

INTEGRATING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTO SOLUTION-ORIENTED COUNSELLING

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Viktor looks tormented. It is the start of our third session, and he is anxious to tell me what happened over the summer of his sojourn in Eastern North America and Eastern Europe. It is obvious within minutes that he is still bedeviled by inner thoughts of unworthiness, despite a tour where he was acclaimed as usual for being an outstanding musician and conductor. He is a bearded graying darkly handsome man in his early fifties, and his eyes are deep pools of sadness. He is still desperately looking for the key that will allow him to escape from his dungeon of internal misery. He tells me that the trip was a struggle of anxiety and depression all the way. As is typical he overscheduled and undermargined his itinerary, so there was scant time for meditative practice, rehearsals, and celebrations. The external triumphs were ruined by Viktor's "Imposter Syndrome" and feeling of unworthiness. Even the visit with his adult daughter from his long-broken marriage was bittersweet. Yes, they enjoyed two weeks in Eastern Europe, but each happy day was tainted with the knowledge that these encounters were so very rare in a lifetime and doomed to be mere memories and reminders of his lonely and meaningless life.

Viktor represents the kind of client I often counsel and coach, and my interventions with him are typical of my therapeutic approach, and especially, the most aesthetic and spiritual moments in my work with clients. He is a perfect candidate for my solution-oriented counseling (SOC). Beyond cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) for the alleviation of his distress, Viktor is an ideal client for the integration of what we now know about the science of happiness, the empirical studies proliferated by Dr. Martin Seligman (2000) and associates in what is called Positive Psychology (PP).

Coaching Toward Happiness (CTH). It is more than a year now since my friend Dan persuaded me to enroll in the University of Pennsylvania correspondence course called Authentic Happiness Coaching (AHC) and now called Coaching Toward Happiness. We were the third vanguard group to take the 8-month course. There were over 200 students from around the world, mostly in the United States. We listened simultaneously to weekly lectures while we read PowerPoint slides on our home computers. We also had weekly telephone meetings with our learning group, a "pod" of 18 students. While there were some psychotherapists attending the course, most participants were from human resource, coaching, or communications fields. While the course material was new and interesting for most students, I found it somewhat redundant and not that original. The faculty consisted mostly of Marty Seligman Ph.D., the dean of the Positive Psychology movement, and his academic colleagues and associates.

Positive Psychology. As a popularizing movement, Positive Psychology has a similar effect to Dr. Phil's TV show (see Michael Ventura's review in the July-August'05 Psychotherapy Networker): it helps make psychology-based interventions more user-friendly, more sensible, and less focused on psychopathology. It is wonderful to proselitize the good news that happiness can be pursued and even sometimes achieved by following principles and doing several exercises that have a proven empirical record of effectiveness. Like the research on empirically supported treatments and therapeutic efficacy in general, the addition of a research base to guide our interventions and therapeutic methods are a welcome addition to the field of human health and wellness.

Interventions in Search of a Method Framework. On the other hand, the list of interventions championed in the PP literature are more like a loose collection than a coherent whole or integrated method. Even the PP holy trinity of the Full Life, that is comprised of the Pleasant Life, The Engaged Life, and the Meaningful Life, is a guide that tells us little as practicing therapists about what to use when. In the AHC course, we were taught a protocol for intervention in a stepwise fashion, depending on the needs of clients and their approach to finding happiness. (Insert figure 1 about here).

Many of these PP structural steps and recommendations are clearly not appropriate for therapy, sometimes unsuitable for counseling, and even not helpful in coaching. Clearly what is needed is an intervention method that will provide a framework for integrating the best of PP principles, insights, and exercises for optimal relief of misery and promotion of happiness. Thankfully, the methods of post-modern constructionist therapies such as Solution-Focused Therapy and Narrative Therapy lend themselves well in providing frameworks that can serve well. Moreover, since several exercises and insights of PP are essentially based on Cognitive Behavior Therapy, it makes sense to use an SFT-CBT hybrid as the vehicle of choice for this journey.

Figure 1. A QUICK COMPARISON OF SESSION FORMATS AND FOCUS BETWEEN AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS COACHING AND SOLUTION-ORIENTED COUNSELLING

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS COACHING (AHC)

An intervention sequence or protocol for AHC is presented in the course offered by the University of Pennsylvania by Seligman and associates. A very brief summary goes like this:

In session 1, rapport building is developed through finding the underlying strengths starting with a positive introduction and strengths displayed (note, not merely talents or skills or accomplishments but strengths that are virtues or ends in themselves). Explain that happiness skills are not merely the absence of problems or depressive underbrush, but a whole different approach to the full life. Have your client do the baseline tests, the VIA, Approaches to Happiness at outset and completion, and the Steen and CESD weekly.

