



Clear Thinking Issue 92

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In this month's issue;

- How to increase your influence with clients (or why advice-giving doesn't work)
- Learn hypnosis online

How to increase your influence with clients (or why advice-giving doesn't work)

3 tips to get your clients to value your suggestions

Why is it important for therapists to give careful consideration to increasing influence with their clients?

Sometimes what a client needs is pretty obvious. Anyone can see it. And as you're not shackled by the old idea that 'therapy must never be directive', you come straight out with your wonderful suggestion, re-frame or clearly 'spot on' (to you) piece of sage advice.

And what happens?

They nod politely. "Yeah, yeah, I'll try that..."

But you know they won't. And you sense you've blown it. What has happened?

What you've said to them - even though it may be exactly what they need - doesn't *feel valuable* to them. Direct advice giving tends to diminish the *perceived value* of that advice. What do I mean?

Take my advice (but only if it's worth something!)

We value stuff that:

- is *rare* (who would value a diamond if they grew on trees?)
- we've had to *work* for (the more effort we've put in, the higher the value)
- is obviously *highly valued by others* (social effect)

Psychotherapy involves both learning and teaching. The client both teaches and - ideally - learns from their therapist. You may know exactly what your client needs, but how do you deliver that advice so that it's deemed valuable enough to act upon? Even diamonds can be mistaken for common stones.

3 tips for increasing the influence of your suggestions

1. Dress up the advice

Rather than a direct piece of advice:

"My advice to you, young man, is that you should stop doing that"

Develop a formulation such as:

"Later on [make them wait for it], I'd like to share an idea with you to see what you think. It's a bit unusual [implies rarity] and it might not make sense to you at first..."
[implies they will have to work a bit for it]

2. Tell them how valuable others consider your suggestion to be

People are more ready to try something that others have tried (and found successful) before them. You can use examples like:

"Four of my clients in the past few months have done what I'm asking you to do, and later told me that they thought it was the best thing they ever did!"

"So many people have now successfully used this approach that it has almost become a standard way to tackle this issue"

3. Use metaphor

Metaphor allows you to give advice without seeming to give advice - thus rendering your advice both more palatable and more valuable to your client. The listener has to 'work for it' through making the link themselves, in their own mind. And that makes it more effective than if you just tell them outright.

I once worked with a man who was still eaten up with resentment over being laid off work years before. I didn't tell him to "*Forget about it! It was a long time ago!*" (direct advice, and clearly what he needed to do). While he was in trance, and without mentioning lay-offs, work, redundancy, or anything directly related like that, I told him a story of a man who'd been forced to carry a heavy burden for a long time, and then discovered that he could put the burden down and "*leave it far behind*".

Want some advice?

Therapists who've taken our training courses have all been trained in increasing influence and can testify that these methods work extremely well. When you re-read this article, and consider how to adapt these tips for your own clients, you may find yourself remembering how many tales speak of a *magic wand with curious powers...*

Learn hypnosis online

Hypnosis, and effective therapy, is all about the art of influence. How can you learn to influence people in a positive way, so that they can overcome difficulties, escape from anxiety, get rid of phobias and enjoy life more? Our [online hypnosis training course](#) Hypnosis Unwrapped is the ideal way to get a really good grounding in how to use hypnosis for therapy. The next course starts on 26 May and you can participate from anywhere in the world. Our Early Bird Discount (25% off) is open until 5 May. It's a good idea to book early, as places on each course are limited to 25.

See you in a fortnight.

[Mark Tyrrell](#)

Co-Founder

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