

Lisa's Tapestry

A QUADRANT II INTERVENTION - By David Grove (1989)



Introduction

This intervention, done by David Grove as part of a therapist training video, is called *Tapestry*. It is an example of a client who comes in with a particular feeling of shame. What's important when working with shame, anger, or guilt, is that so often the retelling of the story in fact helps to reinvest and perhaps to re-traumatize the client all over again. So an important feature of this intervention is to work in such a way that the client does not have to reveal the content about the particular experience.

We begin first of all by establishing the client's epistemology, that is what would they like to have happen and how do they know they've got what they've got. There are three important features to this intervention.

The first one is to consider the moment in time that we are gathering this information from. To begin with we start in a time period, T-1. T-1 is a moment in time in any given experience just before the worst moment, T. The purpose in healing the wounds around shame, guilt, or anger is to grow the experience up from T-1 through T, into T+1, when it's all over. What we often find is the client has frozen this moment of time, T-1, in which they relive and recapitulate the symptoms of their experience just before that very worst moment. You may be familiar with nightmares and dreams in which the experience is relived, for instance a falling dream and when you hit the ground you wake up the moment just before you hit the ground, and that's a T-1 moment. Or a dream where you're being chased, just as he goes to grab you, you wake up.

So it's in that moment of time, T-1, in which we find the most profound symptoms. We want to extinguish those symptoms so that they don't have to be felt again by growing those symptoms and the client up through T and into T+1 when it is all over. We do this by establishing symptoms into metaphors using questions. These are the questions we ask to develop metaphors from a feeling word, a thought word, or from a symptom. By asking a mixture of these kinds of questions we help develop a semantic word into a metaphor. A

metaphor is simply a container where information from an experience is carried across into something else. We know we have a metaphor when it is an object that we can actually draw.

Once we have found metaphors that belong in the moment of time, T-1, our next task is to grow this information up. We need to mature these metaphors so that they grow up from T-1 through into T+ 1, and we do that by asking these questions. We mature the information from T-1, through T, into T+ 1. These kinds of questions help grow and develop the metaphors so that they are able to confess their strengths. They then can become useful, powerful, and healing metaphors instead of dysfunctional symptoms that the client originally presented with.

Metaphors are foreign objects which have been imported into the body. So if you think about feelings that people describe such as "I've got butterflies in my stomach", "I'm all tied up in knots", or "blank" or "foggy", those are all features which belong outside but have yet imported inside. So part of the healing strategy is to provide a suitable environment in which the metaphors can be commissioned to go outside and to perform a healing venue or function. It is through this transformation from inside to outside that we interrogate a metaphor until it confesses its strengths and the dysfunctional symptoms are healing in a sense that the body of the client no longer has to hold these feelings inside.

So we begin this intervention by asking where the symptoms are. You will notice it's a little bit like a mystery story, because in working content free, we have to mature the information because we do not know enough about what actually happened. So as we progress, see when it is that you may discover what the particular presenting symptom of this client was, or what the nature of the event was. At the end of the intervention we have some feedback in which the client will describe her particular experience. It is much easier to describe an experience after it has been healed than before.

Grovian Therapeutic Metaphor Session

Lisa: So what I would like to accomplish is I would like to get rid of the achy pain that I have in my ankle and foot that spreads up into my leg. I've had the pain for about fifteen or twenty years.

David: And so when you've had the pain for about fifteen or twenty years, and what would you like to have happen?

Lisa: I would like for the pain to go away.

David: And when you have the pain, where do you have the pain?

Lisa: I have the pain in my ankle and foot, the inner side of my foot.

David: And on the inner side of your foot. And when it's on the inner side of your foot, what's it like when it's on the inner side of your foot?

Lisa: Its like pressure.

David: And pressure. And when it's like pressure, what kind of pressure?

Lisa: Umm, it's like a balloon. It's like a balloon that's filled to capacity.

David: And a balloon that's filled to capacity. And is there anything else about a balloon that's filled to capacity?

Lisa: It feels like it's going to burst.

