

Key Words for Unlocking Our Unconscious By Prof. Jerome Liss M.D.

“What can I say to help?” This is one of the basic questions that a Helpful Listener asks. There are general orientations that are useful: “Don’t judge, don’t interpret, don’t give premature advice.” But these “don’t’s” do not respond to the question, “What can I say?”

The “Key Word” and the “Directional Phrase” give a fundamental strategy for “what to say” in Deep Listening. They give the Listener a tool for responding. The response is not invasive. The response allows the Listener to **accompany** the Protagonist without interfering.

What is the "Key Word"?

The **Key Word** and the **Key Phrase** refer to **those special words** embedded within the Protagonists's verbal communications that carry a **special emotional charge**. Example: The Protagonist says, ***“I came home from work. The house was empty. I felt struck by a thunderbolt.”***

The Key Phrase is “struck by a thunderbolt.” The emotional charge is carried by this phrase. At that point the Helpful Listener can say, “That sensation, ‘struck by a thunderbolt,’ can you say what it was like?” The Helpful Listener has done two things in his reply: First, he has repeated the Key Phrase, ***“That sensation, ‘struck by a thunderbolt.’”*** By repeating the **Key Phrase**, the Listener creates an echo chamber and resonates the emotional charge. Second, by adding, ***“Can you say what it was like?”***, the Helpful Listener is suggesting a **direction of exploration**. This is called a **“directional phrase”** because it points to “the direction of exploration.”

The Helpful Listener Echoes the Protagonist’s Key Words

This is like developing a special song – the Key Word song -- that sings out the emotion. We are in an emotional sound studio. The text and music of the Protagonist’s Key Words establish the sound of the emotion. **The Listener echoes back the Key Words and this allows the emotion to echo back and resonate within the Protagonist .**

The Listener’s echo of the Protagonist’s Key Words also help empathy. When the Protagonist hears the Listener’s repetition of his Key Words, he knows that his Listener is attentive and sensitive to his feelings.. **The Protagonist feels accompanied in his emotion. He is no longer alone.** At the same time this echo chamber effect of hearing his own Key Words repeated – especially if the Listener’s repetition is harmonic with the sound of his emotion -- permits the Protagonist to focus his attention on the growing emotion. The

feeling resonates within and, in this way, The Protagonist can prolong his attention toward this vital force that is rising from his inner world. **The result is that the Protagonist feels his Helpful Listener is “attuned” to his inner world and, at the same time, he is encouraged to maintain his own “attunement” to what is happening “inside.”**

The Helpful Listener Offers a Directional Phrase

The second step is to develop **“the direction of exploration.”** In order to do this, the Helpful Listener, in this example, asks, “Can say what it was like?” Thus, the Protagonist is encouraged to describe “what the emotion is like” using words. Other directions of exploration are possible: “Can you describe that image, ‘struck by a thunderbolt’”? (an **image-oriented** question) “What happens in your body when you feel ‘struck by a thunderbolt’”? (a **body-oriented** question) “How might you have shown that feeling of being ‘struck by a thunderbolt’ when you entered the house and found it empty?” (an **expression-oriented** question) “What was the situation, when you found the house empty and felt ‘struck by a thunderbolt’”? (a **situation-oriented** question)

Which is the **best** question for helping the Protagonist? The Helpful Listener can never know with certainty. He can only use his intuition and experience as he helps the Protagonist explore his inner world of emotions and events. Nevertheless the Helpful Listener can be sure that by maintaining the rigor of the “Key Word – Directional Phrase” method, he has **not** added new Key Words that come from his own projections and that can deviate the Protagonist from his inner exploration. **The Helpful Listener remains closely attuned to the Protagonist with this method. The Key Word repetition means he resonates with the emotion. The Directional Phrase means he proposes a pathway of exploration.**

In this example, here is how the Protagonist responds: Protagonist: **“The ‘thunderbolt’ was like an explosion inside. It meant, ‘She’s left!’ And I felt that my life would never be the same again!”** Thus the Helpful Listener’s response, integrating the Key Word with a Directional Phrase, helped the Protagonist formulate and communicate a dramatic and traumatic moment of his life: feeling abandoned! The echo of the Key Word -- being ‘struck by a thunderbolt’ – allowed the feeling to resonate between Protagonist and Listener. And what followed was a description of both the episode and the explosive emotion that arose. There was no deviation toward “Why?” (causality), “What made you feel so bad?” (justification), “Why did she leave?” (explanation) or “What will you do now?” (solution).

How to Identify the Key Words

Here are some sample phrases. Can the reader identify the Key Word or Key Phrase? That is, can he select that special word or string of words, while the Protagonist is sharing an important personal experience, that seem to have the most intense emotional impact?

Phrase

Key Word

I haven't been feeling well recently. In fact, I've been really depressed.

Really depressed

When I talk to my parents, I feel like I'm being judged.

Being judged

It's a feeling of panic. I'm not sure why it comes.

Panic

I was criticized by the teacher. He said, "You'll never succeed!" That wasn't very encouraging.

"You'll never succeed!"

We were together for six months. And then? It was a complete betrayal!

Complete betrayal

Torn apart! That's the sensation I have every time I see him!

Torn apart!

More complex examples will be presented later.

Examples of Directional Phrases

Once the Helpful Listener senses the Key Word, he can combine it with a Directional Phrase. That will suggest, to the Protagonist, a pathway of exploration. Is there a "right" and a "wrong" Directional Phrase? No. Each Directional Phrase has the potential to open inner doors. It permits the Unconscious to be revealed. But there is no one correct way. The choice of the Directional Phrase comes from the Listener's intuition. Here are several frequently used Directional Phrases.

What happens when you feel?

Can you describe that sensation of?

In what way was it?

Can you describe that particular moment in which

What was said that made you feel?

Where in your body do you feel?

What is the sensation inside when you say you feel?

Can you express that feeling of?

These questions focus on the reality. Like a microscope that focuses in on specific details, these questions ask the Protagonist to reveal the details and nuances of his inner world. In doing so, the Protagonist gets into better touch with himself. And while he shares these difficult experiences, he can feel that his Helpful Listener is close by, understanding his emotions and respectful toward his individuality.

In addition, the use of Directional Phrases helps both Protagonist and Listener to maintain their attention on “What actually happened?” while the Protagonist is sharing an emotional difficulty. This helps the Listener avoid one of the most frequent obstacles regarding Helpful Listener, namely, to jump too early to the question of solution: In other words, the question regarding the solution --“What can you do to overcome that problem?” -- can be posed at a later point. In contrast, Directional Phrases regarding “What happened?” and “What did you feel?” encourage the Protagonist to explore the reality that created his disturbance.

