

MIKE BLOGS

Articles on Personal Growth, Business,
Emotions and Puppies



Mike Blogs

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Our Clients and the Elephant in the Room

By Michael J. Kline

With every client, there's often an elephant in the room. Who is this elephant? It is the self. The invisible and always present voice in our client's head. It's the elephant in the room because it's the one big, usually obvious thing that prevents them from doing what they want to do, achieve, pursue, accomplish, avoid, or change.

The irony is this voice comes from the same mind who created the desired intention in the first place. So, there's the struggle – the vicious circle of our client's own creation. (I'm guessing that by now, you've realized we're talking about ourselves too). In other words, we become our own worst enemy and biggest critic.

What if we could shut off the voice like a switch, how much would that be worth? Without being aware of it, most people attempt this every day. Trying to alter our state of mind through endless activities, drugs, alcohol, exercise, yoga, meditation, plant medicine, etc. All in attempt to stop the voices from running the show.

Most people understand what being in "the zone" feels like - doing something without thinking, just flowing without a sense of time, perhaps even a feeling of bliss. Even if it's rare or just for a brief time, we usually love this experience. The zone is where we often feel our best and perform our best. It's no coincidence that athletes try to get in this state of mind, at will. Unfortunately, the elephant in the room usually has something to say about that.

The science community has identified 6 important chemical reactions in the brain that occur when in the state of flow, they are, serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, endorphins, anandamide, and oxytocin. When these chemicals are active, they quiet the voice in the head, and can allow focus without interruption and access to the zone.

What does all this mean? Knowing about these chemicals might be intriguing but it doesn't help to get us in the zone. When we're working with our clients, using our amazing powerful questioning skills, and exploring different avenues, the client's mind will either let you in or reject what you are saying, and you don't always know for sure which one it is. In fact, the client may not even know because what they say and how they respond will not necessarily line up with what they will do.

Every human has this inner voice, and it has been well-trained to think the way it does, to keep us feeling safe and loved. The good news is that convincing even the most well-trained and stubborn elephants to consider new ideas and other possibilities is much easier than you might

think. The self, the voice in the head, gets all its information from subconscious memories from all life experiences which drives current decisions and behavior.

A tool I use with my groups and individual clients is RIM (Regenerating Images in Memory). The process allows the client to naturally dip into a state where the elephant's voice got it's training in the first place. There, in this pliable state, we can take advantage of the science of neuroplasticity and regenerate a sense of safety and love all the elephant voices, so that it will cooperate with desired outcomes.

In RIM work, the whole brain is active allowing the perfect relevant subconscious programs to surface automatically, without any psychological manipulation whatsoever. The client is always in control and creates their own healing/growing journey. Through gentle, somatic sensing, neutral witnessing and following the client, stuck negative emotions surface and dissipate, making room for new positive feelings and freedom from old programs by creating new neuropathways in the brain.

Since there is no switch or app on our phone to turn off the voice in our head, RIM is the most powerful tool we've found to help clients get out of their own way. I hope you will join me on a journey of self-healing and helping clients break the vicious cycle of the voice in their head. By Mastering Emotional Processing Skills using RIM, you will never feel helpless no matter what shows up. I teach these skills online, live and at retreats. [You can find more info and upcoming classes here.](#)

How to Start on Time and Respect Late Arrivals

By Michael J. Kline

The program starts at 9am. I'm the kind, compassionate and patient trainer, so let's wait for the stragglers. Wait, what? I'm here on time, you're here on time. Why are we waiting? It's the polite thing to do for the stragglers, and it's terribly rude to do to those who arrived on time. One argument is if we start on time, the late comers will need us to repeat things to catch them up anyway. I think that's even worse, so it would be easier to just start late. I almost always promise my participants that we start and end on time. After all, making and keeping promises builds trust, and we need deep trust in our relationships, right? This article will dive into some solutions that accommodate trust and respect for everyone.

I believe that we are always teaching people how to treat us. If you start late, you're teaching people to arrive late next time. For example, I know that if I am attending a webinar, I can expect to start several minutes late, and to listen to boring introductions for the first 10-20 minutes. I tend to arrive on time and use that time to catch up on my emails. It is very rare, that I feel my time is respected on a webinar or at most meetings. We are all trained or being trained to operate with very low standards.

My first step is promising participants in advance that I will be starting and ending on time. I reinforce it with a request to arrive ten minutes early to settle in, have some social time and get comfortable. Even working on Zoom I offer coffee social time at the beginning of a meeting, so people can randomly make new friends, just like at in-person events. People love this!

In some of our training programs, the end of the day needs to be flexible because we don't want to leave someone struggling if we are processing some deep emotional work. In this case, I promise to start on time, and give an estimate of the target ending time, and ask participants to be flexible give or take 30 minutes for the end time, and I explain why.

I am a nice guy, I understand that some people will be late for unexpected reasons, and because they have been trained by other facilitators to expect to start late anyway. Here's how I support them and still start on time. I start with something fun and energizing, that is not critical to the rest of the day's content, so I don't need to repeat it for the benefit of late comers. My favorite is to start with an energizer, even on Zoom. This is a fun activity that you usually do after lunch to bring up the energy of the room and get people's bodies moving. Why not start the day with some high energy and laughter?

Some trainers and facilitators dislike energizers, and some participants really hate them because they are afraid of looking foolish or vulnerable. We are transformational leaders, so

let's make this easy and beneficial. Start with something really easy, and really fun. It's important to know some really good energizers that are new to most participants. I have a dozen or so go-to energizers I have memorized and practiced. If you want fun ideas and new games that will have you and your participants loving it, take a few improv classes at your local theater company. Or find some online. After you learn a few, you can start to adapt games to fit your theme and gamify just about anything.

