

Indirect Hypnosis Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Audio Transcript and Commentary -
University Of East London UK

Stephen Brooks



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Introduction

The patient is a 35 year old women with OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). The session takes place during a training programme for trainee therapists at the University Of East London in the 1990's and the patient is brought in by one of the students. Brooks gives her one session of hypnotherapy lasting 45 minutes and she overcomes her obsessive behaviour three months after the session.

During this session Brooks demonstrates how he enters the patient's reality and discusses her symptoms in a very informal and conversational way. He gains rapport with his humour and acceptance of her symptoms and induces trance indirectly using the patient's sweaty hands as an initial pre-trance induction while the patient discusses her problem. Brooks asks many

questions to very quickly elicit the patterns in her family history and typically, rarely asks about her symptoms. In this way he quickly uncovers the cause of her problem and creates ways of resolving it.

Brooks uses a combination of tasking and indirect hypnosis to rearrange her way of thinking and feeling about her family dynamics and successfully treats a life long problem in only one session. The patient overcame her problem within three months. This period was even indirectly suggested by Brooks during the session. So not only does she overcome her problem, she actually does so on cue, as indirectly instructed to do so.

At first it may be difficult to appreciate the full impact of Brooks' approach as he works so indirectly and informally. To many people this session may appear to be no more than a casual conversation, but this is the art of indirect hypnosis, or more specifically Stephen Brooks' approach. A dramatic shift and change of style can be noted when Brooks engages the non-conscious in hypnosis, not just in tonality and pace but mainly in language and depth of wisdom. It is as if another person speaks from within him at this stage. This has been observed over and over by his students in the past, and many have made their own interpretations of how and why this happens. Brooks' own revelations while in trance, obtained during a very moving experimental hypnosis session at Roehampton University England in 2003, can be read in the free downloadable eBook [The Unconscious Mind Of A Master Therapist – An Interview With Stephen Brooks Under Hypnosis](#)

Readers might also be interested in downloading a similar publication from the 1980's based on edited extracts of automatic writing where Brooks converses with his own non-conscious mind while under hypnosis. It offers insights into his approach and non-conscious way of thinking at that time: [Communicating With The Unconscious – Extracts of Automatic Writing 1979 - 89.](#)

Bonus Material...

On these training programs Brooks usually follows each demonstration with a post-therapy session analysis of his demonstration and we hope to add this as a running commentary to this text at a later date as this will expand the readers understanding considerably. We will email you when we have updated the text with a commentary so you can download a newer version. Repeated reading and analysis of the text should bring to light many of his subtle techniques and language skills.

Stephen Brooks

Stephen has a lifetime's experience of using indirect hypnosis with severe problems and difficult patients. Inspired and encouraged by top American Psychiatrist Milton H Erickson, he was the first person to introduce Ericksonian Hypnosis into the UK in the mid 1970's. Since then, his own

innovative indirect therapy techniques have had a major influence on the health professions both in the UK and Europe and have changed forever the perception of hypnosis and how it should be used within therapy.

He was founder of [British Hypnosis Research](#) (1979) and the British Society of Clinical and Medical Ericksonian Hypnosis (1995), both major training bodies for the caring professions. His two-year Diploma courses became the standard training for thousands of health professionals and over a period of 15 years he taught indirect hypnosis courses in over 27 major British hospitals. His Diploma courses also became the standard training for hypnotherapy associations and organisations in France, Belgium, Spain and Ireland. In 1991 he was awarded special acclaim when archive recordings of his work were preserved in the British National Sound Archives.

He specialised in innovative approaches to Indirect Hypnosis with an emphasis on demonstrations with real patients during his training courses, something that many trainers are still afraid to do. A common thread in Stephen's work is his humour, compassion and creative approach to therapy and his deep respect for the unique needs of the patient. He treats problems by spontaneously doing what is often most unexpected but always most appropriate for the patient at the time, quickly tailoring each therapy session to the patient. His enthusiasm is highly contagious and he has the great quality of being able to teach his complex refined skills in a dynamic and simple to learn form.

In the mid 1990's, at the height of his UK career, he decided to retire and settle in the mountain rainforests of Northern Thailand where he studied trance healing with monks and shamans for several years. He is now responsible for the design and teaching of the [British Hypnosis Research](#) online academic hypnosis courses and he runs the British Hypnosis Research [Summer School](#) in the UK and America each year.

For further information about free Indirect Hypnosis publications please visit: <http://www.indirect-hypnosis.com>.

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For further information about Stephen Brooks [click here](#)

Indirect Hypnosis For Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

BROOKS: Would you like to come up? There, take a seat. Is it possible to put this mic on somewhere, shall I just do that for you? And, what's your name?

SUBJECT: Julie.

BROOKS: Julie. That's right. Yes, Julie. Well, I'm Steve. Where have you come from today Julie?

SUBJECT: Hastings.

BROOKS: Hastings. Well, you must have a really good reason for coming all this way into London from Hastings.

SUBJECT: Yeah. I suffer from OCD so I'm hoping that this hypnotherapy session is going to help.

BROOKS: OK. (to the audience) You know what OCD is? Obsessive compulsive disorder? How long have you been aware that you have this particular behaviour?

SUBJECT: Since my teens, although it wasn't given a name to start with.

BROOKS: OK. What did you think it was?

SUBJECT: Me going mad, I think.

BROOKS: You going mad? So can you tell me, when you were a teenager, what sort of age was this? At what particular age in your teens did you become aware of that?

SUBJECT: 16.

BROOKS: About 16. So before then nothing like this would happen?

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: No. Do you remember what it was like to not have it?

SUBJECT: Not now. It's a bit difficult.

BROOKS: So if you were to go to the first year, 16, that you became aware of having this symptom, what sort of things would you have been doing then. Not what you would be doing now, but what would you have been doing when you were 16 that gave you some idea that you had this particular symptom?

SUBJECT: Well I used to worry about my hair. I had this perm once and it went wrong and I used to be very obsessed with my hair, I'd be in the mirror all the time looking at it. So it wouldn't just be normal "Oh I've had a perm and it's gone wrong", but it would be a reaction that was very strong, and it would be a continuous thought in my brain. My hair looked awful and I realised that my thinking wasn't normal.

