

## Lesson 17 - The Gift of Contrast

One of the most powerful reframes you can offer your client is to help him see that difficult or apparently negative experiences are contributing to him rather than hindering him. Most people regret hard times and either wish they hadn't occurred, they blame others for their problems, or they beat themselves up for their errors. If your client is in the midst of a challenge, he may not see the gift it is offering. When you demonstrate to your client that all experiences are helpful, you empower him to change his perspective on what has happened or is happening, and move to the next more rewarding rung of personal evolution.

We learn through contrast. When something happens that we do not like, it stimulates our intention to create what we want instead. Everything in life is either ***It*** or ***Not It***.

***It*** experiences are those in alignment with our joy, passion, intention, and purpose.

***Not It*** experiences are those that grate against us, deplete us, and are misaligned with our joy and passion.

*Not It* experiences help us to recognize what is *It* and move in that direction. When you understand that an experience is *Not It*, the only real helpful question is, "What is *It* instead?"

Some sample dialogue you might offer your client:

*"So if dating guys who want to date other people is Not It, what is It?"*

*"Sounds like you're done with working in the corporate world."*

*"I'm hearing that you would much rather have your own private practice than deal with all the paperwork the system requires of you."*

Some clients tend to keep going over and over *Not It*, why *Not It* is *Not It*, and how angry, depressed, or victimized they are by *Not It*. But any further analysis or resistance to *Not It* will only keep your client stuck in *Not It*. Keep reminding your client that the only purpose of recognizing *Not It* is to give her clarity about what is *It* and move wholeheartedly in that direction.

We learn from both *It* and *Not It*. If you are learning to ride a bicycle, for example, you recognize that when you lean too far to the left, you fall and scrape your knee and it hurts. That's *Not It*. Then you lean too far the right and hurt yourself in that direction, you realize that, too, is *Not It*. Eventually you learn to stay balanced and experience the thrill of riding a bicycle—that's *It*!

It would be nice if you could just sit on the bicycle for the first time and ride like a champion. But that hardly ever happens. You need to learn how to ride. So even the falls, scrapes, and hurts ultimately move our toward your desired goal. The good news is that once you learn to ride, you own the skill for a lifetime. So the *Not Its* that led to *It* were but a minor inconvenience compared to your ultimate success. Help your client recognize the value of *Not It* as well as *It*, and together you will make contrast, and all experiences, your friend.

*"It takes great learning to understand that all things, events, encounters and circumstances are helpful."*

- *A Course in Miracles*, Manual for Teachers, p 10

**Exercise:**

1. Note three experiences in your life that seemed negative or painful at the time:

a.

b.

c.

2. Identify the **Not It** these experiences represented:

a.

b.

c.

3. What **It** did each of these experiences lead you to?

a.

b.

c.

4. Identify a challenging experience you are going through at this time:

What **Not It** is the experience showing you?

What **It** is the experience guiding you toward?

5. Identify a challenging experience a client, friend, or family member is going through:

What ***Not It*** is the experience showing that person?

What ***It*** is the experience guiding that person toward?

***Affirm:***

**Contrast is my friend, always moving me to greater joy and self-expression.  
I assist my clients to appreciate the value of contrast  
as a source of growth and expansion.**

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