So, I start exactly on time with an energizer game. Preferably something I can later tie into the learning. It typically takes 5-10 minutes to do a good energizer, so late comers will either join in, or come in near the end of the fun and wonder what they missed. That's ok, they can play more later in the day. We can welcome them with enthusiasm and love, without any judgment for being late or making them feel bad.

By the way, never, ever, ever, greet a late arrival with a sarcastic "glad you could join us". This is a common mean-spirited comment in toxic work-place settings, and it will annihilate any attempt at creating emotionally safe space for the entire room.

If you are using a slide deck, another idea is to start the event with cartoons. Jack Canfield does this at every event from a one-hour keynote to a 7-day training. He teaches that we start with humor because it improves the immune system and our memory, and opens us up to better learning, and it's just a lot of fun. He's right. I'm adding this suggestion because you could also use this to solve the starting on time situation.

Whatever you do, remember, the goal is to build trust and create safety. We do this by starting with clear expectations explained in advance. We build on it with modeling integrity, making and keeping small promises like starting on time. We also build community by having fun and laughing together. And we respect late arrivals while simultaneously training them that we start on time.

If you'd like to talk more about safe and sacred spaces, I'd love to hear from you! What's been your biggest challenge?

Michael J. Kline is a Teacher, Healer and Firekeeper. You can often find him teaching emotional processing skills like RIM (Regenerating Images in Memory), or assisting Jack Canfield, training transformational trainers, or hosting a retreat at Con Smania Retreat Center in Costa Rica. Otherwise, he's at home in Sarasota FL, with his husband of 34 years, and their labradoodle Luke. You can reach him through his website www.intus.life, or e-mail mike@intus.life

A Group Check-in that Matters

By Michael J. Kline

Let's talk about the importance of starting your event with a check-in and ideas for deepening the experience.

The two big variables for check-ins are the size of the group and the length of the event. A smaller group or longer event both allow for longer check-in time. Conversely, a larger group or shorter event, means a shorter check-in. Regardless, always have a check-in. Always. Participants need to get their voice into the room to feel connected, otherwise, they might think they could listen to a recording and have a similar experience.

If you have a larger group for a one-day event, maybe it's shouting out where they're from, or maybe a milling exercise where everyone stands and introduces themselves to two new people around them. Or better yet, have them share with two people, something they're grateful for today. This gets energy going in the room and makes everyone feel a little more connected and emotionally a little safer and will improve participation later. If people start the event by speaking anything to anyone, they are more likely to speak up later when you ask for input of any kind. We'll do a separate article on gradients of safety, but if you ask questions, and no one answers, it's probably because a lack of connection or emotional safety. The check-in is the place to start building your gradients of safety.

My happy place is in-person, transformational events, usually with 12-24 people spending 5-7 days together. In this setting, I want the deepest possible emotional sharing and processing for the magic to take place. Personally, I'm very comfortable with anything that shows up and handling it in front of a group. If this is not your jam, you can learn deeper processing skills, partner with someone who has this expertise, or perhaps have a supporting assistant in the back of the room who can handle everything that pops up. I've been providing back of the room support at Jack Canfield retreats since 2015 and I've witness miraculous transformations.

With this group size (12-24), an opening circle is ideal. In fact, I prefer an opening circle check-in every morning. Remember, this is a blend of right and left-brain work. We want emotions and spontaneity, and to do it well, requires a little strategy. If you provide a typical ice-breaker opening question, or leave it to each person to introduce themselves, it will probably stay pretty surface level and frankly boring for everyone except the person speaking. We want to open with a bang. Everyone should know from the start they are in for something different, and they are getting their money's worth, so it's time to buckle up! Start creating safe and sacred space from the first moment.

For deeper work, I like to use a sentence lead instead of a question. The responses tend to come from the heart, compared to answering a question, which tends to come from the head. Start by modeling it by going first. For example: “My name is Mike and I’m from Florida and I’m here to make some new connections and explore my next steps”. A snoozer in my opinion. Still, it’s way better than talking about my job selling insurance. We can increase the safety level, by normalizing what often scares people – vulnerability. Let’s turn up the emotional temperature by modelling a deeper share: “My name is Mike and I’m here because I’m tired of putting myself last and I want to learn to love myself and find something to be excited about in my life. I claim my seat at the table”. Feel the difference? Your sample share can be something true for you today, or an example – perhaps sharing how you might have answered this back when you started your own transformational journey.

The point is to model what you’re looking for. If you do an example, be sure to point out that this is how you might have answered this a few years ago, or that its an example of things we hear a lot. Then, be sure to do your current, true, vulnerable share – for example: “I’m Mike, and I’m here to share my highest gifts in the most authentic way possible, to inspire your transformation and expansion into whatever your next step is. I claim my seat by the fire”. I find asking them to claim their seat is very powerful because most people never really felt like they belonged at the preverbal table, or fire, or wherever you are doing your circle.

I learned an even deeper opening check-in as part of The Circle Way[®], as taught by Peerspirit. We invite participants to bring a personal object with them that represents (something you choose), perhaps where they are in their recovery journey, or their connection to creative writing – or whatever it is you’re working on at the retreat. You model your check-in, sharing your object, and what it means to you and why you chose it. When done well, I guarantee that by the third person sharing, the whole group will be in tears, because people have powerful and personal meaning to be there. This is setting the dial at a much higher emotional temperature.