BROOKS: Was that the very first time that you were aware of that, when you had the perm, or were there things before that?

SUBJECT: Things before that I think.

BROOKS: Can you remember what sort of things?

SUBJECT: I used to be afraid of a certain television programme.

BROOKS: Like what? Can you remember the programmes?

SUBJECT: Science fiction ones.

BROOKS: What age would you have been when you were afraid of science fiction programmes?

SUBJECT: Actually, that was about 11.

BROOKS: 11. Was there a particularly scary one or something like that?

SUBJECT: It seemed to scare me.

BROOKS: One particular programme?

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: What would you do when you were scared? What sort of things did you do?

SUBJECT: Well, I used to shake and sweat, but I'd still watch it though.

BROOKS: You'd still watch it? So you'd shake and sweat but you'd still watch it?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: What made you want to watch it if you found it scary enough to shake and sweat?

SUBJECT: Well, actually, I had to watch it.

BROOKS: You had to? What would happen if you hadn't? You'd probably stop shaking and sweating wouldn't you?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Maybe you just liked to shake and sweat. Maybe that's part of the excitement. Isn't it interesting that you still watched a TV programme that was scary enough to make you shake and sweat? Yet you carried on watching it. It's almost like you were testing yourself.

SUBJECT: I didn't want my mum to find out that I was scared of it.

BROOKS: Ah. What would happen if she had?

SUBJECT: I don't know. She found out one day when I was watching one particular science fiction programme. She noticed that I was a bit shaky and everything and she said "you're frightened of that, aren't you" and I said "no".

BROOKS: What would have happened if she'd have found out that you WERE frightened?

SUBJECT: I'd have been extremely embarrassed.

BROOKS: Yeah? Ah, so you tried to cover it up.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Just by carrying on watching it. You could have made an excuse and gone to the toilet, couldn't you? Or said, I'm going to go out now, or going to my bedroom?

SUBJECT: Not every time the programme came on though.

BROOKS: What was this programme?

SUBJECT: Time slip. Years ago, that was.

BROOKS: Was it your decision to watch it every week?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: So you chose to put it on and watch it. And then you'd sit there scared of it and you wouldn't dare leave?! Wow! Did you like the programme?

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: So you liked it but it was a bit scary.

SUBJECT: Yes. It was about supernatural things, you know, so I was a bit scared of things like that.

BROOKS: So now, as an adult, what sort of things do you like to watch now?

SUBJECT: Comedies.

BROOKS: What about science fiction?

SUBJECT: It doesn't bother me now.

BROOKS: You mean you don't find it scary, or you're not interested in it?

SUBJECT: No. I don't find it scary.

BROOKS: Are you interested in it?

SUBJECT: It's alright.

BROOKS: Nothing that interesting. Isn't it fascinating that, you were about how old, 11 you say? at the age of 11, you know, to a young girl the age of 11, just learning about the world and still not sure about things, science fiction programmes can be so exciting, because you know it's a made up story but a part of it can almost seem real. When you were 11. Now when you look at it as an adult it doesn't look real any more, does it.

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: It's just a drama.

SUBJECT: People with special powers and all that. I used to worry that I might have these special powers.

BROOKS: Well, what would you have done if you'd had them?

SUBJECT: Well. I was brought up to believe that anybody who had supernatural powers was a bit evil, and it was against religion and everything.

BROOKS: Was your mum pretty religious?

SUBJECT: My mum and dad are pretty religious.

BROOKS: So if they'd have found out that you'd got some supernatural powers, ooh that would have been a bit ..?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Have you got some supernatural powers? Think you may have had?

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: So when did you find out you didn't have any supernatural powers?

SUBJECT: When I watched Uri Geller and I tried to bend the forks.

BROOKS: And it didn't work?

SUBJECT: Never.

BROOKS: Never? You tried more than once?

SUBJECT: I used to. When his programme came on I used to try.

BROOKS: Right, so that's when you gave up on the idea of having supernatural powers.

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: So you hadn't got them.

SUBJECT: Nothing to worry about. I hadn't got them, no.

BROOKS: So what about your mum now, and dad? Are they still alive?

SUBJECT: Yes, yes, very much so.

BROOKS: Are you living near them or with them? Whereabouts are they?

SUBJECT: They live in Hastings.

BROOKS: So you're living in the same area?

SUBJECT: I live in Bexhill.

BROOKS: How often do you see them?

SUBJECT: Several times a week.

BROOKS: And what do your mum and dad do?

SUBJECT: They lead very boring lives. Neither of them work, they're retired, they don't do a lot, they basically spend their lives worrying about money and doing the housework and watching television.

BROOKS: So do you go round and see them, or do they come and see you?

SUBJECT: I usually go round to see them because my fiance has got a car.

BROOKS: So he gives you a lift there. Does he stay? Each time?

SUBJECT: Yeah, usually.

BROOKS: I'm trying to get a picture of your life, at the moment you see. You talked about when you were a teenager. I want to get a picture of your life now. So you tell me you go to see mum and dad several times a week. How often is several times a week?

SUBJECT: Well, it depends how often Mike's available with the car you know, because he works and everything. It could be evenings usually.

BROOKS: How many times could that be in a week?

SUBJECT: 2 or 3 sometimes.

BROOKS: 2 or 3. And your mum and dad are pleased to see you, I imagine?

SUBJECT: Yeah. And I spend all day with them Wednesday. I go for the day.

BROOKS: What about weekends?

SUBJECT: I don't see them as much at weekend because Mike, my other half, takes me out.

BROOKS: So Wednesdays you are there. When he's at work you're at your mum and dad's on a Wednesday, and then a couple of evenings as well, 2 or 3 evenings.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: OK. How old are they now?

SUBJECT: Their late 50s.

BROOKS: Late 50s. And they are both retired, already?

SUBJECT: My dad took early retirement.

BROOKS: Why was that?

SUBJECT: Well, he'd got bad backs and everything.

BROOKS: Are they still as religious as they used to be?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: How religious are they?

SUBJECT: Well, they don't exactly go to church, but they're still very religious.

BROOKS: Have you got any sisters or brothers?