These questions also help the Listener avoid asking “Why?”, which is another obstacle against Deep Listening. The question “Why?” raises the concept of causality and, as result, frequently reduces the Protagonist’s contact with his inner emotion. “Why?” means to explain or to give reasons. In contrast, “How?”, “In what way?” and “What happened?” mean, “Can you stay with that experience?”

Two Realms to Explore: The Episode and the Emotion

The Listener also know that there are **two aspects** to the exploration of “What happened?” One part regards **the episode** or “provocative situation”: *“What was said specifically?”* *“What did you see happen?”* *“What occurred?”* The other part regards **the emotion**: “What did you feel at that point?” “Can you describe that feeling?” “Do you still have that feeling inside? Somewhere in your body? What is the sensation?”

In situations of emotional distress, the Protagonist has a tendency to focus on one detail of an episode and forget all the rest. Questions regarding “What happened, precisely?”, help refresh the memory. In addition, the emotion of a distressing experience is usually summarized with a single and imprecise word: “I felt tense,” “upset,” “surprised,” “bothered,” “disappointed,” “nervous,” etc. The Listener’s Directional Phrases, “Can you describe that feeling of (Key Word)?”, “Where do you feel it in your body?”, “Can you describe the sensations?”, etc., help the Protagonist to pay attention to these diverse and subtle feelings and find words to hold them in consciousness. When the feelings are held in consciousness and the episode is described in detail, the feeling usually becomes “contained” (more “under control,” less like “a storm”) and, at the same time, the event is remembered more concretely. This helps to build understanding. That means to understand oneself and, at times, to understand the Other.

The logic of personal exploration often follows the following sequence for understanding a Problem:: **Episode** (what happened) followed by **Emotion** (what was felt). Only at a later

stage comes the question, “What can be done?” We call this stage **Construction or Solution**. (See the Chapter, “From Problem to Solution.”) On the other hand, this itinerary is not rigid. Sometimes the emotion is explored first. Sometimes a tentative solution becomes the first matter to be explored. A solution may raise new difficulties, and the Protagonist returns to the emotion of the problem.

An Intuitive Guide for Choosing Directional Phrases

The range of Directional Phrases is vast. Only several are presented above. Here are examples: (Imagine the Protagonist’s original phrase was, “I feel very anxious.”) “That feeling, ‘very anxious,’ can you stay with it? What is it like?” “What moment gave the most intense feeling of anxiety?” “When you say, ‘very anxious,’ notice what happens in your belly. Can you describe it?” “If you had to give a shape and a colour to this sensation, ‘feeling very anxious,’ what would they look like?” “Are there other situations that make you feel anxious?” “When you were a young child, did anything make you feel very anxious?” (Exploration of the past is usually initiated only after the Protagonist has completed his exploration of the present.) “‘Very anxious.’ If you repeat that several times, perhaps something connected to that feeling will come to mind.”

Listeners will develop their own preferences for directional questions. A personal style usually emerges over time. But what can guide the Helpful Listener’s intuition? It seems that the most fruitful Directional Phrases are those which “open up” some dimension of the emotional experience: the external episode or else the inner emotion. The Helpful Listener tries to sense, “What part of this experience is already emerging? What aspect is spontaneously coming to mind?” For example, a Protagonist says, “I had a conflict with my wife last night. It was very upsetting.” The episode is the conflict. The emotion is feeling upset. **Which direction is more fruitful, to ask “What was said in this conflict?” (the episode) or, “Upset, how can you describe that?” (the emotion)** The response comes from trying to sense, “What is most available in the Protagonist’s experience at this moment?” Another way to put the question: “What aspect of the distressing event is most close to his center of attention – the words that were exchanged in the argument, as well as facial expressions and other parts of the provocative event? Or the emotion that was felt?” If the Helpful Listener’s question touches the part of the unhappy experience that is already in mind, the Protagonist will continue to share with intensity, spontaneity and trust. On the other hand, if the Listener is far from the Protagonist’s experience and concerns, this can interrupt the Protagonist’s inner concentration and spontaneous expression. Examples regarding the problem of the couple conflict: “Do you think other couples suffer from the same type of conflict?” (If this question were asked later on, it could raise some interesting reflections. But if said too soon, it interrupts the Protagonist’s concern with his own experience of a couple conflict.) “Did you eat something disagreeable? That could set off a conflict!” Or, “If you were drinking alcohol, that always puts things out of control.” These questions deviate the Protagonist from his emotion and from his memory of the specific episode. The Listener might observe, in the Protagonist’s expression, a break in his inner concentration: For example, the Protagonist stops his spontaneous verbal flow. He shakes his head, “No,” or shrugs, “I don’t know.” He needs time to return to his inner world, and there may be a decrease of energy as he continues to recount his memory. Thus the Listener’s deviating

question or inappropriate comment can interfere with the process of Deep Listening.

If the Listener remains attentive to the Protagonist's Key Words and Phrases, such inappropriate and deviating questions can be avoided or, at least, kept to a minimum. Attention to the Key Word keeps the Helpful Listener attuned to what is essential.

Choosing Key Words When the Protagonist Has Said Many Things

In an earlier section, "How to Identify the Key Words," the sample phrases were simple. Therefore, it was relatively easy to identify the Key Words. But very often, the Protagonist will share his experience using ten or twenty phrases. Sometimes even more. Almost every phrase contains a potential Key Word. How can the Helpful Listener choose which Key Words to echo? Once again, experience and intuition can influence the choice.

There is **no** "one best Key Word." Therefore, the Helpful Listener can relax. **He knows that there is no single "correct choice."** Each choice has "advantages and disadvantages." Nevertheless we do have some guide-lines. **One guide-line is the following: "The Helpful Listener searches to echo back the Key Word that seems to correspond to the Protagonist's emotional state."** For example, is the Protagonist in the "Problem Phase" or the "Solution Phase"?

Example: Protagonist: "I feel anxious about this separation from my husband, not so much for myself, but for my two children. They're eight and ten years old. Since they won't be seeing their father every evening at dinner time, they will probably be very upset. The thing is I don't know how to explain to them this separation. I'm not sure how to answer their questions, like, "Mommy, why aren't we going to live any more with Daddy?" (pause)

The pause means that the Protagonist has presented the essential part of her dilemma and is now waiting for help from the Listener. The Listener has a choice: to choose a question that represents an exploration of the Problem, or to choose a question that orients the Protagonist toward the Solution.

Problem Orientation. Helpful Listener: "You said that you feel **anxious** because the children will probably be **very upset**. In what way do you imagine the children will show that they're **upset**?" (and later) "And in what way does their **upset** reaction make you feel **anxious**?"

Solution Orientation. Helpful Listener: "Yes, I understand. It's important to find a way **to explain the separation to the children, and to answer their questions about "why."** Perhaps I can help you find a way to explain. At this point, what do you imagine you can say to them?" (After the Protagonist offers her ideas for explaining the separation to the children, the Helpful Listener can help her find alternatives for answering the various questions that the children might ask. The Listener might even suggest role-playing so as to try out different ways to explain the separation.)

