



Literature and Coping Skills
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Lecture – 12
Verbal Imagery and Healing – 2

Hello everybody, I am Ajit K Mishra your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am here again with a new lecture on verbal imagery and healing. If you remember, in my last lecture, I talked about some of the critical aspects of verbal imagery and healing. Also try to show how verbal imagery ultimately leads to our healing and how verbal imagery is such a powerful process, that people are using it as a therapeutic technique for healing mental challenges.

In my last lecture, I focused on a few very important components, such as imagery, longing for form, the power of imagery, verbal imagery, imagery and healing, and finally on Neuro-Linguistic Programming. So, as we moved from the first towards the last component, in my last lecture, we gradually discovered how imagery plays an important role in our understanding of the thinking and experiencing processes, and also in our understanding of the healing process. So, today I am going to talk about some other important aspects of verbal imagery and healing. Let us take a look at those.

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**Verbal Imagery
and Healing**

- Verbal Imagery as Therapy
- Image Therapy - Three examples

I am going to talk about verbal imagery as therapy, while focusing on some of its therapeutic aspects. I am also going to talk about image therapy to three very important examples in the form of extracts taken from poems are written by great poets Across Ages. So, these are the two very important things that we are going to do today. And at the end of today's lecture, I am sure you'll be able to understand the power of verbal imagery, and how it can lead to healing.

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Verbal Imagery as Therapy

- Meaning making process – connecting the dots (seeing a picture and making a picture)
- Empathic listening and decision making
- Modifying action tendencies for goal-directed behaviour
- I don't have words to express vs naming through verbal leads

So, let us take a look at each of these components. We all know verbal imagery has therapeutic effects, and we discovered some of his therapeutic effects in our last class. So, meaning making process is very, very important. If remember, I talked about the sense making process that humans engage themselves with, which in fact leads to the production of meaning. The meaning making process is all about connecting the dots.

While talking about the longing for form I told you all that It is an inherent It is a natural desire in humans, to see things in order to attach or assign a form to be otherwise formless things. Same is the case with our understanding and feeling when we feel a distressing emotion, or disturbing emotion, which challenges our very form our very existence, we promptly want to overcome that by overcoming that particular problem, so that particular problem can be overcome or when we begin to engage in a meaning making process.

And this meaning making process depends a lot on verbal imagery. I will explain how, if I show you a picture or an image that will definitely have an impact on you. So, that image will certainly

communicate a lot of things to you and you will derive that message easily. So, if I show you a readymade image, that will have an important effect on you, but it will be inadequate in terms of your engagement, your engagement will be partial.

Because you are not creating that image, you are trying to understand or make sense of that image you are trying to figure out the message that is contained in that image. But if I ask you to write down a few words, that will present your current mental state, your current mental state, not your regular or general mental state. For example you are feeling very, very angry. And if I asked you to express that particular mental state using a few words, then you begin to make a picture with words.

So, when you begin to make a picture with words, that means you are engaging in that process and that meaning making process will be stronger. And that is the reason why I use the example the task of, talking about life, what life is, according to you because you promptly find a word that will present your idea of life. So, therefore, the moment you do that, you are actually engaging in a meaning making process.

So, verbal imagery, because you are going to create an image through words, and the image that you create will give you more relief, than the image that you see. So, that is the difference between seeing and making a picture because while making a picture we have to connect a few dots, so that we can make meaning in a much better way. The second thing, which is equally important is empathic listening and decision making.

So, it may happen that sometimes we create or use words, to talk about ourselves, we want somebody else to empathically, listen to us, so that our decision can be made. It may also happen that when we engage with literary forms, including poetry or fiction, and drama, we come across words. They are not just words, they are speech elements.

Somebody is trying to say something to us. It is an inter-subjective condition, situation. It is an interpersonal situation, because that is how we begin to engage with literally works through the interpersonal mode. It is an interpersonal that means there is a person outside the literary work, that is you, and there is a person at least inside the work, that is a character.

And then you begin to interact with that character, through an interpersonal approach or an inter-subjective approach. That can happen only when there is empathic listening, it may happen, even in the absence of empathic listening, but it will be a mechanical activity. So, the connection will not be established, mirror neurons will not be activated, if it is not an empathic approach. So, we need to listen to the sounds, the words that are expressed.

