

July 5 Al Turtle on concepts and practical notes on guiding couples and groups into being dialogical - based on years of experience with Communologue

Notes

I think "guide" vs "facilitator" is perhaps the kind of wording that is more comprehensible and accessible. "Guide" evokes for me connection and an appreciated peer service role. A person who has knowledge / experience but is there to serve.

This makes me think of various types of guides I might have if I go on a trip in unfamiliar territory. The Circle Line boat around New York city - the boat has a fixed route and I stand or sit looking at what this boat always passes by. A garbled loudspeaker rattles off the same list of historical events and where Cher's purple apartment building is to everyone. Or here in my hometown of Newport Rhode Island where tourists are "guided" through the gilded mansion tours lockstep in herds, listening to rote lectures.

I have heard of personal guides one can hire in other lands when going out in the wild parts of the country. I imagine the one I'd like to hire - knows the poisonous snakes and how to avoid triggering animals that might kill me, demonstrates for me the techniques of moving softly and in tune with the environment so that we get to see more of the wildlife. Is skilled enough that we can get close to places others may not be able to go safely. Honors my intuition of where I want to go, what I want to see. A true guide to my discovery on my path. Is open, yet skillful and experienced.

The individual therapist with whom I made the greatest progress of my life saw herself as a guide, not a God. I have never been satisfied with anything less after that experience. April Lorenzen, Peace Project June 2006

GUIDE'S ROLE: Couples

First Session

Demonstrate and Model

- Structure to Provide Speed control, Space for both and guide
- Effect of Mirroring – hearing, make feel heard
- Validation – including Feelings, make feel understood
- “Please say more”, PreValidation and Deepening Pulling
- Normalize disagreement and candor: Story of Yellowstone Couple
- Normalize interruption as teaching only (use Cat Principle always)
 - and tiny sharing Guide must be “real”
- Responsibility: It is theirs. I can be helpful in learning.
 - “No way to do homework wrong”
 - “Clients are all chronically disobedient.”
 - “Work at your own pace.”
- “Hope leaps when you try my skills at home without me around and it works.”

Second Session

Briefly teach and Model

- Goal: Vintage Love, Partnership
- Mirroring as a teaching tool
- 52 Skills
- Make ‘em feel..
 - Heard
 - Understood
 - Valuable
- Shallow at first, parking lot – skill teaching

Third Session

- Model, guide deeper
- Start each session with focus on “How’s it going at home.”

- Be sad when going ok. Be excited with argument or conflict.
- Add: depth, deepening pulling, etc.
- Skill teaching as appropriate

GUIDE'S ROLE: Singles

First Session

Establish Role:

- I an old fart. Done lots of things wrong. Learned from my errors. Available to you.
- I work for you
- I ask questions to help clarify what you want from me
 1. answer as best you can
 2. don't wanna talk about it. refuse to answer
 3. lie – ok You are the boss.
- Model Mirroring Skills – all of them
- Validate, validate, PreValidate
- Responsibility:
 - Avoid MasterTalk explicitly – especially slave form
 - “What should I do?” Look up in book under “What”.
- Avoid agreement unless real.
- End: Ask in 2 hours, “What’s it like being with me?” How am I doing.

GUIDE'S ROLE – Group

- Easier as interruption is the norm, just modify it to ensure dialogical principles only.
 - Dialogue is innately preferable if people know how. Count on it.
 - Interrupt only to help the speaker feel “heard” and “understood” and make this easier for the listeners.
 - Unlike teaching couples, you/guide will most often be present.
 - Can teach faster than couples. Don't have to wait for them to practice at home.
 - People forget new dialogical principles easily.
 - Goal is N-2 guides in the room..
1. **To regulate speed, to slow the fast talker, to let people absorb many topics shared at once.** Type of Intervention = Mirror including interruption and support on regulation of speed. "Hold on. Let me get that.... Now, Go on."

Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me and who experiences me as talking too fast, with too many words or ideas, too quickly or too much for them to track, (this may include their needing to translate my words to their own language) to interrupt me and slow me down - so that all my listeners can be comfortable."
 2. **To contain and convert MasterTalk of any form: direct or indirect.** Type of Intervention = Mirror, including rephrase with boundary inserts. "I hear that you believe/think that"

Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me, and who experiences me speaking in MasterTalk in such a way that makes them uncomfortable, to interrupt me and invite me to repeat my message with less MasterTalk - so that all my listeners can be comfortable."
 3. **To contain and convert the projections in frustrations.** Thus to validate the speaker and simultaneously protecting and validating the "projected upon," the person who does the triggering behavior. Type of Intervention = Mirror including rephrases, boundary inserts and PreValidation of the target of the projection. I believe that if frustrations are part of the material the group is facing, then the word Trigger and the dynamics of frustrations should be taught. "Let's see if I have that. You believe that so and so did such and such. And that triggered and bothers you a lot. And while we know that so and so is making sense doing what they are doing, you want to share your distress. Go on."

Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me, is hearing me speak of my frustration(s) and who believes me focusing on triggers or the triggering people in my life in

an uncomfortable fashion, to interrupt me and invite me to focus more on sharing the internal causes of my reactions to those triggers - so that I may be validated, and that all my listeners especially a person who may have done the triggering behavior, can be comfortable."

4. **To convert questions into statements and invitations, and also remove any tone of demand.** Type of Intervention = Mirror the question, invitation to share what is behind the question, and then invitation to anyone who might want to respond. "So you are wondering about such and such... Could you say more why that interests you. Go on.... Does anyone have anything to share concerning this person's curiosity."
Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me and who hears me asking a question in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, to interrupt me and invite me to share what are my thoughts and internal statements that have led me to ask the question - so that the asking of my question can be validated and so that all my listeners can be comfortable. I also encourage the person I am questioning to respond to my question only as they wish - so that the person I am addressing may be comfortable."
5. **To manage the space/time.** Type of Intervention = Brief Interruption. "We take a break in 10 minutes. Go on." "You've been sharing for about 20 minutes. Could you wrap up your thoughts and let someone else share, please." "The session ends in 10 minutes. Let's wrap it up. Anyone got some final thoughts." "This session is over. Let's get back together tomorrow at 9AM."
Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me and who notes any issue of the space needs or time needs of the group, to interrupt me so that I can participate fully in those group needs and so that all listeners may be comfortable."
6. **To invite clarity.** Type of Intervention = Mirroring including substitution of concrete words/terms/name for abstract terms; or and invitation to be more specific. The purpose is to a) invite more candid, frank, open, trustful, undisguised, and up front communication; and b) discourage indirect, deceptive, misleading, confusing, disingenuous, evasive talk and obfuscation. The goal is to improve the chance of people being easily understood and decrease the likelihood of confusion. The sentence, "People don't seem to be speaking clearly." is mirrored, "You don't think Joe and Mary are speaking as clearly as you would like. Did I get that?" Or "Could you be more specific about whom you are speaking?"
Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me and who experiences me as sounding uncomfortably misleading or abstract, to interrupt me and help me speak more clearly so that I may be more easily understood and so that all listeners may be comfortable."
7. **To invite depth of communication.** Type of intervention = "Pulling" statements, either directive or undirective. An invitation to share more and to share more deeply. The purpose is to a) invite more full, complete and easily understood sharing and b) develop an active conversational sharing tone with participative listening. The goal is to improve the chance of people being easily understood, decrease the likelihood of confusion and increase involvement. The sentence, "I had a really tough day." is mirrored and pulled by "Please tell us about it." The sentence, "He met me and we went to the court together," is mirrored and pulled "Who's the he in your sentence?" The sentence, "Things are getting better for me," is mirrored and pulled, "Why do you think that is so?" The sentence, "When she did that I got scared," is mirrored and pulled, "What about her doing that is scary for you?" The tone becomes a little like a gentle interviewing process.
Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me and who experiences me as being unclear or incomplete to invite me to say more and thus help me speak more clearly, so that I may be more easily understood and so that all listeners may be comfortable."
8. **To guarantee validation** Type of Intervention = Clear PreValidation and Validation of any participant after a speaker appears to invalidate them. This is a response to the tone of invalidation. The purpose is to treat even the tone of invalidation as a small mistake and to not let that tone remain unresolved and to assiduously remove it. The goal is to increase the chances of people sharing their diversity by firmly maintaining the tone of PreValidation.
Encouragement: "I encourage anyone who is listening to me and who experiences me as invalidating others, quickly and gently remind me of their validity and to validate or PreValidate them. This is to help me remember to use PreValidation and to maintain the tone of PreValidation so that all listeners may be comfortable."