Now let us return to the Listener's dilemma: "For the next step," the Listener can wonder, "is

it more advantageous to explore the Problem or to explore the Solution?”

Principles for Key Word Selection:

1. Which orientation most closely responds to the Protagonist’s inner state at this moment? If the Protagonist seems highly anxious and troubled (trembling, eyes fixed to the floor, voice low and hesitant, etc.), it might be more advantageous **to explore the Problem:** “What **upset** reaction might the children show? How might they show it?” Or: “Can you describe this **anxious** feeling if they show they’re very **upset?**”

If, in contrast, the Protagonist’s emotional state seems more positive, with verbal expression clear and showing good facial contact with the Listener, the Listener might choose **to explore the Solution:** “How might you **explain the separation** to the children? What are the possibilities?”

2. Clarify the alternative possibilities for exploration and ask the Protagonist to choose. Helpful Listener: “I wonder, at this point, which question would be more useful. Would you prefer, right now, to explore the **upset** reactions the children might show, and how this could make you feel **anxious**, or would you prefer to consider different way to **explain the separation** to the children?”

Sometimes the Helpful Listener’s dilemma is not about the Problem or the Solution phase but, rather, about **which emotion** in the Problem phase deserves exploration? Let’s take the situation of “mixed feelings” regarding a stress.

Protagonist: “I have this new job. I know it’s a great opportunity. But at the same time I feel so flustered, so many confusing feelings. Sometimes I get this feeling of **fear**, apprehension. The boss is very demanding. I’m not sure I can satisfy all of his requirements. Then I look around and see a lot of disorder. I can ask certain colleagues for help. But they seem very uncooperative, very selfish. And this gets me **angry.**”

Helpful Listener: “**Fear toward the boss. Can you satisfy his demands. And angry toward certain colleagues.** They seem **uncooperative, selfish.**” (Key Word summary) The Listener can feel, at this point, a dilemma. “Shall I suggest to the Protagonist, at this moment, to explore **the fear toward the boss? Or the anger toward certain colleagues?**” The dilemma can be overcome by asking about both feelings: “You spoke about **fear toward the boss and anger toward certain colleagues.** Can you share more about these feelings?”

But the Listener might feel that there is an advantage in focusing upon one feeling or the other. Which shall he choose? He can try to observe and intuit the Protagonist’s inner state. If the Protagonist seems closer, at the moment of sharing, to a feeling of **fear**, he can ask, “What happens inside when you have this feeling of **fear that you won’t satisfy the boss’ demands and requirements?**” If, in contrast, the Protagonist seems more in touch with his feeling of **anger**, the Listener’s question can focus on this emotional state: “Can you describe for me this feeling of **anger when your colleagues seem selfish and uncooperative?**” The point is that the Helpful Listener’s question can favor an elaboration of the underlying

emotional state. Fear represents a “parasympathetic state,” that is, a state of psychophysical vulnerability and sensitivity. The expression of this state can lead to clarity and partial relief. After this state is shared, the Protagonist might feel less fear and more control and self-confidence.

On the other hand, the emotion of anger is connected to a state of sympathetic arousal. The Protagonist, in this psychophysical state, seems more charged with energy and ready to discharge his aggression. Focusing on the anger permits the Protagonist to clarify this feeling as well as obtain partial relief.

The states of “parasympathetic vulnerability” and “sympathetic arousal” are described in Chapter VI, “**in The Psychotherapy of the Body**.” The main idea is that emotional knots are often related to “mixed emotions” involving **sympathetic and parasympathetic states that are working in opposition**. Both states are asking for expression and relief at the very same time. But these two physiological states work in opposite directions. That creates an inner emotional conflict. Emotional healing requires that emotions come out in sequence, first one and then, by means of “rebound,” the other. But which emotion can come out first, the **anger with sympathetic arousal?** Or the **fear with parasympathetic vulnerability?** (In other situations the sympathetic arousal might be expressed as **rage, frustration or protest**. In contrast, the parasympathetic vulnerability might come out as **sadness, hurt or shame**.)

The overall point is that The Helpful Listener tries to sense which psychophysical state is more fully present? And based on this intuition, the Listener asks questions that favor the expression of the emotion that is already present. After the Protagonist gives full expression to one emotional state, the opposite emotional state is ready to come out. This unties the emotional knot. At the same time the process favors a return of psychophysical vitality. Chronic depression decreases. Inhibition is replaced by spontaneity. And the person feels better, renewed, more self-confident with a return of hope.

In conclusion, we have offered several guidelines for helping the Helpful Listener select Key Words and Directional Phrases that orient the emotional exploration. Through practice in Training Groups as well as by repeated experiences of offering Deep Listening, the Listener will develop his skill and intuition. Perhaps the most difficult part of this task is **to remember** the various Key Words while the Protagonist is sharing his personal experiences. By means of Training Groups and practice, this capacity to remember the pertinent memory Key Words will develop. The capacity to formulate various Directional Phrases will also be enriched over time.

One last point: The selection of the Key Words and Directional Phrases can become poetic. This also occurs spontaneously with time and practice. Example: **Protagonist:** “She left me. It was a surprise. She **broke** the relationship. I didn’t expect it. I felt **so much bitterness**. I don’t think I could love again. Something in my chest, **my heart....**” (pause) **Helpful Listener:** (slowly) “**So much bitterness. A broken heart.** What does it feel like?”

So much hurt and solitude in the world. Deep sharing can be encouraged by Deep Listening and this brings relief. Thus, the learning and practice of Deep Listening can relieve,

to some extent, human suffering.

In summary, Key Words combined with Directional Phrases offer a fundamental tool for Helpful Listening. This method guides the Helpful Listener as he searches to give “empathic accompaniment” to the Protagonist without intruding, interfering, controlling, interpreting or rushing in with premature advice.

Key Words for Unlocking Our Unconscious

by Jerome Liss, M.D.

THE KEY WORD IS LIKE A KEY

Part I: Deepening With Key Words

What is the "Key Word"?

The door of the unconscious is locked. Key Words unlock the door.

The Key Word and key phrase refer to **those special words** embedded within the Protagonists's verbal communications that carry a special emotional charge and that reveal an important aspect of the Protagonists's experience. The Key Word or key phrase means the hot word or hot phrase. Every time we hear the Key Word we can see lights blinking, vibrations shimmering and flesh needing to tremble: emotion, charge, impulse and force!