SUBJECT: No, I'm an only child.

BROOKS: Were you naughty?

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: Are you sure?

SUBJECT: I was a goody goody.

BROOKS: Were you really?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: I can't believe it.

SUBJECT: I was.

BROOKS: Julie. I don't believe you. When I look at you I think "there's a naughty little girl in there somewhere". Are you kidding me? Were you a goody goody?

SUBJECT: Yeah. I was very angelic as a child.

BROOKS: Really?

SUBJECT: Mmm.

BROOKS: You weren't a little devil sometimes?

SUBJECT: No. I make up for it now.

BROOKS: Do you? How do you do that?

SUBJECT: Few lagers and that.

BROOKS: Sssh. There's people listening! Fascinating. So, give me an example of some of this OCD behaviour you have in your life. What sort of things do you do that can be called OCD? Can you give me some examples of things that you do?

SUBJECT: Well, when I get up in the morning, because I pulled out about 10 or 15 hairs that were a slightly different colour, I get up in the morning and I'm looking in the mirror to find 10 or 15 hairs to see how much it looks like, to see if it's going to grow back in a different layer. So in the morning I check that, and then every time I'm in the toilet, there's a mirror in there, and I'll be checking again to find those 15 hairs. My life seems to revolve around worrying about my hair. It's usually my hair. If it isn't my hair it's my skin.

BROOKS: What is it about your skin? What are you looking for when you check your skin.

SUBJECT: It used to be if I'd got spots or anything, I used to get paranoid, I used to squeeze them and then I used to worry that I'd scarred them.

BROOKS: So you must be pretty good at spot squeezing.

SUBJECT: No, I don't do it any more.

BROOKS: You don't?

SUBJECT: I leave them alone.

BROOKS: How come? You must have been so good at it. Why stop something you're so good at?

SUBJECT: Every time I did it I used to worry that I'd scarred my face.

BROOKS: Ah, and that became a bigger fear than having spots.

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: Is it OK if I talk to the group as well as talking to you? Do you mind?

You see we are looking for resources all the time we are working therapeutically. What can we utilise here? We are looking for patterns, cause and effect, relationships, trigger/response, all this sort of stuff. I find it fascinating, J used to squeeze spots and she obviously was very qualified in spot squeezing. Probably got a PhD in it, probably, and yet she chose to stop doing that. Why, because she found something else which was more scary than having spots. And that's a

resource. We now know something that motivates her. Do you understand what I'm saying here?

Is it OK if I just share like that a little bit, just so they know what I'm doing, because they haven't got a clue, pretty thick this lot, and I have tell them every now and give them a clue what I'm doing so they can keep up?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Is there anything else you do, besides the hair checking?

SUBJECT: Well, I usually tend to get one obsession at a time. I don't tend to get more, if that makes any sense. I can't usually deal with more than one obsession, so at the moment it's just the worry that I pulled out about 10 or 15 hairs, and I've been going around the hairdressers saying "well how many hairs do you lose each day?" and things like this, you know.

BROOKS: You've been getting some expert advice, you mean.

SUBJECT: Yeah. I kept going round all these different hairdressers asking cos I was worried that I pulled out some and they'd grow back a different layer, you know, as hairs goes layered, and I was worried that 15 might cause it to layer.

BROOKS: I see, start creating some kind of pattern.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Well, you could actually artistically do it, like pulling a circle of hairs out, so when they grow back it would be like quite attractive, a circle. If there's going to be layer, might as well make use of it, do something creative. So how long have you been pulling your hair out? Does this go way back to the beginning or has it started after that?

SUBJECT: Well it was only one day, when I had nothing better to do. Being blonde I'm a bit vain I suppose, and I happened to notice that there were some other colours in my hair, like a brown colour sort of, so I started looking in my mum's mirror when I was at home and I pulled out about 5 there, and when I went back home to Bexhill I pulled out a few more there, and then that same evening it suddenly dawned on me what I had done and I suddenly thought well maybe I've done something to my hair style and I started worrying. Just that thought and it triggered from there.

BROOKS: How old are you now?

SUBJECT: 35 in May.

BROOKS: What happens when you start to go a little grey?

SUBJECT: I don't know. I'll have to worry about that one when it happens.

BROOKS: Well, you're getting on a bit it now.

SUBJECT: Thank you.

BROOKS: 35. 35 I tell you. You don't know when it's going to start. What happens if you wake up one morning and there's a grey hair there? What are you going to do?

SUBJECT: I don't think I'll pull it out.

BROOKS: Why? Are you going to keep that one? Why are you going to keep that one there?

SUBJECT: Well. I might be lucky. My mum's kept her hair colour, more or less. She's got a few grey hairs, but not much.

BROOKS: She hasn't bothered pulling them out.

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: She has pulled them out or she hasn't?

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: She's pulled them out?

SUBJECT: Mmm.

BROOKS: Your mother's pulled her grey hairs out.

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: At what age did she start getting her grey hairs?

SUBJECT: Don't know. A few years ago.

BROOKS: And she pulled them out.

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: And they keep growing back again don't they.

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: What colour do they grow back?

SUBJECT: Grey, I think.

BROOKS: It's like they say "I'm going to be grey whatever you do to me. I'm going to be grey again. You pull it out and it comes out "ha ha I told you, I'm going to be grey again". If you keep pulling it out it just carries on being grey. Maybe you get greyer each time you pull it out, it gets greyer still. So you are going to keep yours. So if one grows you are going to keep on growing it? You're not going to pull it out.

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: Why not? You're so good at pulling hair. Why don't you pull that one?

SUBJECT: It'll put me off.

BROOKS: How do you mean?

SUBJECT: Because I've pulled out so many and I'm worried about it growing back in a another layer, it's put me off of pulling out other hairs, so I won't do that any more, you see.

BROOKS: So you've stopped pulling hair now.

SUBJECT: Mmm.

BROOKS: So what do you do now?

SUBJECT: Just worry about my hair at the moment. I don't actually do anything. I don't have sort of physical things that I do at the moment.

BROOKS: When did you stop pulling hair?

SUBJECT: After I realised that same day that I'd pulled out about 10 or 15. I thought it was 10, and then my mind said, well maybe to allow for a bit I'd better make it 15 if you see what I mean.

