

The 'Re-Nurturing' Of Alice

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Every life has suffering to some extent, and living through, and working through that suffering is a rite of passage that must be accomplished to not only survive but to make life meaningful and enjoyable to the highest attainable degree. Often, this seems near impossible, or in the least a tall order, but this realization is the necessary foundation for growth. We only live one life at a time, and it is our obligation to overcome the sadness and tragedies that are a part of life. Would that it were other than this reality. Would that it were a paradise forever in our outer worlds. Would that it were readily understood by us that paradise exists only in our inner worlds.

I cannot remember a client that I have not learned something from. When we listen we discover the clues to their relief, to the desired change....somewhat like a detective solving a mystery. We must find the clues even with smoking cessation and surely with weight management, and beyond. We learn from every client even the ones that are quiet, the ones that getting a few words out is like pulling teeth, the ones that discontinue in the middle of your session plan, the ones that tell the truth, the ones that lie, and from our successes and our failures. We must listen. We have the opportunity to help our client to create a new life even though the client only came for one or two issues. I have said time and again that people can attain the desired change but some still are miserable.... something like the alcoholic who had given up drinking for over 20 years and is still miserable....because he or she did not also learn how to be happy.....only learned how to attain sobriety. We have the opportunity to teach people how to alleviate present stress and how to deal with stress that comes at them in the future as it surely will. Stress is a part of life for we are always being bombarded by stressors, whether real or imagined....as the imagined carry just as much weight or more than real stress. Our subconscious minds do not know whether we dreamed up the stress or if it is actual, and therefore we must work with each client as if their problems and issues are the most serious. We must also personally learn that our lives are important and should be treated as we treated the lives in a great movie like "Gone With The Wind" or "The Battle of the Bulge" or "Mary Poppins". We owe this to ourselves and to our clients. We can lead a horse to water but we cannot make it drink....unless we have the horse's body in our presence for a period of time. It is my belief that there is a key to everything and the client has the key to 'their everything', just as we have the key to ours.

Alice, referred to me by a fellow hypnotist, was accompanied to my office by her medical doctor. It was obvious that he was concerned for her welfare and that he wanted to size me up before permitting her to proceed with my hypnosis services. The three of us spent the educational hour together and then he was asked to wait for Alice in another office while she participated in the hypnotic session. Alice, in her late thirties, presented a forlorn individual who truly believed that she had no future....not saying that she thought she was going to die....but sort of intimating this. Her husband had committed suicide a year before, and her step-son was recently killed in an automobile accident. She carried with her thoughts of her relationship with her mother that was one of motherly jealousy of the attention that Alice's father gave to Alice. She was very intelligent and efficient in her calling which demanded her time and almost complete daily attention. She was defensive and very confrontational with authority figures. She

felt sick with physical illnesses that were unable to be diagnosed....naturally, psychosomatic in nature. During the induction of the hypnotic state she started moving both arms and hands up and down her body, shaking them about and inch above her body. It appeared to be uncontrollable and unintentional on her part. They were moving rapidly and a few minutes passed. Had this been in my first year of practice I probably would have started shaking myself. Instead I just told her to continue whatever she was doing to relax and if shaking her arms and hands like that helped her to relax, then by all means continue doing it. A couple of minutes later her arms stopped shaking and her body eased deep into the plushy chair. I breathed a sigh of relief.

During this session and ensuing sessions we discovered the happenings that were important to her with the use of Parts Therapy and by simply asking while she was in a regressed state. Most happenings were the same or similar to the ones that she described in the waking state during the interview. She continued going back to her childhood around 3 and 4 on through 12 years or so. She dwelled on some relatively little incidents, but not 'little' to her. The incidents with her mother seemed to attract more of her subconscious attention than the recent tragic happenings. She also described her day to day associations with fellow employees and with her superiors. We 'attempted' to effectuate a de-sensitization to the happenings in her life but I did not see nor feel the response I was looking for directly after the sessions nor in the weekly feedback prior to the next sessions. I did not see that glow that I wanted to see. I did not see the smile in her eyes, nor the angelic look on her face which usually follows a relaxing session or one in which there is a catharsis, a purging of the emotions.