A simple example: "Today I am not feeling very well. In fact, to tell you the truth, I am feeling **terribly upset!** Key word: **Terribly upset!**

Other examples: "When I woke up this morning, I had a repeated thought: 'You're a **mess!** Your life is all **botched up!**' Key words: **Mess! Botched up!**

"I was thinking of how my mother looked in that photo. Something in her expression, her eyes... Can it be true? Is she really **crazy?** Something about her... an **absence...**" Key words: **Crazy? Absence...** Perhaps **eyes...**

"My husband was never a big talker. But now when he comes home, he plops himself in the front of the television, and for the whole evening doesn't say a word, no, not a word, **not a Goddamned word!** (pause) It makes me feel... **lonely...** What can I do? What should I do? (looking at the Helpful Listener)

Key words: **Not a Goddamned word!** (sympathetic anger charge) Then **lonely...** (rebound to parasympathetic vulnerability). Which Key Word will the Helpful Listener pick up? Clinical intuition and experience will lead the clinician to a very rapid decision: **Lonely** if he wants to favor, for the moment, the deepening of vulnerable and hurt feelings, **Not a damned word!** if he senses it is preferable, at that moment, to deepen and elaborate the sympathetic anger.¹ Whatever the decision, **it is the Key Word that will unlatch the lock.**

One last point: Not everyone will agree, in a particular case, as to **which** word (or phrase, or part of the phrase) represents the Key Word. But that is fine. We can never know for sure the inner life of our Protagonists or, for that matter, of anyone, aside from oneself, as R.D. Laing so poignantly points out in **The Politics of Experience.**² So we must acknowledge that every intuition we make, when attempting to select from the Protagonists's total statement the most pungent Key Words, remains, epistemologically speaking, a hypothesis, not a truth.³

Repeating the Key Word

And how does the Helpful Listener use the Protagonists's Key Word? By repeating it! Not only by repeating the Key Word itself, but **by repeating it with an intonation and rhythm close to the client's.** For that reason I wrote the above Key Words, like

"...loneliness..." and "Doesn't say a damned word!" along with their various grammatical signs, since the intonation and rhythm of the verbal expression are integral parts of the Key Word, but the reader cannot hear the sounds written on the page.

To Repeat the Key Word Creates an Echo Chamber of Experience

What happens to the Protagonist when the Helpful Listener repeats the Key Words embedded within his phrases? For example, if the Protagonist says, **"I'm depressed,"** and the Helpful Listener responds by echoing the Key Word, "M-m-m, **depressed,**" he is creating **an echo chamber**, not only of the word, but of the experience. **Depressed.** This gives the Protagonist time... time to absorb his own experience of "depressed, and also time to absorb the Helpful Listener's absorption of his depressed experience. The point is that **when the Protagonists absorbs the empathic introject of the Helpful Listener, this is already a major step in therapy.**^{3A}

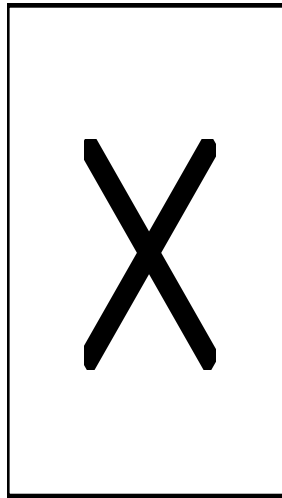
What happens when we are in the position of the Protagonists? Whenever our Helpful Listener simply repeats our Key Word or phrase, with an empathic attitude, we benefit from two immediate effects: First, we feel the echo of our experience through the Helpful Listener's words and thus we can maintain our consciousness on what we had said: **"Stay with it."**

Second, we can feel directly our Helpful Listener's closeness and support. As suggested in the article, "The Self, the Impulse and the Other,"⁴ **the Impulse is reinforced, the Other is empathic and the Self becomes more self-accepting.**

If therapy is like crossing the river, at this point the Protagonists is remaining on the same rock, almost **crouching** and digging his heels in. Not very significant? The opposite! This is very significant! "We have to become what we are in order to change!", a beautiful Gestalt and meditation phrase. This is a method for arriving there... where we are.

CROUCHING ON THE ROCK

CROUCHING ON THE ROCK



To focus on the Key Words, without the introduction of any extraneous Key Words of interpretation, association, understanding or whatever else the Helpful Listener might want to interject, allows the Protagonists to focus on both his situational dilemma and his deep emotions. **If the Helpful Listener introduces too many of his own Key Words, the intensity of the Protagonists's emotional-cognitive experience can become diluted.**

While the Helpful Listener does not, typically, add new Key Words, he is constantly adding new phrases, which we call, "directional phrases." For example, let us say that a Helpful Listener adds phrases like the following: "Can you describe that feeling?" "Do you remember an episode that made it more intense?" "Can you let it come out?" "Can I say that phrase with you?" "Let's try it louder and louder!" "Can we do that expressive movement together?" These are "directional words" that indicate what the therapeutic direction is, that is, the direction of exploration. Other frequently used "directional phrases": **"What is the image?", "What part of the body contains that feeling?" "Do other thoughts come to mind?"**

These are "directional questions" that follow the logic of an experiential map containing three channels: image, emotion and thought.

Part II: Going from Problem to Solution: "Key Words" and "Directional Phrases"

Coming Down to Brass Tacks: "What Can I Do in My Situation?"

Problem Exploration and Solution Work move ahead when Key Words are combined with Directional Phrases.. In the example of Louise, she came up with the Key Words "breathing

space". The Helpful Listener focused on directional phrases that focused on the Solution phrase, that is, on the question, **"What concrete actions Louise could initiate in order to create "breathing space" in the near future?"**⁸ Louise decided to take advantage of her husband's 10-day absence for business reasons in order to take some "breathing space" for herself: And what, concretely, could she do in order to create "a breathing space"?

Spend an evening with her two best women friends, with whom she decided to confide more deeply about her distress and confusion, asking them to promise confidentiality.

Take an evening by herself, for example, to go to the movies, in order to taste that free "breathing space" she will have more conclusively should she decide to effect the separation from her husband.

Spend a day alone with the children in the open air ("breathing space") in order to reinforce and explore the single-parent relationship that may become more habitual for their future.

The Choice in Key Word Selection: Problem Exploration Vs. Solution Hypotheses

Let us remember that there are "advantages and disadvantages" in the formulation of "directional phrases." The Helpful Listener, for example, can orient the exploratory work with open-ended directional phrases, such as, "What comes to mind?", or else, "Is there an image, or another important thought?", all of which can help unlatch the door to unconscious associations.

The Helpful Listener intervenes by selecting Key Words that correspond to the Protagonists's stage of emotional work: One stage is to "Explore the Problem". The other stage is to "Formulate the Solution." In our example with Louise, the Helpful Listener chose Solution Work connected to the Key Word, "breathing space." What guided his choice? First, Louise was already beginning to breathe more fully and this was associated with a general sense of "positive force" coming from her body (body tone, posture, gestures) as well as from her facial expression. In other words, her overall state corresponded to the "relief" experience which gives the sign to change from Problem Exploration to Solution Work. Second, Louise had expressed, at the very beginning of the session, the question, "What can I do?" Therefore to neglect that basic question would indicate that her Helpful Listener was not listening to her needs.