For the highest setting, what we do at RIM training retreats, is we start with a deep immersive RIM activity. It’s a closed-eye experience that feels a little like guided imagery, but it gets its power in the nuanced way it’s co-created. When participants open their eyes usually in tears, we give them time to journal first, then share. When complete, everyone feels a deep connection and knows they are in a safe place with kindred spirits on a similar journey. No one shares about their work, or boring life situations, because no one’s bio is as interesting as their soul. I have spent 7 days with people, bonding with them deeply, learning all their values, fears, dreams and passions. I have no idea where they live or what they do for a living. People are not starving for networking. People are starving for real connection, to be seen and heard and loved.

If you’d like to talk more about safe and sacred spaces, I’d love to hear from you!

Transforming from Not Enough

By Michael J. Kline

The best education for me is experience, and with over fifty years of experience being not enough, I think I've had enough of not enough-ness. What astonishes me now, is the glorious humility of being the amazing, powerful, beautiful, magnificent, and perfectly human man that I am. Yes, I said humility.

Contrary to my previous belief, I think being “not enough” is a very egoic position. Wait wait... hear me out... to be less-than, or not enough is to create separation from the magnificence we were born to be. We know we were each born as a perfect baby. At some point we separated from that perfection. We know that in the quantum field, we are all connected, so it's not just a spiritual concept that we are all one. To be not-enough, would mean that we are having the experience of being separate – from all that is, from our own perfection and from God. The thing is, we are not separate. That is impossible. No wonder I suffered so much!

I don't want to lose anyone on the choice of words or religious arguments, that's not what this is about. So, feel free to choose the God/Universe/Spirit word of your choice. For me, growing up Catholic in Ohio, I thought God was a jealous, demanding, needy old guy, judging me from his magical place above the clouds, somewhere over Cleveland. I was taught to kneel before such power. To be less than. To accept my low place as a sinner. My default destiny was eternity in hell until I earn my way to heaven, which is impossible by the way, for a gay boy. I was taught that humiliation was synonymous with humility. I was taught to think of myself as separate. I don't blame my teachers, maybe I was a poor student, but that is what I learned. It's been forty years since I left the church, and I've since come to love and appreciate many things about it, and I also continue to grow and learn differently.

What I know now, as best as I can know anything, is that humility is giving up the concept of being separate, trusting Spirit enough to know that I can safely surrender my need to be enough.

When we look at the basic model of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and later the Barrett Values Model, we see that our first and foundational level of needs is to feel we have enough safety, money, health, etc. Next, we need to feel loved enough, and only then can we give attention to being enough in our third level of needs. Our continuing evolution through transformation into alignment, collaboration and contribution requires us to have enough of the basics to trust we are okay. When we don't have enough to survive, it's hard to believe we are enough in any way, shape, or form.

So, only when we know we are enough, do we feel safe enough to surrender into not having to be enough. We are actually everything. Don't say that out loud in front of the Sister Veronica of my childhood – it won't end well for you. It takes humility to let go of being a separate special entity who is capable of not being enough. Only with the strength of this humility, can we be one with everything, incapable of being anything less.

The ultimate ego trip is to think you are so special that you are not enough. You are. What would it be like to accept that? You are enough whether you like it or not, if it's comfortable, or scary, or exhilarating, or freeing, or something else, doesn't matter. We are all enough. And yes, I understand we have life experiences that convinced us to think this way. Maybe it's time to change the past (yes, we can) and adapt new thoughts of our true enough-ness. And, it is humility, not ego.

Imagine taking a drop of water from the ocean and holding it in the palm of your hand. It would be correct to say this is ocean, right? If the drop could speak, it could accurately say I am ocean. It is not the entire ocean. It is no less than any other drop of ocean, and does not answer to more powerful drops deep in the sea. It does not compare itself to prettier, smarter, or stronger drops. It just is.

My preferred metaphor, which showed up for me consistently for about six years before I set aside the fear and embraced it, is Fire. I am Fire. I am not all Fire, and yet I am one with the essence of Fire. I need tending and fuel, and I will eventually die. I can be extinguished. I am powerful. I can be destructive. I can provide safety and protection and warmth. I can be the neutral witness to what wants to be shared, without judgment or reaction. I can receive and turn into ash whatever wants to be given to me in the spirit of surrendering to the energy of the Fire. I am all that. I need not compare myself to the smoldering cigarette butt on the side of the road, or the sun. I just am, and I am all I need to be.

If you were to choose a metaphor, what beautiful, powerful and glorious and scary metaphor would you choose to represent you? Or who you are becoming? I'd love to hear! If you'd love to hear more about changing the past, let's talk about [Regenerating Images in Memory](#).

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Choosing Patience another Puppy Lesson

By Michael J. Kline

I'm working at the window in my office (Panera), and I'm so distracted by these people having a business meeting. They are just two people having a conversation, until they put a third person on their speaker phone and it becomes a very loud conversation. On my journey toward being a more patient and kinder person, I decide I to stop complaining in my head and put on my headset and get back to work. My plan backfired. Now it's far more annoying to be able to hear their conversation through my over-the-ear, noise-cancelling headphones blasting relaxation music into my head! Surely, after making a concerted effort to abate the noise problem, I have honestly earned the right to be annoyed, or to even complain. A voice in my head reminds me, this is a public café, not my office. I come here because I like the energy of being around people. That was worth a chuckle. It's clear I like the energy of being around quiet people, or even people talking loudly about things I'm curious to eaves drop on, but not the people I was given this morning. Then a miracle occurs!

I look up to see a woman walking her puppy outside my window. OMG, it's so stinking cute! Who wants to work anyway?! She sees me smiling at the puppy and smiles back, I wave, the puppy sits and looks up at me through the glass – I'm sure I know those eyes – in one of my past lives as a dog, we were best friends, I'm certain of it. And the puppy recognizes my souls as well, as she stares directly into my eyes and time stood still for a few moments of deep connection. I'm glad she has her new life, obviously well loved and cared for, filled with joy and wonder. At this moment, I am connected once again with who I really am and all is right with the world.