BROOKS: Yeah, round up the figures.

SUBJECT: Yeah, just allow for a few more. At the moment I've been cutting out my mums hair and trying to count 15 of those. My poor fiancé, he had a bit of his hair chopped of and I was counting 15 of those, so.

BROOKS: You don't have any scissors on you do you?

SUBJECT: No, its OK, you're safe.

BROOKS: Actually, I could do with a bit off the sides here. It's a shame, I didn't know you were coming. So when did you actually stop pulling hairs? How long ago was that?

SUBJECT: Well, as soon as it started really. The same day it started, when I realised what I'd done. About a month ago I think this obsession started. This particular one.

BROOKS: OK, but you've actually stopped doing it.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: And you told me you can only concentrate on one at a time.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: What's the one you're doing now?

SUBJECT: Worrying about the 15 hairs that I think may cause another layer when they grow back.

BROOKS: Oh, so you have to wait until they grow before you know?

SUBJECT: Apparently it takes 3 months for new hairs to grow from the root when they've been pulled out.

BROOKS: And what happens if there's no layer?

SUBJECT: Then I was wrong.

BROOKS: Yeah, so what happens then? Do you start pulling them again?

SUBJECT: Knowing me I'll probably get another obsession.

BROOKS: You get bored with your obsessions very quickly, don't you? You know that naughty little girl I talked about inside of you. I think she loves doing different things, she loves to kind of escape a little bit and get out there and do different things. There's a part of you that really likes a bit of excitement, likes a bit of adventure.

SUBJECT: Yeah. That's right. You're right there.

BROOKS: OK. And I reckon that having a new obsession is like a way of going on holiday in a way, like going and doing something different.

SUBJECT: I've never looked at it that way before.

BROOKS: It is almost, because you go from one obsession to another one, and you don't like to do the same one twice.

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: Well, if I told you that I want you to do the same obsession twice, what would you do?

SUBJECT: I'd say no I'm not going to pull out any hairs.

BROOKS: If I said I want you to pull out some hairs, what would you do?

SUBJECT: I'd refuse.

BROOKS: I still think, that grey hair when it comes, maybe you should pull it out.

SUBJECT: I won't.

BROOKS: We haven't got all day have we. We can't wait around until you get some grey hairs for you to check it out.

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: So maybe I should pre-empt the grey hair and say maybe you should start with a blonde one. Which part of your head is going to go grey first? If one has to go grey somewhere, where do you think it's likely to be?

SUBJECT: I've got no idea to be honest.

BROOKS: I wonder if we can just kind of brain storm, imagine. Your mum, for example, where did her grey hairs start?

SUBJECT: Here, there and everywhere, you know.

BROOKS: What, here and here?

SUBJECT: Yes.

BROOKS: I've got quite a few here there. I like mine, I have a jacket to match. I make something of my grey hairs you see. I'm looking forward to being really grey. Anyway, here we go. Somewhere around here. If we imagine one particular place on your head, here, that you had a grey hair, and pick a blonde one, a really nice blonde one that could be grey later, just imagine that, if I said I'd like you to pull that out, how would you feel?

SUBJECT: I don't want to.

BROOKS: Why not? You've been doing it, just one hair for Heaven's sake?

SUBJECT: I know. Apparently you lose 60 to 100 a day from the roots, so my hairdresser tells me.

BROOKS: So what's another one?

SUBJECT: True, but I don't want to encourage it.

BROOKS: 101 hairs. Wasn't that a movie? 101 hairs. One hair more, just for me. You're not going to please me?

SUBJECT: Why, do you want a souvenir?

BROOKS: I wanted to know if you'd be willing to do it. Tell me, what other obsessions can we make up that maybe you could do?

SUBJECT: They are usually to do with my hair or my skin.

BROOKS: Can you think of some more that you haven't done yet.

SUBJECT: Ah, let me think. I haven't started to worry about wrinkles yet.

BROOKS: How could you miss that one?!

SUBJECT: Cos I don't think I've got any yet. I'm quite lucky.

BROOKS: How do you do that?

SUBJECT: I take after my mum cos she's young for her age.

BROOKS: I mean, if you're OCD you should be worrying yourself silly. You should have worry lines all over your face.

SUBJECT: That's what I thought but I look in the mirror and I can't see any wrinkles yet.

BROOKS: But everyone knows that everyone who has OCD has wrinkles, because they're worried and frowning all the time.

SUBJECT: That's what I would have thought.

BROOKS: That's why it was so surprising you said you were OCD. You don't look it.

SUBJECT: No, I look as though I am a calm person.

BROOKS: You look like you've just had a face lift.

SUBJECT: Thank you.

BROOKS: There's not a wrinkle in sight.

SUBJECT: So there's nothing to worry about then yet.

BROOKS: Yet. Well, why wait to worry? Why not get it over with and deal with it now? Rather than wait until later to worry, why don't we say that we're going to worry now. A whole lot of intense worrying and I can do some therapy on you.

SUBJECT: Or I could buy some Oil Of Ulay and take it from there.

BROOKS: Well that's one way of doing it. Well, maybe you should do that anyway. Let's bring the worry forward. Let's imagine now you had wrinkles. How does it feel if I said like you've got wrinkles now? If you looked in the mirror now and you saw wrinkles there what would you feel?

SUBJECT: I'd feel like I was getting old.

BROOKS: And then what would you feel?

SUBJECT: I'd probably feel the urge to go out and buy some cream, even though I've already got several creams.

BROOKS: How many creams have you got?

SUBJECT: Well, I had creams from the time when I was worried about spots. I bought loads of different tubes of creams. I wouldn't like to say how many I've got. A whole pharmacy full.

BROOKS: OK. So you're well stocked up. An armoury. OK. So, if you looked in the mirror right now and saw you'd got wrinkles you'd feel you're getting old and you want to get some cream. Then what do you do?

SUBJECT: Probably be looking in the mirror quite a lot.

BROOKS: What for?

SUBJECT: To see if the cream's working.

BROOKS: Ah, so you're waiting for them to go. And if they didn't go, what would happen then?

