



## Lesson 33:

# Verbal Experiments and Directive Invitations

Deepening contact and inviting engagement

Look up the term *ego strength*. Why might a client's level of ego strength be an important factor to consider before utilizing transformational bodywork techniques?

What are three indicators that a client is feeling stable and resourced?

How might you know if using an advanced communication skill (such as a verbal experiment or a directive invitation) is okay or welcomed by your client?

Here are a few examples of verbal experiments:

- You're welcome here.
- You did your best.
- It's okay to feel.
- It's okay to come home.
- It's okay to rest.
- You are okay just the way you are.
- You made it.
- Your needs are okay.
- It's okay to be protected.
- Your life belongs to you.

What are 3 additional verbal experiments (supportive statements) that you can think of?





Here are a few examples of directive invitations:

- Breathe into my hands
- Stretch the tissue with your breath
- Push into my hands
- Use my resistance to help you open your body
- Allow the sensations to travel from your limbs into your core
- Imagine your skin can touch me back
- Twist this blanket with your hands as I work into your shoulders
- Soften your muscles and allow your ligaments to receive this pressure
- Push through your bones
- Tighten and release your entire leg

What are 3 additional directive invitations that you can think of?

As we travel to the right on the continuum below, we step further into transformational terrain and need to exercise greater care regarding the types of verbal interventions we choose to make.

### Communication Tools



Mirroring - Contact Statements - Verbal Cues - Verbal Experiments - Directive Invitations

If you feel that the work has gone as deep as you feel comfortable with and you do not want to surface deeper aspects of the wound, it is not recommended to use communication skills such as contact statements, verbal cues, verbal experiments, or directive invitations.

Switching from these techniques to a more general conversational style can be the most supportive choice at times. This switch can be a type of titration, letting the safety between you and the client build slowly and in a way that is organic.

You may, at times, even want to reduce the amount of mirroring you offer. One side effect of mirroring can be that for certain clients it can cause them to reveal more than they had planned to about themselves. This can leave a client feeling exposed.

You can think about the use of these communication skills similarly to how we think about pressure in a massage session. Sometimes a lighter touch is better and you can even check in with a client explicitly about how your communication style is working for them.

The responsible use of these communication techniques is essential and learning to use them effectively takes practice. It is recommended that you practice with friends, colleagues, or mentors as you build this skillset.

