

# Co-Counselling Manual

A step by step guide  
to a  
Fundamentals Training

Gretchen Pyves

1994

Every single Human Being  
at every moment of the past,  
- if the entire situation is taken into account -  
has always done the very best he or she could do,  
and so deserves neither blame nor reproach  
from anyone including self.  
This  
in particular  
is true of you

*Harvey Jackins*

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# Foreword

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This co-counselling manual is primarily intended as an 'aide-memoire' for those who have completed a Fundamentals skills training course. It reflects the teaching concepts and philosophy presented by Gretchen Pyves and Mike Bray on Fundamentals courses run in the North West of England since 1983. These concepts are in line with CCI (Co-Counselling International) principles as formulated and advocated by John Heron, but they also reflect the particular style developed by these two Co-facilitators. This manual is also intended for those who are interested in learning about co-counselling. Please note that it is not intended as an alternative to attending a Fundamentals course. The skills of co-counselling are learnt by attending a course run by an accredited Teacher of Co-Counselling. A reference section is presented at the back of this manual as a help during co-counselling sessions.

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# 1. Background

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## What Is Co-Counselling?

### What is Co-Counselling?

It helps me fulfil my **potential as a human being**

It is about

- doing it **for myself** and **to myself**  
but not by myself - I get help from others
- understanding my **emotions** and by doing so,
  1. **remove** the effects of past hurts
  2. **deal** effectively with current hurts
  3. **set** realistic future goals

I can then -

- **get my light out from under** the bushel
- **live** the whole of my life with all of my ability
- **enjoy** life more and more

Co-Counselling is a self-help peer-support counselling system. The methods are taught at a Fundamentals skills training course of about 40 hours. The word co-counselling is applied when two people, who have attended such a course, come together and agree to have a reciprocal session of counselling. It is basically a way of helping ourselves without recourse to experts, and an alternative and effective method of dealing with stress. An important element in the training is the 'education' given for dealing with our emotions, a much ignored part of ourselves. As we grow up we are taught to keep our emotions down and under control; we also learn that it is desirable to have academic prowess, that it is healthy to take exercise and to eat a balanced diet. Nowhere are we taught to deal with our emotions: we are 'stuck' with them so to speak and at their mercy. These vital determinates of how we behave and approach our daily living are ignored. Co-Counselling addresses these areas of neglect - recognising 'emotional education' together with methods of dealing with our needs, as important adjuncts to success in living our lives to the full.

## The Advantages

Essentially, the first advantage that co-counselling offers to anyone who has the desire to learn the skills, is free therapy for life. Thus, after the initial training there is a saving in financial terms, as the cost of therapy can prove to be quite expensive over a period of time.

Secondly, a Co-Counsellor has many partners to choose from. This ensures that those undergoing any stressful period can readily arrange a session without having to fit in with a therapist's appointment system.

Thirdly, but seen by many co-counsellors as the most important difference to other forms of counselling and psychotherapy, that the client is not dependent on a particular counsellor for his or her own development.

The client, at the outset in co-counselling, states 'how' a session is to run and stays in control of this throughout. In effect there is no dependence/responsibility given to the counsellor for the client to have a 'good' session. The client is thus empowered.

## **Equality**

The point I wish to stress here is that through training the participant learns the skills to be both client and counsellor. When one of the pair has been client and had a timed session whilst the other partner has been the counsellor, there is a switch over of these roles for an equivalent amount of time. There is thus an equality in the sharing of both roles and the taking of self-responsibility. Both parties also take equal care of each other in a mutually supporting way, and this precludes any dependence emerging.

## **When is it not Co-Counselling?**

The word co-counselling is inappropriate when only one of the pair is 'helping' another to work through a problem; that is a counselling session given by one person (the counsellor) to another person (the client), and there is no switch over in these roles. It is also not co-counselling when two people come together either regularly or irregularly to discuss and talk through their problems with each other. This is not to imply that these methods are inappropriate in sorting out issues, it is only inappropriate to use the word co-counselling.

## **How does Co-Counselling work?**

Techniques taught on a fundamentals course in co-counselling teach the participant acting as counsellor, to enable and facilitate the client in a powerful atmosphere of care, support and security. This underlines the basic philosophy of the technique which is that in order to change, a person needs to find a safe environment where s/he can let go of all the feelings usually denied expression in our society. (Heron 1977)

At the end of the training course, as a co-counselling counsellor you are in the position to deal effectively and safely with whatever your client chooses to bring to his or her session. As a client, you direct what and how you wish to proceed, determining your own pace. It is an on-going process that enables co-counsellors to explore and become proficient in dealing with their own distress. There is no rule as to how often a Co-Counsellor has sessions - that is left to each individual.

## **Extra Rewards**

One of the rewarding spin-offs is that once a Co-Counsellor has spent a fair amount of time working on his or her own issues, helping others who are not co-counsellors becomes easier. The learned and familiar skills enable an experienced Co-Counsellor to counsel in the accepted sense of the word in any situation that humans find themselves in distress over. Learning how to enable distress discharge in others without becoming emotionally involved oneself, is also an important element that is taught on the Fundamentals course, especially for those engaged in the 'helping' professions.

Another spin-off is that in everyday interactions co-counsellors find they become increasingly aware of their own and others' speech and body patterns. This can aid in leading to greater clarity of interaction and allows problem solving and decision making processes to develop in a more meaningful way for all parties concerned.

The basic premise then is that each of us has a potential which goes far beyond that which we normally realise. It is possible to learn for ourselves how to become more responsive, creative and flexible, autonomous and co-operative human beings and how to deal with our own distress in our own way with some help from others.

Heron (1977) states that whilst our society and culture has given degrees of help to us, this has been limited and in many ways restricting. (See also Non-cathartic Society). The simple techniques learned in co-counselling (which are natural to us) are available for us each to use for helping ourselves and others. As adults we each need the support of others to flourish in an interdependent way which can then enable changing conditions in our society, our community, our circle of friends and workmates. Each of us can learn to grow and develop in his/her own most meaningful way, and create for ourselves an increasingly distress free environment.

Co-Counselling is for everyone who is interested in their own personal development. You do not necessarily have to be in a distressed state in order to undertake the training or to benefit. People in all walks of life, employed, unemployed, are already finding co-counselling a useful tool with which to enhance their life skills and find fulfilment. As a Co-Counsellor you can join the growing numbers and be accepted nationally and internationally wherever co-counselling communities exist.

A list of contact persons is available from your co-counselling teacher.

N.B. Co--counselling is not for those too heavily distressed to give attention to another human being, nor is it for those too heavily reliant on anti-depressants, tranquillisers etc.; or who are unable in the conventional way to conduct their occupational and personal life in a sufficiently normal and balanced way by the prevailing 'norms' of society.

## History of Co-Counselling

*Extracts from Heron's Articles 1980*

Co-Counselling is a set of skills which are used in a reciprocal peer counselling setting. They were originally developed in the USA in the late 60's by Harvey Jackins who called it 'Re-evaluation Counselling'. Under his auspices it spread throughout the USA and to Europe, and networks of co-counsellors were organised. In the early 60's and 70's communities were simply networks of people who co-counselled in their own homes regularly and who met from time to time for shorter or longer workshops. Harvey then developed guidelines and the notion of a Key Reference Person. This person, with a small committee, advised on all substantial matters of Theory and Policy for Jackins, the International Reference Person. This Organisation became theoretically rigid and internally authoritarian.

Co-Counselling International (CCI) is an alternative approach developed by John Heron who became opposed to the authoritarian style which he believed violated the fundamental concepts of equality advocated in co-counselling. CCI operates on the peer group principle with no hierarchical structure. Communities are free to organise themselves and train their own teachers. Further information is given under CCI Communities. In order to understand the rationale of the techniques offered in co-counselling, it is necessary to understand the concepts behind these techniques. Acceptance of these concepts is thus a prerequisite to trusting and trying out the techniques. The following section is devoted to presenting co-counselling theory as far as it goes, prior to taking the reader through the individual techniques.



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## 2. Theory

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### Left Brain/Right Brain

Left brain	Right brain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• logic</li><li>• intelligence</li><li>• abstract thought</li><li>• analytical</li><li>• rational</li><li>• objective</li><li>• directed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intuition</li><li>• imaginative</li><li>• free</li><li>• divergent</li><li>• subjective</li><li>• concrete</li><li>• holistic</li><li>• multiple</li><li>• simultaneous</li></ul>

Split-brain studies at the California Institute of Technology during the 50's and 60's indicated that each hemisphere of our brain employs different modes of processing information. In most right handed persons the left side is believed to be more dominant than the right side, and it is thought that with left handed people this can be reversed. The left side is-to do with logical rational thought processes i.e. the intellect of the person, whilst the right side is to do with intuition, feelings, and a sense of beauty, e.g.scenery, music, art, etc.:. There is little 'cross over' i.e. emotions are not experienced in the logical side and rationality is not experienced in the emotional side. The implications of this are far reaching:-

1. Our society pays a great deal of attention to the logical/intellectual side of the brain. In effect this attention is focussed on only half of the brain. This seems to be a disproportionately small representation of a whole person.
2. We behave largely as we feel. What I mean here is that if a person is feeling sad or depressed, no amount of self-talk to 'pull themselves together', together people are worse off than me' etc; will shift that feeling. The logical rational side cannot alter the feelings 'locked into' the emotional side. It is important to remember this because the only effective way of dealing with emotional behavioural issues is to ACCESS THE RIGHT SIDE.

Talking about, intellectualising (which is in effect dissociating from incidents and events), maintain a person in the left side. Co-Counselling techniques are all about accessing the right brain, which is why they are so successful.

## A comparison of left mode and right mode characteristics

Left mode	Right mode
VERBAL: Using words to name, describe, define.	NON-VERBAL: Awareness of things but minimal connection with words.
ANALYTIC: Figuring things out step-by-step and part-by-part.	SYNTHETIC: Putting things together to form wholes.
SYMBOLIC: Using a symbol to stand for something. For example, the drawn form stands for the eye and the form + stands for the process of addition.	CONCRETE: Relating to things as they are at the present moment.
ABSTRACT: Taking out a small bit of information and using it to represent the whole thing.	ANALOGIC: Seeing likenesses between things; understanding of metamorphic relationships.
TEMPORAL: Keeping track of time, sequencing one thing after another. Doing first things first, second things second and so on.	NON-TEMPORAL: Without a sense of time.
RATIONAL: Drawing conclusions based on reason and facts.	NON-RATIONAL: Not requiring a basis of reason or facts; willingness to suspend Judgement.
DIGITAL: Using numbers as in counting.	SPATIAL: Seeing where things are in relation to other things and how parts go together to form a whole.
LOGICAL: Drawing conclusions based on logic: one thing following another in logical order for example, a mathematical theorem or a well-stated argument.	INTUITIVE: Making leaps of thought often based on incomplete patterns, hunches, feelings or visual images.
LINEAR: Thinking in terms of linked ideas, one thought directly following another, often leading to a convergent conclusion.	HOLISTIC: Seeing whole things all at once; perceiving the overall patterns and structures, often leading to divergent conclusions.

## Perception

What is perception? 'Perception' is the way a person views the world. It is important to remember that each person views the world from a different perspective. The reason for this is that we each have different histories i.e. our parents are different from other parents so their 'rules', their ideas of what is right or wrong, how things 'should' be or not be are different. Our lives have given us individually different experiences - schools, holidays, reading material etc.; to name but a few. Each new experience is therefore based on our past history and our own 'perception' so it is not surprising that several people experiencing a similar incident are likely to have 'seen' it in a different way. A good example of this is when several people are witness to an accident and submit statements to the Police. These statements are unlikely to be the same and in some respects can even differ on crucial points. Let us now take this further:-

Events of themselves do not have an emotion - an emotion when experienced, lies within the person perceiving the event: To explain, if two men who are fighting are viewed by a mixed crowd of people the following are possible reactions:

- Women are likely to feel very frightened and want to run away or at least seek some protection from another human being around.
- Men are likely to react either by wanting to step in and stop the fight or by urging one of the fighters on and to "give it him....." etc.:

The event itself cannot create these divergent feelings. How we each view the world is likely to be determined by our inner state and beliefs.

Perception and reality are closely linked - as illustrated by the following example:

"Which side of the road is the right hand side?"

Of course this depends on 'where you are coming from'. If two people are walking towards one another, the right hand side of the road occupies both sides, not only that, but each right side is also the left side. Confusing? The application of this in co-counselling is that as each person sees and experiences the world from a different perspective, so each person is always 'right' from their own point of view. We create our own reality. Accepting this means accepting the person and their right to see things as they do.

Another important feature is to remember that all speech is autobiographical. That is, when a person speaks, on whatever subject, they are always speaking from their own individual perspective - even their observation of another person's behaviour is how they see the person and how it effects them. It is helpful to remember this when at the receiving end of criticism and/or praise as well.

Following on from this, it can be argued that how the world is for different people depends largely on their 'inner world'. A cold, haughty, withdrawn person is likely to experience coldness and haughtiness from those around. Conversely, a warm, loving and friendly person is more likely to notice these qualities in those around. To a large extent this point can be developed further by proposing that everything that is happening around a person - events and people, is a mirror image of what is going on inside them. our outer world is therefore dependent on our inner world. Each person creates their own reality and the beginning of change therefore lies within each one of us.

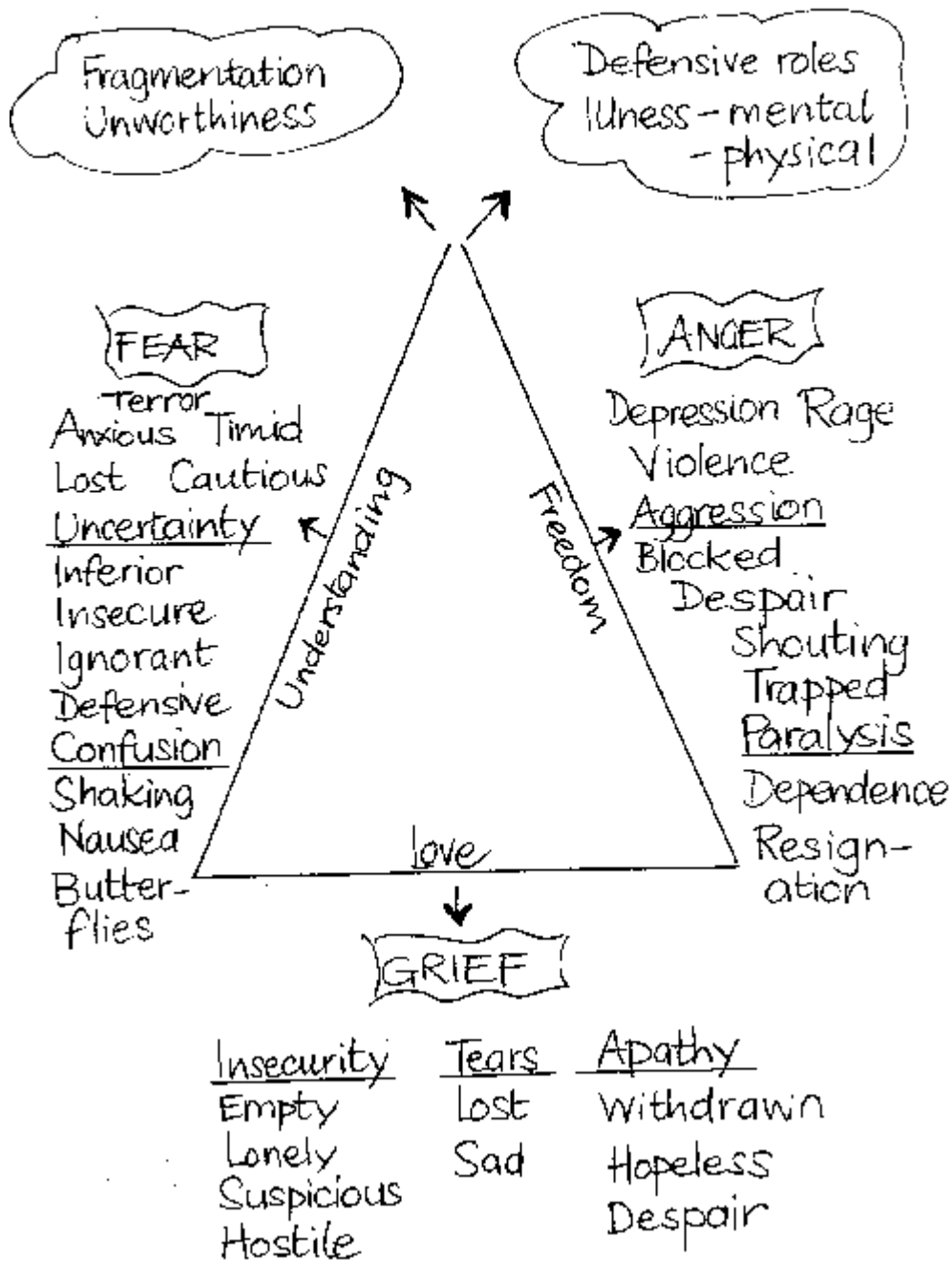
Co-Counselling is one way to begin to see things from different perspectives.

At this point I would remind the reader that you have survived life crises until now. You already have a survival tool kit. Co-Counselling does not mean throwing away any of these tools, they are very Important to you. What it does offer is additional tools to add to the ones you already have, and to use them for helping yourself whenever you choose to do so.