In session 2, review and amplify their written intro, and assess their results for the Pleasant Life, the Engaged Life, and the Meaningful Life. Ask which one they would primarily like to expand, assigning more tests and assignments to further investigate and promote their area of interest and development. For example:

- Pleasant Life: savoring, gratitude visit, 3 blessings, ending grudges and negatives
- Engaged Life: building Flow, long cuts, gift of time, friendship, signature strengths
- Meaningful Life: obituary letter to a grandchild, acts of kindness, volunteering, mentoring.

In subsequent sessions, monitor and expand their growth and depth with appreciative inquiry until they are noticeably happier. At that point you could expand to other areas or agree to end your coaching for now. At completion, do a follow-up measurement to establish and ratify the positive changes that have occurred.

SOLUTION-ORIENTED COUNSELLING (SOC)

Solution-Oriented Counselling is an eclectic extension of an Ericksonian solution-focused therapy approach (O'Hanlon, 1988) into counseling and coaching contexts to foster a sustainable and enjoyable life of purpose, passion, and precision.

At the initial point of the consultation we engage our clients in a collaborative understanding and co-construction. Presenting problems are redefined as having a more limited scope of influence, over which clients can exercise increasing containment and management mastery. Thus, these dilemmas are now regarded as solvable with the installation of hope.

Systemic elements and feedback loops are recognized as part of the context in which the problem is embedded. In a process of management by exception, we work from the assumption of latent skills and abilities that are likely held back from application by some forms of constraint. Such constraints could be in the perceived roles or rules of the interpersonal context, or the rules of intrapsychic assumptions about life and their ability to change it. In this method, we often use Ericksonian utilizations and pattern interventions and the reappraisal formats of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, thus rendering rigid rules in forms that are more flexible and adaptive.

Metaphors about patterns of possibility are introduced. Often we help the client generate islands of security in a flood sea of chaos. As security and competence expand, the flood waters recede. Positive imagery and future projection motivate clients to take the crucial initial steps toward solutions that work. Small progressive movements are ratified and reinforced as emerging new ways to deal with old situations. Incremental first-order change within the context often transforms into second-order quantum qualitative changes of state that redefine the client's paradigm of understanding.

As presenting problems are resolved, we assist the client by interventions to promote relapse prevention in specific and related contexts. We also invite the client to generalize the positive understandings and skill development that emanated from this process into areas of life development and the enhanced enjoyment of living. The focus of collaboration now may shift beyond the alleviation of suffering, to principles of the attainment of happiness. (Sometimes new clients come into your practice at this point of reference, seeking expansion of functioning as a goal for coaching). We will typically elaborate the principles of Positive Psychology, especially the construction and expansion of states of Flow and engagement. Perhaps clients may want to pursue the development of a focused and meaningful life through the design of a personal mission statement employing their signature strengths in pursuing their life purpose. We coach the client to develop a statement of identity, and lists of core values, strengths, operating principles, favorite roles, life goals, and proximate steps over the next year to launch this principled life. We plan the work; then we work the plan.

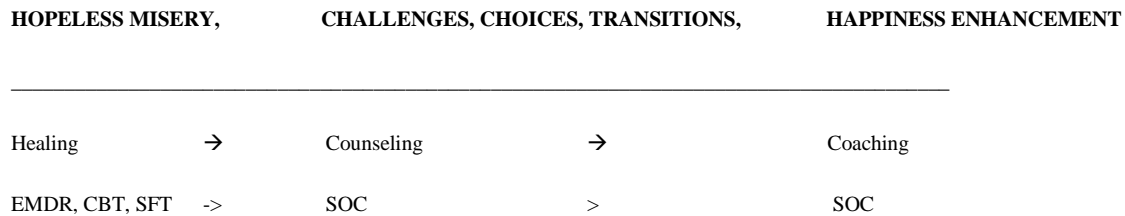
The coaching process supports the implementation of this provisional plan, allowing for changes along the way to accommodate shifts in balance and focus as needs arise. The methods used in the counseling and coaching are isomorphs or parallels to the method of solution-focused therapy, and are more oriented to the development of a full and enjoyable life in a broader sense. We are not merely helping the client to get unstuck using conflict into confluence, we are assisting the client in discovering how to glide through the Flow of living with focus, spirit, and passion.