Puppy energy what it is, my soul's old friend is off to her next adventure in the grassy islands of parking lot bathroom breaks and giant plastic Christmas mall decorations. I'm back to my first-world problems brought about by being able to work at my laptop wherever I want and being surrounded by everyone having similar technology allowing them to share with people on a cell phone at a café producing their own work accomplishments over coffee and orange scones.

Dam, I miss those orange scones on my new healthy eating plan.

The lady with the puppy passes by on the way back to her car, so I run out to ask for a picture and tell her what a gift it was to have her puppy interrupt my crankiness and replace it with the power of choice. The puppy made me forget all about the noisy conversation that was previously impossible to ignore. It turns out, once I was aware of my attention being able to shift, I realized I was actually in choice all along. I just forgot. It seems I forget a lot.

The truth is, that when we feel we are not in choice, it just means there is something that is not in our conscious awareness. Once something comes into conscious awareness, we can then be in choice – no judgment on what we choose, just that we can choose from awareness instead of giving that power to whatever pre-programmed habits of reaction are occurring beneath the surface.

Now that I've brought you to your awareness, there is always something not in your awareness, you can choose to explore more of what is beneath the surface of your operating system. Or not. That is the power of being in choice. I choose to continue being a perfectly flawed human and exploring whenever I remember to do so. What do you choose? mike@intus.life

Everything Feels Different After Ayahuasca

By Michael J. Kline

Confession: For much of the last year, I was feeling sad, drained, and sometimes even depressed. Silly me, I thought I was beyond that. Turns out, I'm still really, really, human. I would frequently drop back into that old habit of over-thinking everything, getting frustrated, confused, and angry and then feel guilty for not just being as happy as I should be. After beating myself up for beating myself up, I would remind myself that I know better, then I'd regurgitate the same crap over again.

Then a friend invited me to spend a week in Costa Rica at Rythmia Life Advancement Center. Primarily to do a week of Ayahuasca journeys for self-healing, reflection, growing, purging, connecting and whatever else was meant to happen. I said yes - partly because I love and trust this group of friends, and partly because I learned that when something scares me, I should lean into it. I'm so glad I did.

Now that I'm home, I feel overwhelmed, but instead of overwhelmed with bad news, uncertainty, and frustration, I am overwhelmed with gratitude, love, peace, excitement, calm, confidence, and joy. My entire body is giggling with child-like wonder and excitement. My mind feels clear for the first time in many months. I feel eager to step into life, like I just met someone new and fell head-over-heels in love. I did. I met myself and I love me, like never before.

I discovered that somewhere in my human evolution, I had become a person who lived in constant fear and who felt he didn't deserve love. I have done many brave things and many lovely things to convince my ego that I was brave, courageous, loving, and lovable. However, nothing less than the total truth is acceptable when you sit with Mother Ayahuasca. And the truth is, I was living in fear and feeling unlovable for my entire life. This week, Mother Aya merged me back to my true soul and healed my heart. I got my miracle! If you're thinking you want this, I'll warn you, Club Med, this ain't! This was not an ordinary transformational vacation; it was a rebirth. It was all-inclusive, which means it includes both beautiful heaven and hell experiences. It was a physical and energetic cleanse so deep I could feel my entire body - heart beat and breath in sync with all of nature, like I am an instrument playing in the Pachamama orchestra. I feel a love so deep, when it first came over me, all I could do was shake and cry until I laughed and cried some more.

Now that I'm home, I looked at the grass and the sky and the trees this morning on my walk

and greeted them all like the old friends they are. We know each other. We have played together and cried together and worked together and love each other. Yes, I sound like I've been drinking the Kool-Aid, and I have. I can tell you, the Kool-Aid tastes like shit in one cup and like a dream mocha latte the next. Like everything on this journey, maybe it's another metaphor for life.

If you read this far, and you want a little of what I'm having, feel free to reach out, I'm happy to share what I can if it is helpful to you. For me, I just feel a need to share some bits of my journey of healing and growing.

When Positivity Isn't Positive

By Michael J. Kline

Mindset is crucial to success and happiness. It's no wonder so many coaches, trainers and helping professionals rush to help clients find a positive mindset. Certainly, there is a time and place for finding the hidden gift in negative events, for finding the silver lining or even gratitude for events that initially feel painful. I totally get it and I have over-used positivity training myself. It is helpful to remember that emotions are our natural feedback system. Avoiding negative emotions is like ignoring the check-engine light in your car. Missing negative emotions allows them to fester, grow and show up in seemingly unrelated ways making our lives more difficult.

According to Vipassana Meditation training, 2500 years ago, the Buddha taught that if we resist negative feelings, they expand. If we pursue the positive sensations, they dissipate. The desire to control our emotions gets us exactly the opposite of what we want. Carl Jung taught that what we resist not only persists but expands. Dr Deb Sandella, founder of the RIM Institute, teaches that emotions flow through the body like water flowing through a river. Our resistance to negative feelings is like throwing a boulder into the river – building a dam that blocks our natural emotional flow.

So, it is critical that we allow the negative feelings to be fully felt, give us the necessary feedback, express what needs to be expressed, and only then, we can simply allow them to dissipate organically and naturally. What won't work with negative feelings, is what I call the three W's that people tend to prefer – White-Washing, Walking Away or Wishing.