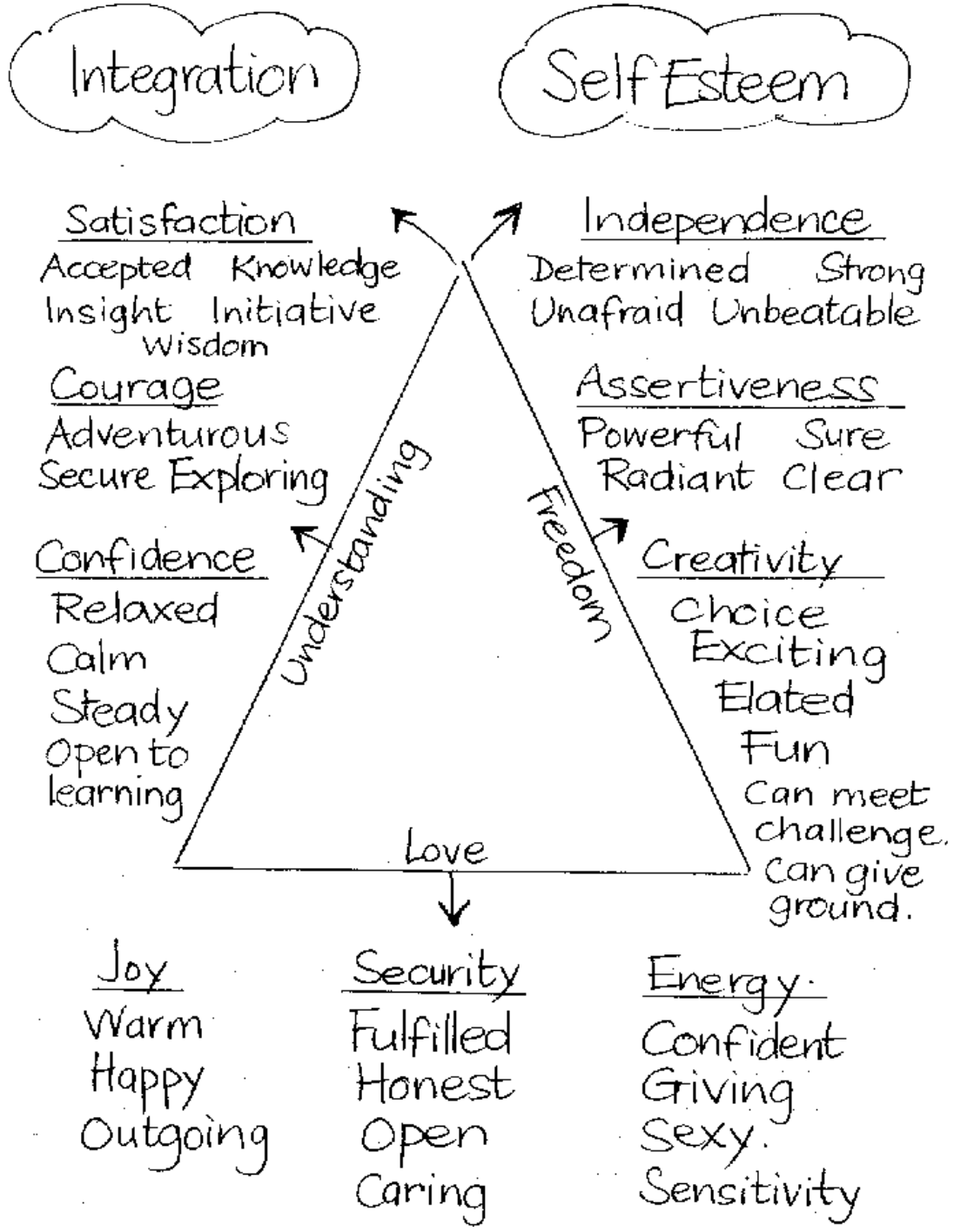
"Sorcerers say that we are inside a bubble. It is a bubble into which we are placed at the moment of our birth. At first the bubble is open, but then it begins to close until it has sealed us in. That bubble is our perception; we live inside that bubble all of our lives. And what we witness on its round walls is our own reflection."

*Don Juan from Carlos Castaneda, "Tales of Power"*

# HUMAN NEEDS FRUSTRATED.



# HUMAN NEEDS FULFILLED.



## Human Needs: their frustrations and consequences

Apart from the physical needs for food, drink, sex, sleep, warmth and shelter, we have, according to John Heron, three basic personal human needs:

1. The need to love and be loved
2. The need to understand and be understood
3. The need to be self-directing and live with others who act likewise.

Where these needs are not met then the result is:

1. Grief when there is no love
2. Fear when there is no understanding
3. Anger when there is frustration in being self-directed

Let us look more precisely at what these human needs are. John Heron's description of love is the "capacity to care and be cared for, to be concerned for the other for the others' sake and to be the conscious recipient of such concern, to wish the flourishing of another and to flourish in response to a reciprocal wish." This kind of love, he proposes, is unconditional, non-possessive and nurturing. Heron points out that in our society "nurturance needs are confused and conflated with sexual needs. Physical contact and human warmth are confused with erotic contact and sexual desire so that the whole culture cheats itself of warm, supportive, human physical interaction." (1977)

With regard to understanding, we are talking here of the intellect of the human being. At the time of birth, according to Harvey Jackins, the human being is at its most intelligent. This intelligence then becomes increasingly occluded by hurtful, stress experiences. It is very true to say that we cannot think intelligently while we are distressed. How often have you experienced an accident or near miss in your car after a row with your partner? Or done something 'silly' because your mind was not on what you were doing at the time, but taken up

When a child is presented with a strange and unfamiliar situation without being given adequate information, then fear may result. This situation will be recorded in the child's history, together with the feelings experienced at the time of the incident. A child also needs to know that other people around recognise and accept him/her for whom s/he is. The consequence of this not happening can be a deeply distressing and hurtful experience. Being understood and accepted by other human beings is a fundamental need. One of the major aims in co-counselling is to draw attention to this fundamental need and to facilitate such interaction.

Self-direction is the exercise of intelligent choice which can be towards the meeting of physical needs such as food or sex or rest or warmth or shelter. However, it can also be toward a personal goal such as choosing a partner, achieving a position of repute in a job, the ability to take part in desired social activities or the expression of ones own abilities and talents on self-development. Frustration of any personal goal can result in anger. In addition, young children can be frustrated by the sheer physical effort required to achieve their objectives, quite apart from being frustrated by other human beings. Ideally a child requires facilitative parents who provide conditions for self-discovery, give encouragement to make decisions, and provide the opportunities to fulfil the decisions once they have been made.(Heron 1977)

### Frustration of Human Needs

When 'love needs' are frustrated through loss or separation, or from parting due to indifference, or invalidation from a rejection by another person(s) in the love relationship, then according to Heron distress is experienced as sadness, as sorrow, and in its more intense phases as grief.

When 'understanding needs' are frustrated because there is insufficient information, either in the surroundings or by a child's 'significant' adults, then anxiety is experienced. When this situation appears to be threatening, either physically or

When 'self-direction needs' are frustrated i.e. the child is prevented from exploring and experiencing situations (a natural process of self-discovery), then tension results. The more thwarted a person feels, the more anger is experienced. Children, if permitted, can explore this need for discovery through their imitation of adults, and through their imaginative play.

The frustrating messages that we are constantly given during childhood are:- you 'should' 'ought' and 'must' be other than you are. These 'shoulds' 'oughts' and 'musts' are the rules of other people which are being imposed on us. Very often they are rules which we then take in and adopt as our own rules of how we and others should behave. Closer analysis of these rules reveals that people can vary greatly in what is believed to be right/wrong.

One of the long term effects of these messages' can be that people are unsure whether they are doing the right thing and may need approval from others before they feel OK. A dependence may then be created together with low self esteem and a lack of ability to make decisions. Let us now look at the effect of the frustration of our Human Needs.

## Consequences of Frustration

Apart from the immediate emotional reactions to the frustration of achieving human needs, what are the long term effects? **Distress needs to be discharged otherwise it is permanently stored in the person.** (See 'Patterning' and 'Theory of Discharge' for expansion of this)

Stored distress will affect the person in either one or both of the following ways:

- Physical
- Emotional

### Physical consequences

Wilhelm Reich's theory postulates that there is a systemic response to distress resulting in muscle and organ contraction. Since this results in tenseness and then a reduction in energy flow through these organs and muscles, these parts will eventually begin to manifest a malfunction. There is a dis-ease of the physical being. It is a well known fact that there are stress induced illnesses - high blood pressure, skin rashes, asthma, arteriosclerosis, coronary artery restrictions and some cancers, to name a few. In addition, research has also shown that where there is stress then the body's auto-immune system against illness is reduced in capacity, and this can lead to an increased risk of catching colds and minor illnesses and a reduced resistance to other viruses.

### Emotional consequences

John Heron promotes the work derived from Pavlov and Penfield in explaining the consequences of distress on the human psyche. There are specific areas in the brain which hold on to the memory of experiences, which will not normally be transmitted to the conscious mind unless stimulated. However, these memory experiences are largely responsible for the belief patterns a person has about him/herself and the world. Traumatic and stress incidents, unless discharged fully at their origin, are therefore stored in the person's memory bank. This storing also includes the emotional experience at the time of each incident. When a subsequent incident re-stimulates this memory (albeit unconscious to the person) then the emotional reactions are experienced as they were the first time. This response is like a replay of the past event with the recipient reacting in the same way as at the age of the original incident, regardless of their current age. This is called 'patterned behaviour'. (The section on patterning will deal with this in more detail).

Apart from patterned behaviour, there is the state of mental illness at the far end of the continuum.

When a person has been so emotionally interfered with, the intelligence and emotional behaviours become sufficiently bizarre for the person to seek help or for others to notice the bizarre behaviour and expedite such help as is considered to be necessary.

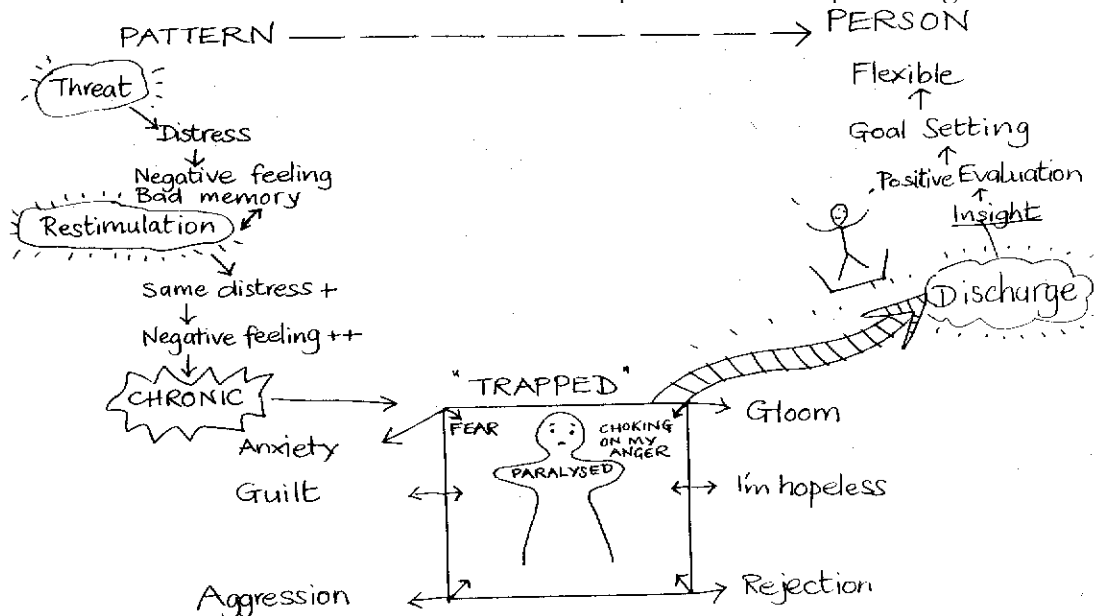
## Potential of Human Beings

AFFIRMATION OF TRUTH: "I am whole, perfect, strong, powerful, loving, harmonious and happy."

According to Harvey Jackins (1965), human beings have the capacity to be enormously intelligent. In addition, the natural way for a human being to feel is zestful, i.e. gets a 'kick' out of being alive and views problems as interesting challenges to solve with enjoyment. With regard to our relationships with other People, Harvey Jackins proposes that it is a natural process to have relationships, and to enjoy affection, communication and co-operation with other human beings. These three characteristics are innate (with each of us at birth) and are not acquired. Harvey Jackins goes on to propose that all the rest of human behaviour and feeling is acquired and is the result of something having gone wrong.

Much of this theory is reflected in Analytic and Humanistic Psychology.

Let us now look further at a process of behaviour which may help to throw light on how our thinking and beliefs can become distorted. This process is called 'patterning'.



## Patterning

**What is it?** The word patterning is applied when a person is behaving in a way that is largely influenced by previous distress experiences. Take the analogy of a blank gramophone record as being the new born child's mind before any messages have been recorded. Through the learning process, events are recorded. Soon the child will experience a stressful time and will feel a deeper emotional stress response i.e. anger, fear, etc.. This 'response' will have a marked effect - it will make a 'deeper groove recording' a chronic pattern is thus established.

Many differing deeper recordings will be made during early childhood, the most vulnerable years being 0-6. In the future, and as adults, when similar experiences and emotions are felt, the person is pulled back into the original stress recorded groove. The consequence of this is that people then behave and feel very much the same as when they were 'little people' and it is this response or reaction that we call patterned behaviour - replay of the old distress recording that a person is hooked back into. The person is therefore not acting from their true authentic able self but from the position of a hurt/angry fearful child.



This patterned behaviour is labelled as our personality. When a pattern is established in this way it is seen to be in a 'chronic' state so that the person is unable, by conventional means, to get themselves out of the reaction or feeling. It is useful to remember that whenever we argue with another person in distress, we have slipped into the other person's, and probably our own, patterned behaviour. Whenever we blame or reproach another person we have slipped into this as well. It is so important to remember that the distress pattern is of a completely different character to the human being.

It is also useful to remember that our stress recordings have a very strong pull, rather like a tug of war with the present logical reality. The stress pull is the more powerful. Hence a person will say 'I know it is unreasonable/silly etc: of me to feel like this - but I can't help it!'

It is only possible for human beings to believe something different about themselves when their stress has been discharged. The right brain which holds the original stress recording is stronger than the intellectually left brain. Let me now illustrate what I mean by telling you.....

## The Story of Harry

*" Harry was a little boy of about 5 years old. He was outgoing and lively, and his mother allowed him a lot of freedom to discover things for himself. Harry started school. The Headmaster was a tall chap with glasses and a mass of curly brown hair and had a large moustache. For some reason this Headmaster frequently seemed to catch Harry doing something he shouldn't be doing. As a result he would tell Harry off in a loud and severe voice or take him to his study and do the same there. Harry didn't like these confrontations, they gave him bad feelings in his tummy and he was frightened and wanted to run away. As a "little person" there were not many options open to him so HE DID THE BEST HE COULD AT THE TIME and began to 'take avoidance tactics. He kept a 'weather eye' open to spot the Headmaster and whenever he thought he would appear, Harry made himself scarce. This worked fine since it prevents from being told off and also stopped the 'bad' feelings.*

*Harry eventually left this school and progressed through other schools to University. The memory and emotions of the early school experience faded away.*

*Harry then went on to his first job, where he was placed in an open office with colleagues about the same age. The manager of this department was a fairly tall man with thick curly hair and glasses. Harry noticed that whenever this manager buzzed him on the intercom or called him into his office, he began to feel nervous and his tummy churned. However, Harry put this down to the fact that probably this was normal and most people felt this way when being confronted by their 'boss'. That is until one day when the manager had spoken to him over the phone and wanted to see him, and Harry expressed his anxiety to a colleague. This colleague showed great surprise that Harry should even feel this way, and others in the office likewise, saying that they found Bill (the manager) a really decent guy. Learning this, Harry was very surprised but had no understanding or knowledge in consciousness as to why he should be reacting in this way."*

Harry was in patterned behaviour - way back in time in the recording groove of being 5 or 6 years old. He was 'restimulated' by the appearance and position of Bill to his previous experience with the Headmaster. Being in that patterned state was not conducive to acting in an adult way. In fact Harry's demeanour in front of Bill would be more that of a frightened child within the body of an adult.

Patterns are addictive in their actions. They tend to force their victims through a re-enactment of the original hurt that caused the pattern. This is in an attempt to deal with it. However many times a present time experience is worked through, until the original hurt is accessed and dealt with, the pattern will continue to repeat. Human Beings are constantly attempting to deal with the original hurt. I believe patterns are the basis of all the difficulties and problems we experience through our life's journey. Co-Counselling offers the opportunity of dealing with the origins of these patterns and so heal the distress.

Another way of describing an experience that restimulates is to say that a 'button has been pushed'. Anne Dickson uses the phrase 'crumple buttons' which I think aptly describes the event.

Harvey Jackins stresses the importance of remembering that "The Human Being as a Human Being is integral, is wholesome, is good. The pattern may be of infinite variety including some pseudo-survival

varieties, but the Human Being as distinct from the pattern is one-piece, is consistent, is wholesome, is good." As he then states - "is completely 'upward trend'".

Furthermore, you are as intelligent as you have needed to be to arrive at today's date. Worth celebrating?

Let us now examine how it is that stress is not released but stored within us .....

How shall the humans of the future live?  
Without distress, in love and zest and peace?  
Of course they will, but mystical good-will  
Is not enough. We have a lot to learn  
Of practical details. We must divide  
The work between us in rewarding ways,  
Allow, encourage growth in everyone,  
Yet know the wishful fancy from the fact  
Not won to yet. No one shall be oppressed  
Nor be imposed on, yet shall all contribute,  
And workability shall bring accomplishment.  
The techniques of community we fashion  
May guide the great Community to come.  
*Harvey Jackins (To "Guidelines")*

## Non-Cathartic Society

Generally speaking, our society is non-cathartic, which means that as human beings we do not own nor are we very often in touch with our feelings. In addition, we are discouraged from showing or giving way to our feelings. So what is acceptable behaviour in our society?

