



This is a transcript of the video “AFC Connection Blog 04”
from Alec at in8.uk.com

See: <https://www.in8.uk.com/2019/09/why-i-do-not-off...ong-term-therapy/>

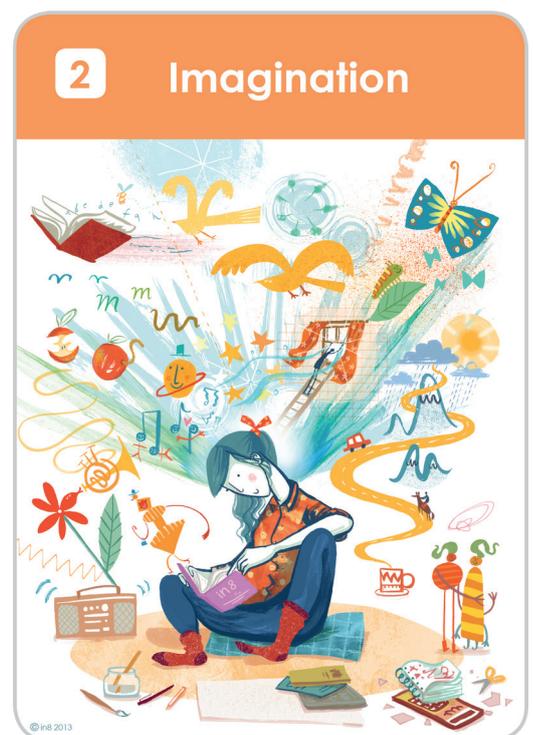
Why I do not offer long term therapy

Hi, Today I'd like to share with you why it is that I don't offer long-term therapy.

And just to set the context, this is the fourth in a short series of videos in which I'm picking stories from my own life to share with you and using them to illustrate how I've achieved a life in which I feel enormously wealthy in terms of emotional and mental health. It wasn't always that way but in each of the videos, I'll be using one of the Anxiety Freedom cards to illustrate my message and the reason I'm doing this is show you how you too can live a life free from anxiety and stress.

In the last video, I shared how I've never been unemployed. In this one, I want to talk about imagination and the role of imagination in the subject of change. Something which really fascinates me. The card I'm going to use today is card number two in the Anxiety Freedom cards: Imagination. Take a quick look at this and think about the style of it. What does it mean to you?

Imagination is one of our superheros, it's one of our superpowers if you like, our ability to imagine a future and a past and like any powerful tool, you can both use it and abuse it. So I'm just going to share how I used this early in my life because I always had a vision that I would be a father right from as far as I can remember. I just assumed that was the normal thing that you did. I grew up in a family, I had a fairly happy family childhood I'm happy to say but I always had this expectation, if you like, that I would one day have my own children. But what was interesting is that when it actually happened, it was a step change. It was a real surprise. There was a definite before and after. In fact, now looking back, I find it hard to even imagine who



I was before my son was born. My daughter being born was a big event too but the step change really happened when my first child was born because up to that time, I'd been one kind of person with one kind of expectations and work and all the rest of it, responsibilities and then when Louis arrived in my life, suddenly I have different responsibilities. I had a new person to love in my life and it was a massive, massive change and nothing prepared me for it. Nothing anyone could have said would have made me ready for the change that happened the moment that he arrived and it really was, it was kind of like there's a before and there's that event and then there's an after.



And I think that if therapy's going to be effective, it has to have a before and an after. And that point of change, there has to be a change of belief, feelings or behavior. And if you're not changing anything, you've got to ask the question, why are you in therapy in the first place? So I'm very much a believer in the idea that therapy, in order to be effective, has to help you change something. I use a rather simplistic metaphor of a stick. A stick has two ends. It has a beginning, a middle and an end, if you like. And we're at the point in the middle and we can look back to the pass and we can look forward to the future.

So people use their imagination in different ways. And what's interesting is to think of the idea if you're going to drive a long way, let's say drive to Scotland and you set off at night, you don't need to see the whole journey ahead of you. You need to see the 200 yards that your head lamps illuminate. If you have a sat nav, you set the sat nav to Scotland and then you just follow the route. But I see so many people abort the journey because they can't see the whole route. They don't know how they're going to get there. So instead of using their imagination creatively, they start to use their rational mind and they start to think yeah, I don't know how I'm going to do it, so I'm not going to even entertain the idea. The point about having a vision, the point about me believing I was going to be a father is that you don't need to know how you're going to get there. You have to have a clear vision of the future.

So think about how you use your imagination. I say like any powerful tool, you can use it and abuse it. You can use it positively to create a vision of the future which you can work towards or you can use it negatively by imagining all the worst things that could possibly happen by catastrophizing or ruminating or just thinking about all the things that might go wrong. If you're suffering right now, what is your vision for a better future? It's very hard sometimes when we're suffering to have a vision. In fact, it's very hard to think at all. I'm aware of that. But it's really important that we take the opportunity, whatever opportunity we do get, to have an image of a future life that is somehow better, especially if we're struggling in the present time.

So let me know what you think about this. Just to summarize, I've talked about imagination, the importance of having a vision. If you don't know where you're headed, how do you expect to get there? The idea of a step change, a before and an after. And the explanation of why I do solution-focused therapy. I don't go in so much for open-ended exploration. I think there's a place for that for some people but most people who are suffering, who are struggling in the here and now, they need to change their behavior, their beliefs or the feelings, the way they feel about what's happening.

And I believe that effective therapy needs to build this idea of step change in. So before you come to see me, you have this problem. After you've been to see me, whether it's one session or half a dozen sessions or however many sessions it takes, you're in a different path, you have a different feeling, a different set of expectations. The people who do the long-term exploration, that's fine. It's not what I do. I help you make changes in your life.

So please leave a comment. Let me know what you think about this and I really look forward to reading your views and if you've got any questions, please leave them as well because I'm hoping to do some live video where I answer people's questions. So thank you very much for watching.