

0.17 – ‘Tired eyes’ – Sometimes it can be useful to notice your clients appearance in this way, though this needs to be with caution as you may be incorrect and inadvertently insult them! On this occasion this was received well and seemed to help the client to transition from his work life to the session.

1.32 – Reiterate the number of the session and the length of this. Informally, conversationally.

1.45 – Offered ‘my perception of the work so far’ I phrase this carefully as my overview is my perception, and there is a chance it may not be the clients. Again I offer this option trying to make sure client feels able to say no if he doesn’t want it. At all times trying to be tentative and warm. Client chooses to have the overview.

2.10 – Overview – this is phrased sensitively, not formally, still talking to my client, not just relaying the information.

3.38 – Important here to allow client the choice to talk about other things, despite the overview which raised the themes from the last two sessions.

16.07 – In response to clients ‘really?!’ I asked for more, ‘what is that ‘really, really, what?’ When a client expresses something which is open to interpretation, it can be useful to make sure your understanding lines up with their meaning. This led client to more useful self-reflection.

17.31 – ‘He’s at arm’s length, that version, that person is at arm’s length’ A brief paraphrase.

17.54 – ‘Doesn’t make sense to who you are now that that could be you, is that right?’ Staying with the ‘really?’ feeling the client has expressed, allowing that feeling to have some airtime.

18.29 – pre-empting / mirroring hand gestures. Showing client I am following.

19.01 – Here I took the client back to something I felt had passed at the start of the session, when the client remarked in passing that he would reassure himself if he could go back and talk to his younger self. The context of the client working in addiction in the past provided an opportunity for some further self-reflection around this. However, looking back, I am aware I may have seized the opportunity to revisit this theme and lost the opportunity to remain where the client was at in that moment, talking about the two screens in front of him. This may have also been useful.

This said, the client continues, and I gain a much clearer understanding as a result.

22.30 – Paraphrase. ‘Might feel slippery and it might feel you can never get out, but there is going to be a way out, when you’re ready, not before’ – Staying with the content. Allowing client time and space.

22.19 – ‘So the things you did to others feels different to the slippery slope you were in with your addiction’ – noticing the difference he feels to this compared with the more accepting comments he noted in his last exploration.

25.40 – Use of silence. 15 seconds. Client needed to think, so I let him think.

26.45 – ‘Don’t pollute me’ – Using similar words to client to help him know I am tracking him, and I am following and understanding. Client took the word.

27.20 – Here I used my stacking dolls to explore what the client had himself raised. Visual aids can be very useful to explore subject. I use them briefly here to show the client my own understanding of the ‘integration’ he speaks of. This is tentatively done.

29.44 – ‘Do you mean there what are the implications on the current you, on the you now, if you start to try and build some understanding of some of the stuff you did to others’ I would have worded this slightly differently in hindsight, I would have liked to pick up on the integration, rather than use the word ‘understanding’. Client spontaneously corrected this.

30.40 – Sharing my understanding of the clients words through facial expression.

31.00 – I had heard the client struggling to understand how to integrate his past self with his current self. I wanted to invite the client to see and acknowledge that young man, thus exploring the challenges of integrating him further. The client invited me to explore my own thoughts which, by my own admission, had come up strongly as I focused my mind on the past him. This type of immediacy can be powerful when used tentatively and carefully.

33.48 – ‘Scary step’ – Reflecting the feelings communicated around this, the polluting, the arrows.

33.54 – Noticed here the client had ‘picked’ from the words I had used but hadn’t used acceptance. I was interested to know if this was meaningful for client.

34.33 – ‘Why do people find themselves in addiction, what’s your take on it’ This was a little strategic, I was hoping to invite client to explore his experiences from the safety of the ‘general’ question. In fact he explained it generally so it perhaps didn’t fully serve the purpose I was hoping for. Looking back now I would have preferred a short reflection ‘You wouldn’t wish it on your worst enemy’ etc.

37.37 – ‘Interesting what you just said there that when you were a little boy you had, the fact you were a little boy, and when you grew up you had the alcoholism and now you’ve got neither, so what happens now, there’s no ‘oh, because if that’, it’s you now isn’t it.’ I must have received this as I stated it here in my mini summary but looking back I think I missed the point a little here. The client was in the direction of exploring if he was seeing his situation through his, as a boys, eyes, a brief reflection would have done the job (I feel like I’m noticing this quite a lot!)

38.50 – ‘yeah, where does it live now’ Short paraphrase.

39.40 – ‘that’s the present tense isn’t it, right now you are not like that, you were like that’ Noticed the client speaking of his past self as his current self, ‘I am like that’. Shared this with client. This was useful for the client.

41.28 – Noticing I had perhaps not acknowledged enough the positive change the client had experienced during the course of his life.

41.52 – Time boundary, 2 or 3 minutes left.