



Clear Thinking Issue 122

Do you ever get 'stuck' clients?

Sometimes, we all get clients who can't move forward. Often, one particular issue remains raw and emotional. If this is due to post-traumatic stress, it can usually be treated rapidly and effectively using the Rewind Technique. You can learn the Rewind Technique online - and currently get 25% off. [Read more here.](#)

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How to learn excellence from others

Hypnosis Master Series: How to learn excellence from others – by Mark Tyrrell

Who we associate with profoundly affects how we are. But how we *use* that association will also make a significant difference. What does this mean?

Well, firstly, think about this: do you live and work surrounded by a certain 'type' of person? And if so, what type is that? Are many of the people you are surrounded by upbeat? Open-minded? Decent? Bright? Energetic?

Researchers have found that if we are subliminally exposed to lots of *words* that denote a particular quality – for example, frailty or confidence – then we are more likely to act more frail or more confident because of the unconscious impact those words have on us. (1)

Research has also shown that people's intelligence ratings go up after being exposed to pictures of brainy-looking professor types, but – strangely – IQ scores go *down* after seeing a picture of a 'one-off' type genius like the archetypal genius Albert Einstein. This is probably because we're more likely to be influenced by a group or 'type' than by a single extreme 'outlier'. We often assume, when we see someone who is absolutely top-

notch excellent at what they do, that 'I could never be like that'. Although this response is understandable, we shouldn't take it as an immutable 'fact'. In many instances, with dedication and focus, extreme talent *can* be picked up – if we go about it in the right way. (2)

As long as the quality we're after isn't one that's purely genetically determined, such as height, then we can actually learn a lot from the so-called 'one-off' genius. We may even pick up some of that genius.

In times gone by, the apprentice system was very popular. A young person would live and work with an older expert in the craft or skill they were to learn. This expert would be a master builder, master painter, or master whatever-it-was.

That young person would study not just the *skill* being transmitted, but the *master* himself (and it usually was a man in the old days). They would study the *way* the master moved, spoke and conducted himself. Not just what he *did*, but how he *was*. You might say that in this way the skill was transmitted almost through 'osmosis' from master to apprentice. The whole attitude and approach to a skill is absorbed, as well as the technical skill itself.

Some research with sports teams who were temporarily playing below par found that, when they were shown video of themselves from times when they had been playing really well, and were asked to adopt the same body postures, facial expressions and manners they could see in the video, they were easily able to return to their previous form.

So if we put these ideas together, we can see that focussing on someone who is excellent in their field is an excellent way to begin your own journey to excellence.

First you need to decide that

- you can, in fact, absorb some of their excellence
- you will, as well as studying their skill, observe and copy how they go about it - their attitudes, posture, facial expressions and the whole demeanour associated with their excellence.

This doesn't mean just mimicking them and always doing things their way. It does mean that, for a while, the *outward* aspects of their behaviour can act as a kind of 'scaffolding' while your own excellence is building underneath. Later, when you have become as good as them (or, who knows, even better!) you can bring your own uniqueness to it.

When I was learning public speaking I would spend hours watching great and compelling presenters: the way they walked, the way they held themselves. I'd listen to

how they spoke and even watch how they behaved before and after speaking. I'd practise walking, moving and speaking just like they did. It was as if, for a while, I saw through *their* eyes and walked in *their* shoes. This mimicry provided a strong supportive scaffolding, protecting my own growing skill in delivering information to big crowds confidently and eloquently.

This is a subtle process. It is almost as if we are looking to pick up an indefinable essence, and allow the excellence to 'rub off' on us. Hypnosis can speed up this process. Using hypnosis effectively means you can observe the person in your mind, even when you're not with them.

Even more importantly, through your imagination you can hypnotically experience actually *being them* for a while. In this way shy people can 'borrow' the perception of the super confident. So-so soccer players can, for a while, inhabit the reality of the top stars. And we can get the sense of what it's like to be someone who we know to be great at studying, or organization, or making people laugh. If we can hypnotically experience situations through their eyes, then we can't help but pick up some of these excellent traits ourselves.

Empathy is usually thought of as putting yourself in the place of people who are experiencing problems so that you can truly understand and relate to what is going on with them. Similarly, this kind of 'hypnotic apprenticeship' helps you to develop a sense of inhabiting an excellent quality, and therefore greatly improves your chances of actually developing it as well as speeding up the process of learning. We can use what we might call the 'mechanics' of empathy to help us walk in the shoes of people who do stuff extremely well.

So, how would you do this hypnotically?

There are four essential steps:

1. Decide what quality you admire and wish to emulate, and who best demonstrates it. It might not even be someone you know personally, but someone you see in the media, or even a fictional character from a movie or a book. Study this person carefully and think about how they walk, talk, look and communicate.
2. Close your eyes and practise some self hypnosis. Think of the skill or quality they possess in abundance - whether that's confidence, musical ability, or whatever.
3. Now, in your mind's eye, *watch them* exercising their talent. Get a real sense of how they move and talk and act, or just a feeling of their whole attitude and demeanour.

4. Next, strongly *envisage floating into them*, as if you are merging with them and seeing through their eyes, and *experience* what it's like to play (or whatever they are doing) with such excellence.

I worked with a man who felt that he was missing out in life because he didn't feel confident enough. He considered a number of candidates for the role of 'confidence genius' and finally picked an older colleague he knew at work, a man who had many years of experience and a great way with people, whether singly, in small groups or large gatherings. He had, of course, often seen this man in action, and knew him well enough to have a sense of his personal character and take on life. He set about imagining standing, sitting, walking, talking, looking and generally *being* like his confidence genius in the sorts of situations where he felt he needed more confidence himself. And lo and behold – he started to inhabit that confidence for real.

If others can do it – so can you!

Notes

1 - A priming experiment done by John Bargh, in which a professor offers an assignment which, among other words, includes gray, old, Florida, bingo, and wrinkle. After reading some sentences including these words, readers will walk slower or take on other characteristics we associate with old age. See: Ferguson, M. J., Bargh, J. A., & Nayak, D. A. (2005). After-effects: How automatic evaluations influence the interpretation of subsequent, unrelated stimuli. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 182-191

2 - Bargh, J. A., Chen, M., & Burrows, L. (1996). Automaticity of social behavior: Direct effects of trait construct and stereotype priming on action. [*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*](#), 71, 230-244.

Rewind Technique online course - LIVE for the last time

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See you in a fortnight.

Mark Tyrrell

Co-Founder

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