David: And it feels like it's going to burst. And when a balloon feels like it's going to burst, is there anything else about a balloon that feels like it's going to burst?

Lisa : No.

David : And when a balloon feels like it's going to burst, what would a balloon that feels like it's going to burst like to have happen?

Lisa : And it would like to have all of the air let out of it.

David : It would like to have all of the air let out of it. And what kind of air is that air when it's in a balloon that wants to let all of the air out of it?

Lisa: It's hot.

David : And it's hot. And is there anything else about air that's hot?

Lisa: And it's dark.

David : And it's hot and it's dark. And it's hot and it's dark like what?

Lisa: It's hot and it's dark like a hell hole.

David: And it's hot and it's dark like a hell hole. And is there anything else about hot and dark like a hell hole?

Lisa: It could spread.

David: And it could spread. And when it's hot and dark like a hell hole, what would hot and dark like to have happen?

Lisa: It would like to drain out.

David: And hot and dark would like to drain out. And when hot and dark would like to drain out it would like to drain out like what?

Lisa: Like lava.

David: Like lava. And what kind of lava could that lava be when it would like to drain out like lava?

Lisa: It's sluggish and it has hard things in it.

David: And it's sluggish and it has hard things. And when it's sluggish and has hard things, what kind of hard things?

Lisa: Sharp, hard things.

David: And sharp, hard things. And sharp like what?

Lisa: Sharp like a needle.

David: And sharp like a needle. And when it's sharp like a needle, what kind of needle could that needle be when it's sharp like a needle?

Lisa: A dark needle.

David: And a dark needle. And a dark needle. And when it's sharp like a dark needle, is there anything else about that dark needle?

Lisa: It just could hurt. It could do a lot of damage.

David: And a dark needle could do a lot of damage. And is there anything else about dark needle that could do a lot of damage?

Lisa: It could tear flesh.

David: And a dark needle could tear flesh. And what flesh would a dark needle like to tear when a dark needle would like to tear flesh?

Lisa: It could tear flesh on the outside and the inside.

David: And a dark needle could tear flesh on the inside and on the outside. And would a dark needle like to tear flesh on the inside or on the outside first?

Lisa: On the outside.

David: And on the outside. And does a dark needle know where it would like to tear flesh on the outside first?

Lisa: On the arms.

David: And on the arms. And whereabouts on the arms would a dark needle like to tear flesh?

Lisa: By the elbow.

David: And by the elbow. And which elbow could a dark needle like to tear flesh first?

Lisa: On the left.

David: On the left elbow. And can a dark needle begin to tear flesh on the left elbow?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And as a dark needle tears flesh on the left elbow, what happened next as a dark needle tears flesh on the left elbow?

Lisa: It likes it.

David: And it likes it. And as a dark needle tears flesh on the left elbow and likes it, what does a dark needle want to do next?

Lisa: It wants to stop.

David: And it wants to stop. And when a dark needle stops and it likes to tear flesh on the left elbow, what would a dark needle like to do next?

Lisa: It would like to be broken.

David: And it would like to be broken. And how can a dark needle be broken?

Lisa: It could be bent.

David: And it could be bent. And a dark needle could be bent like what?

Lisa: Like a bent needle.

David: Like a bent needle. And what kind of bent needle could that bent needle be?

Lisa: Like a sewing needle.

David: And like a sewing needle. And a bent needle like a sewing needle and where could a sewing needle like to go, and what would a sewing needle like to do when it's bent?

Lisa: It would like to heal the hurts.

David: And it would like to heal the hurts. And which hurt?

Lisa: In the ankle.

David: In the ankle. And can a sewing needle be interested in going to the ankle that hurts?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And what would a sewing needle do to an ankle that hurts?

Lisa: It could pop the balloon inside the ankle.

David: And whereabouts on a balloon would a sewing needle like to pop?

Lisa: Right in the middle of it.

David: And right in the middle. And can a sewing needle pop a balloon right in the middle?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And as a sewing needle pops a balloon right in the middle, what happens next?

Lisa: Black comes out.

David: And black comes out. And black comes out like what?