SUBJECT: Well, I wouldn't consider surgery in case it went wrong.

BROOKS: Oh really.

SUBJECT: Yeah, I mean these things can go wrong can't they.

BROOKS: Often do.

SUBJECT: Then you're worse off than when you started.

BROOKS: How are you feeling right now?

SUBJECT: My palms are sweaty but that happens when I'm a bit nervous.

BROOKS: They haven't been sweating all the time though.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: They've been sweating all the time?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Why did they sweat a little bit more just then? Did you notice that, they sweated a little bit more just then.

SUBJECT: Probably cos you mentioned it.

BROOKS: Right? So they were responding to my hypnotic suggestion already. Isn't it interesting how a part of you knows how to respond to the words I'm saying? And you don't even have to know how to do it. It happens all by its self. Without you making any effort. Just by me mentioning that yours hands are sweating, they sweat even more. Isn't it interesting how you just responded like that, automatically, without even trying?

SUBJECT: I don't normally respond that way to hypnotherapy.

BROOKS: So what has happened to you right now that you are responding so well? Any ideas?

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: Isn't that curious? You could wonder what else you could respond to with me here. You could wonder what else could happen. What else you can learn, and what else you can achieve for yourself Julie, right here. You know the part of you that day dreams?

SUBJECT: Yes, I know.

BROOKS: You know about her, that day dreamy part? She's got a surprise for you. This day dreamy part of you has got a surprise for you.

Because she knows all about day dreaming and she knows all about your imagination, she knows all about fantasies, dreams, she knows all about the things that you'd like for yourself, she knows all about things you're scared of. She knows more about you than even you do. And she knows how to make those hands sweat. And she just did that for you. And she's going to do something else for you now. She's going to allow you to realise that already she's made some other changes happen to your body here.

She's just slowed your breathing down and she's smoothing your muscles out in your body, she's smoothing the muscles out in your face even more than they were before. And as she's smoothing the muscles out in your face and relaxing your breathing she's making your eye blinks, that's right, happen in a different way. Yeah. So much so that each time you blink, Julie, she's going to take you deeper and deeper into that day dreamy state. She's doing that beautifully right now. Beautifully. That's right. And each time you blink, deeper and deeper into that day dreamy state. Because she's going to do something very important for you. This day dreaming part of you is going to help you.

She has a key. A key that will open a door for you. It'll open a door to freedom, to learning something new about yourself and your future, and all the wonderful, wonderful aspects of yourself. You've been keeping that key in your pocket for a long time. You know what happens to a key when you keep it in your pocket? It gets polished. All the rough edges polished away so it's smooth, and it fits even more comfortably into that lock and undoes that door even more effortlessly and easily. Now you know that a little girl has the right to be afraid. The little girl has every right to be scared, not knowing what is right or wrong, not knowing whether she should move left or right, having to tread very carefully.

Imagine how it feels to be asked to walk a tightrope without ever having done it before. Very scary. Look down there, look down there, feel very nervous. Can you balance as you walk along that tightrope? Scary. Not even knowing if there's a safety net there. Maybe there wasn't a safety net then. There is now. And you know, some people love to let go, love to just fall into the safety net as if it were the arms of some wonderful, wonderful supportive person. Fall from that rope with ease and enjoy the excitement. Some people like to go bungee jumping. They want the pleasure of the fear. There's a part of you that knows all about that.

And you know, some people when they go bungee jumping they just love to scream at the top of their voice as they fall and

experience the absolute pleasure of fear. They don't care who can hear them. They scream at the top of their voice. And there are some people who go bungee jumping and they daren't open their mouth, afraid of what others might think. They're scared. Yet, do you think it's appropriate to be scared to be falling backwards 400ft. I think it's totally appropriate to be scared, and part of the pleasure of the fear is in screaming, and really enjoying that letting go. Enjoying that letting go without any guilt. A real sense of freedom.

Now that part of you that likes that adventure and excitement, that day dreaming part, doesn't have to keep those dreams as part of your day dreams. Those dreams can become reality. Those dreams can become your future. The part of you that really wants that excitement and adventure can experience it freely instead as a daydream.

We mustn't forget that day dreaming part because it has been teaching you by getting you to rehearse and practise your dreams over and over again, the things you'd like to happen, exciting things that you've always wanted to do, to have. You know, you're a young woman, with a fiancé, do you think you'll have a family one day?

SUBJECT: No.

BROOKS: Why not?

SUBJECT: I don't think I'd make a very good mother.

BROOKS: What is it about you that makes you think that?

SUBJECT: All these obsessions I get.

BROOKS: You can get obsessive mothers. Maybe you're well qualified to be a mother. Most mothers end up obsessive. If you didn't have the obsessions, would you want a family then?

SUBJECT: I hadn't really thought about it.

BROOKS: Well, that's right. Do you have a sense that you almost feel yourself to be a kind of mother to your parents?

SUBJECT: I don't know really.

BROOKS: Think about that for a moment. Where would they be without you?

SUBJECT: Well they've only got me. I'm the only daughter. They don't really have any other close family.

BROOKS: And you go and see them quite often. They'd be pretty lost without you I think, and they're in their late 50s or early 50s?

SUBJECT: Late 50s.

BROOKS: They've probably got quite a while to go.

SUBJECT: My mum doesn't think so, she keeps worrying about death.

BROOKS: What's that feeling you have there? Right there now.

SUBJECT: I wonder why she worries.

BROOKS: You wonder why she worries.

SUBJECT: Mmm. All the housework. She's got OCD about housework you see. I was never allowed to touch any of my own things without asking first.

BROOKS: That naughty little girl inside of you, that naughty part of you inside this angelic little face, is there anything that she hasn't done yet that she'd like to do? Something kind of naughty or different?

SUBJECT: Naughty?

BROOKS: Something that would not be the kind of thing that she would normally do. Something that she'd really like to do but she hasn't done yet.

SUBJECT: I've always had an ambition to sing.

BROOKS: To sing.

SUBJECT: Yeah. I do karaoke and things like that. After a few drinks I quite enjoy it.

BROOKS: Yeah? And what would happen if you did it without a drink?

SUBJECT: It has been done before, yeah.

