

## *Chapter Eleven*

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# *Some MOL scenarios*

*T*he scenarios that I describe in this chapter are based entirely on my own experiences. They illustrate, however, some principles that will be helpful in improving the practice of MOL. There is nothing remarkable about these scenarios other than that, for some reason, they stood out for me. Perhaps as you experience MOL for yourself you will compile your own inventory of scenarios. Many of these issues have been touched on in previous chapters, but they are explored more fully on the following pages.

### **A tug-of-war**

Sometimes as you begin working with clients you may begin to wonder if they are fully participating. Clients can sometimes be polite and cooperative but still not completely enter into the psychotherapy experience. You might get an idea that this is happening by sensing that you are in something like a game of tug-of-war with a client. Similarly, it might seem to you that a client is being resistant or you might decide the client has motivational problems.

If you notice yourself experiencing a resistant situation it is important to check two things. First, your own expectations need to be explored.

Are you expecting clients or psychotherapy to be a particular way?

Do you have references about appropriate ways for clients to engage in the psychotherapy sessions?

What is it that you are presenting to clients that they are resisting?

Second, it is important to remain curious about what clients experience as they sit in front of you.

From a PCT perspective, when clients seem to be resisting, it's likely that you're disturbing something they are controlling and they're pushing back. It may be that you're subtly trying to steer the conversation; perhaps you think you've figured out what the problem is but the client hasn't seen it yet. If it feels as if the client is pushing back or resisting, it might be helpful to check out what you are providing to the interaction that the client is pushing back against.

Clients turn up to psychotherapy for all sorts of reasons. Clients don't bring you into their worlds unwittingly or accidentally. MOL will proceed smoothly when clients employ your services so that they can describe and explore the goings-on inside

their heads and observe where this takes them. Not all clients, however, will have the same purpose. Perhaps Cheryl is coming along just to keep her partner happy. Maybe Dudley has made an appointment to see you to keep his boss off his back. When Francine explained that she had been to see several counselors but nothing they did had changed anything for her, and now her daughter and mother would have to take her problems seriously, I wondered whether it might be more important for Francine to be taken seriously by her mother and daughter than to resolve the problems she described.

Whatever their reasons for attending, you can prevent a tug-of-war from developing with clients by being clear about your role. Your role as an MOL psychotherapist involves providing opportunities for clients to attend to higher perceptual levels. For some clients this just means that your services won't be of use to them. That's OK. If you are clear about what your job is and stick firmly to this, clients will be able to decide for themselves whether or not what you have to offer is for them.

It is up to the client to decide what to talk about. A tug-of-war could be expected to occur if you as the psychotherapist try to lead clients into conversations that you think should occur but they would rather not think about at the moment or are not bothered by. As an MOL psychotherapist you'll primarily be interested in discussing those areas associated with internal perceptual conflict, but it is ultimately up to the client to decide whether a discussion of these topics takes place. A tug-of-war is only possible as long as you're holding one end of the rope. MOL is about dropping the rope.

Savannah told me she had a number of "don't go there" places in her head. Sometimes, during the middle of a conversation she would purse her lips, or slightly smile, or her eyes would mist over. She would tell me that one of those places had just popped up. In this instance my emphasis was on the nature of the "don't go there" places rather than what any particular place was.

How many of these places do you have?

What is different between a 'go there' place and a 'don't go there' place?

How do you know when one of these places has popped up?

Are you always aware of these places?

Where are these 'don't go there' places when you're not thinking about them?

Do you get the same kind of feeling with all these places?

Clients often seem to work hard at not thinking about things. Of course to not think about something you have to have a pretty good idea of where and what it is! The thing clients are working hard not to think about can often be the very thing that holds the key to reorganizing. Perhaps not thinking about the problem is preventing reorganization from dissolving the problem and is the reason the problem has endured. Rather than telling or suggesting or advising clients what to talk about, however, the MOL psychotherapist would be more interested in the *now* experience of not thinking about something. If a client mentions something about trying hard not to think about a particular thing you might be interested in knowing:

## *What's been said*

Some scenarios I've experienced as I've practiced MOL are:

A tug-of-war

I've gone blank

Tell me what to do

Give me your opinion

Discovering why and how

When the psychotherapist is stuck

Progress is slow

I'm trying, I'm trying

How long has it been this way?

I also described:

Other problems and other MOL uses

## *The big deal*

Despite the different situations that can arise in psychotherapy the process of asking about “now” experiences and looking for an “up” direction remains the same.

## *Coming up*

Finishing touches.