

Microtracking in the Pesso Boyden method using Witnessing and Voices

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.

Al Pesso believed that what he called Voices "are responded to inside as if they are hypnotic suggestions and they rule our life."

Voices: Those 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 and dramatises them, so as to make the client aware of them and bring them into full consciousness. E.g. the client who fears conflict says: "The only thing I can do is give up and walk away..." The PBSP therapist responds: "That could be a Voice – *Give up! Walk away!*" and gestures as if towards someone else who is giving the client this 'order.'

The externalisation supports the client's Pilot by drawing attention to previously unconscious 'instructions for living. It makes clear to the client that what feels like an absolute truth inside is a conclusion they came to early in life, because of how things were. In PBSP we support the Pilot because this introduces the possibility of choice and, as the structure unfolds, the possibility of future interior 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 frequently heard by the Pesso Boyden therapist in a client's discourse:

Strategy: a 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 me; I won't get the job; I'm 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 unloveable; 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 (I should work harder; I haven't achieved anything)