

A case study: Michaela

By Yehuda Tagar

In 1999, Yehuda Tagar saw this client for counselling, and later wrote this case study, while still living and working in Melbourne, Australia. Yehuda is the founder of Psychophonetics and the principal teacher of Psychophonetics in the professional training courses based in Cape Town (South Africa), and with a branch in Stroud (UK).

Introduction, background & presenting issue

Michaela is in her late 30s, a mother of three and a professional business woman, who has come to counselling because she is between two men, yet again. This time she wishes to make use of the crisis and the necessary transition as an opportunity to look within. She wishes to get in touch with the layers of her inner being from which she feels cut off from, suspecting that she is using relationships as a substitute from - fear of being alone, of not surviving on her own, of avoiding her inner being. She wants to come to the core of this pattern.

In our conversation, while recalling the inner layers of herself she wishes to get in touch with she mentions in passing the possibility of being sexually abused in childhood. I have learnt from experience not to hone down on this when it is first mentioned, but to mark it clearly. Later, when we come back to it I realize that she came to this information in a state of meditation, through a powerful haunting picture, which she was able to confirm through checking out some of the external details with her mother.

Creation of the *common picture*

As the story is told, she summarises how she always moves from an emotionally unavailable man with whom she feels safe, but deeply unengaged and unhappy, to an emotionally expressive man with whom there is a deep emotional engagement, but also a danger. This

time she wants to find a way to leave the man, not for another man, but because of herself, for her inner emotional truth. However, security fears are holding her back.

As the counsellor, I start to create in my mind a possible line of action which would entail awakening to the inner dimension of the dynamics that attract her to the new man.

Initial *wish*

Responding to a question about the woman she wants to become in a few years on her own ground, two major aspirations become clear:

1. to be able to be happy, overcoming a deep un-accessed inner unhappiness, and
2. to be free of expectations and neediness which still largely controls her life.

Focusing the picture

In order to sharpen and focus Michaela's *wish*, I ask for the summary of the experiences triggered by the new man in her life:

- Not being happy with emotionally closed men
- Suspicion of fear of being on her own
- Attraction to emotionally expressive men
- Fear of emotionally expressive men
- Something deeply unhappy inside
- General Insecurity

In reflecting on these characteristics we both have the feeling that a common picture has been reached between us as to the major elements in her internal dynamics, regarding what she wishes to understand and to develop now, and using the present relationship crisis as an opportunity.

Operational *wish*

Her wish now is: *To be stable within myself, free of the neediness and capable of happiness.*

Initial *plotting*

This wish statement is enough in my view to give her a direction in the action phase of the session. The suggested plot is to tap into the

inner resources that are accessed and triggered by the new man in her life, and to explore these experiences within, rather than in relation to that man. She agrees.

Action phase - part 1: Exploration

An *Echo* process begins with firstly becoming aware of her body, then, the name of that man is spoken a few times to her. By hearing the name spoken to her, it then resounds in the bodily memory, by-passing the selective mind, like the echo-chamber resonance of a string in a guitar.

To the third mention of that man's name, her experience is that the echo in her body becomes a flow of energy from her heart centre, moving towards her throat, being blocked there and becoming a lump in her throat. It forms into a cold, still ball in her throat. She is paralysed with pain and fear.

Squeeze

I ask her to express this sensation with her hands and she creates two fists in an excruciating squashing gesture. She presses this gesture into a cushion and moves out of it.

Exit and behold

Sitting in a chair in front of the empty space in which she has gestured the above experience, she can imagine the experience re-lived in this gesture, as if on a screen in front of her. She is being flooded with memories. She *sees* events in front of her, while sensing these events in her body at the same time. This combination of closeness and distance makes it possible to bring up memories and to reflect on them at the same time.

Staging (advanced visualisation) - reporting on what she sees:

- Being held at the back of the head by her grandfather

- Picturing the dark space of a barn space on the farm with light shafts from above through cracks in the ceiling
- She is 3 years old
- Wanting to vomit, cannot breath, choking
- His penis stuck in her mouth
- Picture of him taking off his belt, threatening her with it

She is feeling stuck in the chair, paralysed and cannot move. She is not completely here.

Excarnation sequence – Exit

Counsellor: *Are you in the body or have you left it?*

Client: *I have partially left it, to the left side of where the body is.*

There is a stronger sensation in the body of a heart ache. Michaela gestures this, with one hand on her throat and the other hand clenched fist, expressing the pain in her heart. She contorts the whole body like the fist, and then sharply moves out of this position.

Action Phase part 2: Resourcefulness

Breathing-Healing starts

Michaela starts to breathe deeply, with a rocking movement from side to side in an elliptic shape. She is encouraged to continue and let it unfold as it is obvious from the last squeezing action there is a new channel for breathing opening up, and that healing is taking place through it.

Visualisation-Nurturing

The healing energy appears to her as the colour blue and is circulating from above down into her throat, heart and gut, restoring her ability to be present in the body. We let this take its course and she becomes very present and stable in this experience.