So, once we begin to listen to the sounds and the words that are expressed, once we begin to see the picture, see the image that are created with the help of these words, that will lead to greater decision making. For example, you come across a piece of poetry, in which you find a character who is struggling with a certain mental challenge, say anxiety or depression, then you would like to see how that character manages or whether that character managers will not the first thing that you would like to know.

If you get to know that the character actually manages to overcome that problem, which will mean that it will give a complete form to that particular action, it will have a start, it will have a middle it will have an end, and it will be complete. So, we will definitely be curious, interested in knowing how that character overcomes that problem. So, when It is empathic listening, you gradually move along with that character in the decision making process, because the character will definitely make a decision at the end.

So, also you, you may have a different approach to the whole problem. So, you may go for a different decision, but the decision making process will happen at the end. And it will happen only when there is empathic listening. And through listening, you get to see that picture. So, in this case, listening is seen. So, it is important that we will learn how to listen to this process and how to listen to the words and how to see that image.

And then it will lead to the modification of action tendencies. Action tendencies are those emotional responses or responses to those emotions that we naturally adopt, for example, if I am angry with somebody, I like to either curse the person or attack the person. If I am experiencing the emotion of fear, then I would like to play that situation, flee that moment, so that I can protect myself. These are some action tendencies that are natural to the humans.

But then there is a need to modify this action tendencies, fleeing the object of your fear or the condition of your fear will not help you overcome that you can flee and protect yourself, but that

fear might return to you and disturb you again. So, when that happens, you will flee again. So, fleeing will be a regularity with you, which is not going to solve the problem ever. So, there is a need to modify these action tendencies.

These initial action responses may be very, very natural. But then we can consciously modify those action tendencies, so that we learn how to take care of those disturbing or challenging emotions, or emotional experiences. So, when it comes to modifying action tendencies, we focus a great deal on goal directed behavior. If my goal is to overcome that problem, then I must modify that particular action tendency.

For example, if I go is to overcome that fear of mine, I may have an exam phobia. And that is the reason why I run away from exams, the very moment the exam should you is announced, I begin to experience anxiety and feel. So, that is, that is an action tendency. That is an action response to feel the fear of exam if I am at all afraid of exams. So, instead of adopting this action tendency, I can think of modifying that particular tendency, so that I know how to overcome that fear.

So, I need to fix my goal. If my goal is to pass do well then I have to modify my behavior or action tendencies. How do I do that I have to fix a goal. Yes, I want to succeed in this examination, then I have to fix, these are the things I must do in order to overcome that particular phobia or fear. And when I do that, I will see that I have been successful in overcoming that fear. So, modifying action tendencies can happen when we adopt a goal directed behavior.

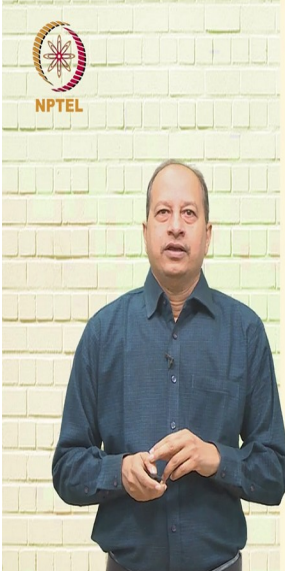
And that is exactly where you need the power of verbal imagery, because you need to talk about it, rehearse it, and say it time and again, through words. Finally, I do not have words to express this is a kind of tendency or approach versus naming through verbal leads. We have talked about the inability to express and the power of naming, which can lead to the taming, so most often we find it inadequate to express our feelings, emotions and experiences through words.

So, most often we withdraw, we say I do not have words to express my feelings for you. I am shocked, I do not have words to express my shock, I am surprised I do not have words to express my surprise. I am so excited. I am overwhelmed, I do not have words. And that actually happens. The executive side of the brain goes blank at times, when we pass through strong emotional phases that happens. Therefore, it becomes extremely difficult for us to find words to express.

And that leads to some kind of limitations in our expressive approach. So, how can we overcome that? We can in fact, find verbal leads. And we can name those feelings properly. Verbal leads, for example, if I give you a lead, how am I feeling? I am feeling and then I may say one word, then you add another word to it, then I see another word, then you add one more word to that. So, with the help of verbal leads, you can always complete you might have come across such things.

For example, you come across a few words of a statement, then you are asked to complete that statement. So, most often you find that easier, easier in comparison to the question that writes an independent statement. Many, many, often, you are asked to complete a story with cues with certain leads. So, we find it easier to do that, because those are the verbal leads that help us express ourselves properly and completely adequately. So, verbal imagery, or words allow us to express our feelings, emotions and experiences.