Lisa: Like sludge.

David: Like sludge. And what kind of sludge is that sludge?

Lisa: Disgusting.

David: And disgusting sludge. And where would disgusting sludge like to go?

Lisa: It would like to go into the earth.

David: And as disgusting sludge goes into the earth, what happens when disgusting sludge goes into the earth?

Lisa: It works itself into the soil.

David: And as it works itself into the soil, what happens to disgusting sludge?

Lisa: It mixes with the good earth.

David: And it mixes with the good earth. And it mixes with the good earth like what?

Lisa: Like fertilizer.

David: Like fertilizer. And what happens when the good earth is mixed with fertilizer?

Lisa: It nourishes the soil.

David: And it nourishes the soil. And does the soil like to be nourished?

Lisa: Yes.

David: With fertilizer. And when soil is nourished with fertilizer what happens to soil nourished?

Lisa: It attracts seeds.

David: And it attracts seeds. And what kind of seeds does it attract?

Lisa: Pine cones.

David: And pine cones. And what happens when pine cones go to good earth nourished?

Lisa: They sprout.

David: And they sprout like what?

Lisa: Like seedlings, they sprout.

David: And they sprout like seedlings. And when seedlings sprout, what happens next?

Lisa: They put out shoots, and they open.

David: And shoots open. And shoots open like what?

Lisa: Like hands.

David: And shoots open like hands. And what kind of hands could those hands be?

Lisa: Hands open and relaxed.

David: And hands open and relaxed. And when hands are open and relaxed and would a curved, sewing needle be interested in going to hands that are open and relaxed?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And what could hands that are open and relaxed do with a needle that is curved?

Lisa: Hands could straighten the needle.

David: And hands could straighten a needle. And could those hands straighten a needle?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And as those hands straighten a needle, what would those hands like to do with a needle?

Lisa: Create.

David: And create. And what would those hands like to create?

Lisa: Beauty.

David: And beauty. And what would be the first beauty that they would like to create?

Lisa: A tapestry.

David: And a tapestry. And what kind of tapestry could a needle and those hands create?

Lisa: A multicolored

David: A multicolored

Lisa: Tapestry

David: A multicolored tapestry. And could a balloon that had been in a foot be interested in going to a multicolored tapestry?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And what would a multicolored tapestry do to a balloon?

Lisa: It would invite it in.

David: And as it invites it in, what happens to a balloon that's invited in?

Lisa: It is incorporated into the tapestry.

David: And incorporated like what?

Lisa: Like silk.

David: Like silk. And what kind of silk?

Lisa: Silken strands.

David: And silken strands like what?

Lisa: Like my hair.

David: And silken strands like your hair. And does a tapestry like silken strands like your hair?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And what does a tapestry do to silken strands like your hair?

Lisa: It weaves. It weaves the strands into itself.

David: And it weaves the strands into itself. And as it weaves the strands into itself, and it weaves the strands into itself. And it's been a long time since those strands have been woven

into itself and the tapestry weaves those strands into itself. And let a tapestry take all the time that it needs to weave those strands into itself. And hands that are open and relaxed, and is so in need of that strand, and a tapestry and take all the time a tapestry needs to weave silken hair into itself. And what can happen?

Lisa: The tapestry, it can wrap around me.

David: And the tapestry can wrap around you and the tapestry can wrap around you. And would a tapestry be interested in wrapping around a left arm that's flesh had been torn. And as a tapestry wraps around a left arm whose flesh had been torn, and hands that are open and relaxed, and a sewing needle, and what happens when a tapestry wraps around a left arm?

Lisa: It makes the arm feel okay.

David: And it makes the arm feel okay. And a tapestry makes an arm feel okay, and it's been a long, long time since that arm feels okay. And as a tapestry wraps around a left arm and makes it feel okay, could a tapestry be interested in wrapping around a foot?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And as a tapestry wraps around a foot, that tapestry wraps around a foot like what?

Lisa: Like a stocking.

David: And like a stocking. And what kind of stocking could that stocking be?

Lisa: An orthopedic support stocking.