Let's start with White-Washing. This could also be called "looking on the bright side". Do any of these phrases sound familiar? They don't deserve you anyway! You'll land on your feet. I'm sorry he/she/they dumped you, I'm sorry about your diagnosis – you must stay positive! I'm sorry for your loss – they're in a better place now. I'm so sorry you lost your job, that must feel awful. Maybe this is a chance to look at your passions and find something you like better! You get the idea – think of any bad news you've ever experienced, and the corresponding cliché you heard from friends and family. It's all well-intended, but usually not helpful from a coach or therapist. Indeed, there may be a silver lining, and there may eventually be gratitude, but only after the pain has had a chance to be felt, experienced, and processed. Our job is to provide the space and safety for the feelings, the expression and natural dissipation.

Next, let's look at Walking Away – moving away from what is painful is perfectly natural, and it is natural for us to want to help our clients move toward the positive. Remember, what we

resist not only persists, but expands. Waking away, also called “leading the horse to happiness”, is having a happy destination for our client – and asking leading questions that will help them discover the path to happiness. This seems better than telling them how to feel, because it creates the illusion that the client is in charge of their experience and self-healing. How do we know that our questions aren’t just manipulating them toward the destination we assumed was desired? Is it possible, we are helping their resistance? Are we accidentally helping them hold on to even more long-term pain?

Finally, we know that Wishing them Away won’t dissolve negative emotions. Yet, if we attempt positivity tools prematurely, that’s all we’re really doing - wishing and hoping. Affirmations, visualizations, spending time with positive people, avoiding the news, mirror exercises, gratitude work, etc. are all excellent ideas. Done prematurely, these are ineffective on larger emotional issues and rarely touch on root causes. Remember the analogy of building a dam in the river of emotions? If the dam is blocking flow, all this other work is like trying to send the negative emotions back up stream. Let’s remove the dam and allow the negative emotions to flow, and the positive emotions will flow and expand on their own. So, when you hear or speak expressions like “trusting the Universe, giving it up to your higher power, everything happens for a reason, somethings are just fate, etc.” check to make sure you aren’t helping your client wish away the negative feelings that just want to flow downstream.

When we help our clients move too quickly toward positivity it’s like putting a fresh coat of paint over old rusty metal or rotten wood. It feels so much better at the end of their session but miserable by the weekend. We need to make it safe and easy to invite the client into what we’ve previously thought of as the scary, shadowy underworld of negative feelings. As those feelings dissolve, the client doesn’t have to carry them around forever. It’s like trying to hold a beach ball under water or trying to run a marathon with weighted shoulder pads. All that suffering is optional.

Mindfulness training, or a ten-day silent Vipassana retreat will help you start to experience more of this for yourself. RIM training provides the experience as well as the skills to work this way with clients. If this appeals to you, learn more about RIM at www.intus.life/rim or how to learn the skills yourself at www.intus.life/learn-rim. Also, you can join our free live Zoom webinar and experience RIM for yourself. I generally do them a couple times per week. If the dates don’t align, sign up anyway and we will invite you to a future event. [Sign up here.](#)

The Sad Tree

(Walking in the woods during my ten-day silent retreat)

By Michael Kline

Hello tree... You look so sad. I'm so sorry you're just leaning there, lifeless, full of holes, no branches, no leaves, no bark, just rotting away. How sad to just be there decaying, with no purpose, no meaning. What happened?

I bet you used to be a big deal in these woods. You must have been very tall and straight, powerful and full of life and possibility. You must have housed hundreds of birds, thousands of insects. You provided shade and shelter to animals, and small delicate plants, you dropped your leaves every year to fertilize the soil, you had deep roots, the very model of strength and stability. What happened that you lost it all? How sad to see you like this now.

I am not sad, said the tree. I was a big deal in these woods, tall and straight, powerful and full of life and possibility. I have housed thousands of birds and millions of insects. I had the honor of providing shade and shelter to animals, and small delicate plants. I was happy to drop my leaves every year to fertilize the soil, and yes, I was blessed with deep roots, strong and stable.

I am still full of life, I am full of holes and many animals and insects still make use of me, as I ever so slowly continue to feed the soil for new life to spring up, full of endless possibility. I will never die, I simply change with the times to accommodate my highest purpose in this moment. It is my joy to be here, still beautifying the woods, still providing what I can provide. And in my later years, to be a teacher to all who seek my wisdom. Thank you for visiting me.

What happened to you, my human friend, that you see sadness here? How sad that is.

As I burst into tears, I said thank you to the tree. Oh Tree, it's me who is sad, that is my sadness I see as I look at you. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, so that I might live as greatly as you. That I might be always serving in the best way I can to support, shelter, feed, nurture and love others. That I might always contribute what I can that is needed in each moment. That I may know my purpose and share my many blessings with all who pass by.

As my sadness faded, I felt the underlying fear arise in my body, that was hiding beneath the sadness. The fear that I would waste my most vibrant years and die alone in the woods unappreciated and unused. As I studied the tree further, and appreciated the beauty of its state – the soft bark-less wood, the perfect holes showing how much life still happens here, the graceful stance, even as it leans but would not fall.

As the fear faded away, my body replaced it with goosebumps of excited possibility and tears of joy.

Mixed Feelings on Mother's Day

By Michael J. Kline

Here in the US and some other countries, today is Mother's Day. As we realize it is a regional holiday, not a universal law of nature, you get to choose to participate or not, and to the degree you want. You also get to feel how you want to feel about it. In my own experience and working with clients, I know Mother's Day can be challenging. This article is for those challenged today. That may be due to the loss of a mother, the quality of relationship with your mother or your role, or lack of a role as a mother. It may be for a hundred other reasons. The point is, you might feel something other than like a Hallmark Card. That's ok. Feel what you feel.

