

CHAPTER FOUR

Example Treatment Transcript

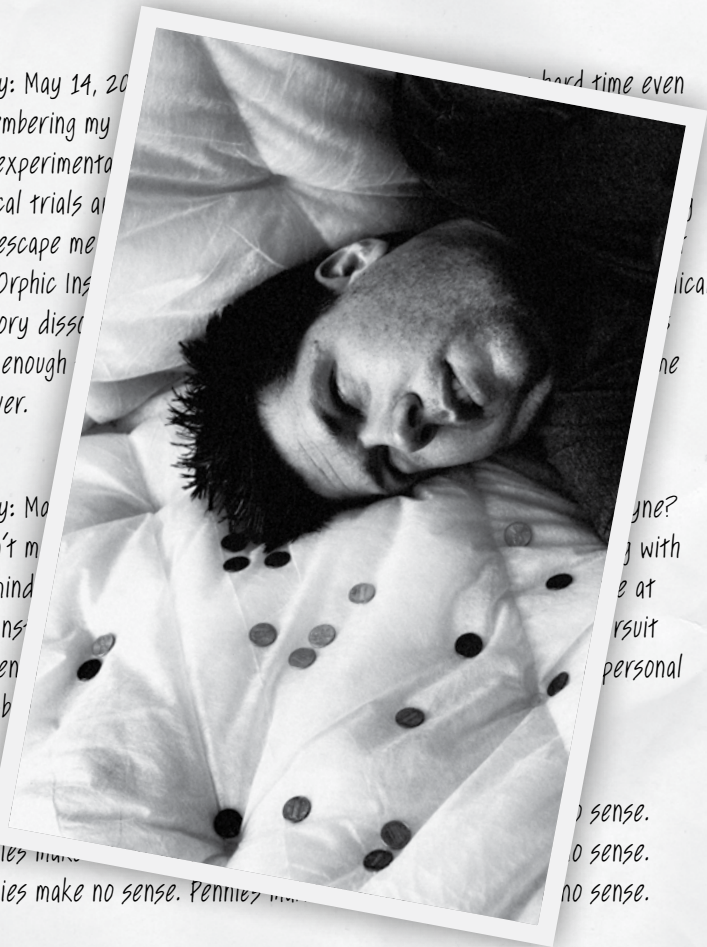
As long as we are alive, important parts of the brain are dividing. The brain is not marble, it is clay, and our clay never hardens.

— Jonah Lehrer

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In order to give you a complete picture of what a therapy session can look like, I have prepared the following transcript from an earlier group. I have also annotated it to point out useful details as they are encountered.

Transcript

15 November, 2000

Observation of four patients, designated M[REDACTED], S[REDACTED], T[REDACTED], and E[REDACTED]. For reasons of medical privacy, patients S[REDACTED] and T[REDACTED]'s memories have been omitted from this transcript.

Patient M[REDACTED] is male, age 46, brown hair, brown eyes, heavy-set build. He wears glasses and a wedding band.

Patient E[REDACTED] is female, age 24, red hair, blue eyes, slight build. She has an obvious scar on the right side of her head, which she attempts to keep covered with her hair.

Patient S[REDACTED] is female, age [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Patient T[REDACTED] is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Choosing the Traveler

S[REDACTED]: I think we're ready to start. We've written the Memory Triggers and put them in this container [indicating a white box in the middle of the table]. I'm going to be the Reader. So now we have to choose the first Traveler.

E[REDACTED] [Indicates M[REDACTED]] I think you should go first.

M[REDACTED]: Okay. But I'll need another penny.

S[REDACTED]: I will help you remember. [S[REDACTED] gives her penny to M[REDACTED]].

For the sake of space, we have omitted S[REDACTED]'s reading of the treatment instructions from this transcript.



Murphy's First Memory

[Patient Murphy reaches into the container and draws a Memory Trigger. Murphy has two pennies, Eddy and Ted each have one, and Sammie has none.]

Murphy: [Reads from paper] "A paper airplane."

[Points at Ted] Would you start?

Ted: Did someone close teach you how to make this paper airplane?

Murphy: Yes, and it was my father. [Points at Eddy]

Eddy: Did your father teach you this when you were a small child?

Murphy: Yes, and that's why I'd brought the paper airplane to his grave.