BROOKS: And how did that feel?

SUBJECT: I still enjoyed it.

BROOKS: And how often do you do that?

SUBJECT: Since I've had this latest obsession I haven't been going. We used to go every Sunday.

BROOKS: And what else is there in there that you haven't done yet? Maybe you don't even know about those other things.

SUBJECT: Well, I haven't learned to be good at housework like my mum, that's for sure! I'm a terribly untidy person, dreadful. Just the opposite.

BROOKS: So you're different from you mum in that way.

SUBJECT: You should see my room.

BROOKS: In what ways are you similar to your mum?

SUBJECT: We both have the OCD. Were both very close because we understand each other, but her obsession is different from mine, and were both very sensitive people.

BROOKS: Does she stick with the same obsession?

SUBJECT: Yes, housework all the time. I mean she spends all day at it, you know.

BROOKS: And you try all of them, you try different ones out.

SUBJECT: Never housework though!

BROOKS: You know, we talked about a key that was polished in your pocket, I have a key in my pocket that has been waiting for you. I've been waiting to meet you to give it to you and mine has been polished for 25 years of being a therapist. And I'd really like to give you this polished key, and I want to give it to you today. Do you want it?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Just close your eyes. Now. There's parts of you that know all about obsessive behaviour, and everything to do with it in great detail, knows all about the thoughts, pictures, the sounds, the feelings that you had that make up what you call OCD. You know OCD. Interesting, 3 letters, nothing more, but they seem in your life to have dominated your behaviour.

Those 3 letters, O C D. You know, standing back and looking at it objectively, I wonder why and how 3 letters, O C D, can actually make a such difference in someone's life. They're only 3 letters. And life is all about choices, it's about options, new opportunities, and quite often we don't know that we have the choice to take those opportunities or choices or options and do something different.

We feel we are creatures of habit and we're bound into certain ways of doing, thinking and feeling. But really we do have choice. The reasons we don't often understand that we have choice is because when we look around us, everything around seems to tell us that we don't have choice.

Like you know, when you want to walk out of a room, we usually choose the door, and yet you could get out of the window. It never enters our mind to get out of the window instead of the door, but we really have the choice. If you wanted to, you could climb out of the window, as long as you're downstairs, or the door. There are always choices. Even in situations where we don't think there is.

All we need to learn what these choices are, all we need to do is to tap into the part of us that knows all about choice, the part of us that's not limited by what we see around us, and what we're told and taught and made to believe. That part of you that liked to watch the science fiction programme knew all about choice, it wanted to have the choice to watch it. It didn't want to show the fear. It kind of liked the fear in a funny sort of way, the excitement.

And life, and everything that life means in terms of growing up, becoming a woman, even getting old, ageing somehow makes us feel that we are limited in choice, that we don't have a choice. Time rolls on, but in the way that we see ourselves, the way we perceive ourselves to be, the way we look at ourselves, the way we think about ourselves, there we have choice, absolute choice.

You know I am looking forward to being 85. You know why? Because I can see myself at 85 as a charming, impish old man telling stories to kids, people and hopefully with a little bit of wisdom, transforming the lives of people around me. I'm looking forward to being 85. I think when I'm 85 I'll be looking forward to being 95. You know, I don't even mind being 85 and unable to walk. I'm kind of looking forward to not being able to move, so that I can't run away, I can't get attached to some crazy idea or get distracted from my purpose. Maybe that is just to be me and share who I am. The great thing is, if you can't move, people have to come to you. That's a nice feeling.

We do have choice, and whether you want to choose is up to you. I'm wondering if there's a part of you now that wants to choose to have something different, if there's a part of you that wants to choose to feel and experience freedom, part of you that wants that key to unlock that door that will open up the future. The future for you.

That part of you that is able to see through things, see through walls, imagine what's on the other side. Even right now you can see your parents' home in your imagination, you can see the door, see the window there, there it is, there, and you can see through the walls into the house, and as you look through the walls you can see your mum and your dad, everything in the right place, everything in the right place, to the point you daren't touch anything, and your mother, your mum, has got you in her right place.

And I know there's a part of you would really like to help her, in the same way that some mothers bring up their children, they don't let them grow up, don't let them learn, don't let them experience life, maybe because they love, maybe because they're scared.

You have a responsibility to your mother and your father. Are you aware of that? And you accept that responsibility, but how responsible are you really, by being responsible? Just how responsible are you? I'd like the part of you that knows more about you than even you do to search through your mind right back to your earliest, earliest experiences you've ever had and to identify all of the things that you've never done that could be different, exciting, adventurous. All the things that will allow you to break away, to move ahead, out, away from, all the things that will enable you to be, really be, who you are. Beautiful, spontaneous adventures, dynamic, individual, not only have the ability to do all the things that inspire others to be equally spontaneous, dynamic, adventurous and exciting. I wonder what her name is. I wonder what her name is. I'd like to call her by her name. Right now I'd like her to come to the surface, I'd like her to look at the map of your future, I'd like her to decide on your direction and I'd like her to spontaneously give you some very interesting surprises.

I don't know whether it will be in the next few days, it may even have to take a week or two before she gives you some of these surprises based on excitement, a sense of adventure, sense of spontaneity, such an important, important part of who you are, deep inside.

How does a child learn to walk? A child learns to walk by not holding onto anything, by taking that step and not holding onto anything, but trusting itself. And what does a mother do, does a mother hold onto the child all the time that it's trying to walk? No, the mother lets go of the child just enough for the child to learn to be independent. And how do you learn to ride a bicycle? Same way, you learn by letting go of something so supportive, and trusting that you can balance, and the way you

balance isn't by standing still, it's by moving forward, by moving forward, getting some momentum in your life and you can balance. That's how you learn to balance, by letting go and having that momentum, that movement forward.

And as you grow, as children grow into teenagers and into adults, the roles of the parents and the child somehow reverse, the parents get older, more fixed in their ways, retire and become more dependent on your mother, the child becomes the mother or the father. And you end up looking after the parents as if they were the children. It goes full circle. Roles become exchanged, so when the child becomes a teenager, and adult and then becomes a parent to its parents, does it do so with wisdom? How much wisdom have you had? I wonder how much real wisdom you have.

