, god help anyone who tries to get in your way now ...

T Not that bad

Rob Huh?

T Not that bad.

Rob Yeah but I think you're pretty determined. Other people should start to get scared of they get in your way.

What's different now than when we started?

T Um ... I think ... not having the same burden ...

Rob Yeah

T It sits there. But it's OK. I want them to see me smile.

Rob OK

T They don't see me ... except when I'm with them. Then I do but they don't see me happy.

Rob So will they be able to cope?

T Yeah.

Rob When they see mum's happy, will they be alright? Will they need therapy?

T No.

[laughs]

Rob Will they be able to make that adjustment?

T Yeah.

Rob Ok ... they may even seem a bit of the same relief that you feel ...

T Yeah. It's just different. It doesn't mean it's bad.

Rob So that burden is still there, but it's less ...

T Yeah

Rob I don't know, maybe further behind you or

T yeah

Rob ... you can pack

T Yeah. Yeah.

Rob And if you were to somehow take an inventory of where you are now ... what if anything is still missing for you so that you can go on with what you're going to do? You know when your doing an application you have a check list ... to go through and see if you've missed anything ...

T I think ... I know I can do it because I'm very stubborn.

Rob Yes! You are.

T But ... part of me still has no confidence in the outcome ... in the ... I'll do it and it'll be the right thing ... I still worry about the outcome - the end picture.

Rob Well, you can't be certain. When you picked up Tsar from the pound, you hoped ... but you couldn't be certain.

T Yeah.

Rob So this is like ... the same as saving you from out of the pound. I mean you're not in the pound, but it's the same kind of like it's the new you ... you feel like a puppy

T Yep.

Rob But you're here also. [loud laughter]

T You're getting there - it's the worst improvement.

Rob An American Family Therapist said that he wouldn't part with any of his kids for a million dollars, but he wouldn't pay 10 cents for another one. So you keep going with your sixteen year old and you've got your six year old ... yeah ... and a four year old ... there's still going to be some ... yeah, yeah, yeah ... part of the deal.

T Yeah.

Rob Are you up to it?

T Yeah.

Rob You are.

T Yeah.

Rob You are.

T It's like a crystal ball.

Rob It is. And when you look at it, and you see that ... what do you see? Do you see the past? The future? Do you see the present? And the way that can move through that. What can you see? When you look at the crystal ball?

T Um ... I think that ... I will be a better person and sometimes I feel like I [indistinct] I want to become the ... I can't crack out of it. I can see that it's going to happen. I just don't want to hurt anyone to get ...

Rob But if you don't get out of it you won't be available for them.

T I'll suffocate. I can move very very easily but I know [indistinct]

Rob So cut the crap and

[laughter]

Rob So when you look in that crystal ball and you look and you see in the future ... ah - how's that? I'm glad I did that. The kids are happy ... seeing me happy. Now how can you keep that image, that crystal ball in front of you. You've got that burden behind you but you've got the crystal ball in front of you.

T I think, I think it's having the around. I went looking for one and I couldn't ...

Rob Now you said you wanted some exercise ... now I know the exercise you need to do. It involves the corners of your mouth. Now those muscles need exercising.

T Yeah

Rob You may need to stand in front of a mirror and practice smiling for a while. Do 12 smile-ups every morning before breakfast. The frown muscles have been over exercised and the smiling muscles have been under exercised..

T Yeah

Rob You need a trainer. I'm serious about the smiling muscles, though. I'm joking about it but I'm also serious. That's something for you to practice.

T I saw a photo of them when they were 12 months or 2 years and we were all smiling and if I could keep that photo in my head ...

Rob And what about practicing that ... yeah, that's right.

T Yeah.

Rob So when you pull up at the traffic lights ... you can do a couple of, er ... exercises with the corners of your mouth ... just let your forehead smooth out ... take a breath ... any time the corners of your mouth go down just a little ... up they

T Yeah.

Rob Mmm ... I think that's an exercise for you to ...

T Yeah.

Rob And what's the breath ... relief?

T Yeah.

[pause]

T Yeah.

Rob You've got some things to do now ... you've got a future to live into.

T I'm tired.