Sammie: Had you written a message for him on the paper plane?

Murphy: Yes, and it was something he had told me when I was young.

Sammie: Did you miss him?

Murphy: Yes, and I'd visited his grave regularly.

[Murphy closes his eyes and thinks for a moment.]

Murphy: I remember a time when... it was ten years after my father had died. When I was young, he taught me how to make paper airplanes. We'd sit together and talk about his father, who had been a fighter pilot back in WWII, and his own experiences flying in Vietnam. He always said, "Don't go looking for trouble. It'll find you soon enough." Every year since he died, I taken a paper airplane with those words on it and put it on his grave.

The cemetery was pleasant enough, nestled in the rolling Iowa hills. I remembered visiting it every Memorial Day when I was growing up, watching the American Legion ceremony and putting flowers on graves of my father's family. Now, it was late October, and there was a chill in the air.

Notice how each Guiding Question and corresponding answer builds on the one before it. By focusing on a line of questioning about the Memory Trigger, the Guides have already created a sense of momentum for Murphy's journey.

Note how the subject incorporates all of the elements from the Memory Trigger and the Guiding Questions and gives the Guides additional detail that helps explain what they saw, e.g. that his father was a fighter pilot. He grounds the beginning of the memory in specifics, thus giving them a clearer picture of what happened.

M [REDACTED] probably realizes that E [REDACTED] is picking up on a childhood dream of his, rather than what actually happened.

Notice the shift in location. Memories can span more than one incident.

As I knelt there before my father's grave, I said...
What did I do or say then?

[M [REDACTED] offers a penny to E [REDACTED].]

E [REDACTED]: You said, "This is the first plane we made together. I know it looks it, too. I'm giving it to you now because I want you to have it. I probably won't be back. We launch for Mars in April. Thank you for giving me the courage and the wings, Dad."

M [REDACTED]: Or was it... [turning to T [REDACTED]]

T [REDACTED]: You said "You were right, Dad. She did find me—Susan. I didn't think it could happen again after Lydia, but it did. Teddy likes her too. We're getting married tomorrow."

[M [REDACTED] thinks for a moment before giving the penny to T [REDACTED]. M [REDACTED] has one penny left.]

M [REDACTED]: I remember now. I said, "You were right, Dad. She did find me—Susan. I didn't think it could happen again after Lydia, but it did. Teddy likes her too. We're getting married tomorrow."

That night, Susan and her sister, Carol, stopped by the farmhouse to drop off a few things for the reception the next day. Afterward, Carol and my son Teddy were playing with the dog out in the yard while Susan and I stood on the back porch... the porch my great-grandfather had built.

As she looked around at the preparations for the reception, she asked me, "Do you think this is going to work out?"

[M [REDACTED] turns to S [REDACTED], holding out his remaining penny.] What... what was it that I did or said?

S [REDACTED]: You said "No, it's going to be a disaster. But it'll be beautiful while it lasts".

Maryanne: [Furrowing his brow and turning to **Eddie**] Or was it...

Eddie: You put your arm around Susan's waist and pulled her close and said, "Oh, we'll make it work. I'm playing for keeps." And you smiled, watching the sun go down. "But as far as tomorrow goes, well, I guess that depends on whether or not my sister shows up."

[**Maryanne** smiles and hands the penny to **Eddie**.]

Maryanne: That's it. I remember now. I put my arm around Susan's waist and pulled her close and said, "Oh, we'll make it work. I'm playing for keeps." And I smiled, watching the sun go down. "But as far as tomorrow goes, well, I guess that depends on whether or not my sister shows up."

She laughed, and I knew that next year we'd go visit Dad together.

[**Maryanne** writes down "When I think of paper airplanes I remember when I knew that I'd made the right decision to ask Susan to marry me. It was such a relief after all I had been through," in the first section of his Questionnaire.]

A penny for my thoughts. [**Maryanne** reaches in and takes a penny from the bowl.]

[**Terrence** and **Eddie** both have two pennies, **Maryanne** has one, and **Susan** still has none.]

Terrence: [To **Eddie**] So, which of us goes first?

Eddie: You go ahead.

Terrence: Alright.

Note the distress that this possibility causes the subject. That does not mean that it isn't what happened, but given this feedback and that this is a pleasant memory, **Eddie** should be especially careful to look closely.