This process is not just a method for human doings, it is an approach for human beings. Thus we also encourage the helpful principles of mindfulness, acceptance, peace, non-attachment to desire, humor, compassion, and transpersonal connectedness that can form a platform for the further development and enjoyment of spirituality.

Perhaps a difference in emphasis between AHC and SOC is that the structure of AHC starts more from a theory of happiness, inviting the client to proceed down its well-researched pathways, with a greater emphasis on testing and empirical measurement of results throughout the process. In contrast, SOC typically starts with engagement around specific client concerns and goals, gradually expanding to larger domains of enhanced functioning and skills and perspectives about happiness and meaning. I prefer the latter approach for its client-centered method.

The Consultation Continuum. This hybrid model is an Ericksonian blend utilizing client strengths at various points of entry in the consultation continuum.

Figure 2. **The Consultation Continuum:**



- This diagram helps put interventions into perspective
- Therapy for healing trauma
- Counseling for problems and transition points
- Coaching for strategies for happiness, engagement, and meaning

This continuum has hopeless helplessness at the extreme left. Clients there need a great deal of support and empathy for the misery they have endured, motivational preparation for assessing their stages of readiness for change (Prochaska et al., ref.), EMDR and other trauma-reduction methods, and a focus on the seeding and installation of hope and patterns of possibility for escaping the trap of misery.

In the middle of the continuum are adequately functional clients temporarily distressed or even disabled by major life transitions such as career shifts, deaths, illnesses, divorces, midlife crises, etc. A counseling model is likely more appropriate for these points of entry, emphasizing client strengths and departures to a better and more fulfilling life.

On the right side of the continuum the main theme at point of entry is that of enhanced functioning. Executive and personal coaching is the stance of choice for the consultant with clients at this intersection of skill refinement and opportunity creation. Although all points of entry demand informed consultation on the part of the practitioner, each point of entry demands a different stance of engagement for goodness of fit with the client. It is here where the AHC model falls down with its recommendations, and care must be taken to modify the application of PP principles.

More about Viktor. Let's get back to Viktor, especially his first session. In March of 2005 he was referred by a colleague who realized this case was more challenging in terms of severity and chronicity of anxiety and depression, so he referred it on to me. Viktor had gone through a series of highly anxious depressions, two suicide attempts, and unsuccessful therapies with psychiatrists and psychologists over the many years since his defection from an Eastern European Communist country (I'm being deliberately vague here to disguise his identity). His first wife (no children) had returned to his home country with no further contact between them. He had a subsequent marriage in Canada, and his daughter who is now 20 years old remains as a testimony to this brief but unhappy union, ending with his suicide attempt in 1992. After many antidepressant medication regimes and unsuccessful psychotherapies, Viktor resigned himself to a life of external success as a university professor, and internal hell as an impostor unworthy of his achievements. Of course, his upbringing by strict parents in a stern political system where individual ambitions and achievements were publicly scorned led to the situation of the client I was now facing. There are more details, but I think you get the picture.

A cognitive therapist's match, Viktor exhibited abysmally low self-esteem, vicious self-recrimination, perfectionism, procrastination, addiction to urgency, pervasive self-fulfilling pessimism, perpetual taunting self-statements, and accompanying symptoms of anxiety and depression, including a pervasive sleep disorder featuring obsessive ruminations. You've seen clients like this, haven't you? They are exceptionally engaging because they are externally functional, but are as yet strangely disconnected from the excellence that others readily observe. While they are by no means externally disadvantaged by social prejudice, as are the most challenging of cases many of you deal with, still the very perversity of entrenched negativity is so deep and wide it seems to be an even greater challenge because it is so absurd. Even further, its owner knows its absurdity, but thus far is unable to reverse its tyranny.

PP The Positive Introduction (not recommended here). In Positive Psychology terms, the first recommended intervention is to ask the client to introduce him(her)self by compiling a story of this person at their apex of virtue and resourcefulness so that we can become aware of their signature strengths. The intent is to immediately shift the client out of a problem framework into a personal resource abundance framework. This proposal, while well-intentioned, is such an empathy mismatch for the perceived misery of my client's presentation that I might as well bring out the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders in response to his opening description of his situation. The Positive Introduction is relevant in a coaching context, but probably not a therapy context. Viktor would probably try his best to do it, but would dismiss it as phony, external, and deeply dismissive of his internal hell that I need to validate as his innermost experience.

