



## Clear Thinking Issue 119

# Teach yourself and your clients the skills of self confidence

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- 3 cunning ways to communicate confidence in therapy
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## 3 cunning ways to communicate confidence in therapy

*How to inspire your clients to believe in their recovery – by **Mark Tyrrell***

*“... All I did was give him a look of confident expectation. An infant learning to walk, **you know** he can learn to walk, but the **infant** doesn't know. You give the infant the confident support of your expectation.”*

Dr Milton Erickson

Ever heard of a double blind drug trial? This is where new drugs, before coming to market, get tested against placebos to see how much of their effect is produced by expectation in the patient's mind (which can be extremely powerful) as opposed to the actual psychoactive chemical impact of the drug itself.

Of course, drug manufacturers hope that the difference between the placebo and chemical response will be significant!

Anyway, the reason the trials are called 'double blind' is because neither the subject on the trial nor the doctor dishing out the pills knows whether what they are receiving is the 'real drug' or the 'sugar pill' placebo.

The reason they do it this way is because, if the doctor knows which is which, *their own expectations* about the effect may be unconsciously transmitted to the trial subject – and influence how they respond.

People are tremendously sensitive to what ‘the doctor’ seems to expect. So a doctor’s attitudes and beliefs are an important factor in the success of a treatment. Or a trial.

Take this out of drug trials and into your consulting room.

As a therapist *your attitude* could make all the difference to how your client progresses in overcoming their ‘problem’. So what’s the best way to communicate to your clients *your confidence* that their therapy will be successful – and so make it more likely to be so?

## 1 Remember - human beings strive for progress

The human race pulled itself up by its boot straps before boot straps were invented. Naked as every other animal, how *likely* was it that we could (or would) come up with farming, technology, literature, great feats of architecture, an understanding of our place in the universe?

My point is that, unlikely as all this might have seemed from our grazing grounds on the savannah two million years ago, barely distinguishable from the other primates, nonetheless *it came to be*.

We have *an innate drive for development* and - when the *conditions are right* - this drive can even go into *over-drive*.

Reflecting on this with clients, simply weaving it naturally into the conversation, will allow them to both consciously and unconsciously register the *expectation* that things will change and improve – because that’s how we are.

## 2 Visualize your client’s future success

No matter what sort of difficulty a client may be struggling with, I like to define what the measures of success will be in their therapy. I then ‘internalize’ those measures for myself through self-hypnosis, and vividly *visualize* what those successes will look like.

In this way I can feel as if I have already ‘glimpsed’ their future success *before it happens*. And so I will more naturally *feel* the confidence I want to *convey* to them.

### 3 Mind your language

Presuppositions are powerful. So use them.

Talk in terms of

*when things improve...*

*as things start to get better...*

*while you're recuperating, you'll **also** notice...*

rather than using more tentative expressions like 'if' or 'whether'.

A presupposition *contains within it* the assumption that progress will occur. A presupposition does not crassly draw attention to the assumption on which it is based. This would risk it being more easily rejected.

For example, rather than saying:

*You will get better!*

(a statement that a severely depressed person might bluntly reject) we might more effectively embed the idea of getting better within a wider framework:

*As you start to feel better in the coming weeks, I wonder what kinds of things your family will notice changing? What sort of things will they be able to tell about you that let them know you're feeling happier?*

Here we have covertly delivered the 'sense of progress', while apparently focusing on what friends and family will notice.

Never underestimate the power of the 'confident support of your expectation'.

## Last chance to learn the Rewind Technique live!

Traumatic experience leaves lasting memories. Most people learn to live more or less comfortably with their bad memories. But for some, the impact of trauma is such that months - and even years - later they are still suffering the same high levels of distress, panic, nightmares, terror, grief, and so on, as when it first occurred.

This is post-traumatic stress. To the PTSD sufferer, it is as if the original trauma is *still going on*. There is no escape. It fills up the whole world.

But it *can* be overcome, and every therapist needs to know how to do it.

This is why we offer a unique Rewind technique online training course to equip therapists to quickly, safely and comfortably and effectively deal with the emotional aftermath of trauma. And stop it in its tracks.

There are only 25 places on each course, allowing participants to get full attention from the tutors and make the most of the learning materials.

**The very last live Rewind technique online training course starts on Thursday 8 September** – and you can get a 25% Early Bird discount if you reserve your place by 18 August 2011. After this date, all our courses are being converted into home use format, so this is your last chance to speak to the trainers live.

You can read more about the Rewind technique online training course here.

See you in a fortnight.

Mark Tyrrell

Co-Founder

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