



# The Therapeutic “Aha”!

**10**

STRATEGIES FOR  
GETTING YOUR  
CLIENTS  
UNSTUCK

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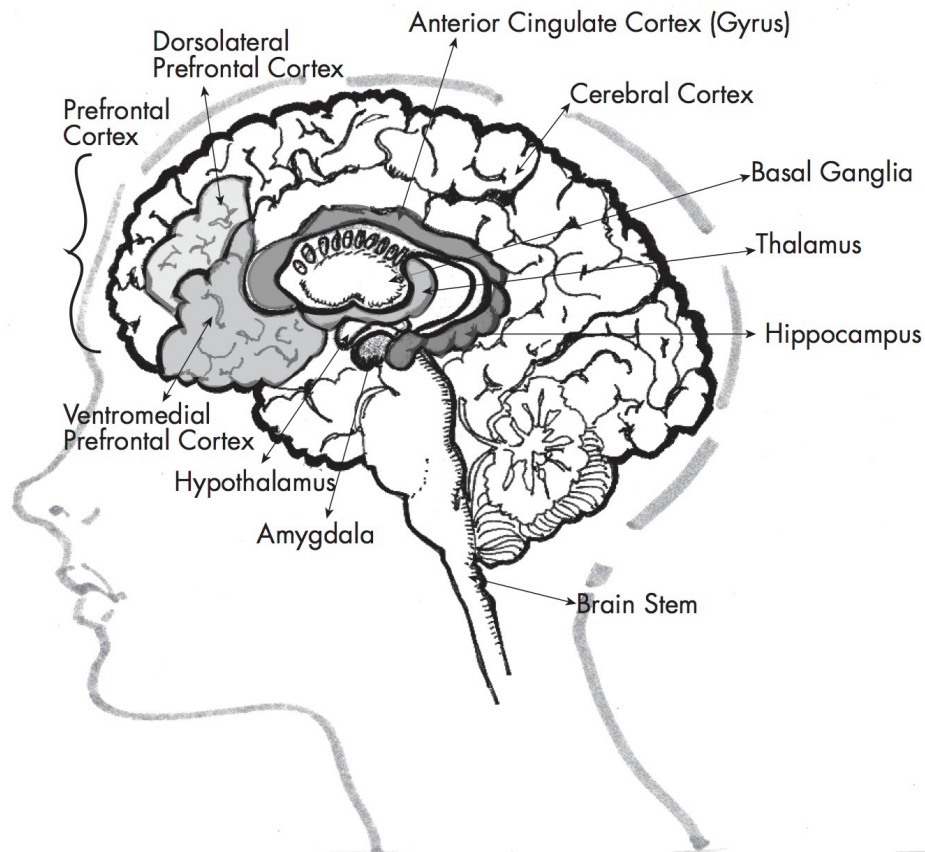
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## Worksheets and Bonus Materials

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# Regions of the Emotional Brain

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 8 (hardcover edition)



The premise of *The Therapeutic "Aha!"* book is that to effect deep and lasting change for our clients, we have to reach the "emotional brain"—the part of the brain that houses automatic, unconscious patterns. Sitting beneath our logical neocortex, the emotional part of the brain does not respond to analytic arguments and verbal reasoning, it learns from experience, association, and repetition.

Thus, therapeutic insight and counteractive coping strategies only go so far; until we intervene with something the emotional brain can understand—a *compelling felt experience*—old, established neural patterns will persist.

Following are worksheets from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* book and a few bonus handouts you can use as a guide for updating old patterns and crafting felt, transformational experiences for your clients.

Wishing you and your clients much success and many more "Aha" moments,

Sincerely,  
Courtney

Figure 1.1. Regions of the emotional brain.

# Align, Lift, and Lead Worksheet

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 47 (hardcover edition)

## I. Make It a "Has Been"

When reflecting back your understanding of the problem to the client, use the "has been" tense change. This implies that an ongoing action has ended or will end.

- *You have been having these feelings of . . . (depression, anxiety, guilt, etc.)*
- *You're thinking on this has been . . .*
- *Your mind has been questioning things, even though you recognize you did what came to you to do and it made sense then.*

## II. Separate Feelings, Behaviors, and Thoughts From the Person's Identity

People say things like, "I'm angry," "I'm a loser," "I can't get past it," and so on. Empower the person by talking in terms of thoughts and feelings, instead of "you" are this or that.