I bought a little puppy the other day. I made a mistake. Not by buying it, but by playing with it solidly for 2 days. It won't let me go. Follows me everywhere, yaps at my ankles if I don't pick it up. I have to hold that puppy in my hands all the time otherwise it just drives me crazy. I made a mistake. So I'm having to desensitize it, having to play with it less, until it learns that it doesn't need me any longer. It has to learn that it stands on its own 4 paws, it has to learn that it's independent, not dependent. And I have to learn that I'm independent, not dependent upon it. It works both ways.

You know we all have many things in common. One of the things we have most in common is our aloneness, we are united in our loneliness, because we can never really fully know another person, ever, however close, however close. We are all alone, but that's the one thing we all share, and that's the one thing, because we share, we feel closest about. Now, I have another part of this key that I'm giving you and that is to learn a little bit about your mother's obsessive behaviour. You know she's got that behaviour, she's had it for quite a while and I think maybe you think you understand her, but I don't think you fully understand her.

Now, I'd like you to learn a little bit more about her behaviour, and I don't know whether you want to do that, I really don't know whether you want to help her even more, to learn more about her behaviour. I think a part of you wants to. So I'm going to ask you to do something which will help you learn more about her behaviour. You can wonder what it is I'm going to ask you to do, just give that some thought for a moment. You don't have to make any guesses, I'm going to tell you in a moment. (Long pause.)

Are you ready? I'd like you to spend 15 minutes a day, no more and no less than 15 minutes a day, for one week exactly, 7 days, no more or less than 15 minutes a day, no more no less, for one week, every single day for 7 days, not 6, not 8, but exactly 7 days for 15 minutes, not 14, not 16, but for exactly 15 minutes a day for 7 days, 15 minutes a day to obsessively clean up your home.

I don't know whether you'll start in the bedroom, start in the sitting room, you might choose to start in the kitchen or the bathroom, you might start a little bit in one corner of the bedroom and then go over to the other corner before you finish the first corner, or you might start with one cupboard in the kitchen and as you're half way down leave it and go into the bathroom. I don't know how you can obsessively clean up your home for 15 minutes a day, every day for one week, for 7 days, no more and no less.

I don't know whether it will be in the morning or the afternoon or the evening. You might even do it in the middle of the night. I don't know whether you'll do part in the morning then leave it until later, 7 minutes in the morning. I don't know how you are going to do it, divide up the minutes. One minute one hour, another minute another hour. You have all the choice in the world to decide how you are going to do it.

And then each time, each day when that's complete I'd like you to sit down and think about you and your mother, and I'd like you to make a decision about something. I'd like you to decide about something that you're never going to do, something that you never ever want, to decide what that is.

This key has been polished for 25 years, it fits so perfectly to that lock, it just opens this door effortlessly, easily. And it's my gift to you, just take it and use it, and stay with that now as I talk elsewhere.

(Brooks talks to the group – while continuing to embed suggestions to the patient in his explanation to the group)

You know OCD. It's a terrible label really, OCD. She's actually got, what's she got, she's got DCO. You know what it stands for, DCO? Anybody got an idea what DCO stands for, don't you know what it stands for? Well, figure it out later. Listen, OCD, it comes in many different forms and has many different symptoms, and has quite a few different causes, but often it's family related and it can often be taught, not always, but it can be taught. Bit like phobias can be taught.

A phobic response can be passed down through the family, not inherited as such, but kind of. And because it's often tied up with family and relationships and all of the anchors and the triggers within a family relationship, one very important way of the dealing with the problem is not just to work on the person as an individual, but work on their relationship within their environment, because you can actually make someone better in your therapy room and then they go back into the environment and all the things out there that were maintaining the problem are still there. They have to change.

The hardest problem for a therapist is changing the environment when it's not available to you. We have to change the environment via the client or patient we have. So we have to help the patient do something that will make a difference to the environment, thus freeing them from all of the triggers. Do you see what I'm saying here? It's not just about getting the person better, it's about breaking down whatever's happening that's maintaining the problem. So we're not just in the business of fixing people, we're in the business of giving them the ability to change their life through changing their environment.

So what we have to do is find something, this is the emotional field I talked about, find something that will make them want to go out there and change their environment. So we have to put them into a situation or context which will give them a learning which will then give them a new insight or change their belief so that they will then make a difference to their environment, so that then their environment no longer has an influence over them.

So we were kind of working like in this way, giving something to them so they go out there and make a difference, and the difference no longer affects them, and the environment no longer affects them and they start to change from within themselves. To try and get them to change within themselves, just here, without taking into consideration the influences outside is futile. You'll get short change. You're short changing them. They'll get short change, quick change, but it'll then go back to an old pattern then because the environment hasn't changed. In some rare cases, because someone changes the environment changes, because the change within that person is so dramatic, you know it's quick, that the environment changes, but if the environment has been there a long time it's going to be less likely to change because it's well ingrained, and the belief systems in people or in activities or behaviours outside of the client, if they've been there a long long time, it'll be harder to shift them, even if the client dramatically comes out as being wonderful, fantastic, etc, the environment like disbelieves it, and will do everything it can to maintain the status quo.

So quite often we have to get the client and take them out of the environment all together. I remember a couple who brought to me a young boy, he was probably about 18, and this boy was unable to make decisions, and because he was unable to make decisions his parents were over, over, over possessive and over caring for him, and I talked to him separately from the couple and it turned out that he was unable to make decisions because his parents always disagreed with each other, and he wanted love from both of the them, and because he had to take sides with one or the other over different issues, he was always wrong with one parent, so rather than actually speaking up and getting blamed by one or other parent from whom he wanted love, he stopped making decisions, he stopped talking, basically. A bit like people who have stammers and stutters, it can often be the cause of that. And so it wasn't that he was really unable to make decisions, but he was terrified of making decisions. And he was 18 and the parents were terrified of letting him out of the house, almost. This was a real double bind they were in.

And so the therapy I gave to them was to allow him to move out of the house and live with a friend. They put up a fight for that one, and I really spent a lot of time building up my rapport with them so they could trust my decision, and they did that, and they let him out of the house, and as soon as they let him out of that environment, he suddenly blossomed. He no longer was going to be wrong when he opened his mouth. And of course he had a lot of anger as well, so he actually spoke up for himself a bit too much sometimes, can you imagine, with his friends.

