

Lesson 5, Visualization. Now visualization is put into its own lesson because it is a part of the art of investigation and research, but it really is its own topic. helping teach the client to teach us about themselves, and it also helps them to learn about themselves. So as a teaching tool, as the client is speaking, being able to shut your eyes and visualize walking through their day, visualize their story. And when you are able to do this, it really sparks questions to ask along the way.

When you're having a conversation with someone, you are listening for keywords in the story. There will be major points and smaller details. But we process things so quickly in our brains. And I think about it all the time, about how much we multitask and we can do three things at once, but when we're telling a story, we're communicating a point. We communicate stories to make a point or to ask questions that require an answer. So when you're listening to a story, you're listening with your brain and your ears for certain key parts of the story, and then you're using these parts to build up to the reason of the story so that it has an end and understanding. Now in your mind it's detected this way so that you can follow along. And you even do this when you're preoccupied, you know, when you're multitasking, you're listening for key words.

And we've all done that, just halfway listening. And these key parts in a particular order keep us following along with the story. So, we're not just visualizing the words being spoken, but the action behind the words. Or, another way to say this is the visuals that we see that play as a little film reel in our head. And we do this unconsciously and quickly. And some of us do it more than others. This is part of the exercise that I would like you to start building on. We understand what the other person is communicating and in turn, we can respond accordingly.

So if you are listening to somebody and you're only catching a couple keywords, it's enough for you to follow along so that when they make the point of the story, you get it, but maybe not all of it. You know if they have more of your attention you actually hear more of the details. So where is it that we're half listening? Because even when we think we're listening we can only be half listening. So some scientists have contended that certain figures of speech, and I will quote this one, a rough day, that's a figure of speech that is just so familiar in our speech patterns. We treat them simply as words and no more than that. So when we're listening, you know, we have these areas of dismissal in our head, meaning that these terms aren't really activating our brain to include them.

So we have to be aware of all that the client is telling us, because if the client is telling us a story and these terms come up and our brain is just like, blip, don't need that part, then we're missing out on what the client is really saying to us. So when the client says to you, hey, I had a rough day today. Well, what does that mean to the client? Because if that's all they said to you, you don't know what it means. But you can tell now that that's the signal for you to step in and find out what does having a rough day mean to them? What does it look like and have them explain it.

Now another thing that can happen is we start taking on the empathy role too deeply. We can start attaching our feelings and experiences into the story being told to us by our client. And this can really cloud how we see the client and understanding how that client may actually feel or what they're trying to express to us in exchange for what we might have felt in a similar situation. It could also mean that we're not really listening and instead we are spending more time thinking of things as responses instead of listening for the clues and the areas that need more insight. So we do this naturally as we would in sharing a story with a friend.

But in this case, we're not trying to befriend the client. We're trying to understand things that they may not see. So we have to remain detached and listen without directly relating our own experiences and events and feelings to their story. Now if we're not able to compartmentalize like that, then again what the client might be experiencing could be lost because we can't see beyond our own feelings and thoughts and interpretation of what they're saying. I mean the client may tell you something and you say, oh yes that happened to me as well. Because you, at that point in time,

you might be trying to show a commonality of response to a situation.

And that's fine on occasion. It is, though, not necessary when you're doing that initial investigation. So I've worked with many of you listening one-on-one. Now, how many times have I stopped you with questions? You were on a roll, you're telling me your story, and you're getting into the thick of it, and I have stopped you time and time again with questions because you're giving me a higher level of detail that doesn't completely tell me what I need to know about you.

So I interrupt you to bring you down into my world and my levels so that we can get into those deeper questions. We can find out how many times did you eat that day? What did you actually eat? Oh, you didn't eat. Okay, well, that might explain some things because we discovered something new that your story didn't illustrate. So when clients are speaking to you, they're telling you their story. Now this is whether you're asking them some general questions or you've asked them to tell you their story. But regardless, when they answer you, this is them. This is about them. This is about their story.

Now, the story, this is different than using the timeline or the history because the story contains words and emotions as big clues. The timeline, when we're just putting down symptoms and events, can look very clinical. It's not associated with any emotions. But you must hear the types of words and emotions that these clients are using to tell their story. People can be very expressive and that needs to mean something to you. You're listening for clues, you're listening to their story, you're not getting caught up in their story with your own emotions or with your own responses. But you're analyzing, you're trying to get a feel for what.

