

Maurice Tomkinson, psychosynthesis psychotherapist, has been using the Communicube with couples in therapy:

I had an interesting example of a couple using it where they gave the top and bottom levels diametrically opposite meanings - suggesting that some of their problems came from viewing the world in opposite ways. One partner put themselves on the bottom shelf, and all their problem issues on the top. The other partner reversed this completely, so they found themselves at diagonally opposite ends of the cube, a long way apart, but relatively close to each other's problems. We used this to explore their differences, and how they might come to terms with being different.

Another client who used a sparkling piece of jewellery to represent his wife, and a tarnished piece of metal for himself. This led on to considering how they took on different roles in the relationship, in particular that he wanted her to "carry" the beauty, glamour and attractiveness for both of them.

Maurice is also using the structure with individuals. He says:

1. It's quite revealing how clients approach the cube - whether they are enthusiastic to use it or reticent, for example. A useful indication of the state of the client's inner child, perhaps.
2. The sort of objects clients use to represent themselves and others can say a lot about their self-esteem.

It enables me to see the client actually doing something rather than just talking about it, which can give additional information and insights that I might otherwise not get. In particular the first time I introduce the cube there is a chance to see how they react to something new and unknown.

The sorts of behaviours I have noticed include:

- approaching the cube with great enthusiasm, as if happy to "play" with it.
- approaching the cube with hesitation, fear, or inhibitions about engaging with it.
- an immediate assumption that "I won't be any good at this"
- looking to me to provide rules and meaning, rather than providing it themselves.
- insisting on tidying everything away afterwards, rather than leaving it to me.
- time taken to choose the object, varies from very quick, to taking a long time to consider the "best fit".
- how the object is placed, varying from careful and deliberate to almost tossed on anywhere.
- type of objects chosen to represent themselves and others.

I wouldn't want to draw any hard and fast rules from the behaviours I am observing - I think they have to be added to other clues coming from the rest of the therapy.

The sorts of deductions I have been making from this information include:

- the condition of the client's inner Child - free to play/fearful/disciplined/cut off, etc.
- similarly around the client's Parent/superego - critical, restrictive, etc.
- can the client think in abstractions or are they stuck in concrete mind (indicated by how well they can make meaning from the objects)
- the state of their will - difficulty choosing, stuck in deliberation, choosing too quickly, vacillation.
- locus of control - do they make their own choices, or look for external rules.

Maurice Tomkinson (personal communication)
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