

Becoming a Clinical Wizard

Utilization of Metaphor in Intuitive, Integrative Psychotherapy

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Metaphors, and their cousins, simile, analogy, allegory and parable, contain rich sensual imagery that can cognitively, intuitively and quietly direct attention to new perceptions that have the power to shift self-states, and move our clients toward changes they desire.

Metaphors offer alchemical gold in their possibilities for transforming symptoms. In a moment of the quiet mind, relaxation or hypnotic trance, or through a non-hypnotic style that facilitates a state of quiet attention and inner readiness. (*The Answer Within*, Stephen Lankton and Carol Lankton, *Induction*, Jeffrey K. Zeig) the individual can intuitively dissociate from the negative cognitions and emotions of the-same-old-story, becoming available for sympathetic identification with transformed meanings.

The quieted mind, combined with evocative and conceptual language of metaphor, and other tools of hypnosis, can produce a shift to more hopeful themes and uplifting interpretations. Personal metaphors can become tools to reach beyond the didactic to inform the cognitive, by tapping into the intuitive ability of the unconscious to reframe and restructure the bio-psychosocial-emotional phenomenology of the client personal schema in which reside negative thoughts and beliefs and the painful feelings of the old stories.

This potential to redirect focus and shift internal states constitutes the transformational Alchemy of Metaphor. The forms of trance and the transformations that result, can reduce stress, increase ego strength, foster improved life skills, turn confusion into clarity, increase a sense of wellbeing, and fuel motivation for change.

Metaphors drawn from the material of personal stories offer the social worker a power-filled therapeutic tool for anchoring growth in the body-mind with stability and durability that can successfully lead to increased resilience and greater coping strength.

Using brief, simple, and effective techniques, therapists can assist their clients in sympathetically identifying with enhanced and transformed metaphors that can be integrated into a more solid, essential core and a more confident felt sense of authentic Self.