

Metaphor with anxiety Bensching, Debbie

So then I went with the image of a person with anxiety that is "floating free" as he/she stands at the edge of a gently moving stream. May develop into sitting or what's comfortable for client.

So, talking to the client who is already in trance where I've guided the client to a peaceful, safe, serene scene on a nice day where there is a gentle stream nearby, I muse, "And you know what happens to a leaf that lands on the water in the stream: the current in the water carries it downstream. And you can watch as that leaf continues downstream..., floating free..., getting smaller... and smaller... as it floats farther... and farther... away, until you just can't see it any more."

[You could also intersperse language to help the client go deeper as the leaf flows farther downstream.] "And as you breathe in, and your heart sends the breath throughout every part of your body and mind, you can let it collect some of that free...- floating anxiety, so that when you release that breath, that anxiety can begin to float... free... on the water in the stream as easily as that leaf. And I don't know whether that anxiety, now, ... floating... free..., will look like another leaf, or something else, or whether it isn't even important to see it, as the current in the water carries it farther... and farther...downstream."

[You might invite the client to let anxiety about different issues manifest as different types of leaves, or perhaps with different colors, symbols, etc. or the "something" else above may elicit symbolism. So anxiety about work might appear as an orange maple leaf (client's choices); anxiety about a spouse/child might appear as a different shaped leaf with a different color. Of course, this might not be a detail the client needs.]

"And you can watch the water flowing, knowing it is doing with that anxiety what it does whenever a leaf lands in the stream, carrying it farther ... and farther downstream, the leaf getting smaller... and smaller... as it floats... farther... and farther away, until you just can't see it any more." (or farther and farther away until it disappears and makes it way to another stream and another stream and eventually become one with the ocean)

[consider repetition of the same phrasing from the earlier paragraph]

"And with each breath, whenever there is some anxiety or too much energy that your most wise self (or unconscious or higher self) knows can be safely released..., you know..., now..., as your heart sends that breath all throughout the body and mind, it can collect more and more of that... free...- floating... anxiety, what ever you are ready to let go of, so that when you release that breath, the anxiety or discomfort can also begin to float ... free ... on the water in the stream, as easily as that leaf."

"You may or may not know that each tree that grows near the stream has its own time when it releases its leaves. Leaves on some trees change colors before they are released. Some trees let them go in the fall. Some, like the oak, wait until spring before they release their leaves. Pine trees release their pine needles a few at a time throughout the year. Each tree knows the right time to release that which has finished serving its purpose. For the trees near the river, some of them land on the ground, where they decompose and become some of the nutrients that will nurture the growth of the tree in the days and weeks and months ahead. The breeze will help some of the leaves and pine needles land on the water in the stream. And you can watch as those leaves and pine needles leave, continuing downstream, floating ...free..., getting smaller... and smaller... as they float farther... and farther... away, until you just can't see them any more; they simply disappear moving farther and farther away.

The stream doesn't care if the trees release one leaf at a time, or two, or three, or more." "And the stream doesn't care if, with any particular breath, you release one anxiety, or two, or three, or more. You can watch the water flowing, knowing it is doing what it does when the leaves land in the stream, carrying them farther... and farther... downstream, the leaves getting smaller.. and smaller... as they float... farther... and farther... away, until you just can't see them any more, until they disappear." [repetition of the same phrasing from the earlier paragraph may be used again]

[Then shift to the process you use for the client to store or anchor this resource within, add your post-hypnotic suggestions and bring the client back out of trance, re-alerting, etc.]