**Intellectual** prowess is highly praised and regarded. Those with academic qualifications are often highly regarded and are better paid than those in less academic jobs e.g. Lawyers, Doctors, and other professional persons are paid more than manual workers, so there is an hierarchical order of esteem and remuneration. Attention would therefore appear to be being given to 'brain' accomplishments.

Sports accomplishments are also highly regarded because **Physical** fitness is becoming increasingly recognised as being important to our well being. Opportunities to attend health clubs and 'keep fit' classes are growing, based on the recognition that to keep fit we must have regular exercise. Eating habits are shifting from meat and animal fat to vegetarian and vegetable fat. The eating of wholefoods and the elimination of harmful additives and preservatives from our diet is a growing acceptability.

Smoking is now recognised as harmful and is increasingly being banned from public places and becoming an unsociable habit.

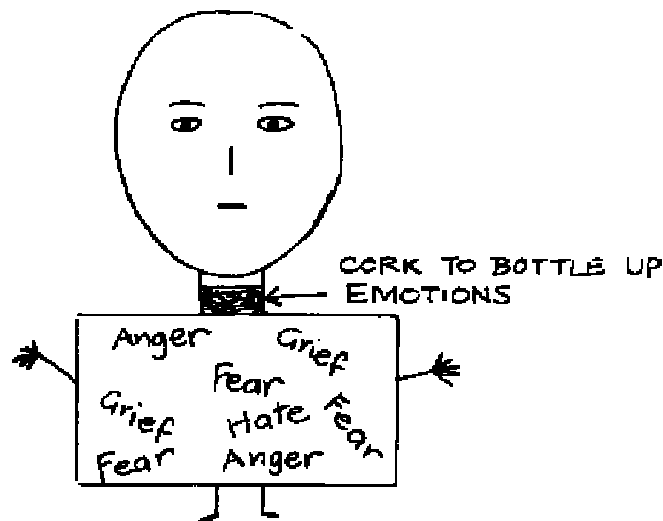
**Emotional** needs are not generally addressed. The prevailing societal attitude says something to the effect that:-

"Our emotions are what we are born with and we are stuck with them. As a result of this, the way we behave and our personalities are things which cannot be changed."

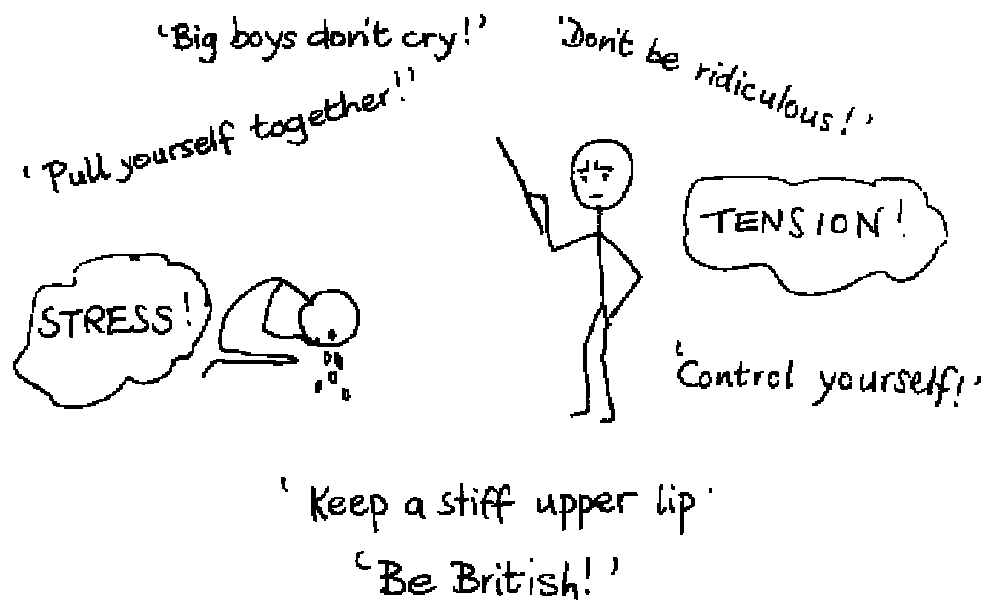
### Let us look more closely at these 'Non-Cathartic beliefs'.

As infants, we instinctively know the natural way to express ourselves. When uncomfortable, angry, or hurt-, we scream/cry; when frightened we shake; when happy we laugh. These 'expressions', to some extent, are tolerated as being 'baby' ways of behaving. During childhood we receive "messages" such as 'big boys don't cry', 'control yourself', 'pull yourself together', from the adults around us. Even laughter, if considered to be 'too much', is discouraged in some ways. "Watch out - it will all end in tears". The implication here being that the discharge of emotions through tears, or angry storming or shaking is not OK

## NON-CATHARTIC SOCIETY.



1. Intellectual prowess (highly praised).
2. Physical fitness (growing in importance).
3. Emotional needs (denied/censored).



Jackins suggests that hidden underneath these "messages" is a statement about the parent him/her-self. This contains both a misunderstanding and an emotional component.

Firstly, there is, a fundamental misunderstanding about what discharge means. Tears are usually taken to mean grief, trembling taken to mean anger. So the belief is that when these emotional reactions are stopped, then the grief or anger or fear is no longer present in the person.

Jackins' point is that this is fundamentally a backward thinking process since tears indicate the freeing of the emotion not the creation of it. Crying etc., never occurs unless a person needs to do it. Tears need to be inside in the first place for them to be able to come out.

Secondly, parents may have a need to stop their child crying because this is re--stimulating their own locked in but undischarged emotion. This creates uncomfortable feelings so "there, there" and "don't cry" are attempts frequently used by parents to stop their child crying, whilst at the same time patting and stroking the child. Once a child is quiet then the parent feels better. Where a child fails to respond, the patting in extreme cases may become beating.

These messages to the growing child and to other adults are really statements about the internal state and understanding of the parent. Gradually we learn as children, that it is not OK to express what we feel. Thus, from an early age, we learn to bottle up our feelings, stuff them down and put a 'cork in the bottle'. We learn that the desired state in which to conduct our lives and behave toward other people, is to be "in control".

It is indisputable that to be in control is a desirable state, but again there are some fundamental errors of understanding both about what being in control actually means and also how to achieve it. To be in control means that a person's reaction to whatever is going on around them is one of logic and understanding, and where emotions are experienced they are not overwhelming.

Conversely a person who is 'out of control' says and does things which they may later regret or have some confusion about. Remarks such as 'I don't know what came over me', or 'I just went berserk for no apparent reason', can often be heard the 'last straw' syndrome. An analogy that is particularly useful here is a kettle, which when switched on gradually builds up steam underneath the lid until it is forced up to let the steam escape. The build up of stress in the body is very like this and the experience of a person 'blowing their top' is also familiar - we even use this expression.

The more we attempt to keep the lid on a boiling kettle the greater the build up and eventual 'blow out'. In attempting to push down our emotional feelings we are also using up a lot of energy to achieve this, energy that we could usefully use to function in a fulfilled way going about our daily business. This misuse of energy to keep our emotions down can so drain a person that they have very little energy for anything else. They can literally become 'depressed' - a well recognised emotional state.

In order to become more in control it is necessary to let the stress out a little at a time, rather like draining a tea urn by turning the tap on for a short while and looking at what comes out. This has a double effect. Firstly it allows us to deal with manageable quantities of distress, and secondly, since we are all subject to stress around us in our everyday lives, space is created for this other stress to enter and not create a 'blow out' situation. The greater the space created through discharge, the greater the amount of stress which can be experienced without being out of control any more. Releasing distress is called catharsis.

In our society catharsis is recognised and accepted as appropriate in some limited forms i.e. crying when watching a sad film or play, weeping in the comfort and privacy of the home with ones closest family members, who accept this; crying in response to the sound of beautiful music or the sheer beauty of the countryside; prayer and church services can also have an acceptable cathartic response, otherwise it is not OK to cry. It is not even acceptable to cry at the loss of a loved one after a 'reasonable' time lapse -- "He or she should have got over it by now."

Laughter is the cathartic response which is most acceptable in our society since it is seen to be a positive emotion. However, since this tends to mobilise the body's energy, it is not unusual for laughter to open up 'blockages' of the deeper layers of distress and for tears to emerge; hence the warnings about 'laughing too much'.

Let us now look at what the discharge process is.

# Theory of Discharge

According to the theory of co-counselling so far as it exists, there would appear to be a real necessity to ensure that stress is not sustained within the body if maximum physical and mental well being are to be maintained. According to Harvey Jackins "it is possible to completely discharge any distress and therefore one's occluded abilities and capacities can be completely recovered" (Jackins 1965).

Co-Counselling addresses the opening up and dispersal of distress through the progressive unfolding of associations and imagery within the client's psyche. The discharge of distress can take many forms outside co-counselling techniques and it is useful to recognise that these are also helpful. Examples include physical sport, yoga, dancing, physical pressure on the body's tense muscles and vigorous movements by the client to mobilise the body's energy, as in massage and bioenergetics.

There is a strong link between the body and the mind. A healthy body can assist a healthy mind and vice versa, so caring for ourselves as total physical and emotional beings is important for achieving a 'wholeness'.

As we have seen, human beings are equipped with the inherent ability to discharge their distress. As "little people" we cry when we are upset, rage when angry, and shake with fear. If the emotion has been allowed to 'run off' through discharge then no evidence of the 'hurt' will remain. An example of this can be experienced by observing children who are allowed to cry until there are no more tears. They will suddenly stop crying, look up with their 'attention out', jump down from the parent's knee and carry on playing as if nothing untoward had ever happened, now free from distress.

Most of us have missed out on being allowed to discharge our feelings in this way as we have grown older. Although our intelligence and physical states have been affected, it is important to know that it is possible to work towards a healthier existence by discharging our past distress experiences, however long ago a traumatic event took place. When stress is released through catharsis, a healing process takes place.

We are born with a clear blueprint with normal connections in our intelligence. This then becomes distorted and occluded through being hurt. In order to survive, we attempt, as far as we are able, to make sense of our world - to make some order out of the chaos we are experiencing. In these distressed states we are in danger of making distorted decisions about ourselves and about the world. Consequently, as adults, those early decisions and formulated beliefs which we repeat in our every day life can be inappropriate and have no useful purpose any more. In fact, these early decisions based on limited knowledge can become disabling.

Discharging the early distress aids the healing of these previously distorted ways of thinking, by clearing our minds of the stress clutter and allowing us to function more intelligently. This healing process manifests itself in any one or more of the following forms:

## **Spontaneous insight:**

the understanding of what was really going on at the time of the initial trauma.

## **Future behaviour:**

new emphasis, open to behaving differently in situations which have in the past been the cause of restimulated distress.

## **Celebration:**

the recognition of being a beautiful person in the here and now.

## **Auditory and Visual:**

seeing colours brighter and sounds clearer - a heightened awareness. Experiencing the world in a new way, being much more fully present and alert to what is going on around.

## **Belief Systems:**

a re-evaluation of who and what a person is. A shifting of negative to positive beliefs about the self.

Co-Counselling theory therefore accepts the notion that discharge can clear the past distress experience, free the intellectual mind from the stress bondage and allow the human being to increasingly have access to their full potential. The process of learning how to discharge is an educative one and the techniques in co-counselling teach this as being a very natural way of behaving. There are usually some concerns expressed at a Fundamentals course about this process. Examples of these concerns are given below, together with my responses.

### **How can I get at my emotion? - I am not feeling angry now - it has gone away.**

Unless discharged, our mind and body holds within it all the emotional or physical reaction to a distress incident whether that happened two days, two years ago or longer. All co-counselling techniques will aid in accessing these hidden hurts if you as client wish to. In any event time is only a concept and time *per se* has no effect on healing, only on whether the hurt is in consciousness or lost in unconsciousness. So go with the techniques and trust yourself to know at what depth and pace you wish to work.

### **I don't want to drag up all that hurt again - it's too painful, I don't think I could bear it.**

Painful feelings are being borne all the time, albeit not in consciousness, and are giving rise to distorted patterns of behaviour which continue to stimulate repeated stress experiences. Other manifestations can be nightmares, feelings of fear, guilt and unworthiness. Accessing the hurt to release it can be done in small amounts - it does not have to be done all at once. The client in co-counselling is in charge of the depth and amount of work being done. Keeping feelings in uses up a lot of energy - energy that can usefully be used for getting on and living life more enjoyably. It is your choice.

### **What is the point of making myself angry/fearful etc. - I need to remain in control?**

As previously discussed, being in control is a desirable state. This is only possible if there is sufficient space to absorb everyday stress. To make this space it is necessary to let emotions out in a safe and regulated way. Co-counselling teaches how to do this in a safe and acceptable atmosphere. This process is rather like servicing a car on a regular basis so it can take the stresses and strains of every day wear and tear. As human beings, we need regular servicing and clearing out in order to deal with these everyday stresses and strains.

### **If I open up the floodgates I won't know how to stop.**

This expressed fear of opening up resulting in being out of control, is never unexpected. The messages about 'pull yourself together', 'act your age', 'pull your socks up' etc., etc: have taught us that it is difficult to stop the emotion from bubbling up and trickling out when we are trying to control it. Because crying or shaking or trembling are seen as loss of control, the connection is made between this and not being able to stop and has led to misunderstandings. The effect of discharge that is allowed to be fully expressed is not usually experienced in our culture.

Remember, crying or shaking or trembling frees the distress from the body; a tear shed is one less tear to hold down. Also, crying or shaking or trembling have a natural end, if the person is allowed to carry on until finished. This is how we self-regulate.

Furthermore we have all learned very well how to control our emotions. We do it all the time, so the skill of being in control is one which is known and practised very successfully, and can be applied at any time. Right now, you the reader, unless you are in a state of heightened emotional discharge are 'sitting' on all the emotions you have experienced and, not yet discharged. Remember that when you give yourself permission to let go of any emotional feeling then you will have less to 'keep down' than you are now managing. The difficulty I propose is not so much in 'how do I stop?', but 'how do I start?' because we have been 'stopping' all our lives.

## Catharsis and how to do it

Prior to any release of emotion the techniques of 'Balance of Attention' and 'Coming Back into Present Time' are taught. These are necessary life lines which are important for the 'client' whilst discharging emotion, and to enable the 'client' to return to the 'here and now' at the end of a session. Because tears are seen to be the heaviest of painful emotional discharges and because learning that discharge is important in co-counselling, there can be a tendency for the new Co-Counsellor to feel that only the discharge of grief is important and that if the client laughs or talks angrily s/he is avoiding the real issues. Other kinds of discharge are equally important - discharge through laughter, non-repetitive talking, shaking, trembling, yawning, scratching etc.:

Catharsis can also include experiencing physical pain - pain which has been locked into the body from the original emotional trauma. Stomach cramps, nausea and retching and other muscular tensions are the most usual.

A word here also about the result of deep catharsis work. When the body releases these deep emotional and/or physical traumas, there can be a period of reaction to this over the next few days. This reaction can be manifested as the symptoms of colds/flu with or without temperatures which I believe is a form of further discharge leading to an eventual healing and should be allowed to run its course. There may also be a very heightened awareness of another reality of power and of a heightened feeling and openness. These states may present a vision of how it might be to be completely clear of distress. Regular co-counselling can slowly progress to enable these developments to be more persistent, consistent and integrated.

According to Dr. William Frey (QED BBC1 March 1988) prolactin is released when the body is under stress. He has researched the difference between emotional and irritant tears. His findings show that the lachrymal glands are like breast tissue and the hormone ACTH is linked with the amount of prolactin in the body when under stress. We literally wash away our stress when we cry. He also believes that weeping staves off stress linked diseases, whereas unreleased stress can lead to subsequent disease which is the price we pay. This scientific explanation of the effect of crying is consistent with co-counselling theory, according to Harvey Jackins and John Heron.

To "All the time in the world"

Sure, hurts will come, and oftener when we venture.  
The crucial option lies in how we meet them.  
Avoiding all the damage that we can,  
We face what did occur un-numbed, unflinching,  
Call loving, skilled awareness to our aid  
To feel and discharge all the recent blows  
Plus all the old ones that the new have rankled  
And, turning insight on the gaps thus opened,  
Reclaim vast areas of our lost potential.

*Harvey Jackins*

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## 3. Techniques

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### Re-Evaluation/Goal Setting/Celebration

The whole purpose of co-counselling is to re-evaluate and goal set

After discharge and completion of unfinished business ...

#### Counsellor interventions

##### *Past*

- "Can you say how that affected your life?"

##### *Present*

Encourage client to make statements to contradict patterned behaviour, e.g.:

- "I am no longer that frightened child"
- "In the present I am strong"
- "I have a right to be me"
- "I can say no / change my mind"

##### *Future*

- "Can you see new ways of dealing with these situations"
- "I will do/be when ..."
- ""

NB The purpose of a session is to work through some distress pattern in order to gain **insight** to **re-evaluate** your life and to set **goals**

Free you natural self!

The word 'evaluate' means 'to ascertain amount of' ... 'find numerical expression for' (The Concise Oxford Dictionary).

I therefore find it difficult to precisely define the word...

