

Representational Exercise - Managing negative emotions

One of the things people find most difficult with emotional responses is making them into some concrete form which their mind can then work on. I believe developing some form, some tangible representation, greatly enhances our ability to deal with emotional responses.

This technique is an ideal example of this process of making our emotional state into something we can easily manipulate and change for the better.

The basic steps to this process are:

1. Name the emotion you are wanting to work on / control / change / reduce.
2. Think about where it manifests itself in your body - where is the sensation? Notice whereabouts in your body this feelings starts.
3. If this emotion / sensation were a thing what might it be? Examples of this are how people often describe a sensation of anger or anxiety as a fiery red ball in the stomach or depression as a dark cloud over their head or a heavy weight on their shoulders.
4. Do not try and interpret the representation let it be what ever feels right to describe the sensation / emotion as it is in you right now.
5. Refine its location, is it in you or outside of you?
If it is in your head where exactly? To the front, to the back, left or right.
If it is in your body? Where exactly?
If outside your body where exactly?
6. Now consider some of the following:
 - What colour is the representation?
 - How heavy or light is it?
 - What temperature?
 - Are there any other descriptors which will help fully define the negative aspects of this state - example how big is it? Does it move / vibrate?
7. As you think about your negative state / feeling / emotion right now what level would you put it at on a scale of 1 to 10?
On your scale consider 1 as very low and 10 very high.
8. Having established a representation for the negative state now start the change process...



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Making change

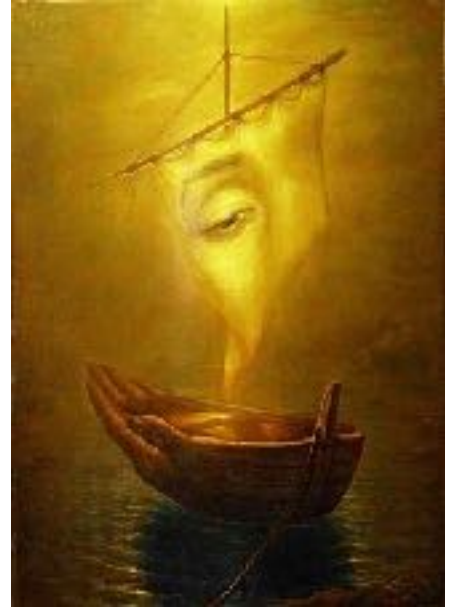
1. If you could change the colour of your representation to a nice comfortable colour you like what would that be?
2. As you change the representation to that very nice comfortable colour what happens to the following, do any change? If so in what way?

Does the representation you have change?
The weight - does it become heavier or lighter?
The temperature - warmer or cooler?
The size - smaller or larger?

3. Can you reduce the size of the representation?
4. Can you move the representation?
If so where might you want to move it to?
Consider different locations in your body /
head or even outside of you if that feels right.

5. Having made these changes how does that affect the feeling / state /
emotion?

6. What level is the emotion / state / feeling at now on your 1 to 10 scale?



Notes and thoughts