The point is that Key Word work focuses with precision and rigor on the Protagonists's emotionally charged language. To bring out their significance and force, the Helpful Listener selects the Key Words pertinent either to the Problem Elaboration or Solution Stage and adds the directional phrases that seem, intuitively, the most fruitful.

How can we better understand this process? Let us imagine how a microscope hones in on cell structures, sometimes pathological, sometimes healthy. In just the same way, jthe

meanings, associations, images and passions embedded within the Key Word cellular structures become problem-based or solution-generating **organelles** (cellular sub-units) that become magnified into consciousness.
ional growth.

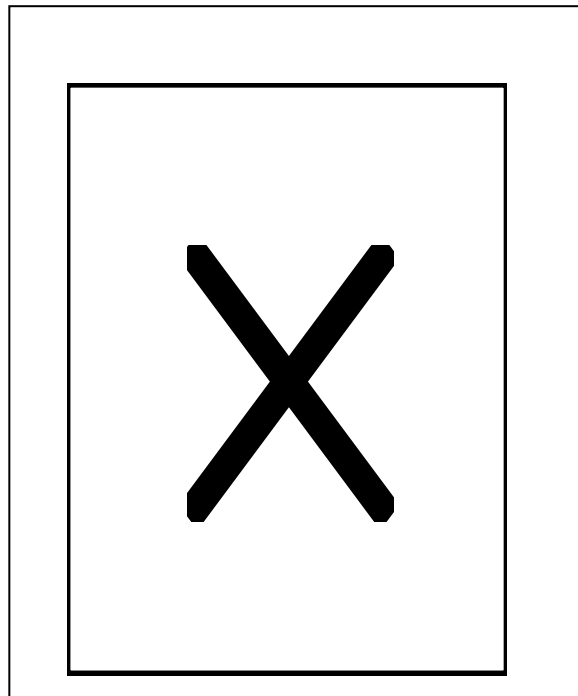
Returning to the metaphor: If we call upon the image of the Protagonists standing on the first rock as he crosses the river, let us call this **next** section, "Jumping on the Rock."

"Jumping on the Rock"

"Jumping on the Rock" means intensifying the emotional work by merely repeating the Key Word or key phrase. "I feel stuck!" Helpful Listener and Protagonists (together): "Stuck! Stuck! Stuck!" Said with increasing loudness.

Another directional phrase: "Can you show it with your **whole body?**" The tone of the phrase is as important as its content, as is the case for all directional indications that seek to make Key Words and phrases shiver and vibrate in their fresh, red-blooded vitality, or else their whispering parasymphathetic delicateness and vulnerability.

JUMPING ON THE ROCK



Words like "stuck," "afraid," "miserable" and "pissed off" are spewed out during the Problem Stage of emotional work, since they express the Protagonists's experience of his life difficulties. Steven Pinker proposes that such brief emotional phrases come from the "emotional **right** brain," while logical thinking comes from the cognitive **left** brain.

Following this the Protagonists might express a totally different series of Key Words, such as "free," "liberated," "clear" or "secure," and we know that we have reached the Solution Phase. As clarified in the chapter, "From Problem to Solution: Guiding Emotional Work with Deepening Followed by Construction," the Helpful Listener's capacity to discern the Protagonists's emotional movement within these two phases of Problem and Solution work becomes an important sign of his growing competence. That is because pulling out from the stream of language the particular Key Words that conform to the Protagonists's emotional state -- distress in the Problem Phase, positive force in the Solution phase -- is an essential element of the Key Word strategy.¹¹ **It is like pulling out the right word-fish that jump out of the stream of consciousness.** To be a poor fisherman, pulling out the wrong words, can block therapeutic progress and may even create a harmful impact.

Let us take another example of Key Word deepening in the Solution Stage. The Protagonists says, "Now I feel free!" The Helpful Listener proposes, "Can I say that with you?", thinking of the motto, "It takes two to tango!" At that point Helpful Listener and Protagonists begin to repeat in unison the phrase, "Now I feel free!", with ever increasing vigor. During this intensification, they might get onto their feet, start waving their arms in the air, laughing and giggling like two playful children, and then end up jumping up and down as they sing out, "I feel free! I feel free. Absolutely free!" And at that moment it cannot be denied that they are actively 'jumping on the rock'!

"Crouching on the Rock"

What does it mean when we say, the Protagonists began to "crouch on the rock." This means that the Protagonists's Key Word and total body energy represent a **parasympathetic** "inward" state. So simple logic tells us that this is the right moment to use body intensification methods that help the Protagonists reach down into his parasympathetic depths of distressful feelings -- pain, hurt, fear, sadness, shame -- benefiting from spontaneous movements, for example, that involve turning the shoulders inward, letting the head sag downwards, bending over the back, putting one or both hands on the belly or chest in the mid-line area -- that's where the vulnerable emotions are usually strongest -- and bending the knees to assume a somewhat **crouched position**. The Protagonists's Key Words usually involve a sense of vulnerability and impotence: "I feel abandoned." "There's nothing I can do." "I feel depressed." "I want to hide from the world." Etc. In other words, to repeat such Key Words and phrases with the crouched up and bent over position is another psycho-physical intensification. Whether we are 'jumping up and down' (sympathetic) or 'taking a crouched up position' (parasympathetic) on the rock, it means that **no new Key Words have been added by the Protagonists. We are not yet advancing on the level of thoughts**. We are merely distinguishing, with great sensitivity, sympathetic-mesodermal states from parasympathetic-endodermal states, and guiding the alternance between these two emotional modalities with dexterity, so as to help the Protagonists untie his emotional knots.¹²

III. Moving Ahead with Key Words

Advancing: "Stepping from Rock to Rock"

I find that the elegance of the Key Word approach becomes especially apparent when **we advance from thought to thought, as if we are stepping from rock to rock, in crossing the river of personal exploration**.

And where does the next thought come from? From the Protagonists! **No interpretations, no leading, no pushing from the Helpful Listener's side**. The Helpful Listener merely says, after a moment of mind-body intensification using the Key Word, (Jumping or Crouching on the Rock), "Does anything come to mind now?" (or: "What are you feeling?" "Does another thought come?" "Is there an image? And if not, a particular sensation?") These are "directional phrases," **not** Keywords. And very often the Helpful Listener says nothing. When the sympathetic-parasympathetic rebound is obtained, there is usually a change of the emotional state toward deepening or toward emotional relief.