'RE-EVALUATION' in the context of co-counselling since the possibilities open to fully interpreting this word seem to rely on an 'understanding' of what this means. My understanding is as follows:-

"To ascertain again the amount of ('truth')

At this point I bring in other 'like' words, namely Re-examine, Re-establish, Re-fashion, and Re-decide. All seem to have a relevance. In order to more fully understand Re-evaluation, I have divided the analysis into two parts:



## 1. The act of re-evaluation

When I talk about what Re-evaluation is, I am linking this specifically with our Belief Systems - the core of our behaviour. So the Act of Re-evaluation is, for me, the ability to ascertain the 'truth' of an early laid down self-belief and the decision to change it because the 'truth' no longer applies. Beliefs are usually in the form of "I am" statements e.g. "I am no good" "I am lazy" or injunctions such as "I must be perfect" "I have to please my parents (the world)".

## 2. The process of re-evaluation

"Re-evaluation in co-counselling occurs when certain conditions are present"(John Heron)

The following is my understanding of these conditions and their consequences:

**Cathartic Release:** the nature of catharsis has been dealt with in a previous section. It will suffice to remind the reader that the purpose of discharge is to clear away the distress of an early critical incident. Do not confuse the necessity to discharge emotion with the purpose of discharge which is to gain insight and be able to re-evaluate. The effect of catharsis is therefore to gain insight.

**Insight:** the mind is liberated through catharsis to make a truly discriminating appraisal of what was really going on in the early critical incident and in subsequent re-plays.

**Understanding of old Patterned Behaviour:** the person's intelligence previously occluded by inhibited emotional tension will be released. This enables them to see clearly what it was they needed at the time and how this need was interrupted and how the pain around this interruption has given rise to a set of elaborate past behaviours (patterns). Asking the client to say how the original hurt has effected their lives enables them to begin to formulate new behaviours in their current life.

**Belief Formulation :** seeing clearly what it was they needed, the person is now able to ascertain what it was they learnt to believe about themselves and why. By understanding how the belief was formed and the inappropriateness of this in their current adult life the client is in a place to ascertain the 'real truth of their authentic self' and what they can now believe about themselves.

**Behavioural Re-decision:** with their new understanding the client can begin to formulate the ways in which their behaviour can be freed from these now obsolete patterns. A new set of responses can be formulated, under-pinned by their new found belief.

(This is my explanation of the various stages in the process of re-evaluation within co-counselling. I am sure that outside of co-counselling alternative ways for changing inappropriate beliefs exist).

## Goal Setting

Re-evaluation frees the client to create new behaviour and feeling states in similar future situations, which is what goal setting is all about. By applying the understanding and insight to the future, this firms up the work he/she has just done.

## Celebration

This ideally comes at the end of each session. Asking the client to celebrate something about themselves usually directly related to the session, aids in further reinforcement of the work and insight achieved. Positive affirmations of the natural self are powerful tools of change and are not to be overlooked. I put it to you that you are the best friend you ever have. You are there when you wake up, when you need comfort, when you want to go anywhere. the most reliable person you know, you are therefore worth valuing.

Celebration also becomes a growing theme in co-counselling communities. Beginning with the notion at the end of each session to opening and closing circles, where the positive celebration of self and/or a specific aspect of another is invited. Group exercises reinforce the right to celebrate the positive aspects of ourselves. (see additional material)

## Rules in Co-Counselling

### Co-Counselling is 1:1. It is a reciprocal relationship. Golden Rules

3. **Confidentiality:** not only is the content of the work not disclosed to anyone else, it is not even mentioned to those clients afterwards
4. **No physical violence:** towards another person, or destruction of objects. All emotional energy is to be directed to cushions, etc
5. **Equal time:** share the available time equally - each person being the client and counsellor in each session
6. **Client decides contract to be used:**
7. **Responsibility:** Each client takes full responsibility for their own work, speaking in the first person, and owning statements
8. **Counsellor does not advise or judge:** Counsellor supports the client while they are working through their 'problem'; learns to develop unconditional positive regard; 'keeps time'.
9. **No artificial mood changers:** e.g. drugs, alcohol

### 1. Confidentiality

There are three fundamental basic reasons for not mentioning the client's material content to them after a session or at any future date:

- a. Talking about content can unpack the work just completed. Insights take time to integrate. The person will do this unconsciously if allowed the space with no interference.
- b. It is really none of anyone else's business. The problem belongs to the client who is the only one to decide whether it is brought up in conversation. A counsellor who has been privileged to be a party to a client's problems during a session, has no right to discuss, mention or even enquire about the subject. The argument sometimes put forward during training is that it seems an uncaring attitude not to 'show concern about another's problems. This leads to the second point which is:-
- c. An enquiry of this nature, however well intentioned, is a kind of interference or 'knowsiness' that says more about the questioner's need to know than sensitivity to the other person's emotions and space. The client has more than likely moved on from where they were when working originally through the issue. Although insight, understanding and resolutions for future action can be taken during a co-counselling session, further insights and understanding very often also evolve during the daily life of the person after a co-counselling session. It is therefore totally irrelevant to remind the client by an enquiry of where they were, and is also illogical when the problem may no longer exist or may have changed in character.

## **2. No physical violence**

Safety in sessions is only ensured if this rule is understood, agreed to and observed. Being with another human being whilst they release their fear, anger or other energetic types of emotion, is safe only when the client fully respects this rule. The release of anger in our society is seen to be a negative type of behaviour and therefore 'a bad thing' to do. One reason for this is that anger is usually experienced as an outburst of emotion with the angry person being 'out of control' - this situation may then lead to violence or destruction to other persons or property. A very real fear has thus built up as a result of these connections being made, but anger does not have to be equivalent to violence to others or property.

A considerable part of co-counselling training is devoted to the education of 'safe' ways to release anger, fear etc., safe here being for both the client and counsellor. The fact that there are 'safe' ways available, without violence to others or destruction of property, does not in any way mitigate the effectiveness of the release of these emotions. In co-counselling we use cushions, mattresses or other soft, non-destructible items - never another human being or valued objects. Destructible items such as cardboard boxes, newspaper, can be used if some 'real' destruction needs to be seen or felt.

## **3. Equal Time**

This means equal time as counsellor and equal time as client in one session. The time is agreed by the two people concerned prior to a session e.g. 10 minutes or half an hour each way whatever time suits and is required by both parties. This aspect of equality underpins the whole concept of co counselling - one human being, equal to another human being (in

'humanitarian terms') assisting and being assisted to work -1 'through issues. Where there is unequal time it can be argued that here is an unequal ability-/power to give and be given to, which goes against the co-counselling principle of a peer and reciprocal relationship and can also have its basis in 'Patterned' behaviour.

## **4. Client decides contract to be used**

At each co-counselling session, the person who is the client decides which contract they want to use. The counsellor accepts this decision and keeps to it throughout the time they are in the counsellor role.

## **5. Responsibility**

It is an important concept of co-counselling that the client takes full responsibility, whilst working, for that session. The counsellor is there to support, and where a normal or intensive contract is requested, to draw attention to and make suggestions about the client's cues, using co-counselling techniques.

## **6. Owning Statements**

From the beginning of a Fundamentals course co-counsellors are encouraged to use the pronouns I, 'me', 'mine', etc., when talking about the self. It is more usual in our culture to use the words 'you', 'one', or 'we'. This in effect creates a dissociation from the self. The techniques of co-counselling aim to redress this and put ourselves in touch with our own feelings, actions and perceptions. Using I etc., does this. It is also not possible to speak for another person either in perception or emotion. The use of 'you' is only advocated when addressing another person.

## **6. Do not Advise, Judge, Interpret or Comfort**

As a counsellor in a co-counselling session it is a fundamental condition that advice and judgements are not given. This is an enabling concept which allows the client to take responsibility for their self and to

work at their own depth and pace. How and what the client works on is entirely up to them. The allotted time span (originally agreed by both parties) is to be used in any way by the client which does not violate any of the rules of co-counselling. The solution to a person's problems lies within their 'self'. The value of self-discovery cannot be over-emphasised, both in the solution being the best fit for the client concerned and by experiencing the joy of discovery.

Within this method is a self-commitment and motivation for the client to accept their own solution. Accepting another person's perceived solution is never the same and even if 'spot on' can carry with it an overload of parental or 'significant' others' input. Telling someone how to behave or to take some form of action is therefore avoided in co-counselling. Learning to accept (not necessarily like) another human being and their individual right to be who and what they are and to attach no conditions to this is also part of the philosophy of co-counselling. This underpins a large part of the techniques.

## 7. No artificial mood changers

e.g. drugs, alcohol. The influence of such changers is to further- become out of touch with emotions. Since co-counselling aims to access our feelings in order to learn how to express them appropriately, any artificial means of suppression is not acceptable.

## Have to - Choose to

Exercise in pairs

**Firstly** 1 minute each way on all the things I have to do, e.g.

- I have to get dressed
- I have to go shopping
- I have to clean my teeth, etc. etc ....

Counsellor only listens.

**Secondly** I minute each way on all the above but changing the "I have to" to "I choose to" - whether or not there is a feeling of choice e.g.

- I choose to get dressed
- I choose to go shopping
- I choose to clean my teeth, etc. etc

Counsellor can prompt if client leaves anything out.

This exercise highlights the notion of 'self directed' behaviour as against 'other directed' behaviour.

Feelings of 'pressure' and possibly being stifled, can be experienced when we give our power away and allow others to determine how and what we should do or be. Understanding the principle of choice in our own lives is to introduce two major principles:-

4. that any person has the right to live their life in a manner that is most acceptable to them
5. that in the living of their life, full responsibility is taken for the consequences to self and others.

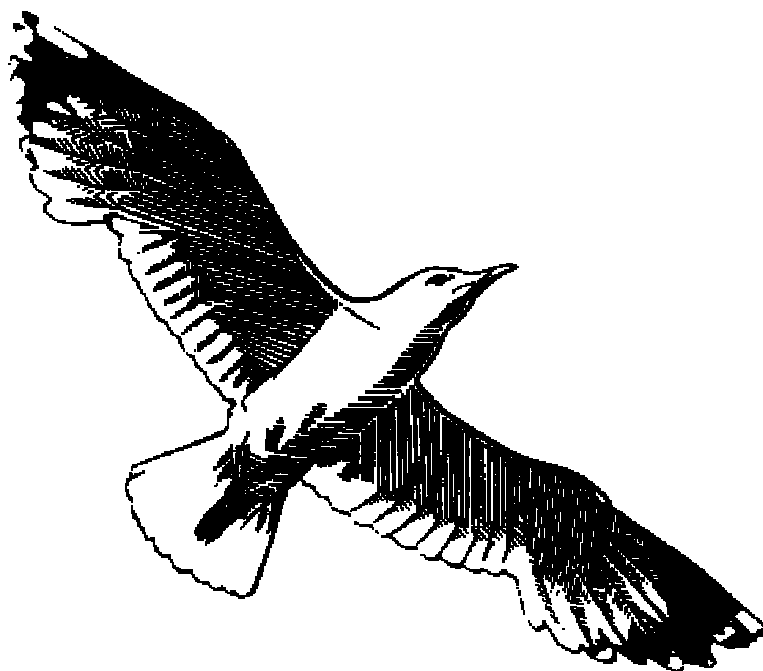
These two principles acknowledge freely the interdependence of people with each other. This means that if a relationship is important or a job is important, introducing the element of choice in the maintenance of these important life states creates a different perspective, one that is less 'onerous', less 'pressurised'.

Let me propose that right now you are where you need to be. This is not to imply that you like how things are for you, only that you have set things up for yourself in order to learn something important. It is my belief that we give ourselves problems to work through. When this has been accomplished we move into a different arena where those previous problems do not exist since they are no longer necessary for our learning. We are now available to meet other problems.

Let us further take this notion that we are masters of our own Destiny. This argument begins with the proposal that Humans are a form of energy. Other animals and plants are also energy. We are all essentially composed of similar substances i.e. Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen etc.; in different proportions. All are energy. This being the case, whatever emanates from a human is also energy. So thought is a light form of energy and as such must make a journey. All creation begins with a dream. The chairs we sit on, the tables we eat from, all began as a dream in the mind of a human being. Dreams are thoughts.

I like to think of thoughts as strands of wires emanating from the brain and at the far end having a plug with which to find a socket. Thoughts make connections and contacts and have a bearing on the future state. How often have you heard people say - 'whatever I do seems to turn out wrong' and conversely the opposite. Those people are setting the scene for their future. "Say it and it will happen".

In the above two ways we create our own lives. This is both an empowering and responsible thought. (Interested readers may like to refer to Joseph Chiltern Pearce, *The Bond of Power, Meditation and Wholeness*, Chapter Three)

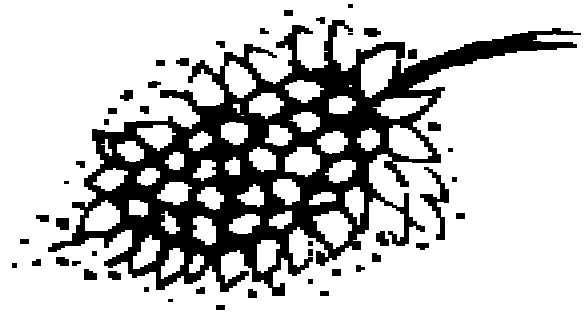


The gull sees farthest who flies highest  
*Jonathan Livingstone Seagull Richard Bach (1973) Pan Books Ltd*

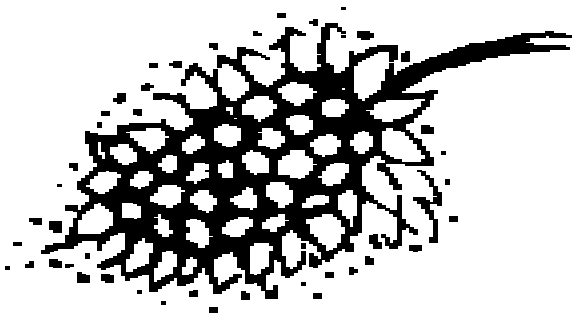
## Contracts of Co-Counselling

1. Free Attention
2. Normal
3. Intensive

These are the three types of co-counselling contracts. A particular contract is always chosen by the client at the commencement of a session. Understanding these contracts enables both the client and counsellor to work together in a harmonious and enabling manner.



You get what you give  
and giving is  
Learning to give whether you get  
anything back or not - otherwise you are **trading**



## Free Attention

### Free attention contract

1. Counsellor maintains eye contact
2. Physical touch e.g. holding hands (check with client)
3. Do not make any interventions
  - Be with the client, for the client
  - No judgements or advice
4. Be aware
  - of client's body posture
  - of words used
  - of tone of voice

NB Not necessary to understand all the client is saying

In my opinion, giving time to another human being is one of the greatest gifts available, since Time is a finite commodity.

Free Attention is the first type of co-counselling contract. It is the only contract that the counsellor in any session is obliged to give. It is a very special kind of listening skill and to generally describe it I use the phrase 'being outwith'. This usage of the word 'outwith' is in a different context than commonly applied. To explain:-

The counsellor is '*out*' of themselves and '*with*' the client. '*Out*' here meaning free from their own emotional response to the client's material.

Conversely, a counsellor who is not '*out*' of themselves will be connecting with their own material and reacting emotionally in some way to the client. This reaction can range from being very restimulated and experiencing their own grief, sadness etc: which may prevent their continuation as counsellor - to an enthusiastic encouragement to the client to try a technique because 'all will become clear' for the client. These behaviours are indicative that the counsellor is not totally '*with*' the client.

'*With*' means being able to achieve a deeper and broader picture of the client's material, and also the ability to objectively pick up the cues which the client gives.

Learning to be '*out*' of ones emotions as a counsellor is a gradual process which begins with the acceptance of the conscious concept of being '*outwith*'. By setting this as a desirable goal and continuing to work on ones own material as client, enables the counsellor to become free of as much restimulation as is possible.

## **1. Eye Contact**

In giving free attention, it is necessary to support the client with gentle eye contact, i.e. one that does not intrude or at worst, distract the client. It is a way of showing the client that as counsellor you are there, accepting him/her non-judgementally and with positive regard, as a person in their own right. This is a most enabling experience for helping the client to feel safe and one which will aid the client for working on distressing material.

## **2. Physical Touch**

This can be both enabling and restricting depending on how it is used, and the historical experience of the client.

A (smothering type of embrace is probably more to do with the need/perception of the giver. In order to give added support to a distressed client, a gentle touching of the hand/foot, which in effect says "I'm with you whilst you work through this material", is likely to be most helpful. If a client needs more, then s/he is at liberty to ask. Gentle holding while the client discharges can be very enabling. However, a word of warning here. It is possible that some clients may find even a gentle touch sufficient to stop them discharging emotion. The reason can be explained by previous conditioning processes when, as a child, the distressed adults around have held (down) and patted (down) the child with the verbal or non-verbal messages "there., there, don't cry" (because if you cry that puts me in touch with my own distress and I can't bear it).

The process of accepting and not becoming distressed by a client's discharge when being counsellor is learnt through experiencing the process as client. A counsellor is largely as effective as s/he is effective as client.

## **3. No Interventions**

The contract of free attention is a silent one. This gives the client free reign to explore their own issues without any interruptions. "THE SOLUTIONS TO ALL OUR PROBLEMS LIE WITHIN US". The client, thus enabled, can make an uninterrupted journey of exploration. Freedom to explore out own problems in this way is very rarely experienced. Usually others are only too eager to offer their advice and help which leads on to a further condition of free attention.

## **4. No judgements or advice**

A counsellor giving either of these is in effect imposing their own perspective about the situation. This is likely to be the result of their own life experience of a similar situation. However, it is never possible to really know how it is for another person'. and as a result of this the solution offered is unlikely to be

useful. Even worse, it can hinder the client in finding the best solution to their problems for their self. Since the client is the only one in this scenario who knows all the variables - his/her own feelings and belief systems - then logically it is the client who, given time, is the only person to be able to come up with the solution that 'fits best' into their life. Getting to the solution oneself, understanding the situation in a different light is a most rewarding experience. Being told, is not the same thing at all and can remove the joy and subsequent commitment to dealing with the problem. It is not uncommon to hear of a parent who complains that s/he has told little Johnny time and time again not to do this or that. My response is that s/he can continue to 'toll little Johnny' a thousand and one times more and still not achieve any change. Understanding through arriving at the solution oneself is more likely to lead to a commitment and fulfilment.

