

VOICES as part of MICROTRACKING

The purpose of microtracking is to make visible the architecture and organisation of consciousness at the level of personal memory. This architecture makes itself known in two ways:

(1) Emotions and affective shifts that play across the client's face, to which the PBSP therapist attunes and then offers a label for the feeling, using the Witness eg "If a witness were here, the witness would say, *I see how desolate you feel as you remember being so alone.*"

(2) Interior (often unconscious) thoughts and instructions which the therapist hears the client express, and then articulates and externalises using the device of Voices.

The Pesso Boyden method and Voices

The therapist notices interior (often unconscious) thoughts and instructions which the client expresses – *This won't last! / I should know! / I'm useless at this!* In a therapy session or Structure, we can articulate these as 'Voices.' We then externalise them so they are no longer just lodged in the client's internal world – we re-express them as if they're coming from the external world, as indeed they originally did: *This won't last! / You should know! / You're useless at this!*

Al Pesso believed that what he called Voices "are responded to inside as if they are hypnotic suggestions and they rule our life". They are conclusions or beliefs we came to because of how things were in our past.

Voices appear in thought and speech as injunctions and instructions from the inner unconscious "narrator or historian" who constantly comments and instructs on how a life is lived. Other modalities might call them unconscious defences, scripts, negative introjects, protector selves, automatic negative thoughts (ANTS), self-talk.

The therapist externalises these ingrained belief systems and habitual internal injunctions, which the client typically utters in the 'first person' (*I'm no good!*). We dramatise them, feeding them back to the client in the second person (*You're no good!*), so as to make the client aware of them and bring them into full consciousness.

This supports the client's Pilot ('executive' part of the ego) by drawing attention to previously unconscious 'instructions for living' and by introducing the possibility of choice: *There's that Voice again: do I want to keep following that instruction?* Consciousness opens the way for choice, and choice leads to the possibility of change.

Clarifying the Voices helps the client separate a constraining or constricting aspect out and away from the emerging soul. This offers space for a reaction of protest which is the beginning of the soul claiming its birthright to be fully expressed in the world.

At other times the therapist dialogues with the client's Pilot, increasing the domain of that function through the awareness of feeling (Witness) and the limiting injunctions and instructions of the Voices.

Voices that are frequently heard by the Pesso Boyden therapist:

Strategy: not chosen consciously, but nevertheless an approach that helped you to live well in the particular context you found yourself in when small (*make yourself small; walk away; go numb; don't care what happens*)

Reasonableness: always reasonable and usually factually true! But the purpose of the Voice / thought is to diminish the feeling that rises in protest against how it was (*they did their best; nothing really bad happened; she didn't mean to be cruel*)

Negative prediction: sounds pessimistic, but its purpose is to protect the person from ever again suffering the agony of hope extinguished (*nothing will work out for you; you won't get the job; you're never going to be happy*)

Truth: not Truth as the person's soul sees it, or what they long for. It is the truth of their experience as a child; a truth that feels absolute, however much a part of them wishes it to be otherwise (*you're unlovable; you can't trust anyone; life is dangerous*)

Family truth: a belief held within the family group, permeating all family members (*we're better than them; they're the work of the devil; beggars can't be choosers*)

Critical: An internal critique with which the individual constantly assesses themselves, inevitably finding fault or a negative comparison with others (*you're worthless; you can't do that; nobody likes you*)

Pushing: the sense of never being able to rest, always having to exert effort and energy in order to be or do something more (*you should work harder; you haven't achieved anything*).

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