ADVANCING FROM ROCK TO ROCK

This moment becomes especially productive if the previous mind-body intensification involved a strong sympathetic-aggressive thrust. **We bounded up the mountain with our mesodermal force, almost to the very top! And then? And then... A moment of silence. The Protagonists is in his deeper self... a deeper feeling, soft, delicate, precious, can emerge.** "And deep inside now?", says the Helpful Listener, softly. Perhaps it's a crying feeling. Perhaps it's an unburied hurt. "It feels like a **swollen wound** inside." Helpful Listener: "**Swollen wound...**" And we go on with Key Words. What has happened is that the intensified body dynamic has permitted us to reach the "**parasympathetic rebound**"¹³ (rebound from the sympathetic to the parasympathetic), and this moment reveals the deeper self.

As the Protagonists continues to respond to the Helpful Listener's "directional question," new Key Words may come up: "It makes me **so mad.**" "**I won't give up.**" "I'm falling into **a deep hole.**" "It feels so **empty inside.**" And these key words then become stepping off points for new intensifications and step-wise advances.

Some Neurological Considerations: Plunging Into the Deeper Brain Substance

Language processes are most clearly related to neurological functions around Broca's area in the cerebral cortex, as numerous studies have verified for more than a century.¹⁴ But we know that a single neurological center does **not** "contain" all aspects of a function. The brain is a vast network, like a network of interconnected telephones, and its genius

comes from the vast interrelationship among all its parts.

This "network" model of the brain permits us to speculate as to how Key Words and phrases reveal a special emotional charge. And our hypothesis? That the Key Word, related to Broca area functioning, has important but **dormant** connections with brain areas especially concerned with emotion: the hippocampus and the amygdala, two important sub-cortical centers that constitute the limbic system, also known as the "emotional brain." The hippocampus, which is the site of benzodiazepine action -- benzodiazepine being a tranquillizer that acts against anxiety -- is also intimately connected to the temporal lobe, the important "memory storage" sector of the brain. But connections between the higher up cortical Broca's area and the lower down hippocampus-temporal lobe region are not of high density. Neuronal messages between these two areas must pass through the entorhinal cortex and the cingular gyrus, two subcortical structures that function as a filter. Therefore, a language pattern can have some relationship to an emotional state, but the two functions are not always intimately related.

Therefore, how can we enhance the connection between the cortical Broca language area and the sub-cortical limbic system emotions?

We find that **repeating** Key Words and phrases, increasing the sound intensity, permitting different "emotionally expressive" intonations of the sound, and adding to this our full body power using our arms, legs, trunk and facial expressions, all seem to **"wake up" the dormant connections between emotion and language**. We can imagine that these integrated body-vocal expressions, repeated and intensified, awaken a great number of **brain neurons** and also their **somatic connections** (muscular, visceral, hormonal, etc.), profiting thereby from a somatic "recharging" feedback to the discharging brain neurons. **Thus, our work stirs up countless central-brain / peripheral-somatic circuits firing together in positive feedback loops**. We can imagine a general schema of the brain functioning at a multiplicity of levels: the conscious cortex, the emotional centers of the limbic system, and the lower vitality centers, to follow Paul MacLean's scheme of the Three-Level Brain.¹⁵ If we add the recent findings presented by Stephen Porges^{15A} in his "vagal model" of emotions, we can add yet another level to the dynamic "waking up" of the brain: the dorsal and ventral vagal centers located in the lower part of the brain. These two vagal centers control heart, lung and digestive functions, that is, our "visceral processes."

In summary, Key Word repetition and verbal associations awaken cortical association areas,¹⁶ while the "whole body intensification" awakens lower brain vitality centers. Thus, the emotional brain limbic system receives cortical inputs from above and vitality center inputs from below,¹⁷ all of which catalyzes limbic system emotional intensification and transformation.

Using Key Words to Open New Experiential Channels

The previously illustrated examples of body-mind intensification are not the only way to use Key Phrases. A more gradual approach involves the careful use of "directional questions" that merely ask for something **more** on a verbal level. (This is one of the most

frequent methods for helping someone explore his inner reality.)

Let's say the Protagonists simply says, "**I feel anxious.**"

Helpful Listener: **Anxious...** (and then adds)

"How...?"

"In what way...?"

"Do you feel anxious IN YOUR BODY right now? What is it like?"

"Can you describe WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE in that moment you say, 'I feel anxious'?"

"Perhaps you know something about THE SITUATIONS that make you feel anxious. What happens in those situations?"

The Helpful Listener, therefore, can ask for associations, sometimes by indicating a particular experiential channel -- sensation, emotion, thought, image, situation, even space or time (these are channels or domains of consciousness that are part of the experiential map)¹⁸ -- or sometimes by maintaining a **general direction**: What comes to mind? What's happening inside?

The upshot is that we are crossing the river, going from rock to rock, step by step, following the Protagonists's pace as we deepen together our awareness of the problem. These are methods that Helpers use intuitively in helping relationships. The Key Word strategy only says this: Avoid extraneous language. Don't add your own probing associations. Let the Protagonists's own resources of awareness and psychological disposition lead this delicate work.

Planting the Seed: The Helpful Listener Is Discrete When Using His Intuitions

As a final word, the principle, "The Helpful Listener does not add any extraneous Key Words," is **not absolute**. After mastering the above Key Word and body vitalisation methods, the Helpful Listener can sometimes take the initiative and add **new** Key Words. But this has to be done judiciously and with great respect for the Protagonists's psychological readiness.

To illustrate this point, let us return to the above example of the Protagonists saying the simple phrase, "I'm feeling anxious." The Listener can "plant the seed" of concrete association by suggesting, in a humble way, one or two possibilities that sprout up from his own intuition.

Light Planting: The Helpful Listener Offers Several General Examples

In seeding the Protagonists's psychic ground by light planting, the Helpful Listener seeks nothing more than go to the next concrete level of situational associations:

Helpful Listener: **Anxious...** Is it something around **work?** Or your **home situation?**

Helpful Listener: Feeling **anxious...** Is it connected to being **afraid of criticism**, or in some way of **being refused by people?**

Helpful Listener: Saying **'I'm feeling anxious,'** is there something about **coming here**, our way of trying **to face** your emotions, or something about **my presence**, that brings on this anxiety?¹⁹

Helpful Listener: I imagine that the sensation, **'I'm feeling anxious,'** crops up at particular moments. When you talked about that difficulty of **talking with your colleagues** the other day, I was wondering if that could have created the same type of feeling of 'I feel anxious.' (Notice that the Key Phrase is repeated in all of these "planting the seed" proposals, so that the echo chamber potential of the Helpful Listener's words is exploited as often as possible.)

Deeper Planting: The Helpful Listener Offers a Few Probing Intutions and then Stops!

In the following examales, the Helpful Listener proposes several concrete possibilities for the Protagonists's consideration. An important point: The Helpful Listener does not "identify with his ideas," that is, he does not try to show that he is "correct," but only wishes to stimulate the Protagonist's own concrete ideas.

