WHAT DIRECTION IS INDIRECTION? SOME GUIDELINES

Frank D. Young Ph.D., R. Psych.1[1]

1.   Conceptual Basis of Indirect Communication Patterns:

   Possibilities for solution that do not command or suggest a direct response to the therapist's advice or recommendation. Indirect communication increases interest, lowers disqualification, decreases performance anxiety, uses attribution (my friend John, The Reflecting Team, etc.) The key element is space and respect that allow the client the opportunity of initiative into patterns of possibility.

2.   Direct suggestion could work. Do not assume that just because it has not worked until now therefore it will not work. Test the front door first with some gentle probes in non-crucial areas, then ask how has that worked for you in the past and how is this context different? Reframe previous therapeutic failures as "latent learning."

3. A Partial List of Indirections:

❑   Discharging negativity

❑   Utilization of existing behavior, piggybacking

❑   collaboration and discovery through experimentation

❑   now and future orientation, present progressive tense

❑   conversational postulates

❑   the yes set,

❑   presupposition,

❑   illusion of alternatives,

❑   future projection with good feelings resulting

❑   shaggy dog story or lengthy or difficult alternatives to create set of triggering relief

1[1] Frank D. Young Ph.D., C. Psych. 935 Eastwicke Cres. Comox, BC V9M 1B2

 Ph: 250-941-1535 Email: dr.frank@shaw.ca Website: solutionorientedcounselling.ca

- ❑ utilizing resistance, the no set,

- ❑ developmental reframes and therapeutic challenges, optimistic skepticism

- ❑ encouraging a response by frustrating it

- ❑ use of "as if" frame: "I wonder what this family would be like if the problem got worse/better?" subjunctive mood, talking about talking about, speculating on other pattern breaks.

- ❑ verbs versus nouns, collapsing and expanding time and space, general and specific.

- ❑ ambiguity: phonological: puns "disarming" syntactic "Hypnotizing hypnotists can be tricky." scope or punctuation: "I see you are wearing a watch very carefully that arm and hand"

- ❑ embedding of lesser included structures - phrases, clauses, questions, quotes.

- ❑ change the problem context (time, location, in whose presence, meaning context, social pattern rearrangements, reinforcement contingencies)

- ❑ attribution of observers, therapist-consultant splits, reflecting team positive attributions of intent.

- ❑ unconscious - conscious dissociation

- ❑ "as if" frame: "I wonder what this family would be like if the problem got worse/better?" subjunctive mood, talking about talking about, speculating on other pattern breaks.

- ❑ embedding of lesser included structures - phrases, clauses, questions, quotes.

- ❑ working metaphorically. Change a peripheral problem isomorphic to central but defended issue.

- ❑ Verbs as problems, nouns as resources and abilities, nominalizations.

- ❑ continuation of previous patterns of ambiguity, embedding, connecting,

- ❑ the apposition of opposites, use of polarities.

- ❑ Quotations and stories including embedded messages.

3.   Group Exercise: "Take out the Garbage! As many ways as you can think, help activate the listener's initiative to do it.

REFERENCE:

Erickson, M.H., Rossi, E, & Rossi, S. (1976). Hypnotic Realities: The induction of clinical hypnosis and forms of indirect suggestion. New York: Irvington Publishers.