Preparation for empowerment/unblocking process

Now Michaela is ready to confront the empty space on the chair, visualising herself in the previous suffering position:

Counsellor: What do you see?

Client: There is a dent in her heart, caused by crushed trust.

Externalizing the invasive force

She then expresses into a cushion the force that made that dent in her heart, using an aggressive, violent gesture of cutting, breaking, destroying into the cushion.

Sounds-Naming for the hitting: G & K

Using the sounds of *G* & *K*, she empties dark blocks from her system - from the throat, gut, mouth, face. At this point, by externalising this internalised aggression, it becomes a cleansing operation of detoxification.

Sound-naming for the emptying: FIRAAFF

After this cleansing activity, a need emerges in Michael - to empty it down through the lower back. We find and use the sound *FIRAAFF* downward and backward through the lower back, like the picture of the nerve branching in the form of a horse tail from the central nerve cord. The repeated movements and this sound result in a sense of purifying and clearing that enables her breathing to reach the lower part of her body. Following this improved breathing is the sensation of a flow of energy to her lower body.

Guarding

We look back at the empty chair again:

Counsellor asks: *What does she need now?*

Client replies: *She needs nurturing, protection.*

The following process is how a *guard* of protection is created:

1. First, she needs to invoke the potential power to protect herself. Situated behind the empty chair, in response to the question as to what would she do as a mature woman to protect this girl, she becomes the defender of the girl in the chair. She pushes the offender forward away from the girl with a movement and

the sound *GGGAH* - in a hitting, assertive intonation and gesture. She is encouraged to speak the words she really wants to speak in this position. She says: *Go away*, with a lot of determination.

2. Positioning herself in front of the chair, with one hand holding the vulnerable place (the heart) and the other warding off invasion – this is the position of the *guardian*.
3. She now observes the one in-between - the girl in need of healing - now that she is being protected. She needs to enter into her position in order to find out the sort of healing needed.

Entering through the Landing Pad (the

untainted core of selfhood in the Life-Body)

I have found in my clinical work with clients, in the recovery from traces of sexual abuse, there is a place in the body that is not contaminated by the experience. This place is called - *The landing pad* – a place in which something in the human spirit, represented in the human body, is beyond abuse and contamination. Through this landing pad, the mature consciousness can re-enter the body with the power to take charge and to heal.

Staging

When I question her about a *landing pad*, Michaela says she can imagine a space in front of her forehead, with pure luminescent magenta colour, that is not contaminated.

Invoking

Michaela imagines and collects all her healing power that consists of all that is good, pure, powerful and beautiful and sees it as a rainbow. She then plays with the rainbow with her hands, then her whole body, until she is dancing and sounding it with *SSH HH*.

Nurturing

With the rainbow in her hands, Michaela enters into the position of the girl, through the *landing pad*- in front of her forehead- and gave the girl a healing internal massage, as the child

required. Then she takes this child into her arms and comforts her.

Self-Parenting

Holding her in a safe place in her chest, Michaela makes a commitment of self-care to the girl inside.

Counsellor: Does she hear you?

Client: She does.

Counsellor: Does she believe you?

Client: She believes me.

Counsellor: Will you live up to this promise without compromising her trust?

Client: I will.

She integrates the girl into her body, and they become one.

Integration: The 'I am' position

Counsellor: Are you here?

Client: I am here.

Counsellor: Can you say so?

Client: I am here.

Michaela gestures the experience of being here and she looks like a guard at peace, with straight palms pointing upwards, aligning with her centre.

As an exercise, it is suggested that she could make this statement to each of the significant men in her life. She wants to do this, and as their names are mentioned one by one, she imagines each one of them in front of her, and makes the statement *-I am here -* in her native language. In her experience of doing this, they get the message, including her father, grandfather, husband, partners, sons. She appears powerful and peaceful at the same time.

She concludes by saying *- I will be here for you -* to herself and commits to doing this when in times of being in need in the future.

Wrapping Up

Michaela chooses to go out for a walk, before we summarise the session, to meet the elements and the open air with her newly found clarity and strength.

In conclusion

We go back through the major phases of the session and take notes. As a practice at home, it is agreed that she will re-visit her inner girl each day to strengthen this new connection. Another session is planned for two weeks if needed.

Follow up

A telephone conversation two weeks later confirms that the level of safety achieved in the session has been sustained, a weight has lifted and she feels the space is much clearer around her. Michaela is maintaining the ritual of self-care.

↓ *The recent IAPPOz professional development weekend gathering, at a residential retreat in the Yarra Valley*



Introducing Psychophonetics Soundwork - Video

See the YouTube video of a conversation between Yehuda Tagar and Rosy Daniel in the UK about the use of sounds in Psychophonetics.

Website link: www.psychophonetics.com.au
Go to the *Resources* page and scroll to the bottom of the page to access this video