PP Test Yourself on the Internet Website and Examine Your Approaches to Happiness (not recommended yet). The next PP recommended intervention is to go to the website authentichappiness.org and test yourself about how happy you are compared to the validation sample of about 300,000 visitors worldwide who access that site and enter data. Well, the good news is you are right to be unhappy. In fact, you are in the bottom 10% of all respondents in your demographic class. Also your baseline happiness is so low there is nowhere to go but up, up, up. Try using that reframe with a severely depressed person. You might end up becoming a severely depressed therapist with the reaction of your client. Once again, this preliminary move of engagement toward growth goals is ideally suited to the coaching situation, moderately appropriate to counseling contexts, and likely a mismatch to many therapy contexts.

SOC Intervention: Parking the Yabut. With Viktor I immediately zoomed-in on his incessant negative self-statements at every moment of self-reflection. I talked about an imaginary cartoon character of mine called the

“Yabut.” It is about the shape of a cartoon rabbit that sits on your left shoulder and disqualifies every positive event in your life with a “Yeah, but...” and amplifies the negative projection of every disappointment or shortcoming. The Yabut’s influence is pervasive; no matter how positive life events can be, the Yabut’s disqualifiers will render them invalid and unimportant. However nasty, the Yabut does serve a purpose of protecting us from optimism and thereby from crushing disappointment, but at such a cost!

In our first session, after listening attentively and empathically to Viktor’s story and presenting misery, I talked about counteracting the tyranny of self-recrimination by Parking the Yabut. I talked about the difference between figure and ground, that the Yabut’s position was valid from a certain prospective, but that his narrative was not the only one that could account for that reality. Henceforth he could listen to the Yabut, but turn down the volume on that commercial so that he could listen to the main program of classical music whenever the Yabut was trying to comment. Viktor liked the idea of putting his self-doubts in their place, overlaying them with his favorite classical music. He also looked forward to a way he could stop contaminating the positive events of his life with the ugly brush of his own personal black “tar.” This metaphorical intervention is not from the PP list, but it sets the frame for other moves in the dance of life. Before Viktor could be open to signal, we had to turn down the level of ambient noise. Before offering the prospect of hope, we needed to turn down the volume on the riptide of negativity sweeping him out to sea. With this process begun, the way was cleared for the next intervention.

SOC The Metaphor of Islands of Security in a Sea of Anxiety and Hopeless Misery. Perhaps my favorite beginning intervention with a client drowning in a sea of hopeless misery is the Metaphor of Receding Floodwaters. Imagine there has been a catastrophic flood and you have been swept out to sea in a lifeboat with limited supplies. Days go by with no sign of land, and your hopes of being rescued are fading fast. Then one morning (perhaps a miracle happened overnight?) you see a distant island and immediately begin paddling towards it. Onshore are luscious pineapples, and you feast on them. Within several days, just when you think you’ve had enough pineapples, another island appears on the horizon, so you paddle toward it. This island has freshwater springs and several other nutritious plants. After several days more you see yet another island. Before long, as you look back to the first two islands, you now see they weren’t really islands; they were peaks of a mountain range now connected by a ridge of land. In fact, in the coming months, as more lands become connected, the seas of anxiety are now becoming land-locked lakes that you can walk around.

Solution-focused therapists will recognize this story as a representation of the principle of management by exception. Here we are asking the client to pay attention to life events that are outside the scope of influence of the presenting problem. Gradually we expand those areas of operation, and thereby shrink the scope of influence of the problem, until it becomes crowded out of its former dominance in our life.

A Modified PP Blessings Exercise. However, in addition to this way of interpreting the intervention, a Positive Psychology proponent would say that this story is the perfect lead-in to The Blessings Exercise. Indeed it is. Viktor was given the assignment of charting at least three positive events he witnessed each day. They could be a kind deed he did for others, a nice favor that someone did for him, or even a kind event that he witnessed happening between third parties. In the best elaboration of this exercise, in my opinion, he would share his notes with others who did the same assignment every day, to amplify and ratify the daily joy of the family or social group. Such was not practical in Viktor’s situation. In fact, in the PP assignments, there is no necessity to report these blessing to others, merely to reflect upon their sweetness before falling asleep that night. Even such a bare-bones assignment has been proven in research on university subjects to improve their mood and reduce their stress and

academic anxiety during the 8-week experimental period, as well as many months thereafter, even without further practice (ref?). So Viktor was given this assignment, to report back to me at our next session.