David: Oh, no. An uninteresting stocking like that. That beautiful tapestry. And it's a beautiful orthopedic stocking, and does a foot like a beautiful orthopedic stocking?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And it's much better to have an orthopedic stocking than to have a balloon filled with sludge, and does a foot like that?

Lisa: Yes, the foot loves that.

David: And a foot loves that. And a foot loves that, and the foot loves that, and what would a foot like to do when a foot loves that?

Lisa : It would like to dance.

David: And a foot would like to dance. And if a foot would like to dance and a foot had been wrapped with an orthopedic stocking that was beautiful, would a foot be interested in tap dancing?

Lisa: Sure.

David: And a foot could tap dance with a tapestry like that, and would a foot like to dance any other kind of dance?

Lisa: Ballet.

David: And ballet. And could a foot ballet?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And a foot can ballet. And would a foot like to do anything else?

Lisa: No.

David: And a foot likes to dance. And as a foot likes to dance, and would a foot like to do anything else after it's danced?

Lisa: Show off.

David: And show off, and it's been a long time since that foot could show off. And that foot can show off, and what would an arm, like a left arm, like to do when a foot shows off?

Lisa: Oh, just wave around.

David: And can a left arm wave around while a foot shows off?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And a left arm can wave around, and a foot can show off, and a beautiful tapestry can wrap around a foot like an orthopedic stocking, and a foot can dance and show off, and a left arm can wave around, and do you like that?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And you like that. And would you like anything else when you like that?

Lisa: Well, I'd like to have everything. Dancing and moving.

David: And you'd like to have everything dancing and moving. And what's the first everything that would like to dance and move?

Lisa: My right side.

David: And your right side. And when your left arm waves, can your right side move?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And as your right side moves and your foot dances, what part of you would like to move next?

Lisa: Just my whole body.

David: And can your whole body move?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And can your whole body dance?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And can your whole body wave?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And does your whole body like that?

Lisa: Yes.

David: And your whole body likes that. And do you need anything else?

Lisa: No.

David: And your whole body likes that. And you like that. And you like that and it's been a long time since your whole body could move and dance and wave? How are you doing?

Lisa: Good.

Post Session Interview

Lisa: This whole thing started for me with the foot. About twenty years ago, I was a heroin addict, and I OD'd one time, actually more than one time. And one of the times when I did, someone put me in an attempt to revive me, put me in a bathtub and put my foot up underneath the faucet and turned on hot water instead of cold, and consequently burned my foot severely. So I've had this scar all that time and ever since then I've had a lot of achy pain in that leg and I've had problems with varicose veins in that leg.

So there's a lot of shame held in that scar and it was like spreading up my leg. So I attempted to have surgery to take care of the veins, thinking that the scar would go away and of course what happened was more scars were created. So it's only been in the past year that I have looked up being shamed by that and an inability to forgive myself for that with the scar. And I had been working on every time I would feel the ache I've been working on forgiveness, trying to forgive myself for this. And I think in my head I have done it, but emotionally on a real deep level, I'm not sure that I was done very far with it. So I feel like this has at least helped things to move inside.

During the process, I was real nervous and I felt like nothing was happening. I felt like I was just an adult answering questions, so it surprised me when certain things came up. I was surprised when the arm came up because I never associated the scars on my arm with the scars on my leg. And the needle, when the needle came up, it surprised me. I think I couldn't

say that I liked the needle in my arm, the needle liked me in my arm, I didn't like it, but the needle liked being in my arm, and when the needle didn't want to be in my arm anymore, I liked that. It surprised me that the needle turned into a sewing needle.

I liked it when the needle moved into the balloon and sludge came out because the balloon for me, the balloon has been an image I've had before in my foot, but the balloon before was always filled with air, with clear air. I've never envisioned sludge in there and sludge is kind of like gelled blood, which is kind of what happens down in there with the blood not circulating and it gets thicker down there. At least that's the way it feels. When the sludge went into the ground and then the seeds went into the ground and the hands came up, I thought the hands were just going to be open to sunlight, and going to feel warmth and things like that, and so when you brought the needle into my hand, it was a delight. It was like something I hadn't thought of doing, but I liked the way it allowed me to pull in, it wasn't only that good things were coming into me, it was also that I was able to take the bad that had happened and put it into a beautiful form.