There are also other important underlying messages when giving unsolicited advice and it goes something like this:- "I can see your problem clearer than you" or "you need me to sort your problem out" or "you cannot sort out your problems yourself" or "you are stupid - can't you see..... 11 etc.; etc.; which is implicitly informing the client that s/he is no good/of no use/has no ability to cope etc.; etc. This is a 'big number' to lay on another person, and again it is more likely to be the counsellor's/advice giver's 'material' of needing to be needed/regarded etc.:

Free Attention is not easy. All the techniques in co-counselling, whilst simple, require a degree of skill rather like learning to ride a bike. Once all the separate skills have been put together then the operation becomes smoother and easier.

Remember, co-counselling is never a conversation. In addition, experiencing the giving of Free Attention enables the counsellor to learn important principles prior to using all other techniques in co-counselling.

### **Be aware of non-verbal signs**

As a counsellor with full attention 'out' and 'with' the client, there is much to notice - body posture, movements, words used, tone of voice and eye movements. In being totally aware of these by being 'out', it is possible for the counsellor to be much more 'with' the client. A useful goal to aim for in noticing what the client is doing etc.; is to be only a 'second' behind in this process. Practising this skill of being a 'second' behind what the client is expressing, will enable the counsellor to increasingly be alert to clues the client is giving. Free attention is the foundation for this skill.

### **Not Necessary to Understand**

'*Understand*' is used here in the conventional sense of knowing who 'Aunt Mabel' is or why 'Allen' was bad tempered. Questions to the client - checking out about the problem - are irrelevant since the client already knows who Aunt Mabel is and possibly why Allen was bad tempered. Understanding in this conventional sense is therefore not useful to the client.

Other counselling techniques (not co-counselling) describe listening skills as active listening. This is a method where y a counsellor checks with the client about the problem in order for the counsellor to fully understand. This is not a technique used in co-counselling.

Furthermore, a question to the client asking about something they have said, maybe to do with the questioner (counsellor) wanting to know, could be an intrusion into client time. Such questioning may direct where the client goes in his/her journey and this pathway may not be, appropriate or necessary to the client. In effect, it can interrupt the client's own journey and become counsellor directed rather than client directed. (All interventions taught in co-counselling are aimed at facilitating the client to maintain their own journey. The concept and practice of free attention is the first most vital and enabling component in this process prior to interventions being taught and practised).

Understanding in the co-counselling sense is to be aware of all the ways in which the client is expressing themselves. It is therefore possible to give free attention to another person who speaks a foreign language and for this to be totally enabling for the client.



## Coming Back After a Session

### Coming Back After a Session

**Present time** or **attention switching** techniques to aid the client's return to the 'here and now'

1. Notice your immediate environment:
  - describe your counsellor
  - describe the room
  - look for six blue objects, etc
2. Look at yourself from the outside:
  - follow your breathing
  - count your pulse
3. Walk around the room placing your feet one in front of the other
  - balance on one leg
  - rearrange furniture or books
4. Count
  - up to a hundred in fives
  - say the alphabet backwards
  - count the number of objects on a shelf or wall
5. Remember things earlier in the day which were not distressing, pleasant past memories, move from one to another quickly
6. Look at positive themes in your life

Knowing how to come back to 'here and now' awareness at the end of a session is a bit like learning how to stop a car prior to first learning to drive. It is in a sense a real safety net/life line which allows deep feelings to be explored.

At the end of your client's session always use these techniques to bring your client back into 'present time'. It is a method which draws attention away from the past 'hurt material'. Distracting the client through observation of their surroundings or being physically involved in an activity, all help the client to 'leave' the material. In my view it is more of a counsellor led activity to ensure the client is fully present in the 'here and now' before switching roles or returning home.

N.B. Please note that **this technique is necessary** even when a Free Attention contract has been agreed. Coming Back occurs after the session work has been completed.

## Normal Contract

### Normal contract

NB all interventions are suggestions of a procedural nature only

1. Counsellor responds to the major verbal and non-verbal clues that the client has missed
2. Counsellor offers standard co-counselling interventions if the client needs help.

This is the second type of contract available and heralds all the techniques that follow. The counsellor in fulfilling this contract for the client draws attention to those clues the client is missing - verbally or non-verbally in ways defined later on in this manual, when the client appears to have lost their way, to be blocking, to be in pattern or to be missing their own cues.

NB: These interventions are always aimed at facilitating the client to maintain their own journey and to find their own solutions. When learning the co-counselling interventions it is useful to remember that as counsellor you can only make a tentative mental guess about what is going on for the client. The interventions therefore need to be in the form of suggestions i.e. reminders of a potentially useful way of working in the session. Remember:-

- a. The client is in charge and can accept or reject any suggestion (incidentally that is all they are rejecting not you the counsellor)
- b. When offering an "inappropriate" intervention it can highlight for the client what is 'right' for them - so it still leads to a discovery.
- c. Where there is an acceptance that the deep unconscious knows who it is best to work with on a particular issue, then the interventions of the counsellor are likely to be right for that client at that particular time.

Confidence in suggesting any of the following techniques to a client in a co-counselling session is gained through experiencing them as client. One rule that I find generates safety is: - I never ask my client to go where I have never been myself.

Implicit in a co-counselling contract is the acceptance by both parties that the client is in charge. It is therefore irrelevant when making suggestions to ask them if they want to do this or that, since the client can always refuse. Making

Direct suggestions such as 'do/say that again - louder', will serve to move the client on unless they decide otherwise. Deciding whether they will or not is to add another irrelevant dimension to their implicit willingness to work, since they have already requested a session and decided on the type of contract. Finally, in facilitating this type of contract, the counsellor never has any certain knowledge about what is going on for the client or what the client needs. The only things to go on are the cues given by the client, who will, to a greater or lesser extent, lay out his/her stall in front of you. As a counsellor it is important to remember that all interventions will not elicit a response or even be 'appropriate' for the client. Keep trying things out, be flexible and open to what is going on for the client. Let go of suggestions that do not work - give them away freely; go with those that seem meaningful to the client.

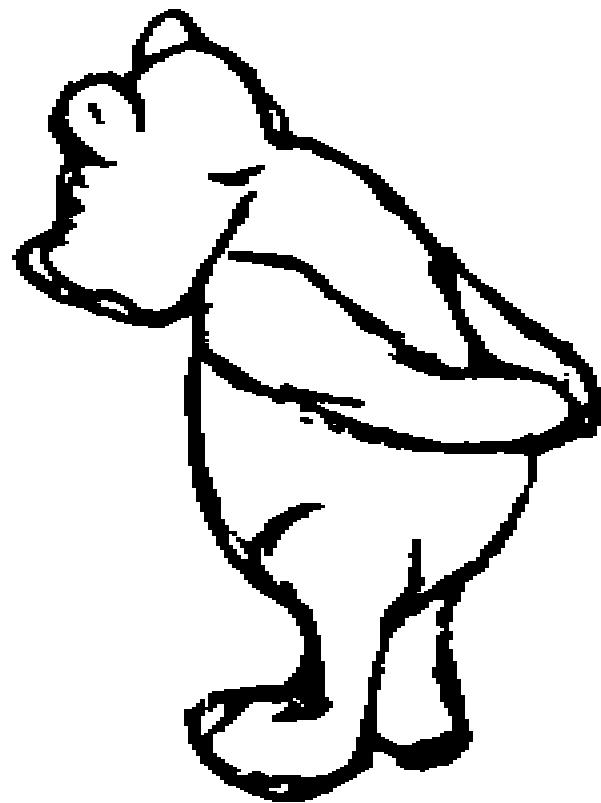
### **Some Counsellor Interventions**

- "How about ...?"
- "I suggest you ..."
- "May I make a suggestion ..."
- "Would you like to ..."

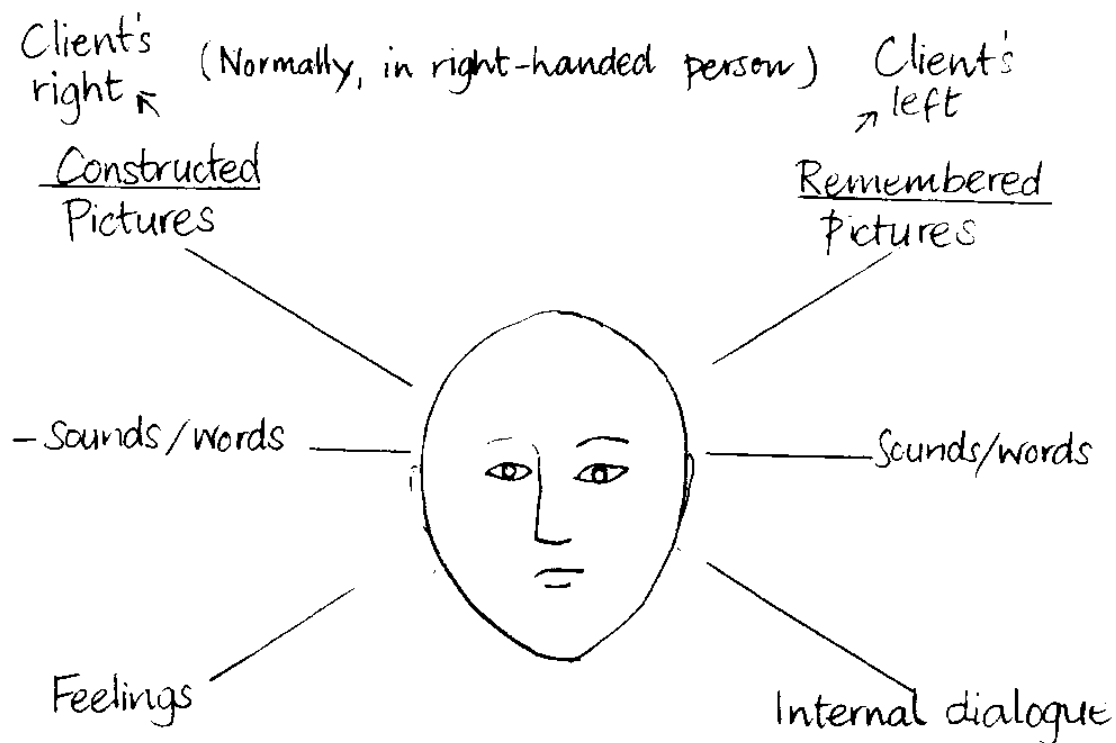


"And if anyone knows anything about anything", said Bear to himself, "its owl who knows something about something," he said, "or my name's not Winnie the Pooh" he said. "Which it is" he added. "So there you are."

*"The Tao of Pooh" - Benjamin Hoff 1982 Methuen Children's Books*



# WHAT'S THE THOUGHT?



Eye movements indicate the internal process. Thoughts come up from the unconscious and are a valuable guide to deeper material. Catching and verbalising sudden thoughts allow the client to express how past trauma and present problems have been inter-locked.

## **What's the Thought?**

A client, making a journey in a session, is likely to have other thoughts which emerge from the unconscious mind and seemingly flutter across their conscious mind. These thoughts are a bit like butterflies flying past. An invitation from the counsellor (who has noticed this happening) to 'catch hold' of one of these thoughts in order to examine it, can lead to deeper material. Counsellor intervention "What's the thought?", "Thought?"

## Eye Movements

When a person looks up they are 'seeing' images either constructed (i.e. future or how things could be) or remembered (a past event). When remembering what has been said in the past, the eyes will move sideways and when feelings are being expressed then usually in a right handed person the eyes will look downwards and to the right (left handed people to the left). This, according to Bandler and Grinder, is a demonstration of how we access stored material and the sequences of eye movements demonstrate how we organise our thinking and feeling processes in response to events being talked about.

In order to pick up the client's fleeting thoughts it is necessary to notice their eye movements. When a person looks upwards while speaking it is likely to assume they are 'seeing' pictures of an event - in other words a thought has popped in. This looking up may be to the right or left or even shift from one to the other. The intervention 'what's the thought?' or 'thought?' will be sufficient for the client to recognise that they have had a thought and to make the choice of working on it or not.

My experience of working on these subconscious thoughts is that whilst they may at first glance appear to be totally irrelevant to the subject being worked on, in some way they do have a real significance when explored. Quite often this is a way into emotions and past associations. The reason for this is not hard to understand. As human beings we are constantly giving messages/clues to the world at large. To use another analogy displaying 'tips of icebergs' about our subconscious feelings and beliefs. To identify the tip and to explore it can lead to larger, hidden parts of ourselves, the deeper larger part of the iceberg lying below the surface. As with all the techniques, this is a way in to these unconscious 'hidden' depths. An experienced client will become more and more accustomed to recognising these thoughts popping up and will be able to hone in on them (without prompting) saying "The thought is..... It

## Debunking a Myth

There is a commonly held misconceived notion which states that a person who "doesn't look you straight in the eyes when talking to you" is not to be trusted. This is going against the natural accessing process which is necessary to use when talking, because when recalling incidents it is natural to use our eyes to follow our internal ways of recalling what we have seen, heard and felt, and our eyes move appropriately to do this. To impose a 'fixed' look ahead is to prevent the speaker recalling the events accurately and incidentally is more likely to result in a 'misstatement'. Therefore to order a child to "look at me when you speak to me!" is a totally unnatural and inappropriate command for the child to follow. (Bandler and Grinder 1979). Similarly the client in co-counselling, who is naturally more likely to look around whilst speaking, cannot continuously look directly at the counsellor. At the same time the counsellor, who is not accessing internal thoughts and feelings, can maintain gentle eye contact with the client.

## Body Movements and Thoughts

When a client suddenly moves his/her body while talking, this is also an indication of an energy charge moving through the body, stemming from a thought that has just occurred (another indication that thought is energy). Attention can be drawn to this with the same phrase 'What's the thought?'

## Literal Description

### Literal description

1. Specific event
2. Use present tense: "I am ..."
3. Describe literal descriptions of scenes and actions as if they are happening now. Using *balance of attention*, evoke sounds, smells, colours etc. (Do not talk about.)
4. Deal with *unfinished business*. "What's left unsaid?"

The client is invited to describe the relevant events which may have occurred either recently or way back in time, as if they are really happening now. The client is therefore encouraged to use the present tense for describing what they can see, what they can hear, smell, touch etc.; and then the emotions associated with an event are more likely to be re-experienced. This time however, there is a difference. By experiencing these emotions again (and remember, - if they were not in us already, we could not experience them) they can now be experienced in a way that was not possible at the original incident by:

- Fully discharging the grief, fear, etc, in a safe and supportive place - the here and now.
- Speaking to the person(s) and expressing both verbally and non-verbally, what was not possible at the time of the original incident. When speaking to the 'people' in the experience, the client is encouraged to talk to them as if they are present and to use the word 'you'.

(Use also 'talking to the cushion' technique, or counsellor in 'role play'). Story-telling and talking about, are to be discouraged as they dissociate the emotion from the event and the emotion needs to be discharged in order to clear the way for insight to occur.

## **Deal with unfinished business**

In working through the emotion of a past event, the client gains insight about what was really going on for them, and also for the significant other people in the same scenario. Finding his/her own power to now deal with the situation in a new way is an enabling process. This dealing with the 'unfinished business' of the past aids in the healing process, because having dealt with the problem, the burden is not carried around anymore. The client is freed from any 'oppression' of the original event. Energy is released for daily living and insight of the self-worth of the client is realised. Life can then be viewed from a different perspective.

In using co-counselling to deal with our past hurts I use the analogy of dismantling a log fire. We first take off the top logs to begin with - those that can more easily be removed and then we are able to work around to the deeper larger ones. Co-Counselling does not mean doing it all at once - you decide.

### **Some Counsellor Interventions**

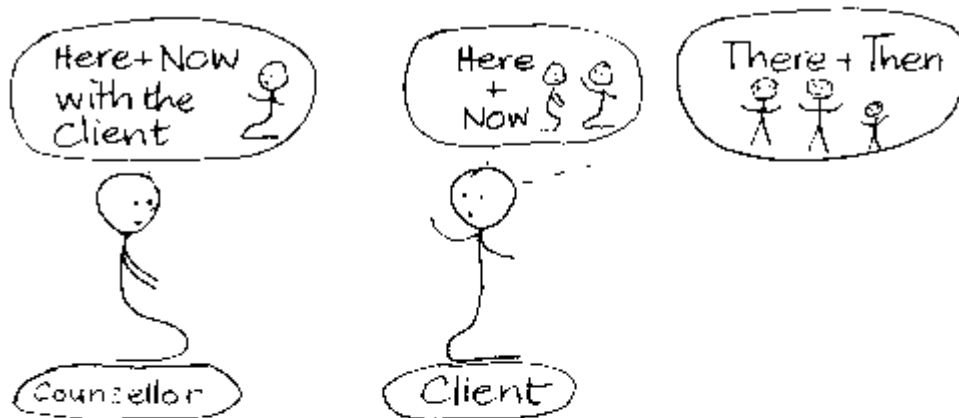
- "How old are you?"
- "When was the first time?"
- "Say that in the present tense."
- "What do you need to say/do to x?"
- "Can you say that directly to x?"
- "Can you say/do to x what little ... couldn't at the time?"