Session 2. CBT Segmentation and Enabling Structure. Within a week Viktor was more energized and sleeping better, learning how to gain greater mastery in parking the Yabut of self-recrimination, not disputing it; merely turning down its volume of preoccupation in the centre of his consciousness while he went on to better images of pleasure and success. While his blessings events were not of profound importance, he did seem to orient towards their fleeting validity in his otherwise dreadful life. He was overwhelmed with the enormity of planning for the complexity of his summer tours. As he prepared for these events, we talked about the nature of enabling structures, allowing him to contain anxiety by packing life into smaller discreet episodes and segments. How do you eat an elephant? It can be done, one bite at a time. The elephants consisted of seemingly overwhelming sequences of highly coordinated events such as presentations, guest lectures, and symphony concerts. This CBT intervention of segmentation was not very inspiring, but it did allow Viktor to get through the summer without resuming his former habit of cigarette smoking to control anxiety.

Session 3. Bypassing Ego by Being a Vessel of Grace. Yes, he had succeeded in quitting smoking since our last session about 6 weeks ago, despite a frantic concert schedule. Yes, I did compliment and commend him on an assignment well done. But he felt, as usual, that all the accolades that befell him as a conductor were unworthy and ill-deserved. He was still compelled and tormented by these thoughts, no matter how irrational. He remained oppressed by a childhood “never good enough” script from which he could not escape. At that point, we could have explored the origins of his life script or life trap by regressing to the past and reworking that experience or sequence of experiences. Most traditional psychotherapy works in this manner, and it may have been helpful for Viktor, but my intuition told me it would likely lead to a quagmire of past memories, expensive and time-consuming to exhume and examine.

I suggested an alternate reality frame. Perhaps there is an invisible element in the universe called “grace.” We cannot see it directly, but can induce its presence when good things happen. Grace is similar to FM signals in a room; just because we cannot hear them does not mean they don’t exist. If we attune ourselves we can receive, carry, and transmit this gift of grace to others. We, in effect, become its instrument and vessel, enjoying resonating with the sweet music that plays us, and occasionally takes us into realms of spiritual rapture. If we choose to embrace this take on reality, then we can bypass the notion of ego, and therefore, the issue of worthiness. That is, there is no glory, except to the music (grace) itself; we are merely its humble servants.

This spiritual notion of grace is not unusual, and you do not have to be a clergyman to understand how it can operate to transform your life. Viktor’s reaction was, “Yeah, but you have to believe in it.” I replied “Belief is perhaps helpful, but certainly not necessary. All you need to do is adopt this notion as a convenient convention, a provisional reality to try on for a few weeks, to see whether it fits, and whether it confers some happiness upon you to look at life and art in this way.” If it allows you to render the question of worthiness as moot or almost irrelevant, then you are free to practice excellence without the encumbrances of ego. You no longer have to prove yourself or validate your worth, you merely are an artist responding to the call to create yourself, having compassion for the imperfect way you walk this path. After a month of living this provisional reality, perhaps you may find that understanding has become realization that this way works for you in conferring relief from misery, and glimpses of happiness.

SOC Zen Non-Attachment to Desire. Viktor also talked about how beautiful and cultured were Paris and Rome and Budapest, and now he was forced to return to the cultural desert of Calgary, and how he loathed having to live here in this relative wasteland. I went back to the usual tenets of Zen philosophy, that while pain is inevitable, suffering (what we say to ourselves about it) is optional. That suffering arises from attachment to desire, the insistence that life must conform to our standards, or we are miserable. I told him several motivating classical stories, too detailed to record here, although I will mention one. The story is about Monkey stew. It seems that Indonesian Villagers wanted to capture a monkey to make a stew. So they laid out some peanuts in the middle of a clearing, but enclosed the peanuts in a large cage with vertical bars. After the villagers had left the clearing, a monkey would come by and see and smell the irresistible peanuts. After seeing there was no one around, the monkey inserted his paw through the vertical bars of the cage, and firmly grasped the prize peanuts. He tried to remove his paw with its

enclosed prize, but of course his paw was by now too large. Infuriated, he tried harder but would not let go of the peanuts. His cries of frustration alerted the villagers, who proceeded to have monkey stew that night. Like others caught in the wheel of fate, Viktor wished to preserve pleasure and avoid pain. He pined for those moments of beauty in Europe, and did not seem to grasp the notion that these moments were doomed to end even if he did not leave these cities. In fact, that all beauty in life is transient, and only our savoring of the memories can give us vestiges of those pleasures. Of course, this is another learning researched in positive psychology. **The Pleasant Life** is fleeting and subject to satiation and self-limitation, although there are practices of Mindfulness that can allow us to savor and partly relive the pleasure of the moment.