As a child, I took pride in making cards and gifts in school. In my teen-years, I made the effort to celebrate brunch and dinner with the family. Over the years those days felt more and more hollow until I knew it was downright fake. In my twenties and thirties, I would alternate a couple years not on speaking terms with mom, (when life was easy and fun) and a couple years when we would make up (when life was stressful and burdensome). Eventually, I realized I had the power to say enough is enough. It was difficult and painful, but less difficult and painful than subjecting myself to the constant devaluing antics of a bitter, sad, angry woman I couldn't help or change.

At age fifty, during a RIM session (Regenerating Images in Memory), I changed my perception of my mother to Aunt. I had accepted her as my mother in every way for the 40-some years since she and my uncle adopted me, following my birth-mother's death when I was seven. I had no memory of my birth mother. After decades of forgiveness work and trying to understand this relationship and my low self-worth, the breakthrough moment came when I fired her as my mother. I instantly realized that while she never could be what I needed as a mother, she had gone far above and beyond any expectation of an aunt. She took us in, fed us, housed us, educated us and did the best she could with her limited awareness, knowledge, skills and tools. When I lowered the bar for her, I could finally forgive her. Following forgiveness, finding gratitude for the gifts received was easy. My loss of a mother was not on her.

During another RIM session, I was able to sense the feeling of being held by my birthmother. The sense was an overwhelming feeling of unconditional love, safety and protection. I cried a lot, I smiled a lot and I discovered that at some level, at some point, I was wanted, valued and loved.

What I find again and again working with clients is, that it is never too late to create a happy childhood. Thanks to RIM, we actually have the power to not only create a perspective shift, or a re-frame, but we also have the power to create an entirely new experience in our imagination. Our bodies, our unconscious mind and our nervous system, treat a well-imagined event similar to a real event. So, while we intellectually know it was an imagined event, we feel completely different. We can neutralize the negative emotional charged stories we tell ourselves. The story shifts from draining to empowering; from suffering to freedom. Our brains never stop growing and changing. Thanks to neuroplasticity in our brain, we now know that anything is possible.

I hope you have something beautiful to celebrate today. I invite you to consider celebrating you. You have already survived everything that has ever happened to you. You have within you, everything you need to be who you want to be; who you were meant to be.

Coaching the Subconscious

By Michael J. Kline

Coaching the subconscious is not complicated as it may sound. Since 95% of our brain activity lives beneath the surface of awareness, it would make sense to go right to the source of all blocks, pain, and suffering.

Whether we are talking about coaching or therapy, the model has always been helping people shift their perspective, reframe a situation, shine a new light, and ask the right questions. All this activity is working with conscious awareness. We tend to work in the so-called thinking brain, while emotions live elsewhere in the subconscious mind and body. Therefore, we cannot think our way out of blocks. fear, anxiety, trauma, and so on.

The neuroscience is here. We now know that decisions and behavior are directed by a lifetime of past experiences and live beneath the surface of conscious awareness, out of reach of the 5% of the brain where we have easy access. We can ask all the perfect and powerful questions and let the client talk about an issue endlessly and help give rise to see things differently which is certainly helpful, but it doesn't resolve the issue at a visceral level, or even tell us whether or not we're working on the most important issue/s.

For example, you have a client who tells you they can't seem to follow through on business projects that would certainly propel their sales effort. The question is, what's really and truly blocking them? Most likely the client has exhausted all the thinking, analyzing, and strategizing and still can't find a solution. That's why they seek your help.

What if the answer lies in the client's past and is stuck in their subconscious? What if their father, family, friends, or teachers told them repeatedly that they will never become anything, never succeed, and a host of other negative possibilities? The client may even be aware of some of these experiences repeating silently in their head. Even if the client tries to convince themselves and says, "I'll show them all." Regardless, the mind is a funny thing. The client may also think, "what if they're right, I'm such a loser, I'll never make it on my own."

I worked with a client who thought this was his story, only to find out that beneath the surface, was a resistance to out-shining Dad. This client had just broken the threshold in his career to make more money than his father ever did, and while doing work his father didn't understand or respect. That was a subconscious block that had never been revealed. No matter how much we explored, we may have never gotten to the real sabotaging issue. By following what showed up in the client's body-sensing and dipping beneath the surface, it revealed itself and was completely resolved in a single session. This method or tool I'm referring to is called RIM

(Regenerating Images in Memory). The possibilities are endless, and could take a lifetime of talking about it, to find the root issue, let alone heal it. We need to create a safe space where the client can sense what's beneath the surface – in RIM we call it the dip/see/do method – we dip beneath the surface to see what's there, then we can act and do something to resolve it. This is not hypnosis or guided imagery, because it only works when it's generated by the client's own imagination that spontaneously comes forth while sensing their experiences in their body, not the limited thinking brain. RIM always trusts the subconscious for the real answers.

RIM is the best combination of skills I've found, that allows all this to happen. RIM does have some skills in common with Interactive Guided Imagery, and Somatic work, along with numerous unique skills discovered by Dr Deborah Sandella.

Dr Deb (as we call her) has a Doctorate in Human Communication and a Masters in Psychiatric Nursing. During the first 25 years of her career, she worked in a myriad of mental health settings from intensive services to private practice, and in two innovative cutting-edge inpatient community-based programs. As an award-winning therapist, University Professor, and a Best-selling author, she's the whole package. Dr. Deb initially synthesized aspects of Interactive Guided Imagery, Somatic techniques, and other skills she found effective. RIM has evolved "through" her rather than "from" her as she humbly describes, it has developed a life of its own as a revolutionary whole-brain way of naturally processing stuck emotions. And neuroscience now confirms what she's been teaching for decades.