You know, what does this whole conversation make me consider? Does this person sound fearful? Do they sound at ease? Has there been some frustration in their voice when they're speaking about a particular subject? What types of words are they using to describe how they feel about themselves? Now, all of this takes work. It takes practice. It takes time.

And if you recognize it, you'll be able to do this. You'll be able to practice this. So because of the things that we can gain from the conversations that we have with them, This is why it's really important to encourage them to be as descriptive as possible, and we do that via questioning. Now, I would also encourage you, in a much shorter way, to speak their story back to them and let them guide you. This is such a critical piece. You need to have heard them, and they need to have felt heard. If you repeat the story back to them, then they're able to say, yes, that's right. That means that you have the correct information. You've heard it the right way.

But it's also telling them that you heard them. And it's a beautiful thing for a client to feel heard and to be acknowledged. Now when you're listening to a client's story, I would start off by telling them that you will be interrupting them to clarify details and to ask questions. This also shows your interest and this is another way that the client feels heard. You're not just sitting there just acting as somewhat of a participant. You also know getting a story from a client and let me be very realistic about this it can be overboard. There are people that could spend five hours giving you their whole life story, and you're not after that. You are after an enhanced version with emotions of the timeline.

So once you get the timeline back from them, this is where you can go into investigator mode and try and put some additional pieces together. You're going to have to guide them so that they don't spend four sessions going through telling their story. You have to keep telling them that we need to know details and facts, but also you're encouraging them to be brief and you're guiding them with your questions. By what you do, you are telling them what you want to know. You're asking them. You're listening to their story, but guiding at the same time.

As you work with a client, as I have found, you're going to discover new things about them at every

single session. Things that just couldn't come out all at one time. Things that they forgot. You are going to bring up things that spark their memory to other things that happened or that they forgot to tell you. And these small details, they can change everything. Especially, even though you have asked questions of the client up front on the intake forms.

You know, it's made me laugh of some of the things that I've discovered halfway through a program into this three or four sessions deep. Even though I ask about structural issues and what's missing or surgeries, find out that the client with whom I am now working has no gallbladder or has dentures. So to see where missing details can affect the steps forward and the direction and the understanding of the case is huge. Never assume anything about what a client means as their meaning and your understanding of their meaning could be in two different places.

All right, my favorite example of this is bloating. So while one client will use the term bloating to describe a symptom aligned with intestinal gas, another client will mean it in the watery bloat sense and no gas. So if your client just told you that bloating was a symptom, which one did they mean? How will you know if you don't ask? Okay, here's another example. A client says, yes, I got up this morning and I was feeling bad.

So when you are visualizing, I want you to literally picture them. Okay, got up in the morning. You're picturing them getting out of bed. You're listening to them. And you say it back to them if you need to. Okay, client, you got up this morning and you were feeling bad. What does bad mean for you? Were you sick to your stomach?

They say, no, I just wasn't feeling good. Okay, that's not enough. We've got to pull this information out of them because feeling bad, quote unquote, without details is not a clue to what may be happening. If you don't ask, you won't know what they're going through and you might instead just get stuck on what feeling bad means or looks like to you. Then you find out a client might have some gut issues and another client might have a headache. That's what they mean when they're saying they feel bad to you.

Well, there's a huge difference between these two, between having gut issues or having a headache, but both clients could still claim that they were just feeling bad. You must encourage them and pull them out to be descriptive about what's happening. You have to know what time these are happening. You have to know. Okay, if you're having headaches or gut issues every morning, what changed?

What do you think brought this on, client? You have to ask them this. And you can't ask too many questions. You just can't. Because you're the one trying to pull this puzzle together. So them feeling bad this morning, it might not be significant to the bigger picture at all or you might not ever see the significance at that point. But if you investigate, you might learn new things about them. As in, hmm, okay, you feel bad. Have you ever felt this way before?

And they say, yeah, I used to get that same type of headache all the time back when I ate dairy or gluten. Okay, now you stop and you're thinking, huh, this happened before, and they know when it happened. And then you find out the night before, they just went out to a restaurant and they ordered off of the gluten-free menu, but they weren't really sure it was gluten-free. Okay, you just helped the client learn, right there. You just helped them make a connection.

And now they're paying attention. They just learned to correlate symptoms with what just happened over the past 24 hours. And then they start asking themselves, hmm, what changed in my life? Now this is why what we do as investigators is so important. It's not just about us. It's not just about us learning the information to help the client. It's about the client listening to us ask these questions and they learn from us and they learn how to help themselves.

