

# Pillar II Asking Exploratory Questions

“Inquiry for the sake of inquiry.” **Have fun with this.** Don't need to get it right. Clients are bringing curiosity and reflection to their inner worlds (perhaps for the first time). Go slow.



Every emerging and unfolding moment can be subject of exploration/inquiry.

Inquiry process, **over time clients do not take their thoughts and reactions as seriously, not presuming that what they are believing is truth, recognizing we aren't defined by what we've taken ourselves to be and ultimately seeing ourselves less through survival styles and old identifications.**

**Process of disidentification.**

# Pillar II Asking Exploratory Questions - Languaging

And what happens NOW when you say those words to your parents?

I notice that you smile as you put less pressure on yourself.

And what happens if you give yourself permission to feel that?

How do you experience the words, “it’s not fair”?

Are there any words that go with your anger?

What’s the scariest thing about conflict with your best friend? What are you fearing right NOW? What are you saying about yourself?

So there’s some settling in the belly as you talk about that. How about taking some time with that?

What was it like to give yourself the space and time to be with the grief (agency)?

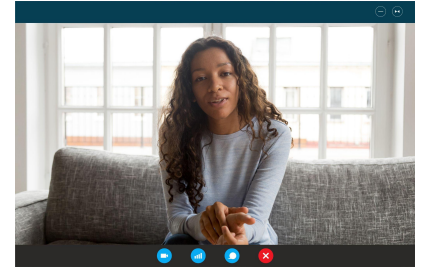
# Benefits and Therapeutic Power of Working In the Here and Now

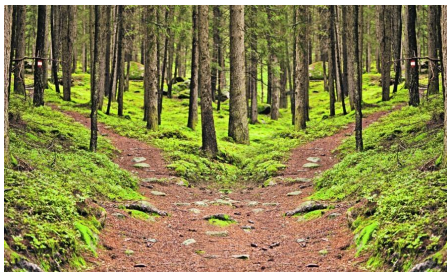
**Heightened Awareness:** Clients gain a deeper understanding of their emotional experiences and how they affect others.

**Reduced Anxiety:** By focusing on the present moment, clients often experience lower stress levels and fewer ruminations about the past or future.

**Enhanced Rapport:** Addressing the immediate relationship in a candid, supportive way can build a deeper, more genuine therapeutic bond.

**Increased Vitality:** The work is described as visceral and immediate, offering a more engaging and active therapeutic experience. More energizing.





**Drive to Survive**

**Authentic Drive**

In the exploration, eventually you will get to a **core dilemma**: “I want to connect, but I fear connection.” Be curious without taking sides. Exploratory vs. goal oriented.

It is a conflict/bind between what is real about us (authentic self) and that which we had to do to survive (adaptive Self).

Children rejected important developmental capacities in order to sustain attachment (earn love). That was ADAPTIVE! That made sense! **What a brilliant thing to do!**

### **Common early adaptations and how it is showing up with our clients (the cost)**

Disconnected from body and feelings and now chronic anxiety and lack of relationship.

Gave up needs to caretake and now feels unfulfilled and burned out.

Gave up autonomy and development of will and now feels stuck and depressed.

Rejected dependency and vulnerability and now feels empty and acutely disconnected.

Rejected playfulness, flexibility and heart and now feels challenged in intimacy.

**Favorite Defenses-  
Projecting, Control,  
Blame, Fawning,  
Shutting down, etc.**

**Attachment - Inhibitory-  
Shame/Anxiety**



The transformative  
power of moment by  
moment tracking!