## **Balance of Attention**

In order to dip back into the past, it is necessary to keep what is known as a 'balance of attention'. This is where the 'adult' client allows their self to reach down and back in time to the unexpressed feelings of the 'child' within whilst at the same time keeping part of their awareness in the 'here and now'. By being aware of the 'here and now' and at the same time allowing their 'past child' to scream/shout/sob/shake etc., the locked in emotion can be safely and fully discharged. An imbalance occurs when the client is so swamped in t e r material that no attention is in the present. The client experiences a state of 'wallowing in the mire'. This can lead to a reinforcement of the past material. This state is also one in which the client is dis-identified with their original setting so that no real experiencing or learning can take place nor insight occur.

As counsellor you will become increasingly aware of when this might be happening. A way to redress this imbalance is to invite the client to give you eye contact for a brief moment. "Can you look at me?" This will not affect the flow of the work but will aid the 'adult' in the client to balance with the 'child' material. Becoming practised in this technique- of maintaining a balance of attention leads to the ability to work on deeply repressive material.

## BALANCE OF ATTENTION.



If client is totally absorbed in past distress, no benefit occurs.

S/he must also be aware of present, mindful that now s/he is safe and has resources.

# Repetition/Exaggeration Contradiction

## Repetition, Exaggeration, Contradiction

### Repetition

- "Can you repeat that?"
- "Can you do / say that again?"
- "Do that again ... again ..."

### Exaggeration

- "Can you exaggerate that"
- "Louder"
- "I can't hear you"

### Contradiction

- "Can you contradict that?"
- "What's the opposite?"
- "How about saying the opposite?"

These three connected techniques can be applied to the verbal and non-verbal cues of the client.

## Repetition

Asking the client to repeat an emotionally charged statement/phrase will usually access the hidden emotion. As counsellor, encourage the client to stay with the repetition of words or body movements, especially when discharge is taking place, until all the emotion is spent, and the client moves on of his/her own free will.

## Exaggeration

Where a client is mechanically repeating a phrase or movement, it can be useful to ask them to exaggerate by saying the phrase louder or making the movement stronger and putting more energy into it. The effect of this is to access the body energy, creating an arousal state which allows the emotions to emerge.

Another way of working with exaggeration is to encourage the client to go with the patterned feeling or body posture. By exaggerating this for as long as is necessary, it will serve to help the client to eventually let go. By going with it **totally** - the negatives become 'spent' and the client can begin to free themselves of restrictive and incongruent behaviour patterns. Working with Exaggeration and, Repetition allows a client to express in an 'uncensored fashion', all negative thoughts and judgements about someone or a situation they are working on in a session.

## Contradiction

Here the client is encouraged to use 'going against statements'. This is likely to intensify distress and produce discharge - initially laughter. The client does not have to believe the contradictions while they are saying them, just use them as leverage to begin to experience the feelings. Clients are encouraged to find contradictions to the uncensored negatives they say.

Especially useful if "stuck" or the negative statements are said as if true or without feeling. This removal of the client's 'qualifications' applies equally to the non-verbals.



**Example** - 'I love being here' - said at the same time as a leg is kicking out (A mismatch of words and body messages). Contradicting the statement and exaggerating the contradiction at the same time allows the relief of stored tension.

Resistance to discharge has been taught to us from an early age. People vary in their control patterns - some are able to release emotions easily, whilst others remain calm and controlled - compulsively holding in discharge under conditions of tension. Observing these, according to Jackins, is to take notice of things you observe the client doing in the present. By contradicting these, the rigidity is disturbed. So, if a client is talking rapidly - request a slow repetition of one thought repeatedly. The fast talking control will be interrupted and discharge is likely to occur. A client who is holding their body tightly - arms and legs crossed - when contradicted, by uncrossing and opening the arms and legs, can result in discharge. Similarly a 'cool' controlled person can be asked to act in a jittery way etc.:

When a client is invalidating him/herself, help them to contradict the pattern by asking them to say 'I am the most handsome, smartest and tidiest hero in the world', or 'I am the most loving, open, beautiful and intelligent woman in the world'.

These contradictions are best said with as much energy as possible - saying them loudly and confidently and allowing discharge to occur, then making another effort to say them loudly, and so on. Making these statements while standing up assists the reduction of restricted bodily control patterns.

Ask the client to try using a specific phrase. If distress feelings get stronger it is a contradiction and will take the client into catharsis. If the client starts to feel better, the phrase is a validation and will bring the client out of catharsis. This makes a good basis for celebration. Experiencing this as client will show you how useful - or not this technique is.

## Identity Check

### Identity Check

These can always be used when you find yourself inexplicably drawn to someone, as well as if you find there is something negative going on.

#### Counsellor interventions

1. "Who do I remind you of?"
2. "In what ways do I remind you of X?"
3. "What do you want to say to X?"
4. "Is there anything still unfinished with X?"
5. "In what ways do I differ from X?"
6. "Who am I?"

This technique is ideally used when co-counselling with a new partner. The reason is to clear away any connections with past acquaintances.

During our lives we meet many situations and make many associations. This is a useful way of operating since it allows us to connect one set of principles to others that are similar. For example, a child learns that a door knob will open a door. The child remembers this when confronted with other doors having knobs/handles. A human being would make very little progress without this ability to use one experience and by generalising, apply it to other experiences. However, this attribute can work against us and nowhere more markedly than with people. The phrases "Oh I know your sort", or "I just hate people with red hair", are familiar to us. What has occurred is a negative response to a previous

acquaintance in a person's life and this negative response is being 'dumped' on a 'here and now' person who in some way resembles the previous acquaintance. This process of generalisation, when applied to another person, who may in some way look or seem like the previous acquaintance, is inappropriate. The similarity is likely to be related to the way a person sounds/looks/does their hair/shape of face or the name they are called by nothing to do with how they really are as a human being.

Our previous experiences may equally have been 'good' or 'bad' and if we carry either of these feelings around and 'dump' them on another person we have just met, it is illogical and inappropriate. More often than not, we are totally unaware that we are 'dumping'. What happens is that we are inexplicably drawn to, or have a repellent reaction to a person, on or very soon after first meeting/seeing them. There is no way that a person can be 'summed up' so quickly. It is much more likely to be tied in with a previous experience.

Where one previous experience has been good', then it is possible for 'unrealistic expectations' for warmth and support to be forthcoming, and eventual surprise and disappointment when this does not happen. This is likely to end up in resentment and statements such as 's/he really let me down', 'when I really got to know him/her they really showed their true colours', will be made. The recipient of the initial warm and friendly emotions is also likely to be confused and wonder what is expected of them. This confusion will turn to bewilderment when they are eventually shunned because they have not "come up with the goodies". Similarly, if a previous experience with another person has been 'bad', then avoidance of similar people may take place and all kinds of angry, resentful feelings are likely to be spilling out, either verbally or non-verbally. Any current person does not deserve the undischarged negative emotions being laid on them which are to do with the unfinished business of a previous experience. As a Co-Counsellor, it is important to clear these other 'past people' from the scene, so that they do not get in the way of working with a new partner. The set of phrases used will enable both parties to work on and 'clear' these 'ghosts' from the past allowing each Co-Counsellor to address each other more clearly. Another useful way to use the Identity Check technique is to ask the counsellor to stand in for the person I have issues about in my every day life i.e. If I have an issue around my boss I ask my counsellor to represent my boss and ask me the sequence of ID check questions. This enables me to identify who the boss reminds me of, clear any unfinished business, acknowledge the boss for whom s/he is and acknowledge the counsellor for whom s/he is. It is important to de-role the boss as reminded person and the counsellor as my stand-in boss.

## What's on Top?

'What's on top?' literally means what is foremost in conscious thought for the client - and an invitation for the client to articulate this without necessarily making sense or censoring. This is useful as a start to a session, especially when the client is not consciously aware of any particular 'problem' or issue they need to work on. By giving free reign to thoughts, the subconscious is given the opportunity to emerge. Evidence of this will be through words used or other thoughts and associations or some body movement indicating there is a charge of energy. Counsellor interventions which draw attention to the verbal and non-verbal clues that the client may be missing, will move the client towards emerging material.

### Counsellor interventions

- "What's on top?"

There are no other interventions specific to this technique. However, the following are useful 'moving on' techniques to use when the client is generalising.

- "Who are you really saying that to?"
- "Who specifically?"
- "What do you need to say to them?"

Where a client is making a quantum leap in cause and effect

- "How does x cause y?"
- "How do you know?"
- "Where did you learn that?"

When a client is talking about a problem, ask them to

- "Say it in the present tense"

The counsellor can suggest, if appropriate

- "What do you want to do about that?"
- "What would happen if you did/didn't?"
- "What is the worst thing that can happen?"
- "And now?"

Other techniques and interventions can be used as and when a client requests or a counsellor senses it is appropriate to the client's material.



"He that leaveth nothing to chance will do few things ill, but he will do very few things."

*Charles Baudelaire*



## Talking to the Cushion



### Work with cushions

#### Purpose

To provide a focus for and to access my emotions. to bypass "about-ism"

#### As client

Instead of talking about someone / feeling or a part of me,  
put 'them' on a cushion and talk directly to the person / feeling or part.

#### As counsellor

- (Can you / would you like to) put your ... on the cushion
- What do you want to say to ...?
- Tell him/her that directly, say "you"

This essentially Gestalt method of working, uses a cushion as a symbol. This means that the cushion can be used to represent another person, a feeling, behaviour or part of the client. By placing a cushion near the client s/he can talk to the person as if they are really there. Using the cushion as a means to talk to a part of their self enables the client to dissociate themselves from an internal emotion or part. Placing the emotional part of their self in front allows feelings to be explored and expressed. This is a very effective method of dealing with as many internal parts or feelings as the client is experiencing problems with. Cushions of differing shapes, sizes or colours can be used to represent these different parts. Using the cushion symbolically as another person enables the client to more easily verbalise what they are not able to say to the real person. The counsellor can suggest at this point that the client switches cushions and 'experience the reaction' of receiving the client's message.

It is important as the client, to address the cushion as 'you' - this gets in touch with the held in statements and feelings that need to be said, explored or given vent to. The cushion can be the safe recipient of verbal and non- verbal discharge of emotion. By sitting on the cushion and becoming the other person or part and explaining to the 'client' how things are from a different viewpoint, enables insight to emerge. Also questions which ask 'why' from the client to the cushion, are a cue to switch cushions and take on the role of the other person or part and talk back to his/her 'client' expressing the imagined feelings bottled up. Switching over continues whenever a question is asked or an explanation is given - this allows the client to explore the issue fully until resolved. Speaking as if the other person can lead to some surprises.

Using the cushion is a safe way to fully discharge anger towards another person. Co-Counselling

parents have ample opportunities to symbolically 'murder' or 'bash' their children and release their anger safely on the cushion. As a result of thus discharging their anger parents can interact with their offspring in a clear and positive way.

### Counsellor Interventions

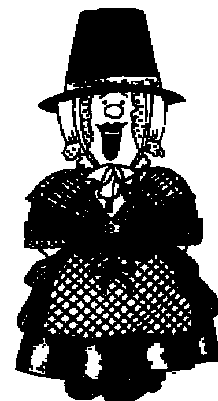
where the client seems to be missing cues:

- "Who are you really saying that to?"
- "Would you like to say that to ---- (putting cushion there)"
- "Say what you were unable to say"

NB: Experienced clients will increasingly recognise their need to talk to 'cushions' and will initiate this technique for themselves. Switching cushions becomes a natural process until a solution is arrived at.



"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts...  
*William Shakespeare As You Like It, Act 3 Scene 2*



# Role Play

## Role play

- "Do you want me to be X?"
- "What are the words?"

NB Counsellor does not *invent* the words of the oppressor

## Reverse Role play

Switch roles. (Client and counsellor change cushions.)

Client becomes oppressor. Counsellor "speaks" as client.

NB Counsellor *can* voice what the client is not saying

Role play outside co-counselling involves the client and other group characters to be given a brief set by the group facilitator. All of these characters therefore require 'acting a part' other than themselves.

Another form of role play can be seen in Psychodrama where the client is being themselves and using other group members to become the characters of their past history to enable the client to work. These other characters can invent their own imagined response whilst in 'role'.

In co-counselling role-play, the counsellor does not invent the words of the client's oppressor but maintains the set words/phrase for as long as the client requests or material comes up. It is not unusual for the client to change the words several times before arriving at those which have the most emotive response for him/her. The client may also wish the words to be said in a particular way and the counsellor needs to be sensitive to these requests. The counsellor can suggest or the client can initiate a Role Play technique.

Bringing in the cushion to allow the client to 'speak' to the oppressor, requires the counsellor to notice the appropriate moment for this to take place. Once material has been accessed by the client, it is useful for the counsellor to slip out of the oppressor role and become the supportive counsellor again. A statement to clarify any change can be made - i.e. "Shall I be counsellor now?" or "I'm counsellor again", when the role play technique has served its purpose for the client.

Inventions from other people can detract from the 'reality' for the client, which is one reason for conventional role play not being used in co-counselling. Another reason is that 'role e players' can become 'hooked' into the role and deny the human response, whatever the client comes up with. This can result in an impasse situation. Co-counselling is all about our own real life drama with the client both directing and acting out the situation.

Psychodrama is nearer to co-counselling role play because the client is playing themselves. Both Role-Play and Literal Description technique are a form of Psychodrama. Role-Play can also be used for the client to work through a negative belief. Here the client directs the counsellor to repeatedly say a phrase that the client believes about themselves:- 'You're no good', 'You have to be perfect', 'You never get anything right', etc., etc.. Initially, the client may have no idea 'who' is saying this, but once this has been identified the cushion can be brought in for the client to continue working with their oppressor and the counsellor to be in the supportive role.

## Counsellor Interventions

- "Would you like me to be x?"
- ("How about) say(ing) it to me as if to him/her?"
- "What are the words/actions?"
- "Talk to the cushion - Tell x -- say 'You'
- "What have you not said?"
- "What might you have said if you hadn't had to hold back?"

## Reverse Role Play

This technique is useful if the client feels 'stuck' in response to the oppressor's phrase or action whilst in role play. Reversing the roles so that the client becomes the oppressor and the counsellor becomes the client, enables the real client to hear any responses the 'counsellor as client' comes up with. This is the only technique where the counsellor can tentatively say or do what the client is not able to. Experiencing being their own oppressor the client can also test the experience of the response that the counsellor as client has come up with. This can be enlightening for the client. Switching back again to the counsellor as the oppressor and the client as themselves, enables the client to then try out for themselves the phrase/words they have just heard and explore how that feels, in order to deal effectively with their response/reactions to the oppressor. The client can request the counsellor to reverse role play as many times as it takes to work through and come up with a satisfactory conclusion.

Behind this technique is the theory that the counsellor, being an objective observer of the situation, is likely to see how the client is 'stuck' - and because the counsellor is an objective observer will not become sucked into the overwhelming emotional response that the client finds themselves in, and can thus react to the "oppressor" in a clear way. As counsellor it is important to be aware that you do not get sucked into an oppressive/rescuing role, passionate to relieve suffering and demanding the acceptance of your interventions (ideas).

### Counsellor Interventions

- "Shall we switch roles?"

## Sentence Completion

### Sentence completion

"I am feeling ... because ... and that makes me feel ..."

Can be used to

- explore a feeling
- keep a direction

### Direction holding

Counsellor aids client to maintain a requested direction. (Issue statement.)

### Counsellor interventions

- "May I suggest you come back to your direction?"
- "May I suggest you keep your direction?"
- "Try saying 'I am feeling angry / frightened / sad / embarrassed' and name a few feelings?"
- "Which one fits?"

A technique which can be usefully used at any time in a session. It is also an effective way 'in' to material at the beginning of a session. By using the phrase and developing the theme, the effect is to work through layers of feelings to access one that has some energy for the client to stay with. Vague indeterminate feelings can be helped to emerge. Similarly, it is a useful starting off technique for the client to use when wanting to keep to a particular direction for working on an issue.

## Counsellor Interventions

- (Can you say) "I am feeling..... because .... and that makes me feel ... "
- Try saying "I'm feeling angry ... frightened ... sad ... embarrassed ... Which one fits?"

## Direction Holding

Direction Holding is used where the client has a particular issue they wish to address, and may request the counsellor to help them in maintaining this focus. Having a counsellor there to constantly bring the client back to the direction, helps when the tendency is to slip away from it given half a chance. The use of repetition here also helps not only to promote discharge but also during discharge.

Direction holding also involves the sustained use of contradiction either verbally or non-verbally. The effect is usually to bring up copious discharge until allowed to be spent (see Contradiction pp. 54-56).

## Counsellor Interventions

- "Can you come back to your direction?"

## Scanning

### Scanning

To survey repeated occurrences of a particular type of event or mental state, or "echoes" from the past.

Enables accessing of Patterns. These usually come from the past and are associated with, and active in, many current incidents. Identifying these then helps clients to work on the origins of these patterns and *not* the results.

### Themes

- 'Minor upsets of the past week'
- 'Times I've been bored'
- 'Times I've been angry'
- 'Times I've felt frustrated'
- 'Times someone said / did that to me.'
- 'Times someone looked at me like that'

This is a technique which enables the client, through examination of every day upsets, to access original patterns.

Scanning requires the client to take a recent feeling and travel back in time, stopping off at times in the past when the same feeling predominated. Working through an identified situation, the client then travels back further and so on, working through issues along the way. This can be both a backward and forward journey in time, working through until the original event that affected the client has been reached.

An original event usually occurs between 0-6 years and is where a belief pattern about the self, others and the world may be formed. The journey can start from the original event - if the client is able to access this, reviewing later, similar experiences in roughly chronological order all the way up to the present. This process can be repeated many times. A combination of talking and/or silent reviewing in this scanning process seems to work well. Initially the client can verbally recount all the experiences first remembered, but on repetition, silently reviews the ones that have already been mentioned, or verbalises any new incidents as they show up. This method allows a very large number of experiences



of a similar nature, most of which are restimulations of the same pattern, to be reviewed in a short period of time. Discharge may occur with the verbalisation or even with the silent reviews. This discharging, which can include laughter, is a relieving of the distress and will result in a 'fading' or reduction in the energy of these patterns. This varies according to the strength of the belief which has resulted from the original experience.