Helpful Listener: "For example, when **your husband starts criticising your older son**, as you mentioned the last time, and **you disagree with your husband's attitude**, but, as I remember you said, **you don't want to contradict him in front of the children**, does this make you **anxious?**

Protagonists: No, it's not that... But when he suddenly **gets into one of those irritable moods, slams the door saying he's going out, and I know he'll probably get drunk again**, that's what makes me so **anxious!**

We see that the Helpful Listener's Planting the Seed by offering concrete associations, either at a "light" or "deep" level, means that the Helpful Listener **can**, on occasion, introduce new Key Words and concrete ideas from his own intuitive framework. In fact, it may be said that this is almost the same as "offering interpretations." **However**, there are several differences: First, the initiative of "planting seeds" should not be taken up by the Helpful Listener too frequently, for this can interfere with the Protagonists's own associative mental processes. Second, this is the work that the Protagonist should be doing for himself and, therefore, the Helpful Listener's "associative interventions" are mainly offered to catalyze, almost "enzymatically," the Protagonist's coming to similar "thought deepeners" on his own two feet. Third, the tone of the Helpful Listener is extremely **modest**: His attitude shows clearly that he has no interest in being found "correct" in his intuitive contribution, but that his only wish is to help the client find his **own** associative material.²⁰ Fourth, every

offering is connected to the Key Words or phrases that the Helpful Listener is also repeating, so that the work of stepping from rock to rock goes on unimpeded.

In conclusion, the Key Word can unlatch the Protagonist's unconscious processes. Let us imagine the mind as a large building. This is where the Protagonist lives. The Helpful Listener follows the Protagonist, step by step, as he descends, first, to the cellar of his darker unconscious (the Problem phase), and then as he moves up the stairs in order to construct new possibilities on the upper floors where there is sunlight (the Solution phase).

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1. Parsympathetic "vulnerable" feelings and sympathetic "aggressive and asseertive" feelings are discussed in Liss, J., "The Autonomic Nervous System and the Emotions," in **Free to Feel**, London, Wildwood House Pub., 1974.
2. R.D. Laing points out that we can see one another's behavior, but not one another's inner experience, which remains **invisible and private** to everyone except to the person who owns the experience. That means our statements about one another's inner life -- like interpretations -- must always be couched as hypotheses. To declare **with certainty** the nature of the other's inner life -- his emotions, his thoughts, his intentions -- is to transgress this essential difference between persons and therefore becomes a sign of invasion and disrespect. See Laing R.D., **The Politics of Experience**, London, Penguin Books, 1969, Chapter I, "Persons and Experience," (esp. pp. 18-20).
3. The special task of trying to intuit with competence **which** is the Protagonists's Key Word may be given as an exercise in a Training Group, and if a certain disagreement crops up among student Helpful Listeners regarding **which** word or series of words represents the Key Word or phrase, then the question can be posed to the student Helpful Listener who is role-playing the client. **The final judge, in any situation, as to what constitutes the Key Word, is the person who uttered the phrase.**
- 3A. Laing, R.D., Phillipson, H. and Lee, A.R., **Interpersonal Perception**, London, Tavistock Pubs., 1966.
4. This article proposes that there are three fundamental theories in psychoanalysis: Self Theory is developed by Fairbairn, Mahler, Jacobsen and Kohut. Impulse Theory is developed by Freud and Melanie Klein. Object Relations Theory is developed by Fairbairn, Gunthrip and Winnicott. These three theories are chosen as the basis for psychological work because they correspond, taken as a whole, to the grammatical form "Subject, Verb and Object," which represents the basis of linguistic structure in Occidental languages. See Liss, Jerome, "The Self, The Impulse and The Other," in **Energy and Character**, (Editor: David Boadella), Sept., 1992 and April, 1993.
- 4A. When the client refuses this approach -- and to my mind this is not resistance, but just another expectation regarding therapy -- then we can turn to other possibilities.
5. The concept of body empathy was first suggested and developed by Dr. Maurizio Stupiggia in Chapter 2, "Empathy," of **La Terapia Biosistemica**, (edited by Jerome Liss and Maurizio Stupiggia, Milan, Ed. Franco Angeli, 1995).
- 5a. See the article, "From Problem to Solution: Guiding Emotional Work With Deepening Followed by Construction." (Jerome Liss, unpublished, 1998)
6. For more details about the transition "from Problem to Release to Solution," see the above article.

7. To understand the terms "endodermal" and "mesodermal," which correspond to "parasympathetic" and "sympathetic," see **Lifestreams**, by David Boadella, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987) and also the article by Jerome Liss, "Muscles and Guts: The Boadella-Liss Model as a Scientific Project," in **Energy and Character**, Vol. 28, No. 1, April, 1997.
8. The fact that some Helpful Listeners finish their work with these general orientations, "I want to take more breath space...", rather than come down to brass tacks, creates an important limit, I believe, for the client's growth. The therapeutic work of defining "what? when? and with whom?" in concrete terms is essential for the Protagonists's evolution at some stages of the work.
9. This particular therapeutic phase is called "Concrete Solution Work and, although not discussed often in "depth psychology" treatises, is a powerful lever for making real life changes and, when there is self-sabotage, for provoking new "depth work" in subsequent sessions. See the article, "From Negative to Positive," (already cited) for a more complete elaboration.
10. See Rossi, Ernest, **The Psychology of Mind-Body Healing**, (New York, W.W. Norton Pubs.) on physical-dependent memory and mental associations, which he calls "state-dependent memory."
11. Key Words are also selected according to their muscular-sympathetic or visceral-parasympathetic significance. For example, "I know what I want to do!" (said with a tonic movement of the arms and shoulders) is a "muscular-sympathetic" Key phrase. In contrast, "Now I have this warm and soft bubbly feeling," (said with a soft voice and round movements of one hand on the abdomen) shows that the person's state is "visceral-parasympathetic." See the article, "Muscles and Guts" (cited earlier) for a full case illustration. Also, see the video film, "Father I Want to See You!," for a blow-by-blow demonstration of visceral-muscular interactions between Protagonists and Helpful Listener. (video film for professionals only)
12. See Liss, Jerome, "The Autonomic Nervous System and Our Emotions" in **Free to Feel**, already cited.
13. Liss, Jerome, "Vertical Grounding, Horizontal Grounding and the Sympathetic-Parasympathetic Rebound," **Energy and Character**, Vol. 20, No. 1, April, 1989, pp. 21-44.
14. Pinker, Steven, **The Language Instinct, The New Science of Language and Mind**, London, Penguin Books, 1994, esp. pp. 307-314.
15. See the classic article by Paul MacLean: "Psychosomatic Disease and the Visceral Brain, Recent Developments Bearing on the Papez Theory of Emotions," **Psychosomatic Medicine**, 1948, Vol. 11, pp. 338-353.

