

Questions for Self-Inquiry

Open questions that give the client back their own answer. Use them in the intake, in trance, or as homework between sessions.

HOW TO ASK

Ask one question, then stop talking. Count silently to ten.

Avoid "why." What, when, where, who and how go around the defenses.

Use their exact words back, and write them down verbatim.

"And what else?" after every answer, until they say nothing.

Never lead, and never rescue. Silence is the question working.

OPENING THE TERRITORY

- ? What would you like help with? Tell me in your own words.
- ? What limiting beliefs hold you back, or keep you from reaching your goal?
- ? How does having this problem make you feel?
- ? When, or where, or with whom does it happen?
- ? What do you have to think about to feel like that?
- ? What have you already tried, and what happened?
- ? Why now? What made you decide to deal with this at this point?

FINDING THE OUTCOME

- ? What do you want instead of this?
- ? If this were completely resolved, what would you be doing differently on an ordinary Tuesday?
- ? How will you know it has worked? What is the first small sign you would notice?
- ? Who else will notice, and what will they see?
- ? Zero to ten, where is this right now? What would take it down by one point?

FINDING THE ORIGIN

- ? When did the behavior start? What were you feeling at the time?
- ? When was the first time you remember feeling this way?
- ? What was happening in your life in the year it began?
- ? If you had to guess at the age you were when this started, what number comes to mind first?

FINDING THE PAYOFF

- ? What is the benefit of keeping this behavior?
- ? What keeps you from changing it?
- ? What's the downside of giving up this problem?
- ? What would you lose if this changed tomorrow?
- ? Who wants you to get better? Who doesn't?
- ? What's in the way here?
- ? If the part of you that does this could speak, what would it say it is trying to do for you?
- ? How long has it been doing that job? Is it still working?

GOING DEEPER INTO THE FEELING

- ? If there were an emotional component to the pain or symptom, what would it be?
- ? If there were a deeper emotion underlying this problem, what might it be?
- ? What does that feel like in your body, and where exactly?
- ? If that feeling had a shape, a color, a weight, a temperature, what would it be?
- ? Is there a message this pain is telling you?
- ? If your friend had this, what would it symbolize?

FINDING THE EXCEPTIONS

- ? When is it not a problem? What is different about those times?
- ? Has there ever been a time you expected this to happen and it didn't?
- ? When was the last time you handled something like this well?

WHEN THE SESSION IS STUCK

- ? What is still bothering you about this right now?
- ? If there were another issue we haven't yet identified, what would it be?
- ? What are we not understanding about this situation?
- ? What core issue have we been unable to find?
- ? Is there any part of you that objects to letting this go?
- ? And what else?

MEANING AND INTEGRATION

- ? What part of you that is asleep is this situation trying to awaken?
- ? What am I being invited to learn here?
- ? How am I being invited to grow?
- ? What self-concept is this mirroring?
- ? If we could reframe this so it felt different when you think about it, how would we do that?
- ? Picture yourself next week in the situation you described. What happens now?