- *There's been a whole bunch of anger around that situation.*
- *Troubling, unhelpful thoughts have been showing up that you realize are not in your best interest.*

## III. Lift and Lead

Add a word, phrase, or statement to your reflection that acknowledges the client's strengths, engenders hope, and leads the client in the direction he or she desires.

- *There's been a whole bunch of anger that's been getting in the way of you feeling secure and at ease, doing things that are beneficial and useful.*
- *Even though you've had these troubling thoughts, you're obviously smart and motivated and it's great you're here.*
- *So that experience was really disturbing and you'd like to move beyond it, so it doesn't affect you like that anymore.*

# Locating Embodied Beliefs Worksheet

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 66 (hardcover edition)

## A. Current Problem/Situation

1. The current undesired response occurs when \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When I'm in this situation, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
3. And I notice these sensations in my body \_\_\_\_\_.
4. And it feels as if I am \_\_\_\_\_, other people are \_\_\_\_\_, and life is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. To avoid these feelings and thoughts, I \_\_\_\_\_.

## B. Earlier Emotional Memories

6. When I trace these sensations, feelings, or thoughts back to an earlier time in my life, it reminds me of when \_\_\_\_\_.
7. And I had these feelings \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Because it gave me the impression that I am \_\_\_\_\_, other people are \_\_\_\_\_, and life is \_\_\_\_\_.
9. I dealt with it then by \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The advantage of responding this way was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
11. The disadvantage of responding this way was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
12. What I'd like to feel and think now is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

# RECON Process Worksheet

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 85 (hardcover edition)

1. **R**ecall the current undesired emotional response, *briefly*.
2. **E**xplore for a similar emotional memory and the associated beliefs and behaviors that got attached to it. (*You can also use the Locating Embodied Beliefs worksheet for this step.*)
3. **C**reate a calm, positive experience that elicits the desired response (*such as feeling peaceful, secure, at ease, fully present, etc.*)
4. **O**bservationally describe the memory while remaining emotionally present.
5. **N**eutralize negative emotional meanings with contrasting positive experiences that update the original learning. (*This can be done via imagery, storytelling, humor, role-play, music, and mindful movement as described in the subsequent chapters of the book.*)

# Breath-Symbol Imagery Script

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 106 (hardcover edition)

(Adapted from Jon Connelly's Rapid Resolution Therapy™)

*Begin by collaborating with the client to create an image of his or her desired emotional response, then ask the client to imagine something in nature or an animal in the wild that represents his or her desired qualities. When you have the client's symbol and understand the attributes the client associates with it, proceed with the script below:*

Rest with your eyes closed and imagine your [client's symbol] as you take a deep breath in. That's it. Now slowly exhale. Good job. See that [symbol] again and inhale. There you go, and slowly exhale. Now, you may or may not continue imagining your [symbol] as you are aware of your breath, noticing you can breathe more slowly and deeply than you normally breathe . . . imagine breathing in the qualities of that [symbol] . . . letting the essence of that [symbol] infuse every cell, every tissue, every fiber of your being, as your mind sets up more and more for what is represented by [symbol] and your ultimate well-being.

That's it, and whenever you exhale, you release what you no longer need back into the earth, where it transforms that energy into [name qualities of symbol]. . . then you can imagine taking that transformed energy up from the ground through your feet . . . legs . . . hips . . . that's it . . . that energy keeps traveling through your abdomen, back . . . Yes, all the way up through your spine . . . spreading through your head, where it clears, heals, organizes, and supports all of those things that are in your best interest . . . revealing peace, light . . . wisdom. And all of that is just working for you whether [symbol] comes to mind or not. That's it . . . and when you're ready, ever so gently, find your way back here, and take a big breath in . . . and slowly open your eyes.

# Compassionate Guide Script

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 102 (hardcover edition)

Take a few mindful breaths and when you are ready, make a gentle smile and imagine creating an image that can represent a warm, kind, compassionate guide you can evoke whenever you would like to access wisdom, support, or comfort. Your guide may be in human form, an animal, or ethereal. Maybe it doesn't take a clear form, but just feels like a body of light or warm energy that you can receive and take in. Whatever image comes to mind is usually perfect for you, and it can even change from time to time, depending on your wants and needs.