Rob You've been doing some exercises.

T Busy day.

Rob Well.

T Yeah.

Rob And you can be tired ... and you can look forward to that breeze ... that wind ...

T Yeah. Satisfied.

Rob Yeah ... Was it worth it?

T yeah.

T Yep.

Rob I'm so glad for you ... and your kids.

T Yeah.

Rob And if you weren't to make, to have made this effort ... to get through that ... and be happy.

T Yeah.

Rob I think you can ... I think you want the best for them ... and you can do that without a smack or being shaken ... that's quite a learning ... Anything else that's there for today, or from this experience?

T I've just got to ... believe that ...

Rob Yes ... and ... um ... you've just got ... to believe it, just like when you go up that mountain ... just like when you walk Tzar ... there's a bit of trust there, you've got to believe it ... the top of the mountain might not be there this time ... but you've got to believe it's there and [indistinct]

T It's like Kilimanjaro at times.

Rob That's quite a ... a friend of mine climbed Kilimanjaro. He had to leave the base at 2 am ... quite a climb ... but he did it!

T Yeah. I want to do that one day.

Rob Oh really? I think it's going to be easy for you ...

T Phew.

Rob So it might be useful for you to just sit with this for a moment and really let yourself feel the relief ... that you **have** got that crystal ball in front of you pulling you ... that will get you through any difficulty ... and you can already look forward ... to that relief ... and the more exercises you can do with the corners of your mouth ... the better it's going to be for everyone.

T Yeah.

Rob So as you just sit with that ... I want to let you know how grateful I am ... in you trusting me with something that is so important to you ... and your future and your kids' future ... It's a gift that you've given me, so thank you for that.

T OK.

Rob And I think your dog can help to remind you that ... They are great teachers, aren't they? They really know a lot, those creatures.

T Yeah.

Rob Someone told me that they think that dogs are Buddhists ... always live in the moment ... they have no doubts ... they trust themselves ... they know they can do it ... no matter how tired or what that Tzar is if you rattle her ...

T yeah.

Rob [laughs] So how will you know when you've had enough of this? ... How will you know when you're ready to ... let your eyes open ... and face the rest of the day? ... And I think it's important that you take your time about that ... not rush it ... don't want you to be too impatient ... [pause] ...

T [opens her eyes] chuckles.

Rob Now you're looking for tissues ...

T Thank you.

Reflections & invitations

I trust that after interacting with this book that you may have a greater appreciation of the central role of utilisation in effective therapy. I also trust that this can become part of your own approach; your own translation; your own interpretation of what your experience has been in this process to make your own translation to more effectively follow your own path.

The central theme of this book is utilisation. I trust that you may further appreciate how process of utilisation bypasses any requirement to explain and formulate a theory, protocol or process to be applied and how it invites a simple, radically different experience - observing and responding. Does Joseph Campbell's invitations to follow your bliss or your blisters connect for you?

I further trust that the focus on your own unique individual experience, your own interpretations, your own learnings, can then contribute to your own clinical work, taking anything useful and making your own translation; so you can try out, play with, or do the opposite - anything that may seem relevant; adapt to your own style; refine what you are already doing in your work to add to the efficacy of what we are about - helping people to restore and reconnect with their trust in their own abilities to get on with their life, with all its vicissitudes, so there is less suffering and more joy.

I invite you to revisit, review, listen again to any or all of what is in this book to refresh, discover, remember anything helpful.

I wonder if the extract from *Disclosing New Worlds* might have a stronger connection now:

I'm reading from page 39 of Disclosing New Worlds 1999 Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus

"This book, then, is attempting to develop sensitivities, not knowledge. Once one has a sensitivity to something such as good food, decency, certain kinds of beauty, or even the pleasures of hiking, one is already on the path of refining and developing that sensitivity. One sees food, decent behaviour, beauty, and hiking trails in a new light. They draw one to them in a way they did not before. As one is drawn, time and time again, one then continuously develops one's skills for dealing with what one is sensitive to."

Disclosing New Worlds 1999 Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus p39
Thank you for being part of our shared experience.

Rob McNeilly rob@cet.net.au

With appreciation

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.



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