When the form became a tapestry I thought the tapestry was going to encompass me and be like a piece of armor and what happened was the tapestry wrapped around my arm and the tapestry wrapped around my leg and instead of enfolding it, and being like a piece of armor it actually freed them up so that they could move, and not be protected and be free to express themselves.

The dancing was also a surprise for me. When I was young I wanted to be a ballerina and I still have fantasies about being a ballerina. My father told me I couldn't because it wasn't something that, there was no way you could earn a living so there was no point in being a ballerina and so I kind of gave that up.

And the tapestry part, I have always wanted to be a weaver, I have not pursued it, dreamweaving. Since the interview has ended, I have felt in my foot, it feels warm and tingly. The whole foot does, the ankle does, and I can feel something moving in there on the inside. It feels like the skin from that scar that has always been so tight and so restrictive, it feels like that skin has the possibility of loosening up. I've also felt kind of shaky since it's been over.

David: What difference do you think it will make?

Lisa: I think I have really been ashamed of this leg. Its like I don't like to expose it at all. I love the summertime, but I like to be able to cover up this foot and I think this tapestry is something that I can use to make it beautiful and to make it acceptable. I think it's going to be looser, and I think I'm going to feel good about it. I still think it's a start, but it has helped to shake things up in me.

David: I guess you'll find out then. Its nice to have some behavior ways to find out just what will happen and what difference it will make and to enjoy a tapestry.

Four Month Follow-Up Interview

Lisa: Since I've had the session with David four months ago, I've noticed a few changes. One of them is that I used to think about my left foot and I would try and imagine it being just like my right foot. I would try and imagine it being without any scars and there would be no veins on that foot. It would be just perfect just like my right foot. And since I went through the

session I have started viewing my foot differently and when I look down on it now, and I see the veins that are larger on that foot, I see them as more of a thing of beauty rather than something that needs to be hidden or something I need to be ashamed of.

And the scar is also, it's like it makes it more interesting, so I no longer hate the differences between my feet and I'm no longer trying to make this part of myself the same as another part of myself, I'm just kind of accepting what it is, and even enjoying it.

I also notice that I'm buying shoes differently now. I'm buying shoes that expose my feet more and I don't know if you remember from the tape, but I had on a pair of tennis shoes and then socks that covered my ankle and my foot. And now I've worn shoes without socks and I wear sandals and everything else that really shows my foot. And that feels really nice having it out in the open.

I've also started painting. I think I've always had an attraction for painting and drawing and dancing and things like that, but I've never really allowed myself to do any of those things. I've just had this desire to have color in my life. So I went down to the local art store and bought myself a nice set of watercolors, just beautiful colors and I'm having just a lot of fun playing around with painting and I think I have in mind that I would eventually like to paint a picture of what I was imagining at the very end of our session.

One thing I liked about the session was when I started out, all I really intended to talk about was the ache in my foot and I had no intention at all of talking about a needle or an addiction that I had. It was just kind of neat that my psyche just kind of took over and said listen in order to heal this part of you, in order to get rid of this ache, you need to tend to these other things. It was like nobody knew where it was going and that's just the way it ended up and I've always liked my arms. I think my arms are strong and it took this part of myself that I like, my arm, that had a needle in it, and it took it down to the foot that I didn't like and incorporated those two. It was just nice the way it allowed the needle to heal that part of myself.

I also have in the past couple of months really been enjoying where I'm living. I've lived in this particular spot for ten years and it's a beautiful part of the world and a lot of people would love to live there, but I've never really wanted to be there. I've never been able to appreciate the beauty of this spot. And it just seems like in this past year, I've been able to go back to places where I thought I would rather be, and certainly when I went to this session, that's what happened for me. It allowed me to kind of let go of these longings that I had for other places and has allowed me to really enjoy and appreciate where I am now.

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