I think the real genius of her discovery, is the use of imagination to connect the thinking brain with the body. We can use the body as a portal to that which is hidden (not in conscious awareness), then allow imagination to make it tangible for the thinking brain to work with it. The result is nothing less than miraculous. By coaching directly where the issues live, my clients report that they don't just feel better, or have new insights – they feel completely different and fully empowered to move their life forward.

Three Money Blocks for Coaches

By Michael J. Kline

From a recent client: “After our call, I brought in more enrollments than my entire month! It was playful and fun!”

This is the text I received the day after a session with Don (not his real name). Don is very accomplished at enrolling prospects in a two-month coaching program requiring a \$5,000 investment. Whether we are brand new to enrolling clients or hate anything that resembles the idea of “selling”, or if we are an old pro, everyone bumps into blocks from time to time. Sometimes it’s about your offer, sometimes it’s your marketplace, skills, prices, etc. Often, it’s mindset, and sometimes it’s a hidden subconscious belief or energy that gets in the way.

After spending a few minutes sharing the pressure of the recent dry month, I had Don close his eyes and find the feeling of that pressure in his body – it was in his chest – as he allowed spontaneous imagination to give it form, color, size, texture and more, I had him imagine being inside the form. As we went deeper and deeper beneath the surface, using the body as the portal to what was hidden beneath conscious awareness, he eventually was surprised to find himself in a memory of being 7 years old in the apartment where he grew up.

Imagining being his young self again, he had a dialogue with his mother that didn’t (or couldn’t) happen when he was only seven. Finding his feelings in his young body and giving them voice released old beliefs about playfulness, safety, masculinity, fun, expressiveness, and creativity. Fully sensing his mother hearing him and receiving all he shared with her, Mom spoke back (in his imagination) and shared everything he never knew to be true in his early childhood. Anchoring his mother’s words and his new feelings in his young body, we then created a long series of new emotional experiences (emotional memories) of his “new” past. The new emotional memories anchored a felt sense of permission to be himself, to play, express, create, take risks, have fun, and not take on Mom’s concerns and worries. Feeling much freer and lighter at the end of the session, Don when on to start his day. His text tells you how it went.

Another client, a coach in her fifties, was certain her money blocks were related to her alcoholic parents. She had done a lot of work with her al-anon group, therapist, and her coach to understand her long-held beliefs. When a client has already done a lot of work with an issue from a conscious intellectual perspective, it may be time to work directly with what is not in conscious awareness. I had her close her eyes and settle into her body and she followed her old belief back to the same age she always goes to – her 9-year-old self. Only this time something felt different – as we continued to body-sense and safely explore beneath the surface, she found herself on the playground. The girl she thought was her friend was bullying her and none

of the girls would play with her. After giving voice through a lengthy dialogue with her friend, her friend shared that she was jealous of her, that everyone liked her better. She then created a new memory as she imagined playing with her friend and all the other girls joined in. Mind you, all of this came about organically – if we tried to suggest new images, as could happen with guided imagery, it would not be as powerful as when it comes from the client’s own spontaneous imagination – it just “shows up”. Anchoring this new emotional memory in her body as a felt experience convinces her nervous system that it’s as real and effective as any factual memory.

Here’s the thing – If you have an unconscious belief that other girls don’t want to play with you at all, it’s no wonder you freeze when asking them to pay you thousands of dollars to play with you now. The trouble is, if the client doesn’t know what the root issue is, we could spend the rest of our career guessing at what might help.

Working on what we and/or the client “knows” is the issue keeps us blind to what is not available to the thinking brain. And yet, working with the intellectual models still produces great results. I’ve discovered that having clients feel better about their work, just isn’t good enough anymore. I’m looking for massive change, as quickly and efficiently as possible. When we can look beneath the surface, the work almost does itself. We and our clients become far more effective with much less effort.

So, my top three answers to the big money blocks with my coach clients? Your Father, your mother, and your friends from the third grade. Of course, it’s only true when it is. It must come up organically by following the client’s journey. That said, these common themes are often the deepest source of feeling good enough, having permission to be ourselves, and to ask for what we want. This is where we learn (or not) to set boundaries, and to know at a visceral level, not just while reading affirmations, but to really feel that we are in fact, deserving, worthy, and enough.

Michael Kline is a Master Certified RIM Facilitator and the Senior Trainer at The RIM Institute. He can be reached via mike@intus.life and more information is available at www.intus.life

Handling Clients' Big Emotions

By Michael J. Kline

How do you handle a client who gets extremely emotional or in technical terms, has a complete melt down during their session? How do you handle stories of past trauma? What do you do if a client goes places you are not comfortable with or feel you're not qualified to handle? How can you help clients with their real root issue/s without digging up the roots?

These are the questions that come up often when I'm teaching. Most of my private clients and my students are coaches and therapists or their referrals. As a man who spent the first half of my life afraid of working with emotions, I'd like to share what I know now. At the RIM Institute, we teach how to identify and then work with whatever is most present for the client in this moment. That may be anything from the smallest emotional block to the biggest of emotions, complete client meltdowns, or trauma.

I think many coaches and therapists fear taking clients too deep, either for their own comfort, or the client's comfort. When these same helping professionals become my students, they assume a different perspective. Their prior training typically was from a cognitive perspective of helping clients shift or reframe issues. What I teach is about creating emotional safety, processing negative emotions without reliving negative experiences. This allows the emotions to freely flow and dissipate on their own while creating new positive emotions, anchored at a visceral level. As the saying goes, "what you resist not only persists, but expands." Once we learn how to allow our own emotions to flow, we quickly realize how safely and easily we can help clients process emotions with miraculous and sometimes instant results in a single session.

