



# Using Imagination to Internalize the Gospel

Once the strategies are relaxed and the client feels safe to be vulnerable, we want the client to actually experience the Core Hurts and View of Self (VOS) underneath. This is different from retraumatizing the client in that we are taking the bandage off to reveal the tender wound underneath in a safe environment. Merely talking about the Core Hurts and VOS will only get us so far since emotional memories are housed in the right brain and verbal processing is predominantly a left-brained activity. We want clients to activate the actual emotional experiences in order to heal and transform them by making use of our God-given imagination, a function of the right brain, to internalize the gospel.

For the purpose of this tool, we will use the VOS of “Worthless.”

**Locate the View of Self.** Stay curious, and ask how the client experiences her sense of worthlessness. You can ask any or all of the following:

- Where in your body do you experience the worthlessness? What are the sensations like?
- Activate her imagination - are there any images, inner voices, or thoughts that come up for you that represent the worthlessness? (often clients will see a younger version of themselves carrying burdens like this, e.g. a 7-year-old girl with slouched shoulders and looking down). This is a way to externalize the VOS so that the client will feel/experience it without getting overwhelmed.

**Create space to explore the View of Self.** Maintaining curiosity, ask how the client feels toward the little girl.

- If the client feels curious or compassion toward the 7-year-old girl, go to the next step.
- If the client doesn't like her (wants to get rid of her, fix her, is critical of her, etc.), identify that as another Strategy to keep the client from experiencing worthlessness and follow the steps in the previous newsletter. Be patient and do not force it.

**Witness memories with compassion.**

- In this step, we want the client to be a kind presence to the externalized VOS, represented by the 7-year-old girl.

- Ask the little girl to recall and share memories of when she's felt this sense of worthlessness in the past. Get specific memories rather than staying in the generalities.
- Ask the client how she feels toward the girl now. If the client feels compassion, tell the client to communicate that to the girl and let the girl receive that from her. Then, move to the next step.

## **Internalizing the Gospel**

This process applies the gospel to the client's memories to facilitate an experience of grace and truth. It will be represented here by the five "R's."

### **RECEIVE his comfort and compassion**

#### **Invite Christ to be present**

- Tell the client to ask the girl if she would be okay to invite Christ to be present with her.
- If yes, ask the client to invite Christ. Ask how the client is visualizing/sensing Christ's presence.

#### **Connect with Christ and facilitate trust**

- Ask how Christ is feeling toward the girl.
- If compassion, let Christ communicate that to the girl. If the girl receives Christ's compassion, ask the girl to take Christ back into the situation that she recalled earlier in her memory.

#### **Experience Christ's compassion**

- Have the client imagine how Christ is reacting in that situation with the girl (His facial expressions, tone of voice, body language).
- Have the client imagine Christ showing His own sufferings that may resemble the girl's sufferings. This is to let the girl know that Christ gets how bad it must have been for her. (You can utilize many biblical narratives here - e.g. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane)
- Ask the client how the girl is responding. If positive, allow the girl to sit in the experience of being loved and understood which directly addresses the worthlessness she's been carrying. Do not rush.
- Have the client ask the girl if she has other memories associated with this VOS and repeat steps in this section until the girl says that she doesn't need to share any more memories because she believes that Christ gets it.

## **REMEMBER Christ on the cross and REJOICE in his/her affirmed identity**

### **Transform the View of Self**

- Once the girl believes that Christ understands her and she accepts His compassion, check to see if she's ready to unburden the worthlessness she's been carrying.
- Locate the burden of worthlessness (utilizing client's imagination) and have the client visualize the unburdening process (e.g. Christ taking the yoke upon himself; laying down the burden at the foot of the cross; washing away the burden with His blood).
- Notice any changes or transformations that might be happening with the girl. Notice any new qualities that the girl is exhibiting (joy, peace, playfulness, creativity, sense of freedom, etc.). Let Christ explicitly affirm who she is in Him and how much she means to Him because of His finished work.

## **REPENT and REFLECT Christ**

### **Unburden strategies**

- Once the client has experienced the unburdening and transformation of the VOS through Christ, ask the client if the strategies like anxiety are still needed to redeem and protect. If no, then ask whether they would like to unburden the strategies to Christ (much like the worthlessness) and take on new, healthier roles. This is a form of repentance moving away from self-reliance to trusting and submitting to Christ.
- If yes, then facilitate a time of repentance, confession of mistrust in God, regrets and the hurts that may have been inflicted on others due to self-reliance.
- Explore with the client what trust and obedience to God would look and feel like practically.
- Have the client imagine the coming week and walk the client through a situation that would have normally triggered her VOS. How would it look and feel different? Have her imagine going through the situation with her newfound trust in God.