In many ways it is a series of literal descriptions, either verbalised or experienced silently, in order to gain insight about the original event, and facilitate the client to be in an emotional state to re-evaluate this and set future targets for similar situations of a restimulatory nature to be overcome. Scanning is useful for beginning this tracing back process or when more work seems to be needed. It can be used at any time.

### **Counsellor Interventions**

All techniques are appropriate

- "Can you scan that?"
- "Have you had that feeling before?"
- "When was the last time you had that feeling?"
- "Was that the first time?"
- "When was the first time?"
- "Can you take that feeling and go back further?"

## **Dealing with Sexual Behaviour**

"-of sex or the sexes..... classification based on the distinction of sexes. Hence sexuality." (Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Being either male or female in our society carries a weight of rules, injunctions, expectations and some misunderstanding of being a man or a woman as distinct from the sexual urges and expression of these urges.

Heron draws attention to the fact that "the cathartic cycle" (which is behavioural) "is quite distinct from the orgasmic cycle" (which is sexual). This is because "orgasm does not unload fear, anger.. grief, embarrassment, whereas catharsis does." There is an obvious similarity in the release and this may lead to confusion of the outcome.

In our non-cathartic society there is also confusion about the expression of human nurturance- needs and the association of these with eroticism. Heron also states that the distinction between nurturance needs i.e.-- touching, holding, embracing, stroking, caressing, where sexual arousal is absent, minimal or entirely secondary, and the sexual function which culminates in ecstatic convulsions, is little understood. The one is confused with the other. This produces an anxiety in human contact as to its purpose.

The free giving of nurturance needs is advocated in co-counselling. The true acceptance and giving of human warmth and body contact without sexual invitation being expected or required, frees co-counsellors and others practising personal growth to delight in each other as human beings to an extent- that is usually not possible with others in society.

Compulsive sexual behaviour can result if a person blindly acts out in the present, the unfinished business of the past; Examples include:

1. the rapist or prostitute who unawarely acts out his/her anger towards his/her mother/father
2. the man or woman constantly seeking sexual partners in an attempt to fulfil past denied love and acceptance.

Patterns are thus present in the expression of sexual encounters as in any other encounter or acts. Distress around repressed feelings can therefore manifest in the sexual act but not be discharged by it. As with any other pattern, the origin needs to be accessed and distress discharged around that first time in order to achieve a lasting release.

The sexually wise person does not confuse gender with sexual arousal and can distinguish in the latter, according to Heron:

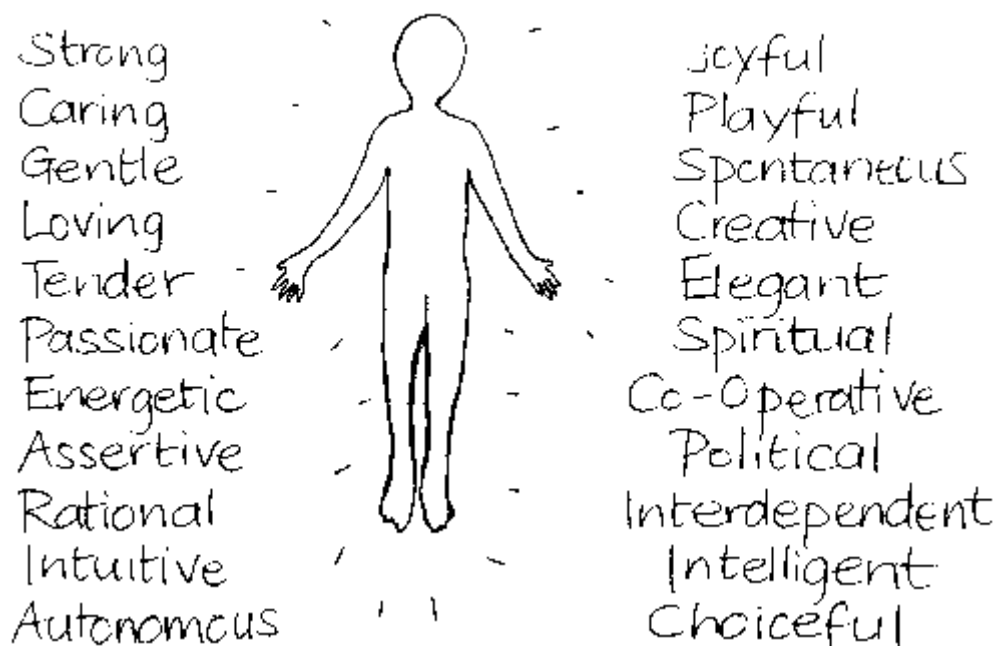
1. sexual interest in himself/herself and in another person that is rooted in hidden distress
2. sexual interest, the expression of which, is a true celebration of human values.

**Exercise** (normal or intensive contract helps in this)

- "As a man/woman I'm expected to"
- "As a man/woman I expect others to"
- "As a man/woman I expect myself to"

Allow sufficient time to explore one or all of these statements, and at the end of a session:

- Celebrate as man/woman.



## Acting into

This is precisely what it says. The technique initially requires the client to "act" into an emotion. The emotions usually "acted" into are anger, fear, grief or embarrassment since these emotions are the ones we have learned to repress and find difficult to access, but all emotions can be worked on. Each type of emotion has a particular body position and movements which will help to mobilise the body energy. In the normal functioning state, the emotions are kept down. This being the case, it is necessary to alter the energy level in the body to allow the emotion to emerge. It is also important to remember that in 'acting into' the client has to inject energy into the exercise which is equal to the holding in of the emotion in a stable position ... "when an immovable object meets an irresistible force..." This exercise needs to be physically safe for the client for two reasons:

1. so that no physical damage will result
2. the knowledge of this safety will help the client to energise by going fully into the exercise

## **Acting into Anger**

The position mostly adopted for Acting Into Anger is kneeling in front of a pile of cushions. In this position the client repeatedly brings his/her arms and fist,-; down onto the cushions slowly building up in intensity and increasing the pace. This "slow build up to a bursting forth" (release) is a simulation of our natural bodily functions of digestion, orgasm, ejaculation and giving birth. If there are suitable words to use in the same way, then so much the better. This process is repeated over and over again until the client actually contacts the anger within. Once accessed and discharging, then normal interventions will allow further material to be accessed.

In this technique, there is a responsibility with the counsellor to maintain an adequate pile of soft cushions for the client to energise with. The golden rule of 'No physical violence' is an important aspect for the success of this exercise from both client and counsellor perspectives. The client is free to hit, murder, strangle and throw cushions around and totally vent feelings in this way whilst the second important rule of balance of attention is also maintained.

## **Acting into Fear**

This is simulated by trembling and shaking. This may be done kneeling, standing alone or digging the fingers into the small of the counsellor's back. Letting out yells, shouts and screams or hyperventilating, all help to allow the fear to surface, which can then be worked on using any other techniques.

## **Acting into Sadness/Grief**

Being hunched up on the knees is the position which most simulates sadness/grief. A foetal position of lying down and curled up, is more likely to develop into a primal "rebirthing". Using the breathing 'as if sad' with sighing and shaky intake of breath, expressing and exaggerating moaning/wailing sounds, will all help the sadness to emerge.

## **Acting into Joy**

Making exaggerated joyful movements and sounds, such as continuous laughter, may access real joy, but be prepared for any other emotion that may surface. This can be a powerful contradiction method which accesses grief/sadness or anger.

## **Acting into Boredom**

Use exaggerated yawning and sighing or other emergent sounds together with stretching, clenching/unclenching hands if the client goes with whatever movement seems appropriate right.

Real catharsis occurs when the movements become involuntary and spontaneous as a consequence of the feeling intensifying to a level which becomes unbearable.

It is very important that the client is aware of being in charge throughout, so the depth of feelings and the extent of the exploration is decided upon by the client. Giving oneself permission to experience repressed emotions and then be able to discharge them, is one of the most enabling methods available.

As counsellor, always be aware that the presenting distress may have an underlying distress. Asking for the earliest memory of this feeling or "Who are you really saying this to" will further enable the distress to be discharged from source.

## Counsellor Interventions

- "Can you put more energy into that?"
- "Say that louder"..... "Exaggerate that"
- Repeat that..... and again" - "Is there a noise/words?" - "Try pretending a noise/action as if it were real"
- "Who are you really saying that to?"
- "How old are you?" - "If you were someone else expressing the feeling, how might you do it?"



You are led  
through your lifetime  
by the inner learning creature,  
the playful spiritual being that  
is your real self.

Don't turn away  
from possible futures  
before you're certain you don't  
have  
anything to learn from them.



You're always free  
to change your mind and  
choose a different future, or  
a different  
past.

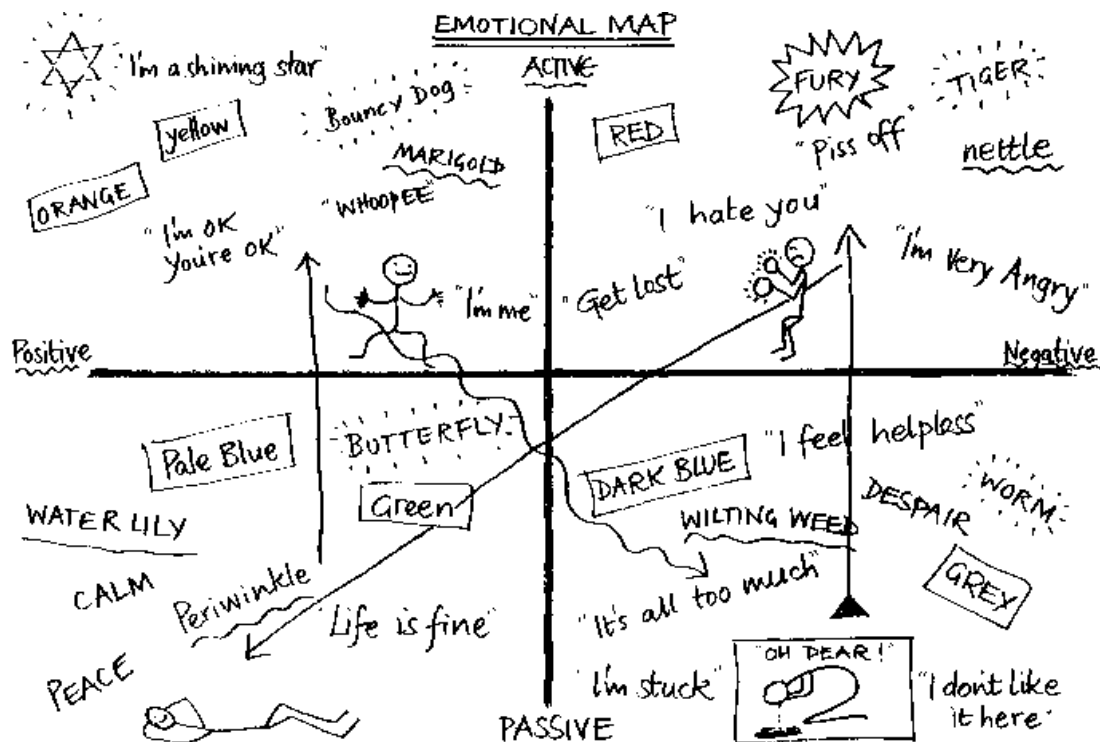
*"Illusions"*

*(The Adventures of a Reluctant  
Messiah,)*

*Richard Bach, 1978. Pan Books Ltd.*



# Emotional Map



"The map is not the territory." *Bandler & Grinder*

In order to go on any journey it is necessary to have a map. Above is a suggested 'map of emotions'.

Implicit messages around us state that excessive emotions are not OK, and must therefore be kept hidden from others. Keeping emotions 'down' in this way can lead to them being so buried that the individual loses touch of them. To be fully alive and responsive to life and living, all areas need to be experienced. Living in the positive side alone is to miss out a great deal that goes on with negatives which will eventually lead to and enrich our experience and joy in the positives. To fully appreciate happiness it is necessary at some level to experience unhappiness etc.

The main advantage in drawing your own map is to put in those positive and negative aspects that are personal to you. Knowing then how to shift from one square to another i.e.:- out of negative passive to negative active will lead to either positive passive or active. Learning how to get unstuck through co-counselling and then doing it, is one of the most freeing experiences. Co-Counselling is therefore a very effective way of dealing with depression - one of the most 'stuck' places to be.

Emotions are not hierarchical. All emotions are equal and to be experienced. Each emotion enriches the experience of the individual. The aim of being in touch with all emotions -- some painful, some joyous, but all worthwhile, is a useful and enriching experience - there is no need to avoid them.

One technique suggested to move from passive negative to active negative is 'acting into'. After the emotion is accessed and allowed to run-off, it is usual for calm to be experienced i.e. passive positive and then a move towards active positive is possible. Although the suggested journey starts from the passive negative to the active negative, then onto the passive positive and eventually to the active positive, it is possible to move from any one quarter to any other quarter.

The important requirement in shifting, especially from negative to positive, is energy. Any of the techniques to mobilise emotional energy are a prerequisite.

## Techniques

- Acting Into (this is the most used and seemingly useful)
- Role-Play
- Repetition/Exaggeration/Contradiction
- Literal Description

## Mirroring

This is a technique suitable for use in either normal or intensive co-counselling contracts.

Mirroring can be used by the counsellor in two major ways:

1. As a means of being in-- close rapport --with the client. Mirroring can be an unconscious message which says "I am here with you". In this case the counsellor matches the posture and shifting positions of the client in an unobtrusive and 'unnoticeable' way. It is important to notice if the client is comfortable with this. An immediate 'opposite' shift in body posture by the client will be an indication that this may not be the case. A few attempts at this will ascertain more certainly where the client is not comfortable about this practice. If so then the counsellor should discontinue.
2. As a means of feeding back any negative/incongruent -non- verbal cues the---client is- in . Drawing attention in this way allows the client to 'see' in the counsellor what it is they are actually saying. Clients can experience varying degrees of discomfort by being thus confronted. Use sensitivity and support whilst using this technique which can press buttons about being 'mimicked' or 'mocked' or 'jeered at' - all negative messages only too frequent in society, especially as children.

Once the client is into material any other appropriate technique can be used.

## Non-verbal



"Words can lie but our bodies do not".  
*Bandler & Grinder 1979*

## **Non-verbal and paralinguistic signs of internal messages**

NB The non-verbal systems are often more of an accurate indicator than the verbal systems.

### Body

- movement of the limbs
- frown or grimace
- fist clenching
- hand wringing
- foot movement / jerks
- distance / general posture
- eye movements

### Sounds

- lack of expression in tone
- emphasis on emotive words
- coughing / choking on words
- seeming slips of the tongue
- impromptu asides

### **Counsellor interventions**

- Do that again ... and again
- Exaggerate that
- Try making a noise which goes with that
- Do the opposite - voice / gesture / posture
- What's the thought?
- What is your right / left hand saying?
- What is your right / left leg / foot saying?

To attend only to words being uttered is to attend to a comparatively small amount of information that is being given. In co-counselling, the noticing of body language aids the discovery, by the client, of occluded and incongruent messages. The counsellor is there only to draw attention to these and by doing so implicitly invites the client to explore them. It is another 'way in' to material.

Remember that EVERYTHING IS A MESSAGE - coughs, splutters, movements - are all messages in one form or another, mostly at an unconscious level. As mentioned previously, sudden body shifts, when linked either to words spoken by others or thoughts during speaking, indicate that a surge of energy has been generated. Using "What's the thought?", or Exaggeration/Repetition/Contradiction techniques will access these.

Allowing the 'body only' to speak can be a refreshing experience. Non-verbal sessions can be set up where the counsellor is requested to give Free Attention or Normal

Contract and where the client only moves and lets out sounds, not words. The idea here is for the client to explore what his/her body wants and to go with it. The counsellor is there to draw attention to parts of the body by touching or verbally offering a technique to the client. I believe there is a counsellor

responsibility in this type of session to ensure the client has sufficient padded material around for directing energised movements against, thus enabling the client to continue in a safe way to express themselves.

## Counsellor Interventions

### Free Attention

- Gently touching a part of the client's body that is marginally displaying tension. This includes noticing the breathing.
- (Pressure)

### Normal

- Normal "Can you repeat that/keep that going"
- "Can you exaggerate that/harder"
- "Contradict that movement/do the opposite" "What do you need to do?"
- "Is there a sound/noise that goes with that?" "Keep breathing" - (when client holds breath) "Where are you breathing from?"
- (Touch/pressure)

## Intensive Contract

### Intensive contract

- Counsellor is contracted to make suggestions to the client at every available opportunity
- Counsellor picks up and feeds back as many of the client's clues as possible

The counsellor's role in giving an intensive contract, is to pick up and feed back to the client as much of the client's material as possible, both verbal and non-verbal. Attempt to maintain a constant 'feedback stream' of these cues.

This type of contract is an important option open to experienced co-counsellors, and at the request of the client to help him/her deal with chronic patterns, occluded or avoided material. It is a very useful 'way in' to material and can be used instead of 'What's on top'/Direction Holding/Sentence Completion at the beginning of a session. Check with the client precisely how long the intensive contract is to last and whether Normal or Free Attention contract should follow. Usually it is only necessary for an intensive contract to last for about three minutes - shorter if the client is into material. Normal contract with appropriate techniques usually follows or the client may ask for an intensive contract until the relevant material is found and then say 'Normal Contract now please' or give a pre-arranged signal.

