

METAPHOR OUTLINE

The major purpose of a metaphor is to pace and lead a client's behavior through a story. The major points of construction consist of:

1. Displacing the referential index from the client to a character in a story,
2. Pacing the client's problem by establishing behaviors and events between the characters in the story that are similar to those in the client's situation,
3. Accessing resources for the client within the context of the story,
4. Finishing the story such that a sequence of events occurs in which the characters in the story resolve the conflict and achieve the desired outcome.

The basic steps to generate a metaphor are as follows:

PREMAPPING:

1. **Identify the sequence of behavior and/or events in question:** This could range from a conflict between internal parts, to a physical illness, to problematic interrelationships between the client and parents, a boss or a spouse.
2. **Strategy analysis:** Is there any consistent sequence of representations contributing to the current behavioral outcome?
3. **Identify the desired new outcomes and choices:**
This may be done at any level of detail, and is important that you have an outcome to work for.
4. **Establish anchors for strategic elements involved in this current behavior and the desired outcome.** For instance, in one knee you might anchor all of the strategies and representations that stop the client from having the necessary choices; and on the other knee you might anchor any personal resources (regardless of specific contexts) that the client may have.

MAPPING STRATEGIES:

5. **Displace referential indices:** map over all nouns (objects and elements) to establish the characters in the story. The characters may be anything, animate



or inanimate, from rocks to forest creatures to cowboys to books, etc. What you choose as characters is not important so long as you preserve the character relationship. Very often you may want to use characters from well-known fairy tales and myths.

6. **Establish an isomorphism between the client's situation and behavior, and the situation and behaviors of the characters in the story - map over all verbs (relations and interactions):** Assign behavioral traits, such as strategies and representational characteristics, that parallel those in the client's present situation (i.e., pace the client's situation with the story). Make use of any anchors you have established previously to secure the relationship.
7. **Access and establish new resources in terms of the characters and events in the story:** This may be done within the framework of a Reframing or reaccessing of a forgotten resource; again, using any appropriate pre-established anchors. You may choose to keep the actual content of the resource ambiguous allowing the client's unconscious processes to choose the appropriate one.
8. **Use nonsequiturs, ambiguities and direct quotes** to break up sequences in the story and direct conscious resistance, if such resistance is present and is hindering the effect of the metaphor. Conscious understanding does not, of course, necessarily interfere with the metaphoric process.
9. **Keep your resolution as ambiguous as necessary** to allow the client's unconscious processes to make the appropriate changes. Collapse the pre-established anchors and provide a future pace, if possible, to check your work

8. Establishing a Bridge to New Resources



MAKING METAPHORS WORK

1. Present State
2. Desired State
3. What Prevents You?
4. What's of Interest, or Value to You? What's Important to you?
5. (without Client) What is this an example of? What are other examples of this?
6. Metaphor: Bridge the Gap to New Resources