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The slide features the NPTEL logo in the top left corner, which consists of a circular emblem with a stylized sun or flower design and the text 'NPTEL' below it. To the right of the logo is a photograph of a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt, standing against a light-colored brick wall. He is looking directly at the camera with his hands clasped in front of him.

- “I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.”
- Wordsworth, “Daffodils”
- Perspective shift (perception is reality)
- We can expand our perception of situations, events, and behaviors by changing our perspective

So, that brings us to this very interesting and very popular extract that I have taken from Wordsworth's daffodils, you might have come across this extract, or you might have read this poems as well. It is one of the most popularly used poems in poetry therapy. Daffodils and this is the first stanza. Take a look at this extract, we will find a few very interesting things.

“I wonder too lonely as a cloud that floats on high over veils, and hills, when all at once I saw a crowd, a host of golden daffodils beside the lake, beneath the trees, fluttering and dancing in the breeze.” So, the moment you read these lines, you will be able to create an image. If you are able

to see the image of something, then you have the right track you will have that ability. So, you can see that image there are various images the image of a person who is wandering aimlessly.

So, there is an analogy between a wandering person and the wandering clouds. And there is a similarity between these two. And both of them are lonely and then something happens. And that something happens suddenly, all at once, that something happens suddenly. So, when that something happens suddenly, you can see a shift. And that shift is very, very distinct. So, that distinct shift allows you to focus on the other part of this extract.

The next four lines where you suddenly experience those things have changed, there is no talk of loneliness, there is no talk of wandering. When do you wander? You wander only when you are disturbed, you are anxious, you are not at ease with yourself you want. So, there is no wondering, there is no expression of loneliness, this is an expression of golden daffodils beside the lake, the trees, fluttering dancing. So, suddenly, there is a change in the perspective.

This is very popularly called perspective shift. I will come to the idea of perspective shift in detail. But let me talk about perception as such. We experience things, either through perception, or through, you know, automatic creation, we may, we may create experiences. In the absence of stimulus, we do not need any external stimulus to create experiences and feelings in us. For example, there is no announcement of the examination, I may still think about examination and experience fear.



So, I may perceive the fear of examination, in the absence of that stimulus, perception is a reality. Because the things that we perceive turns out to be our truth. And they also limit our perspectives, we cannot adopt a wider perspective, then we adopt a very narrow and limited perspective because that turns out to be a reality for us the truth for us. And we continue to believe that that is a reality.

And we find it very, very difficult to change the perspective or shift the perspective. So, shifting of the perspective happens when our imagery shifts, the images that we built, about our experiences, our mental states. When those images shift, the perspective also shifts. For example, I will show you one, two, three sad images gradually begin to feel sad, then suddenly, I will show you a happy image, you can, you can understand that your mood has suddenly changed.

That is the power of perspective shift. So, what we see here, if we go back to the extract, we will see that the first two lines, the perception of reality is that it is very harsh. It is disturbing, it is distressing, emotionally, therefore I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high over the hills and veils. And then suddenly, there is a perspective shift. When that happens, the person, the same person who was wondering and lonely, suddenly feels better and relaxed.

So, that is the power of perspective shift. And that happens when we treat, verbal images, or we take a cue from verbal leads and switch to a different perspective a better perspective. So, we can expand our perception of situations, events, and behaviors by changing our perspective. That is exactly what happens in this example.

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Example #1

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming
brain,
Before high-piled books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garnerers the full ripened grain
...

-John Keats
"When I Have Fears That I May Cease to
Be"

So, let us take a quick look at each of these three examples that are lined up. The first example, it is taken, it is an extract from John Keats, "When I have fears that I may cease to be." I must tell you that all these extracts that I have selected for discussion, focus on fear, the idea of fear and how each of them approaches the idea of fear to a different set of images, verbal images.

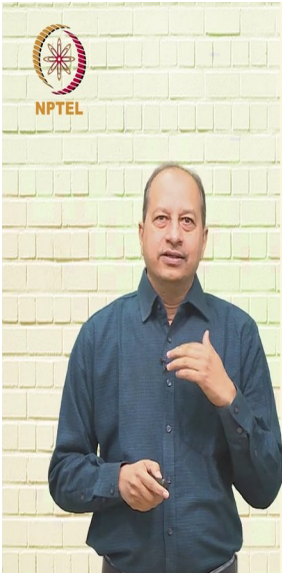

Let us take a quick look at that, I read I have fears that I may cease to be, before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain before high piled books in charactery holds like rich Garner's the full ripened green. So, we see the fear of, dying untimely well, before you have completed your tasks properly, you become famous you have contributed substantially.