Breathing, Meditation, and Mindfulness. As we first began, Viktor exhibited a pattern frequently seen in anxious clients, that of over-breathing. This means that the client takes in a lungful of air, continues to talk and function, does not fully exhale, and continues to breathe in this way until he is gasping for breath and hyperventilating. The problem is a combination of worry about scarcity, subsequent hoarding, and paradoxically too much of a good thing. The anxious hyperventilator actually is gasping for breath while having too much oxygen. The excess oxygen changes the Ph in the blood to the point where it cannot get through the cell membranes of the muscles and brain, essentially shutting those systems down with a by-product of excess. No wonder I think that irony is the driving force of the universe! What is even more ironic is that Viktor is a singer. He knows the importance of breath control and modulation, and yet does not apply that principle to his personal life of anxiety symptom management. Instead he retreats guiltily to another Ativan tablet. At least, that was his pattern before we met and in the first weeks. Instead of this solution, I had him go back to breathing as if he were singing, or even singing to himself at anxious moments. Furthermore, I recommended that he use the breathing-centering tape that I developed and produced, called Wave-Pattern Breathing. In addition to this, after consultation with me when he returned to Calgary, we determined that a regular practice of both yoga and meditation would be wonderful for his recovery. Of course, his teachers in these practices were bound to reinforce the principles of quiet, non-judgmental mindfulness, and being-in-the-present-moment. This proved to be an excellent combination treatment, custom made for overcoming anxiety and depression. Nevertheless, there remained the problem of a pervasive sleep disorder, early morning awakening with persistent negative thinking supplanting ideas and images that could lead to restorative sleep.

Session 4. Treating the Sleep Disorder with Mind State Management, the Software of the Mind. In our fourth session Viktor wanted a program to combat his early-morning awakening insomnia, a pervasive problem of many years that compounded his depression, performance anxiety, and dread of fatigue mistakes. Beyond the usual stuff about sleep hygiene, which was also helpful, I told him about the four main mind states. Whoever researched these first had a penchant for calling them by Greek letters in an idiosyncratic way that we still use today.

1. The first state, Beta, is characterized by brain-wave oscillations that fluctuate over 15 cycles per second (Hz). This mind state is excellent for logical or computational problem-solving, and is deadly antithetical to sleep induction in sleep disorders.
2. The second state of Mind State Management is the Alpha state (8-14 Hz), associated with guided imagery, visualization, relaxation, smooth and confident athletic performance, and relaxed body movement.
3. The next state is Theta (3-7 Hz), the mystical and cherished near-sleep state associated with profound relaxation and lateral mental drifting into the zones of creative imagery.
4. The final state is Delta (1-3 Hz) where you are almost unconsciously in deep sleep.

The secret of enhancing sleep is to bypass beta states as soon as possible, silence most internal chatter, promote your mind into alpha with sustained imagery, and gradually let the mind drift further into theta and delta states. In alpha meditation, act like a squirrel and keep on going from pleasant tree (pleasantry) to pleasant tree. However, if ever you find yourself on a branch of problem solving or verbal analysis, immediately return to your meditative trunk and climb the tree higher before allowing sideways drift (insert squirrel figure here?). I gave Viktor a simple but effective insomnia program using an easy meditation, a complex meditation, and a procrastinated task to do (polishing silverware) when the meditation still was unsuccessful in producing the desired results. In my clinical experience, this program can resolve years-long insomnia within three nights, if the client adheres rigorously to the prescribed procedure.

As usual, Viktor followed the recommended program in a partially applied, but nevertheless effective manner. He improved his effective sleep from about 5 hours per night to about 6-7 hour per night. Obviously, with this and other successes, his mood and functioning began to brighten in the next session.

Session 5. SOC The Dragon's Back Metaphor. Despite making significant inroads on his sleep disorder, anxiety, and depression, Viktor was still dissatisfied. It seemed like no progress was enough, another isomorph for his life script of progress but never adequacy. As you can observe the progress of this case with me, you realize that the slope of recovery is a jagged one, with movements forward and slips backward. Nevertheless, there was a preponderance of good sleep and positive events outweighing negative instances. Still, in the early morning hours from 5-7 am, Viktor found it hard to desist the urge to indulge his usual negative self-talk of failure and almost-convincing hopelessness. At those moments of