

Santa and the Camel

A young woman came to see me a few years ago regarding a problem she had since she was a child. Every year when it is the Christmas season and there are lots of Santa's around on the streets and shopping malls, my client would blush uncontrollably whenever she saw one. She would literally turn red from her neck up and her face would light up like Rudolph's nose. No matter how hard she tried, she could not stop blushing! Sure, it was something that only occurred once a year for a month or so, but embarrassing for Jan none the less.

(Find the specific event)

I did some '**data gathering**' and discovered that when Jan was a young child growing up in the Australian outback (desert town) an embarrassing event had occurred when she first 'met' Santa around age six. Santa Claus was not part of the tradition many years ago in Australia, as he has been in North America. So when it was announced in her little town that Santa would visit, all the kids were really excited to meet him. Of course he would be dispensing 'goodies' as well, and so the children were especially excited.

(She told me the story – movie technique)

On the appointed day all the town children and the parents gathered at the little schoolyard. There was an air of excitement and it grew as they saw this camel sauntering towards them with Santa astride.

Seated atop was this fat man in a red suit! As the camel got closer the level of excitement rose higher and all the kids rushed to see what this strange man in the red suit had in his large bag. The camel came to a halt and heaved forward to sit down with Santa balancing his large bag and bamboo staff. The kids were rushing forward and my client got the full force of the bamboo staff on her head. Not only did she get whacked by Santa, all the kids and adults started laughing at the situation. She was shocked by the smack on the head. Even though it didn't really hurt (it was only a thin length of bamboo like a fishing rod) she felt humiliated at being laughed at.

(how the response was paired or coupled with the trigger)

We tapped continuously while she repeated the story several times (test and retest). As we tapped for each incident I asked her to rate the SUDs. They came down each time. I asked if it was possible for her to make the incident into a little cartoon movie. Santa was to be larger and redder, the camel to be more ungainly and the bamboo

staff much bigger and longer. (changed the visual elements of the client's experience to facilitate the uncoupling of the learned response. test and retest the SUDs associated with the response)

After we had brought down the SUDs rating to a one, we then used the following statements to further reduce any other associated distress: (test for aspects, other associated feelings, associated beliefs, blocking beliefs, hidden agendas, secondary gains) Use humor where/when possible.

"Santa didn't mean to whack me, I was at the wrong place..."
"I was only a little kid and I thought Santa was picking on me..."
"The kids didn't mean to laugh at me but they were so excited..."
"The adults didn't mean to laugh at me but they were embarrassed as well..."
"Santa didn't single me out to whack me, it was his fishing rod..."
"Santa didn't mean to whack me, it was his ungainly camel..."
"Santa didn't mean to whack me...he just couldn't ride a camel..."
"Santa couldn't ride a bike if he tried cause he was too fat, how was he expected to ride a camel without an accident..."
"I was really embarrassed and felt a sense of shame when everyone laughed but I realize it was a 'funny' incident and not about me..."
"People laughed at the incident and not at me personally."

Jan has had the opportunity to test out her 'blushing' around Santa's for the past few years and confirmed that she does not have the same feelings of 'shame' and no longer blushes at the sight of Santa! (If possible follow up with your client to find out if the solution has endured)