

Workbook Chapter Fourteen Bring Harmony and Balance To Your Life

Self-Assessment Tools:

How To Locate Unfinished Learning Experiences Related To Intractable Conflicts

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I teach my clients how to correlate intractable conflicts with unfinished learning experiences. This process can involve the use of a number of different clinical interventions, depending on the client and the symptom and/or illness that have manifested itself.

A useful intervention is asking the client to amplify or forbid symptoms or behaviors to see if this evokes emotions, movement, thoughts, or beliefs that connect to the original unfinished learning experience. Other interventions involve looking for regressive or dissociative behaviors related to acute or chronic developmental shock, trauma, or stress and any incomplete learning experiences that are still showing up in their lives.

Past learning experiences involving unresolved intractable conflict often contain patterns of reenactment of the unhealed developmental shock, trauma or stress, both in the individual and in the client's family-of-origin system. Following are some of the questions that I have found useful to help clients identify the past unfinished learning experiences that are the source of their intractable conflicts:

Questions to Identify the Unfinished Source of Intractable Conflicts:

1. Have you felt this way before? When and under what circumstances?
2. What is the earliest memory you have of feeling like this?
3. What is the most painful or intense memory you have of feeling this way?
4. What is your most recent experience of feeling this way?

Questions to Help Identify What Is Unfinished About An Earlier Unfinished Learning Experience.

1. What is unfinished about this experience for you?
 - What words were you not able to say?
 - What feelings were you not able to feel?
 - What movements were you not able to make? • What goals were you prevented from fulfilling?
2. What are your unmet needs remaining from this unfinished learning experience?
 - What did you need during this conflict that you did not get?
 - From whom did you need it?
 - How can you get this need met right now?
3. How are you splitting (good-bad, right-wrong) in this conflict/trauma?

- Who do you see is right and who is wrong?
 - Are you withdrawing into yourself?
 - Are you pushing others away and making them "bad" and yourself "good" or vice versa?
4. Which of the relational dynamics best describes this conflict/trauma?
- I'm okay/you're not okay.
 - You're okay/I'm not okay.
 - I'm not okay/you're not okay.

Case Example

Jose, grew up in a traditional Latino family, with an abusive father. He told me he did not want to be like his dad. He told me his dad treated women as objects and witnessed him being verbally and physically abusive to his mother.

However, he told me his main problem was an addiction to porn.

I gave him my People Pleaser Self-Inventory and he scored very high on it. When we went over it and looked at the items where he scored the highest, it became clear that his attempts to please others was rooted in some beliefs shame-based beliefs. I believed that he was not "not good enough." We traced this back to his interactions with a perfectionistic father who never praised him for doing anything.

He had low self-esteem and apologized frequently to others for minor things he did. He craved validation from others, that he never got from his father. He is prone to admit mistakes even before anyone even noticed. This seems to be related to his porn addiction.

Very quickly, he began to take initiative to change this belief and change the way he interacted with others. I asked his wife to help him by giving him validation when he did something he was proud of. He stayed away from watching porn for 7 straight days, which is my initial test of whether or not he can control his behavior. I also determined that he would profit from the additional support of a recovery group.

I told him to attend a recovery group of others who are struggling with a porn addiction. He told me that he attended two meetings and got a lot out of it. He said they gave him names for what he was doing and he heard the stories of those who are recovering from a porn addiction.

I had only seen him 3 times when he announced to me that he figured out why he was a people-pleaser. He said, "I realized that when I can please myself, I don't worry about trying to please others." This was a huge breakthrough for Jose. As he begins to take better care of himself and knows that he deserves it, he will continue to make great progress overcoming his addiction to porn and in raising his PsyQ.

Additional Resources:

Novels: "The Dead" by James Joyce