



Clear Thinking Issue 133

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3 nifty ways to separate your client from their problem in therapy

*How to activate the 'observing self' – by **Mark Tyrrell***

Human beings have a unique ability to observe and react to their own behaviour as if it were the actions of someone else - to engage the 'observing self'. This allows people to 'step out' of problematic, trance states and gain a fresh perspective.

We can remove someone's behaviour from the centre of his or her identity by encouraging the operation of the 'observing self'.

"*You are not your anorexia (migraine) (depression) (anxiety).*"

This is true. We are *not* our anger - any more than the land is the weather visited upon it, rendering it so apparently appealing or repellent.

Yet when feelings are intense, we can *feel* as if this is our total reality, when it isn't.

The observing self makes us human

The 'observing self' is perhaps the seat of 'humanity' - what it is to *be* human.

As far as we can tell, no other creature has the capacity to reflect on reality and its own place within that reality. From this capacity flows the potential to become more than just our immediate and current self in our immediate and current circumstances.

And even if other creatures do have something like this capacity, it is to a much lesser degree than we humans.

The extent to which we can engage the 'observing self' corresponds to how well we can 'transcend' the situations in which we find ourselves, understand the workings of our own minds and minimise damaging emotions so that we have clarity and calm.

Many classic psychotherapeutic techniques (such as 'The Rewind') specifically encourage the use of the observing self.

The ability to engage the observing self is a function of the prefrontal neo-cortex, which we can regard as the 'conductor' of the brain's 'orchestra', or the 'leader' of the brain 'nation'.

Here are 3 ways to help you encourage your clients to use their observing selves to really help themselves.

1. Grade emotion, motivation or pain

Whenever we grade (scale) a problem's intensity, it is as if a part of us is watching the problem from the outside. We are partly outside the problem pattern and have removed it from our 'core' self. This breaks the grip of the problem behaviour.

If I feel anxious, decide that '10' is the most terrified I could possibly feel, and '1' is the most relaxed, and then scale my anxiety at that moment as '7', the *very fact of doing this* requires me to use my observing self.

This is one reason we use scaling with our clients.

2. Raise a laugh

When we laugh at a situation, or at ourselves, then, for that time, we engage the observing self.

When people get labelled (or label themselves) as 'depressive' or 'anxious' or 'alcoholic', the opposite happens. The core of the person becomes identified with their behaviour. In a sense, perspective is lost and their identity becomes meshed with their 'condition'.

Of course, humour needs to be encouraged at the right time, and in the right way, but you can tell that the capacity to engage the observing self is getting stronger when you see someone start to show flashes of humour in relation to their situation.

3. Use metaphor and analogy

If you are lost in a thick forest, all you know is that you are submerged in a sea of trees.

But imagine what it would be like if you could be lifted *above* the trees for a moment.

You might look down and see that, after all, you are very close to a path.

After being set gently down again, you'd be so much better able to find your way out of this mass of trees...

This metaphor neatly demonstrates both how metaphor can *activate* the observing self and how engaging the observing self can *help people take a more detached view* of their circumstances - so putting themselves in a better position to escape a problem state or situation.

Describing the *pattern* of a person's problem via a story or analogy lets them see it 'from the outside'.

There are many ways to help people detach psychologically from their emotional patterns. I would even go so far as to say that not just individuals but whole nations and cultures need to be able to view themselves from the outside so as to have a crack at becoming as healthy as possible.

New 'Smoking Cessation Training' Home Study Pack

We've been successfully running online training courses for several years now, getting some excellent [feedback](#). However, one common comment from course delegates was that the live lectures times did not always suit busy lives or time-zone differences and that you preferred to listen to the recorded lectures. We've listened to these comments and created a home study training pack that will fit into your schedule and allow you to rush or meander through the course at your own pace.

When you buy a course, you will receive a pack containing a USB stick and workbook, containing audio lectures, hypnosis scripts, psychology insights, videos, check-lists, transcripts of the lectures, overviews and summaries of the course content. In short, everything you need and more to learn effectively. Also, there is your own private forum for ongoing discussion with colleagues and course trainers, where you usually get an answer within 24 hours of posting a question. After completing the self-test quizzes, you will be sent a certificate of completion.

And of course, Kirstin will still be there to help with any administration or other course queries.

The new course has a new price. Previously, the full price course was £395 or £296 if you got the early bird discount. We're offering the new smoking cessation pack for £195, less than half the original price.

Find out more about the [Smoking Cessation Training Home Study Pack](#)

Find out how you can get 10% discount on this training pack and other products and scripts by [joining the HypnosisDownloads.com Growth Zone](#).

See you in a fortnight.

Mark Tyrrell

Co-Founder

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