Experienced co-counsellors may ask for the whole of a session to be intensive. Interventions still take the same form i.e. suggestions for ways of working. Useful intensive technique--, are Mirroring and Role Playing the oppressor.

## Resent/Appreciate

Whilst this is not strictly a co-counselling technique, it is a useful means to clear issues with another person and at the same time acknowledge something of their worth.

In our society many negative messages are given, so it is useful to remember that there are as many positives to be found which require stating as well. By balancing the negatives and positives there is greater harmonisation e.g.:



- "I resent the way you leave the cap off the toothpaste tube".
- "I appreciate the way you bring me a cup of tea first thing in the morning."

So a useful session exercise to clear issues between two co-counsellors is to set a time limit e.g.:- two minutes, for all 'resents' followed by an equal amount of time for all 'appreciates' (a total of four minutes) and then to switch over. Whilst in the counsellor role free attention only is given.

OR

Where a group (say between six and eight) of co-counsellors wish to use this technique, each person takes their turn at being in the "hot seat". The other members of the group each give a resent they feel towards the person in the hot seat. This can immediately be followed by an appreciate or a full round of resents then a full round of appreciates. Each client chooses the option they prefer. The client listens without making any response.

It is useful for the "hot seat" client to remember:-

- all speech is autobiographical
- other peoples' perceptions are to do with how **they** see the world
- this perception may or may not be in accord with self knowledge/truth - and this applies to both negative and positive feedback
- others project and recognise what is also going on for themselves

Through receiving and giving this kind of feedback, each member of the group learns how to handle criticism and also how to put another perspective on what may be going on for the giver.

## **Celebration as a group exercise**

Co-Counselling theory holds that human beings are born intelligent'. creative, loving, flexible etc.:. That being the case, co-counselling introduces methods of affirming this. The importance of celebration is to counter those negative messages that have been around for a long time i.e.:- scorn is thrown on self-appreciation and put downs such as "s/he has got a big head", "s/he is full of her/himself if Al "it is wrong to boast" etc: are often used.

The reason for negatives being more acceptable than positives may be to do with the notion that selfishness is wrong and unselfishness is a virtue. This belief, in my opinion, fundamentally misinterprets how human beings operate. I am proposing that all humans act from thoughts, feelings, drives and urges that lie within. Even doing what we are told stems from a belief that "I have to do this". Hence all human actions stem from the self. These actions and behaviours can be described as selfish (selfishness: being about, around, or within the self). Doing things for others still originates from the self in either one or all of the beliefs or feelings or motivations. By this definition it is therefore impossible for any human being to be unselfish.

To explain further:- Saying 'no' to a request from another person is equally as 'selfish' as saying 'yes'. The reason for this can be explained by the following hypothetical dialogue:-

If I say 'no' it is because:

- I don't want to
- I can't be bothered
- I have something better to do, etc

(All to do with the self -- note the use of the word 'I')

If I say 'yes' it is because:

- I want to please this person
- I will feel good doing this
- If I do this for them then maybe when I want something done they will reciprocate
- I like to see the pleasure on this person's face etc.:

(All to do with the self -- note the use of the word 'I')

Although in each case there is a different internal dialogue, both are to do with the internal needs, beliefs, gains and losses of the self.

It is my belief that understanding this principle frees interaction with other people from self and other game playing. I can only be me. I can only be myself. I operate 'selfishly' - and so does everyone else!

### **Exercise (1)**

One person in a group stands up and celebrates their own identified qualities for one minute. When a non-verbal sign contradicts the positive statement, then the person is asked to "repeat that statement" or "convince me".

### **Exercise (2)**

At the end of a group 'life' each person writes their name at the top of a large sheet of paper. These sheets of paper are passed around the group and all participants are asked to write a positive comment about each other person in the group.

Exercise (2) can be extended to each person standing up in turn and owning the two most sensitive statements made about them by members of the group. This can be profoundly cathartic.

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## 4. Information

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### A Co-Co session

#### How to start:

1. agree on time
2. who goes first
3. type of contract
4. ID check if necessary (new person)
5. check warning time required

#### During a session:

1. Start with 'What's on top?' / direction / intensive
2. techniques
3. warning time: 'you have X minutes left'
4. *if distressed* 'Do you want more time?' (equality of time to be re-negotiated) NB extra time to be repaid

#### Ending:

1. Re-evaluate
2. Target practice
3. Goal set
4. Celebrate
5. Back to 'present time'

#### Switch over

#### Contracts:

1. Free attention
2. Normal: counsellor intervenes when client gets stuck or presents contradictory messages
3. Intensive: counsellor picks up most of client's signals

## Running a Session

### Before

1. Start the session as soon as partner arrives chats and tea can come after - if offered!
2. Phone off the hook/answer phone on.
3. Notice on front door - "not to be disturbed"

4. Neighbours warned of any noise - e.g.. practise for an amateur dramatics murder scene!
5. Children and animals out of the way and suitable provision made for preventing them intruding.

#### During

1. If you are the visiting Co-Counsellor, remember you are a guest in another person's house and are invited in on trust.
2. The rules of co-counselling prevail which means
3. The counsellor is only obliged to give free attention
4. Requests are confined to co-counselling techniques
5. Both counsellor and client have a right to reject a request.

#### Ways In

1. Start with - What's on top
2. Scanning
3. Direction Holding
4. Intensive
5. Sentence Completion

N.B. It is useful at this stage to be aware of any client and/or counsellor patterns which may be emerging during your sessions.

#### After

Social norms prevail!

## Some Client Patterns

### Some client patterns

3. analytic 'talking about' problems / distress
4. mechanical repetition
5. trying hard / doing it well / getting down to the heavy stuff
6. serious - life is suffering
7. self-deprecation
8. pleasing the counsellor, entertaining
9. relapse into chat
10. dramatisation
11. I have too many problems
12. I'd have got into it if I had (had) more time

Since patterns are manifest in all we do, co-counselling sessions are no exception. As client or counsellor, these roles may bring up unaware 'acting out' of these patterns.

1. It is much easier (less threatening) to 'talk about' an experience. It is a dissociated way of 'being'. However, at the same time it may be essential as a survival skill to leave some painful emotion intact for the time being. In co-counselling sessions encourage the client to use the present tense and to own statements.
2. This is using words without getting down to the real feelings.
3. This is the opposite of (2). It doesn't have to be hard work. It can be as light as asking for free attention while being still.
4. Not true.
5. "Putting oneself down" in new situations is a distorted way of regarding oneself - a quantum leap in thinking. Since there exists a pre-knowledge about inability to perform satisfactorily in one way, then ... (and here comes the LEAP) ... there must be an inability to perform anything satisfactorily. This is to use our 'generalisation' process in a totally distorted fashion. One experience is not a satisfactory guide as to how others will be experienced
6. The client is sucked into performing / pleasing - a sensitive counsellor can 'elegantly' draw attention to this to aid in the discharge of such a pattern. As client, it is your session - you do not have to please anyone.
7. Conversation is possible anywhere. A co-counselling session is not a conversation. Seeking another's views, wanting feedback, can indicate a distressed need.
8. Exaggerating in this way can be another way of eluding the emotional feeling, an attempt to distract from the real issue and making light of hurt feelings.
9. Excuses to avoid, but there can be a reality to this.
10. ... After a session counsellors can always ask for feedback. Clients should never ask for feedback nor should counsellors ever give feedback.

## Some Counsellor Patterns

### Some Counsellor Patterns

1. Compulsive interruption / take-over
2. advice / interpretation / negative feedback at end
3. its my responsibility for my client to have a good session
4. my client has to discharge or I've failed
5. you won't avoid my free attention
6. colluding with chat
7. frequently poor attention

NB "The only workable goal for a counsellor is the freeing of the client from aberration through discharge and re-evaluation." *Harvey Jackins 1975*

1. To take over is to act compulsively in pattern. The need here is likely to be around recognition, having to get it right. If this seems to be around while being counsellor it can be useful to act out this role as client, in your session.
2. Never - a golden rule fundamental to all co-counsellors. To violate this just once is likely to isolate that person from the co-counselling community since they will no longer be trusted.
3. Wrong - the client is in charge. The pattern here is likely to be around the distress of needing to be looked after. We do to others what we most need for ourselves. Giving others responsibility is to empower them.
4. As in (3). It also fails to acknowledge that the client can work through an issue in many ways - some discharge, others are quietly reflective. Each session is up to the client.
5. The counsellor cannot make a mistake within co-counselling interventions. Either way the client knows. Let go easily of any co-counselling interventions that are non-productive. It is not possible to know what is going on for the client - only the client knows. S/he will accept or reject. One intervention is not more important than the other.
6. Intensive and non-supportive. Notice as counsellor if this is around for you. Distress pattern of anger intrusion etc:
7. See (7) for client patterns.
8. Where this is happening then the client will not feel safe or supported. The pattern again can be around intrusion/anger/criticism. So much of our experience as little people has to do with adults' gaze. This can be very frightening and so avoidance is the survival strategy, which may not have to be true now.

## CCI Communities

(Notion taken from Co-Counselling Teacher's Manual) (John Heron 1978)

The CCI (Co-Counselling International) federates entirely independent communities of co-counsellors in several countries. These communities develop their own decision making procedures consonant with the peer principle and their own approach to the training, assessment and accreditation of teachers of this method. The following are proposed types of Communities.

## **Type One Community**

A network of persons who engage in co-counselling sessions in each others homes. It is a community or an association exclusively for the purpose of co-counselling and of directly related matters such as:

- Running 40 hour Fundamental Training Courses.
- Running follow up workshops.
- Running advanced co-counselling training workshops.
- Running Co-Counselling Teacher Training Courses.
- Providing up to date lists of trained co-counsellors.
- Having independent sub groups that meet regularly for periods of time.
- Having general workshops primarily for intensive co-counselling and group work.
- Having theme workshops to develop awareness on such specific areas as sexuality, role stereotyping, parenthood, obesity, creativity, politics, third world etc:
- Run marathon co-counselling sessions of continuous 3 to 4 hours as client with varying counsellors (needs a good mathematician!)
- Run (peer) primalling workshops. Initially run by one person with birth work experiences, then progressively disseminated to peers.
- Run Teachers workshops.

## **Type Two Community**

This seeks to offer help in reciprocal fashion in areas other than co-counselling i.e.: gardening/house repairs/decorating, etc: OR

- Members work together to provide a resource for the group a centre for meetings, workshops, etc:
- Members work together to introduce some change into their social systems - transport, local politics, education, etc:

## **Type Three Community**

A community in a real sense where a group/association live together in a shared property and all that that entails.

## **CCI Membership**

John Heron 1996

CCI is a planet-wide association of individuals and local networks committed to affirm a core discipline of co-counselling while encouraging, on an international and co-operative basis, the advancement of sound theory, effective practice, network development and planetary transformation. Local networks of co-counsellors within CCI are independent, self-governing peer organisations, exploring ways of being effective social structures while avoiding all forms of authoritarian control. Any person and network is a member of CCI if :

1. they understand and apply the principles of co-counselling given below
2. they have had at least 40 hours training from a member of CCI
3. they grasp, in theory and practice, the ideas of pattern, discharge and re-evaluation

## The Principles of Co-Counselling

John Heron (25 Dec 96)

- 1) Co-Counselling is usually practised in pairs with one person working, the client, one person facilitating, the counsellor, then they reverse these roles. In every session each person spends the same time in the role of both client and counsellor. A session is usually on the same occasion, although sometimes people may take turns as client and counsellor on different occasions.
- 2) When co-counsellors work in groups of three or more, members take an equal time as client, each client either choosing one other person as counsellor, or working in a self-directing way with the silent, supportive attention of the group. For certain purposes, the client may request co-operative interventions by two or more counsellors.
- 3) The client is in charge of their session in at least seven ways:
  - a. trusting and following the living process of liberation emerging within
  - b. choosing at the start of the session one of three contracts given in no. 9 below
  - c. choosing within the first two contracts what to work on and how
  - d. being free to change the contract during their session
  - e. having a right to accept or disregard interventions made by the counsellor
  - f. being responsible for keeping a balance of attention
  - g. being responsible for working in a way that does not harm themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment
- 4) The client's work is their own deep process. It may include, but is not restricted to:
  - a. discharge and re-evaluation on personal distress and cultural oppression
  - b. celebration of personal strengths
  - c. creative thinking at the frontiers of personal belief
  - d. visualising future personal and cultural states for goal-setting and action-planning
  - e. extending consciousness into transpersonal states

CCI takes the view that the first of these is a secure foundation for the other four.

1. The role of the counsellor is to:
  - a. give full, supportive attention to the client at all times
  - b. intervene in accordance with the contract chosen by the client
  - c. inform the client about time at the end of the session and whenever the client requests
  - d. end the session immediately if the client becomes irresponsibly harmful to themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment
2. The counsellor's intervention is a behaviour that facilitates the client's work. It may be verbal, and/or non-verbal through eye contact, facial expression, gesture, posture or touch.
3. A verbal intervention is a practical suggestion about what the client may say or do as a way of



enhancing their working process within the session. It is not a stated interpretation or analysis and does not give advice. It is not driven by counsellor distress and is not harmful or invasive. It liberates client autonomy and self-esteem.

4. The main use of non-verbal interventions is to give sustained, supportive and distress-free attention: being present for the client in a way that affirms and enables full emergence. This use is the foundation of all three contracts given below. Non-verbal interventions can also be used to elaborate verbal interventions; or to work on their own in conveying a practical suggestion; or, in the case of touch, to release discharge through appropriate kinds of pressure, applied movement or massage.
5. The contract which the client chooses at the start of the session is an agreement about time, and primarily about the range and type of intervention the counsellor will make. The three kinds of contract are:

**Free attention**

The counsellor makes no verbal interventions and only uses non-verbal interventions to give sustained, supportive attention. The client is entirely self-directing in managing their own working process.

**Normal**

The counsellor is alert to what the client misses and makes some interventions of either kind to facilitate and enhance what the client is working on. There is a co-operative balance between client self-direction and counsellor suggestions.

**Intensive**

The counsellor makes as many interventions as seem necessary to enable the client to deepen and sustain their process, hold a direction, interrupt a pattern and liberate discharge. This may include leading a client in working areas being omitted or avoided. The counsellor may take a sensitive, finely-tuned and sustained directive role.

6. Counsellors have a right to interrupt a client's session if they are too heavily restimulated by what the client is working on and so cannot sustain effective attention. If, when they explain this to the client, the client continues to work in the same way, then they have a right to withdraw completely from the session.
7. Whatever a client works on in a session is confidential. The counsellor, or others giving attention in a group, do not refer to it in any way in any context, unless the client has given them explicit, specific permission to do so. It is, however, to be taken into account, where relevant, by the counsellor in future sessions with the same client.

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# 5. Reference Section

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## Brief Synopsis of Co-Counselling

### Aims

- Deal with distress - past or present
- Identify blocks and patterns
- Deal with unfinished business and heal the past - Become aware of strengths
- Set goals for the future
- Liberate my Potential in:
  - Loving
  - Creativity
  - Understanding
  - Self-Direction

### Golden rules

1. Confidentiality
2. Equal time
3. Do not Advise or Judge

### How to start a session

1. Agree on Time
2. Who goes first
3. Type of Contract
4. Identity check - especially if a new person
- 5 minutes Check end of session working time - say 13 minutes'

### During a session

1. Techniques to get into blocks and patterns 2 mins Catharsis/deal with unfinished business
2. Re-evaluate how this has affected my life
3. Re-evaluate how I can now be
4. Celebrate strengths
5. Come back into present time

### Contracts

#### Free Attention

- Listening only (being 'outwith')
- Gentle eye contact
- Physical contact if necessary
- Be present for the client in an accepting and non- judgmental way

#### Normal

Counsellor picks up and draws attention to verbal and non-verbal, negative or charged cues the client gives out

#### Intensive

Counsellor picks up as many cues as possible over a short period of time i.e. 3 minutes

## Summary of Techniques

### Identity check (ID) (with new counsellor)

1. "Who do I remind you of?"
2. "In what way"
3. "What do you need to say to ...?"
4. "Is there anything left unsaid to ...?"

### Catch the thought

"What's the thought/feeling/gesture?"

Sentence completion "I am feeling because ... and that makes me feel ..."

Scanning: "Scan that ... When were the other times you felt ... Go back in time"

Literal description:

"How old do you feel?"

"Describe that, say that in the present tense"

"What do you need to say to that you couldn't say then?"

Talking to the cushion:

"Talk to him/her. Tell him/her"

Repetition:

"Say/Do that again. Keep repeating that"

Exaggeration:

"Exaggerate that movement/sound. Put some energy into that. Say that louder"

Contradiction:

"Contradict that; say/do the opposite"

Acting into:

"Would you like to put some energy into that?"

"Act into that feeling"

Role play:

"Shall I role play that?" "What are the words?"

Reverse role play:

Client becomes own oppressor whilst the counsellor says what the client cannot. Then switch back

Direction holding:

Go against a strong negative i.e. contradiction

Keep to a particular theme (request at the beginning of the Session)

Coming back after a session:

"Coming back to the present - What can you describe?" etc:

## Counsellor interventions

- "What's on top?"
- "How is it for you?"
- "What's the thought/feeling?"
- "Because ?"
- "And now ?"
- "Do you know what is stopping you?"
- "If you did know - what would it be?"
- "What is the worst thing that can happen?"
- "Who are you really saying that to?"
- "What do you really want to say to ...?"
- "What does that remind you of?"
- "Where did you first learn that?"
- "Do you want more time."
- "Do you want to be ?" (role play)
- "Shall we switch over ?" (reverse role play)
- "What's happening now?"

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