Nevertheless, he suddenly became very independent and became transformed and initially was angry at his parents, and there were problems with that, but then that resolved itself after a year or so, it resolved itself so that he could look on them more compassionately and value why they wanted him to be there, that they were doing it out of love and fear and things like this.

Through therapy he was able to look at it more objectively and understand it and then he came back into their family, but from a different perspective altogether and was able to relate to them. We had to get him out of that environment. I was lucky because I had all 3 of them with me for those first few sessions so I could actually do that. It's not always possible to do that. And it was good for the parents. Can you imagine how good it was for the parents?

They were just falling apart, this couple, because initially they disagreed with each other and then the thing that united them was their common goal to actually protect this child who was

actually like he was because they were like they were. And they were kind of falling apart because they could not originally resolve their own issues and they couldn't make a decision about what to do with the child. Once he was out of course, then they could be helped with their own individual problems without using this child as a kind of medicine or therapy for themselves, as a way of bonding themselves together. So they could be helped with their own issues, so once he was out it enabled everybody to be healed. And quite often when a person comes into therapy, you're not dealing with one person, you're dealing with a whole family, a whole environment.

In a moment I'd like you to open your eyes and you to tell me what your fiancé does, what kind of work he does. As soon as you are ready. What kind of work does your fiancé do?

SUBJECT: He's a lorry driver, and a side loader and fork lift driver.

BROOKS: And where does he travel?

SUBJECT: All round England and Wales and Yorkshire.

BROOKS: Does he eat Yorkies?

SUBJECT: Not particularly.

BROOKS: Don't a lot of them eat Yorkies? So he's a trucker. He travels all around England. He must be quite knowledgeable about towns and countryside in England.

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: So when he takes you away, where does he go? Does he take you some places he goes? What do you do when you go out together at weekends?

SUBJECT: Well, we go all over the place. We visit his parents, we go to Eastbourne, Brighton, Worthing, all over.

BROOKS: Its beautiful, Sussex. You like Sussex?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Hastings is a nice place. You know Battle?

SUBJECT: Mmm.

BROOKS: I like all that coast along there. It's beautiful. Hastings and, where does Paul McCartney live along there? Where is it?

SUBJECT: Peasmarsh.

BROOKS: Is it? Have you popped in for a cup of tea yet?

SUBJECT: Unfortunately, no.

BROOKS: Well, you haven't gone round, have you? Spike Milligan lives there as well I think.

SUBJECT: I don't know.

BROOKS: I think it's Rye, is it Rye? Very nice area, I used to live down in Brighton. I like the area. There are lots of other exciting areas as well, other parts of the world. Have you ever travelled abroad?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: Where did you go?

SUBJECT: I've been to Jersey and I've been to Spain.

BROOKS: Where in Spain did you go?

SUBJECT: Tennerife actually.

BROOKS: How long ago was that?

SUBJECT: A few years ago.

BROOKS: Well Julie, I think you've got some things to think about, but don't think about that. Anything you want to ask?

SUBJECT: I don't think that my cleaning would be up to my mum's standard.

BROOKS: You can always try. Can you see any real grey hairs here, I mean a real grey one? See one there?

SUBJECT: There's a few.

BROOKS: Can you pull one out for me?

SUBJECT: Which one?

BROOKS: Spoilt for choice are you?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: OK, can you find a real grey one, a real, real grey one, not half one, I want a real grey one.

SUBJECT: I think I've found one.

BROOKS: OK, can you give it a yank? This is your souvenir.

SUBJECT: My hands are too sweaty, ah I've got it.

BROOKS: I didn't even feel it, you're so good, you're a real expert. There's no root on that, you've snapped it.

SUBJECT: I don't know.

BROOKS: Do another one. That was an easy one. She knows how to pick the easy ones. I quite enjoy this. I could get obsessive about this.

SUBJECT: I wouldn't if I was you. I can't get hold of it. I might pull out a few instead of one. No, I've made that one go curly.

BROOKS: I don't want a perm.

SUBJECT: Perms don't take on me.

BROOKS: Nor me. I felt that.

SUBJECT: I've got several there actually.

BROOKS: That's the one there you chose. You still haven't got the root have you, I mean they're just snapped.

SUBJECT: I'm sorry.

BROOKS: Now they'll grow back. Oh well, never mind. I thought if you got the root they wouldn't grow back grey you see.

SUBJECT: Apparently they don't grow for 3 months from the root. That's what the hairdresser told me. They're stagnant for 3 months and then they grow back after that.

BROOKS: They're thinking about it are they?

SUBJECT: Yeah, they're taking a rest.

BROOKS: "Shall I grow, maybe, no, no, it's too early, give it a couple of weeks." OK, well you might not want it as a souvenir, but I thought maybe that would be nice.

SUBJECT: Bit like having cat hairs on me.

BROOKS: Which pocket would you put them in? Your right pocket or your left pocket?

SUBJECT: I don't know. I had some of my mum's the other day.

BROOKS: Which pocket were they in?

SUBJECT: The left pocket of my coat.

BROOKS: Maybe you should put it in the right pocket of your jumper and then it kind of balances out, doesn't it? You think the right pocket or left pocket?

SUBJECT: Right pocket.

BROOKS: Yeah, OK. Pop them in now before you lose them. You've made my palms sweat by doing that.

SUBJECT: I probably will lose them now.

BROOKS: No, they're cosy in there. They'll be alright. Keep them safe and cosy in there. Well, thank you very much. Where are you going to spend the rest of the day?

SUBJECT: I don't know.

BROOKS: Are you going to stay up in London, walk around the park for a little bit?

SUBJECT: It depends on what my driver's doing.

BROOKS: Driver?

SUBJECT: Yeah.

BROOKS: You have a chauffeur? Lucky you. Where's your chauffeur?

SUBJECT: Juliette.

BROOKS: Hi, Hi. Thank you Julie, can I have my microphone back? Don't take it away with you and drag the whole PA system down the street. Thank you very much.

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