Forms of Self-activation:

Primary Anger or Grief

Healthy Dependency

Boundaries

Open Heartedness

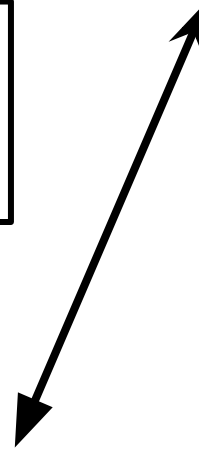
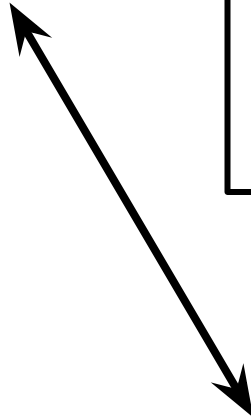
Fulfillment/pleasure

Vulnerability

Somatic Experience

Authentic expression

**Self Activation/Life Force  
Expression**



We do anything to earn our parents' love even in the most rejecting and abusive environments, so resolving trauma can feel threatening. If I change, then I lose what I wanted from my parents. The chance for that love is over. Grief, anger.

Remember the core dilemma in the exploration: The tension between authenticity and loss of attachment. That for which our client wants also fears. Can we hold and explore both without taking sides?



# Pillar III Reinforcing Agency

Agency- for our clients to see that they are the actors in their own plays. “I am the one living my life.”

Clients who experienced ACEs have higher likelihood of developing a fragmented, incoherent and unstable sense of self.

Sense of self becomes organized around shame. More reactive to life experiences held either as collapse or tension: “The world is out to get me.” “I am a victim.” “I being done to.” “I can’t trust anyone.”

Agency supports clients to have a greater awareness and clarity about the present ways they are relating to themselves and others (to see their role- self-responsibility).



# Pillar III Reinforcing Agency

Agency is the bridge between child consciousness and embodied adult consciousness.



## **Lack of Agency**

Difficulty listening to myself  
Reactive to life circumstances  
I have not control or choice  
Feel hopeless and helpless  
Threatened by internal states  
Life is happening to me (“being done to”)

## **Agency**

I am the one living my life. I am the actor in my play.  
See my part in emotional or relational challenges  
**I can choose how I respond**  
Less dependent on outside to know self-worth  
Accept and welcome my feelings and needs.

# Pillar III Reinforcing Agency

Agency is the opposite of shame and blame. **As children, we could not impact our external world. As adults we can.**

We do not focus on the behaviors and how clients react, we focus how clients **RELATE** to themselves and these external circumstances.

A female client stuck in an abusive relationship. We of course are listening the latest incident of verbal abuse, but **we are also tracking intently how she is relating to herself**: “I just want to hide. I feel that it is my fault. I am unlovable. If I would only improve, he might be kinder.”

Rephrase: Client says, “I’m ashamed after I get angry with my mother.” Therapist then says, “It sounds like you are shaming yourself after you get angry with your mother.” **The difference between experience happening to us vs. what we are doing to ourselves. Changing a noun to a verb.**



# Pillar III Reinforcing Agency

**With agency, our clients start to experience themselves as increasingly independent from the environment's response in determining how authentically they can experience themselves.**

Clients often feel that the pressure or judgement is coming from the outside world when in fact the pressure and judgement often is coming from within.

**We are skeptical therapists:** Don't necessarily accept what our clients are telling us as the truth about them. "You have this belief that..." "You have this idea that..."

**Agency offers increasing freedom from our false/adaptive self. It feels more spacious, fully alive and clear. "Now from this place, look back at your conversation with your husband."**



## Pillar III Agency Languageing

Any moment of agency, we stop and reinforce. We are looking for the “cracks” in familiar patterns (“child consciousness”). And then make it experiential!

**“Sounds like you made a decision that responded to the moment and not reactive.”**

“So, you went out with friends when your wife was out of town.”

**What happens NOW as you give yourself permission to feel your sadness.**

What does that feel like, in this moment, to feel anger towards your mother?

**When you get to the place where you feel OK, it’s enough, you just let me know.**

Wow! That seemed to be your truth. And now some big feelings are coming up.

**Sounds like we are at a crossroads. Which way do you want to go?**

You stayed true to what you felt and needed. What’s coming up?