Before my pen has gleaned by teeming brain before high piled books before I have contributed substantially in category greatness hold like rich Garner's the full ripened grain. So, suddenly there is a comparison there is an analogy between once achievements with that of ripened grain. So, we can see that even the green has before the grain has ripened.

So, if we do not get access to it, if we lose it, what will happen? So, Keats is talking about his fear of death in this manner. What is important about this particular thing is this; this particular extract is this particular standpoint adopted by kids is that he has adopted a goal imagery. I have already talked about goal imagery, if you remember, in my last lecture; I talked about coping imagery and goal imagery.

Goal imagery, gifts your goal. So, what is the goal? For John Keats, the goal is that of making a substantial contribution. So, although he is moved by the fear of death, he is still focusing on those things that he would like to do. So, if he sticks to that particular thing, then there is every possibility that his behavior will be goal directed, and his action tendency will be modified. And that is exactly what happens.

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Example #2

I am afraid, oh I am so afraid!
The cold black fear is clutching me to-night
As long ago when they would take the light
And leave the little child who would have
prayed,
Frozen and sleepless at the thought of
death ...

-Sara Teasdale, "Fear"



This is the second example. "I am afraid, Oh, I am so afraid. The cold black fear is clutching me tonight, as long ago when they would take the light and leave the little child who would have prayed, frozen and sleepless at the thought of deaths." That is taken from Sara Teasdale Fear. So, when you look at this, I am afraid or I am so afraid. I can take you back to I think I can I see I

can. So, if you practice positive thinking or positive visualization, there is every possibility that you will get into that mode.

But if you do not do that, definitely get into the negative mode, the Death Wish or the death instinct mode, the survival mode as well and not be able to overcome it. So, when somebody repeats that I am afraid I am so afraid, and then frozen and sleepless and the thought of deaths, you are so afraid. That means you are not ready to change the perspective.

It is a limited perspective that you are afraid it is a narrow perspective that you are frozen and you are unable to change that perspective. When you do, so, there will be no change in it because there is just one kind of image, one kind of imagery that you have created for yourself. That is the image of deaths, which is frightening, scary, which makes you frozen and sleepless. So, that is another example.

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Example #3

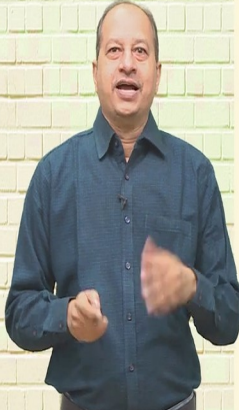

We have grown cynical and often miss
The perfect thing. Embarrassment also
Convinces us we cannot dare to show
Our sickness. But you listen and we know
That you can meet us in our own distress.
- Elizabeth Jennings, "Night Sister"

The last example, has been taken from Elizabeth Jennings Night Sister, It is, again an extract. We have grown cynical, and often miss the perfect thing. Embarrassment also convinces us we cannot dare to show our sickness, but you listen, and we know that you can meet us in our own distress. So, there is an attempt at perspective shift. We have grown cynical and often Mister perfect and there is no doubt about it, he accepts it.

If you remember, (31:10) allow he is allowing his feeling, he is accepting that as a fact. But at the same time, he also says that, yes, embarrassment also convinces us that we cannot dare to show our sickness, we cannot show our sickness. But we have so much to say, so much to share, so much to show. But there is something else that stops or prevents us from doing that, in this case, embarrassment.

But you listen, and we know that you can meet us in our own distress. So, you can meet us in our own distress. So, if we are not distressed, then there is every possibility that we can easily overcome. If we are not embarrassed at showing our sickness, sharing our sickness, then we can easily overcome. So, that is the idea. So, there is an attempt, there is a conscious attempt at changing the story, changing the narrative, hence, changing the life possession.

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References

- Lazarus, A.A. (1977). In The Mind's Eye: The Power of Imagery Therapy to Give You Control Over Your Life. New York: Rawson.

So, that is how we come to the end of this lecture. I hope you have liked the things that we discussed today. I will meet you again in my next lecture. Thank you for joining.