The theme of 'lack of nurturing' kept coming to me. How do you promote change when the foundation of love and confidence is not here since a child? Some children are love-starved and this makes them as impoverished as orphans. How do you build upon a base that does not exist? We cannot change the past but we always have the ability change the perception of the past. We cannot change specific incidents in a person's life. This is quite foolhardy as the client's conscious mind is always lurking around to perform its mischief, its detrimental work. Although the subconscious mind accepts everything that is told to it, our conscious mind squeezes itself into the scene and starts analyzing the words, the thoughts, the content of the suggestions, the imagery. For instance, if a child was raped by her father, you cannot say that nevertheless the father really loved her. This is unacceptable. The conscious mind would stand on edge and the client would probably resent that statement and end the session. However, you can direct the client to the source, which is the father, and suggest that all fault for the happenings was on the father and not on the child; that we cannot be responsible for others' actions; that some people are sick and their actions are evil; that things like this happen in life; that the client bears no blame nor shame. Although something like this did not happen with Alice I wanted to give you as strong an example as possible so that it is clear to you what the limits of suggestion should be. I have never believed in changing the incident....only the perception of the client. It is far easier to generally change the perception than to change the specific facts because of the conscious mind's presence.

What has this to do with the 're-nurturing' of Alice? The concept has everything to do with it. How could I overcome the hurt and shattered feelings that Alice had concerning so many years of her childhood with the constant jealousy and admonitions of the mother? How could I give her nurturing that she did not receive during all of those years? How could I build change without the foundation? How could I have Alice create a new life without putting the past at rest? There were so many incidents we could spend

session after session where eventually they would be running into each other causing total confusion and chaos. The young lady at times seemed so slight while sitting in the plush chair, like a little girl who was comfortable in the soft, billowy arms of the chair. I so wanted to get inside the mind and feelings of this client that I was probably in a hypnotic state when the idea came to me that I had to re-nurture her and that I would use the arms of the chair to accomplish this. Do not treat this thought lightly. Do you not be judgmental of my approach until you have thought about it. I could not attack each incident as they seemed quite un-surmountable and I would still be required to build her self-confidence and self-esteem to accomplish any goals that I would work with her once she set them. She would not set goals when I wanted to give her this as a homework assignment....because she had no future, so why set goals?

I began: "As you sit in this comfortable chair and relax behind the privacy and safety of your closed eye lids, you immediately feel so comfortable, as the soft arms of the chair embrace you, comfort you and nurture you. You feel so good as you are sitting here, and you can remember a beautiful day when you were only three or four years old when you were playing in the sun and smiling. You felt so good, so full of love. In fact you feel like you are 3 or 4 years old now and that you feeling so much love and protection which is strengthening you every minute that you are sitting in this chair. The minutes in this chair seem like years and years of great nurturing. You are being re-nurtured in your mind and in your body....re-nurtured to grow into an extremely self-confident person, full of high self esteem and desire to succeed. And as you continue to grow past 5 and 6 years old into your teens you remark to yourself that you are receiving great nurturing, as good or better than any other child, any other person that has ever lived. You feel so good, brimming with self-confidence.... sparkling with self-esteem. You know that each thought and each action that you take in the future is founded upon this great nurturing that you have received. You think of your future and look forward to each day knowing that each day you have the ability to create a new Alice....to create a bright future for Alice....to be the person that you always wanted to be....to be the person that God intended you to be."

These were the words that I remembered and maybe the sequence was a bit different but you have the gist of the imagery. We never attacked the happenings with the mother and did not get into specifics. We generally addressed the love and protection and specifically 're-nurtured' Alice as this was the forerunner of and the foundation for the future. I have changed names, etc. for the sake of confidentiality and cannot tell you what she has accomplished now for that would point at her, but suffice it to say that her present work and creativity reaches hundreds of thousands of people and makes them a bit happier and more content in their lives.