

Module Five: Video Number 1:

Collapsing the Story

Welcome to this Module #5 which focuses on the 3rd Stage in the Radical Forgiveness process. Now, I'm sure you found a lot in the previous module to give you the belief in yourself that you can be there for a client, listen to their story in a totally no judgmental way, and to hold the space for them to feel their feelings. You'll be fantastic, we know that.

Now, in this Module, we take a long look at the 3rd stage which we call Collapsing the Story. Where in the 1st and 2nd stage we take the story at face value and just allow it to be what the client says it is, in this module, we begin to probe the story in order to begin separating fact from fiction and to have the client look at it from a more reflective standpoint. Even to bring a bit more understanding, mercy, and empathy towards the victimizer, perhaps. To walk in their shoes for a while and try to understand why they might have done what they did. And, then to ask what part they might have played in creating the situation themselves perhaps, and so on.

But let's be clear. This is not yet Radical Forgiveness because there is still the belief that something wrong happened and that one is still the victim in the situation. The scales are still tilted in the direction of the need to condemn. For that reason, it remains the case the first three stages, Telling the Story, Feeling the Feelings, and Collapsing the Story represent all that is possible for traditional forgiveness. It can no further than this step. And, while it is helpful and in many ways healing, it is not true forgiveness. How can it possibly be that if the belief remains that something bad happened and it was their fault?

As far as we're concerned, however, it is just one step in the process of Radical Forgiveness, and as such, it is a very valuable step. We learn a lot about our client and his or her story in this step. We get to know what drives them, what core beliefs they have about themselves, the people around them, and the world out there. It is during this stage that whatever pattern they might have shows up and what might really might be the reason they have created this situation. Remember the saying: "We are never upset for the reason we think."

COACHING TIP: Almost invariably the drama they are experiencing goes all the way back to one or both parents, usually the parent of the opposite sex, actually. So always gently probe how they feel about their parents. If there is another person involved, ask whether this person reminds them of their father or their mother. You'll be surprised how often they say yes. That's really the person they need to forgive.

Not only does it help us to see the patterns, the synchronicities, the oddities, and other factors, but as these things get revealed they offer the client some kind of 'evidence' that this situation is not just a random event without meaning or purpose. Something else is going on that we are not picking up with just our five senses.

They might also begin to see how they had constructed their story not just on the facts of what happened, but on their interpretation of what happened. These interpretations often have their genesis in early childhood formed out of a collection of beliefs formed at an early age in response to a single event, or a series of similar events.

Because young children are very egocentric, they imagine that the world revolves around them. When something occurs, for example when a parent leaves, they automatically think it's about them. They immediately make it up that it was their fault that the parent left. Out of that come other interpretations that feed on themselves. "If my father left because of me, I must be unlovable." "If my father doesn't love me, no man will ever love me." "If I love someone, they will leave me. It is therefore too risky to love anyone."

There's a video in the Resources section that shows how this story can actually form and gather a lot of steam. So, watch that video. You'll be surprised.

Anyway, that's how a story builds and becomes a whole series of strongly held, subconscious beliefs that run our lives. Other stories form around the periphery of the core story, and each of them play out in some form or another as our experience of life. Our life is often nothing more than the out-picturing of our stories repeated over and over again.

This is what happened with my sister Jill, of course. When our father demonstrated the kind of love for my daughter, Lorraine, that Jill always wanted to feel from him and had not felt, Jill took that to mean that she was inherently unlovable. That became the story she believed until she brought someone into her life (Jeff) who was able to make her discover her story and to see that it was false.

Now, ideally, the client will begin to see things in the story that will lead him or her to collapse their own victim story by opening up to the possibility that what might have been offered was a chance to see the situations they have created are simply reflections of their own consciousness and an outplaying of their false beliefs.

It is quite interesting when you bring people to an awareness that very often there is little about their story which is actually true. 90% of it probably is B.S. (And, I always say Belief System, but you know what I mean.) It was only the event itself, and the pain around it, that was real. The rest was interpretation.

COACHING TIP: Be careful not to destroy their story. You could easily destroy them if you do. After all, if we are not our stories, who the heck are we? They might jump to the conclusion that, "Without my story, I may no longer have an identity or any relevance at all." So be sure to support them dropping what they can but don't push it too hard.

I would also like to shine light on the idea that, while the pain we feel about the facts of what happened is real and is there to be felt, the pain attached to that which is one's interpretations, assumption, beliefs, and expectations is completely optional. Because it's not real in any sense. It has no basis in reality other than in that which is floating around in one's head. And that's basically junk.

This is carefully articulated in the **Radical Forgiveness Quick Worksheet**, Page 1 of which is downloadable in this module, so try it out for yourself. (We'll look at Page 2 in the next module which deals with the reframe.)

We also provide another worksheet called The Centrifuge. This tool helps the client, with your assistance and guidance, of course, to separate *what actually happened* in any situation from their *interpretation* of what happened.

A forgiveness centrifuge simply reverses the process by which the person created their stories. To use it, they take the story that they are living — the one that is causing their discomfort, which is certain to be a hopeless mixture of fact (like what happened) and interpretation (which is to say, all their thoughts, judgments, assessments, assumptions, and beliefs about what happened.) They feed the story into the top of the imaginary centrifuge, just like anyone would with carrots in a juicer, and then, in their own mind, see the machine separating the facts from the interpretations.

Then it asks them to make a list of the events themselves, and the interpretations they made about the facts. They will quickly realize that the list of interpretations is many times longer than the list of facts?

That, in itself, takes a tremendous amount of charge out of the story and collapses it down to a size more consistent with the reality of the event. They will come to see that their Spiritual Intelligence was giving them a chance to let those core-negative beliefs go and to make new choices about life.

So, download the Centrifuge Worksheet and try it for yourself, and then try the brief online version.

It is likely you will recommend this one to a client rather than a paper one, especially if you are working virtually with a client.

I guess this is all I need to say on this video. The thing is to download the PDF about core-negative beliefs and also the centrifuge and the first page of the Quick Worksheet. So, you're going to get a lot out of those things in this module. So, we'll see you in Module #6.