16. For an exposition of how stress disrupts cortical association functions, and how the resumption of cortical association area interaction can help return the person to a state of equilibrium, see the interesting research based on EEG studies by Quarti, C. and Renaud, J., **Neurophysiologie de la Douleur**, Paris, Hermann, 1972.

17. Visceral inputs reach the limbic system by a tortuous route: Starting with the vagus nerve, the visceral sensory input enters the brain at the level of the Solitary Nucleus, then climbs up the pons through a series of short fibers to reach the trigeminal region and central gray matter, and from there the message is relayed further upward to the limbic system. This once again indicates "indirect connections" that need to be reinforced, such as by Key Word repetition and intensification, in order to integrate visceral emotional input with emotional experience. See Nauta, Walle, "The Central Visceromotor System: A General Survey," (pp. 21-39) in Hockman, Charles H. (Editor), **Limbic system Mechanisms and Autonomic Functions**, Springfield, Ill., Charles C. Thomas Pub., 1972.

18. For examples of "experiential maps" that are used to guide the psychotherapeutic process:

a. Liss, Jerome, **Free to Feel**, (cited previously), "Excitement, Flexibility, Clarity and Complexity," (pp. 102-103) for a map of consciousness based on these criteria.

b. Bandler, Richard and Grinder, John, **Frogs Into Princes, Neurolinguistic Programming**, Moab, Utah, Real People Press, 1979, for the model of body, word-thought and image dimensions of consciousness.

c. Gendlen, Eugene, **Focusing**, New York, Everest House Pubs., 1978. for a map that emphasizes the interaction between body sensation, word and image.

d. Downing, George, **Il Corpo e La Parola, (The Body and the Word)**, Roma, Astrolabio Pubs., 1996, (also in German and Swedish editions), for a presentation of word, image and body domains of consciousness, with the body domain containing position, gesture, sensation and movement.

19. Although the language here is not particularly charged with material from the Protagonists's history, and in this way represents "light planting," the fact that it deals with the here-and-now relationship between Protagonists and Helpful Listener, i.e., the so-called "transference," can justify it being re-categorized as a "Deep Planting."

20. How can the Protagonists sense that the Helpful Listener is not interested in imposing his personal ideas but only in stimulating the Protagonists's own intuitions? Here are two signs: First, when the Helpful Listener's tone of voice, while offering new ideas, is not one of certainty, but rather, one of "offering hypotheses" that the Protagonists must evaluate himself. Second, when the Protagonists says "no" to the Helpful Listener's intuition, then gives the correct alternative, and the Helpful Listener shows immediate acceptance and appreciation for this correction.

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From p. 4

"Express the Key Word with Your Body! I'll Do It With You!"

How can the Helpful Listener combine Key Words with body intervention? By suggesting to the Protagonists that he express both impulses together: the word **and** the body. To illustrate this point, let us return to one of the initial examples:

"When I woke up this morning, I had a repeated thought: 'You're a **mess!** **Your life is all botched up!**' (Key words: **Mess!** **Botched up!**)

It's the sixth session. So the Protagonists, Louise, already knows the ropes, the rules of the game. And, of course, she has given her consent to work in this way of expressing more fully her Key Words by using her whole body.^{4A}

Helpful Listener: "**Mess! All botched up!**" There, in the bed... waking up... can you tell me more?

Protagonists: Since my husband is away, I was able to think about the situation while I was lying in bed this morning. It doesn't work out -- I mean, the marriage -- but we have the two children. The attraction to my colleague, Frank, doesn't help. It's not that I want to leave Jeff (the husband) and run into Frank's arms. The problems have been going on for too long, years, even before I ever knew or heard of Frank. So what am I going to do?!

Helpful Listener: Do!... Yes, do. But is it all right if we go back to "feel"? Then later, to "do"?

Protagonists: Yes, of course...

Helpful Listener: Feel... "**Botched up. A mess.**" Can you say it several times, let it come out, so we can see it better, feel it better...

Protagonists: "Botched up... A mess!" **The Helpful Listener accompanies Louise's words as well as her new gestures that rise up spontaneously. This is called Body Empathy.**⁵ And what happens? Louise's arms, shoulders and face begin to writhe and twist like swollen intestines in blocked peristalsis -- and she has had abdominal problems for more than two years -- and as her words are repeated with more and more force, the Helpful Listener **repeating** with her the words and gestures to create body-voice empathy, she half closes her eyes and ends up with vigorous expressions that are between rage and crying. (**She is stuck between sympathetic rage and parasympathetic crying.**)

At a certain moment she raises both arms as if on the verge of declaring something important (**a sympathetic-mesodermal gesture**), but the words get blocked, and her arms drop in defeat (**rebound to the parasympathetic, "I can't"**).

Helpful Listener: (gently, firmly) Louise, can you bring your arms up there again, just for a moment, and he gently lifts one arm to the position he means, slightly above her head. She moves both arms to the position above her head, he holds both there as support, and asks her to repeat the same Key Words in that tonic body position: "**Botched up... A mess!**" **And they say it together three times**, her arms moving in rhythm with the sounds and... Louise drops in a collapse! She suddenly keels over, drops her arms, bends her whole back over, until her face is almost in her own lap, and a deep and painful cry gushes out, followed by streams of tears. The Helpful Listener encourages her to repeat the same words, or to say any other words that come to mind, and with pain and despair she repeats, "**Botched up... A mess!**" **And then changes it to just repeat, "Botched up!"**, with the Helpful Listener saying it **with** her (at the very same time, in the same tone and rhythm). Thus the endodermal-mesodermal⁶ "knot" words are repeated by both the Protagonists and Helpful Listener together, with the result that the Protagonists's crying remains abundant until it gives **full release**.⁷

Deepening the Feeling of Relief and Liberation

"I've got to solve it!" is the next phrase that spontaneously appears. (A "doing" mesodermal phrase) So Helpful Listener and Protagonists begin to repeat this phrase again and again together. And as she repeats it, Louise's energy becomes more "clear," her breathing wider, her position returns to almost sitting up with the back erect (but now with the elbows crooked on her knees, as if she is ready to contemplate something), the eyes lucent, not just from crying but also from relief, and the Problem phase is now ready to pass on to the Solution-Construction phase.^{5A} It is not that the emotional relief is total, as I would have preferred, but her insistence on "What to do", already said two times, means that she needs to consider some first steps in order for the therapy (that is, her life) to advance.

fn See the article, "From Negative to Positive," previously cited.

From p.5

And what about the body interventions? Key Word work connected to just right **endodermal-mesodermal body interventions**⁷ also adds intensity to the therapeutic work, and that means a deepening and transformation of the Protagonists's experience. The clouds of anxiety and depression dissipate as the emotions unravel and find release.

From p. 5

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