If you'd like for your guide to be in human form, would you like for it to be male, female, or androgynous? What facial features or clothing would you give it? How old would you like the guide to be? If you envision your guide as someone familiar like an ancestor or spiritual figure, that is fine as long as you feel a sense of total acceptance and unconditional love from this figure. Imagine your guide looking at you with soft eyes and a warm smile. Or, if you like, the guide could hold your hand, give you a hug, or lovingly embrace you in some way. The point is to imagine the *feeling* of receiving unconditional support, encouragement, and acceptance from someone or something.

If you don't get a clear image of a guide, you could just imagine breathing in light, energy, or something else that evokes feelings of warmth, love, kindness, and acceptance. As you exhale, imagine releasing pain, troubling thoughts, or tension.

If you like, you can communicate with your guide, asking for advice, insight, wisdom, or perspective. I don't know if you'll get an answer now or later, but an answer will come, and often when you least expect it.

# Superhero Story Template

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 124 (hardcover edition)

**Your Superhero Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Origin Story:** (Usually begins with thinking your life or homeland was okay, until something happens to alter or destroy your world as you knew it.)

**Superpower(s):** (Special sense or skill you developed out of your life circumstances.)

**Secret or Known Identity:** (Do you tell people about your special abilities or feel like you have to keep them a secret? If you keep them secret, why?)



# Superhero Story Template

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* p. 124 (hardcover edition)

**Sidekick(s):** (A special friend or ally, could be a person, pet, or metaphorical figure.)

**Championing Cause:** (What injustice, principle, or cause motivates you and gives you a sense of purpose?)

**Kryptonite:** (What weakens you? Hint: It usually is something that comes from your "home" planet such as guilt, resentment, substance abuse, manipulation, etc.)

**Supernatural Guide:** (A figurative or literal being in your life that imparts wisdom, support, or guidance. Could be your higher self, may not be outside of you.)

# Role-Play Game Ideas

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* pp. 129-133 (hardcover edition)

(Adapted from Jon Connelly's Rapid Resolution Therapy™)

- I. **"There's nothing I need to do about that right now."**
  - A. Tell client you are going to ask them to do things they realize they can't do anything about **right now**. Ex. *"People are polluting the Potomac river, make them stop! Hurry!"*
  - B. Instruct client to say; *"There's nothing I need to do about that right now."*
  - C. Keep going with similar absurd requests with client repeating, *"There's nothing I need to do about that right now,"* until client is laughing and answering quickly and automatically.
  - D. Next, ask client to do things the obsessive worry or ruminating thoughts have been asking her to do such as, *"Get your mom to be less critical."*
  - E. Instruct client to continue responding with the statement, *"There's nothing I need to do about that right now,"* until they can feel the truth of it.
  
- II. **"I'm not in a position to do that."**
  - A. Tell client you are going to ask her to do things she knows are not within her resources or responsibility to do, such as, *"Go ahead and pay a little extra income tax this year, you know, so those big corporations can pay a little less."*
  - B. Instruct client to say emphatically, *"I'm not in a position to do that."*
  - C. Continue with absurd statements and segue to the real requests client has been having trouble refusing.
  - D. Repeat until client feels more secure and comfortable with new response.
  
- III. **"It doesn't exist" game (good for getting present & not reliving trauma)**
  - A. Ask client to tell you something they were doing earlier that they know they are not doing right now, such as *"brushing my teeth."*
  - B. Ask client to remember brushing her teeth as you do following role-play:

Therapist: *Hey, stop brushing your teeth!*  
Client: *I'm not brushing my teeth.*  
Therapist: *Well, get me to stop brushing my teeth.*  
Client: *You're not brushing your teeth either.*  
Therapist: *Well, where is brushing your teeth?*  
Client: *It doesn't exist.*
  - C. Repeat until client is responding with *"It doesn't exist."* automatically.
  - D. Then ask client to stop an aspect of the events that have been troubling her while she repeats same 3 phrases affirming their non-existence.

Example: Recurring memory of a dog attack  
Therapist: *Get that dog off your leg!*  
Client: *He's not on my leg.*  
Therapist: *Well get him off my leg!*  
Client: *He's not on your leg either.*  
Therapist: *Where is it?*  
Client: *It doesn't exist.*
  - E. Repeat until client can recall memory with less distress and stay present.

