



Clear Thinking Issue 124

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3 ways to communicate client responsibility

*How to ensure therapy is the joint endeavour it needs to be – by **Mark Tyrrell***

There you are, struggling - drowning even - in a tempestuous sea. Thankfully, your rescuer arrives before you go under and promptly throws you an inflatable life jacket. They have, for the time being, fulfilled their responsibility as rescuer.

But now *you* have a responsibility – *to put the jacket on*.

We work *with*, not *on*, our clients, and they need to know this.

People can sometimes adopt a deep passivity about their lives, expecting and waiting for things to be done *to* and done *for* them.

To be successful, psychotherapy - which includes hypnotherapy - requires the client to take 'ownership' of their share of the therapeutic work. Any kind of 'magical thinking', particularly in relation to the role of hypnosis in treatment, can become an obstacle to the real work of change.

So how can we powerfully convey the importance of client responsibility?

1 Say it straight

There is no mystery about this. It's absolutely fine to lay it on the line and say something straightforward like:

*You know, the real changing happens inside **you** and we need to work **together**.
We can work as a team, if you do your part.*

2 Use analogy

I'll often bring in the life jacket analogy (see above), or I might say something along the lines of:

*Okay, now there is a lot I can help you with and, of course, you need to **let me help you**. I'm learning to play the guitar. I have a wonderful guitar teacher, but I'm the one who has to bring my guitar to the lessons, pay attention to what I'm being taught and practise regularly as best I can...*

3 Talk about *their* capabilities

You never hypnotise anyone. You help them explore their hypnotic potential. But the point is, it is *their own* psychotherapeutic or hypnotic potential which is pivotal.

So we might very permissively suggest:

You know, I'm very curious as to just how much of your hypnotic potential you can explore and develop today, and perhaps you can really enjoy that sense of curiosity too and wonder where it will take you...

Talking like this is pretty hypnotic in itself, as it encourages greater openness to ideas and expectation of change.

Talking in terms of what *they* can do encourages a sense of capability and also subtly communicates their personal role in their therapeutic progress.

As Dr Milton Erickson once said: "*What your patient does and what he learns must be learned from within himself. There is not anything you can force into the patient.*"

Precision Hypnosis online training course - LIVE for the last time!

Who is responsible for what happens in hypnosis - the therapist or the client? The answer is: they are both responsible.

Therapeutic hypnosis is a fully collaborative effort. And the first responsibility of the hypnotherapist is to ensure that they have a deep knowledge of the processes of effective therapy and highly developed skills in using hypnosis for therapeutic ends.

And 'highly developed skills' is exactly what our Precision Hypnosis online training course offers you. This course is not for the beginner, but for the therapist who is ready to move beyond the basics to the highest level of skill.

And it's available online LIVE for the last time!

The next Precision Hypnosis online training course starts on 7 September 2011, and early bookers get a substantial early bird discount of 25% if they book before 17 August.

Don't miss this opportunity – in future this course will only be available as a self-study training program.

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See you in a fortnight.

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Uncommon Knowledge
Psychology trainers since 1995

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