# Modifying Mood and Meaning with Music & Poetry

from *The Therapeutic "Aha"* pp. 146-152 (hardcover edition)

- I. **Creating mood modifying playlists:** Begin by asking client to select 1 or 2 songs that match her current mood and then add 3 or 4 more songs to the playlist that gradually change tempo to reflect the desired emotional state. Based on the concept of entrainment, this can also be used to induce relaxed states by selecting music that has a tempo of 60-70 beats per minute.
- \* **Spotify Playlist:** To listen to all the songs mentioned in the *Therapeutic "Aha!"* book, go to this Spotify playlist <http://spoti.fi/1y1acwa>.

## II. Questions to process selected poems or songs in a session:

- What does the poem or song mean to you?
- Does the poem/song provide a sense of validation or relief?
- How does it impact you to see the words on a page or hear the words out loud?
- Is there a specific line or aspect of the poem/song that spoke to you most?
- Does it leave you feeling better or worse about your experience?
- Would you add anything to the poem/song or change anything about it?
- How would you like the person in the poem/song to feel or think about himself or his situation now?
- Can you show the same compassion for yourself that you have for the writer?
- What kind of follow-up poem or letter would you write back to the writer?

# Putting It All Together

*Supplemental bonus item inspired by Jon Connelly's Rapid Resolution Therapy  
This worksheet is NOT in "Aha!" Book*

## Part I: Establish CARE

### 1. Connect

- A. Align with client as you take in nonverbal and verbal essence of what he/she is saying.
- B. Read nonverbals for attunement, misattunement, and reattunement.

### 2. Align, Lift, and Lead

- A. Align by reflecting your understanding of issue using "has-been" tense change.
- B. Lift by acknowledging strengths. Separate feelings and thoughts from client's identity.
- C. Lead the client to begin considering their desired response to the problem.
- D. Create a future model or symbol of what's desired so client can imagine it.
- E. Make sure client is okay with this image, if not keep adjusting it until you are both in agreement about what the desired response should be.

### 3. Resource with Imagery and Self-Soothing Skills

Write down client's desired response to the trigger or issue that's been disturbing:

- A. Elicit positive resource state through crafting a symbol for client's desired response
- B. Use breath-symbol induction to deepen response and teach self-soothing skills
- C. Ask client what they would adjust or fine tune until image is just right.

Client's symbolic image:

### 4: Educate on nature of trauma, emotional memories, and implicit beliefs

- A. Traumatic experience leaves a sensory impression
- B. Mind attaches meaning to events
- C. Emotional brain confuses similar and same.
- D. Goal is to get mind fully present so it knows the event is finished AND change any unhelpful meanings mind attached to the event.

# Putting It All Together

Supplemental bonus item inspired by Jon Connelly's *Rapid Resolution Therapy*  
This worksheet is NOT in "Aha!" Book

## Part II. RECONsolidate Unresolved Emotional Memories

5. Recall undesired response briefly and have client identify where he/she feels the sensations in his/her body.

Description of undesired response and associated physical sensations:

6. Explore sensations for similar early memories/events and identify the implicit meaning or embodied beliefs that got attached to that event.

Implicit meaning/beliefs:

7. Create a calm, positive experience of desired response for 10-20 minutes to soothe nervous system. (Okay to return to image that worked for client in step 3 for this step.)

8. Observationally retell the story of the traumatic event/emotional memory while assisting the client in staying emotionally present.

9. Neutralize meanings attached to event with contrasting experiences that give the client new meaning/perspective. You can use imagery, role-play, story/metaphor, humor, music, movement techniques discussed in the *The Therapeutic "Aha!"* or come up with your own. Continue until client can talk about event with no distress.

New meaning/beliefs:

## For more information and resources:

1. To get *The Therapeutic “Aha”* book, click the link below:  
<http://courtneyarmstrong.net/the-therapeutic-aha-book/>

2. Get more free downloads, articles, and videos at:  
[www.courtneyarmstrong.net](http://www.courtneyarmstrong.net) or follow Courtney on [Twitter](#),  
[Facebook](#), [Linked In](#), or [YouTube](#).

3. For more info on Courtney’s online courses, consultation groups, or live workshops, [click here](#).

4. Rapid Resolution Therapy: [www.cleartrauma.com](http://www.cleartrauma.com)

5. Coherence Therapy: [www.coherencetherapy.org](http://www.coherencetherapy.org).