At this point, I should address the immediate concern some readers may have. Yes, it is important that every professional stay in their own lane and work within their area of expertise. Coaches and other helping professionals are not mental health professionals, and must not dabble in diagnosing, prescribing, or becoming the "expert". Anyone can do this style of big work, while staying within the legal and ethical standards of their profession. I spend a lot of time teaching the difference, and how to create emotional safety for our clients. We all have emotions, and emotions are not a mental illness. Big emotions are just an opportunity for big work.

From personal experience, I learned that getting my "own stuff" out of the way was key to better serving my clients. Once we do that, the sky's the limit to how deep we can take clients in resolving a lifetime of blocks and suffering. The problem is our culture taught/teaches us to fear emotions. When you were four years old and cried, an adult probably told you that big girls/boys don't cry. You may have been assured that "you don't really feel that way", or my

favorite, “stop crying or I’ll give you something to cry about.”

My own first memory of being told to “man-up” was at 5 years old. At age 7, upon my mother’s death, I was told “don’t cry, and you have to be a grownup now!” This is obviously not helpful even if our parents meant well. In fact, most parents were not taught to process emotions either. So, they feel discomfort when strong feelings arise and don’t know what to do but use the same language that was used on them as children. Unfortunately, this language can be harmful and weaken a child without even realizing it. It’s the parents, family, friends, and teachers own discomfort with emotions that can create lasting shame, low self-esteem, etc.

While participating in a ten-day silent Vipassana meditation retreat, I learned that the Buddha was teaching how to process emotions similarly, 2500 years ago. He taught that feelings are intangible, and you can’t think your way out of them. Emotions flow through the body naturally, and if you resist negative emotions they expand and if you allow them to flow, they will dissipate on their own.

Dr Deb Sandella, the creator of the RIM (Regenerating Images in Memory) method, calls it the River of Emotions. Emotions flow through the body like water flows through a river. Emotions are dynamic in nature, until we resist – or build a dam in the river to block the feelings we don’t like. No matter the size or intensity of emotions, if we allow the client’s imagination to make them tangible in their own unique way, we can create emotional safety so the client can be in it. There, they can regenerate new images in memory (RIM) and experience the emotions dissipating through their body in real time. We then anchor the new positive, lighter, freer, safer feeling in their body. Once complete, the client no longer needs to carry that history. The work on that specific negative emotion/issue is done. The original factual memory is still intact but loses the negative charge it once had. That’s the genius of Dr Sandella’s discoveries about emotions. The client can now move on, the negative emotions no longer drive their decisions and behavior that have been running their lives beneath their conscious awareness.

Helping clients bring that which is not in their awareness, into awareness and dissolving it naturally, is relatively easy after we do the hard work of getting comfortable with being uncomfortable. This happens once we can allow enough of our own big emotions to dissipate from our bodies. Once we know how it feels to allow and be free, and that we survived what we thought would kill us, we can easily walk with our clients through just about anything. Using the RIM tool, you’ll never again be at a loss of what to say or do with a client even when they go to their darkest moments.

Dealing with emotions – Five surprises

By Michael J. Kline

My Friday night date night? Our big night in the city was spent at my chiropractor, who held a movie screening for the bestselling, award-winning iTunes documentary, Heal. Heal, stars some of the world's leading scientists as well as spiritual teachers, including Deepak Chopra, Bruce Lipton, Marianne Williamson, Michael Beckwith, Joan Borysenko and more.

If you're a coach, therapist or practitioner, I have five surprises for you. If you're a health or wellness coach, or are interested in wellness, [this movie is a more obvious](#) MUST SEE!

While watching the movie, there were several (ok, maybe 20) places I wanted to pause the movie and talk about how the same principles apply to behavioral change, and issues that deal with our emotional/mental blocks in business, relationships, self-esteem and more. The fact is, we have more control over our health and all aspects of life than we have been taught to believe. The RIM (Regenerating Images in Memory) tools we use and teach, can be learned by any therapist, social worker or coach, even without a background in psychology. The documentary inspired me to share these thoughts, summarized as:

Five surprises about emotional work:

1. When you're a hammer, everything is a nail. I can only help people who are ready to do the work and want results. Most people who hire a coach or therapist fit in this category. I have used the same coaching tool to help a fifty year old executive deal with business decisions as I do with a thirty year old full-time mother dealing with her chronic sore throat. Whaaa?! (True stories, [on my website](#)). Our decisions and behaviors are controlled by our emotions. Even the analytic client with the spreadsheet behind every decision (you know who you are), is still driven by emotions, including the need for the analysis! And that's ok! The process of helping a client manage and release stuck emotions and old beliefs is simple, proven and effective, without reliving old stories, traumas and dramas. So, regardless of the client or the root cause, the process is the same. The emotion doesn't care why it's there, it's just there and can be released.
2. It's the environment, stupid! This was the title of my favorite chapter in the book, The Biology of Belief, by Bruce Lipton, who in the late 1960's was an early stem-cell researcher, atheist and super-science researcher and professor. Dr. Lipton, (who has become a big believer btw), in the documentary, expanded on his views about the

environment in which our cells live, and how much we can impact that environment. Consider how easy it is to conjure up an image of standing on the edge of a cliff – your body responds and changes its chemical makeup just from the thoughts you create. Now consider the well-documented impact of stress on the body. Now consider that we know emotions occur in the body, and have been doing so since the day we were born. Our early programming and emotional memories stored in the cells of our body, continue to drive our decisions and behaviors and trigger stress responses and all the related chemical changes to the environment in our body. We can change from reactive to proactive and create much better outcomes. We can, usually in a single RIM session, create a major shift in our clients' emotional memory, generating a new belief – not just to feel better, but to feel different. Not merely a new perspective or reframe, but a new feeling and belief at a much deeper level. This is just as powerful as the original belief formed at an early age. Consider what's possible if we can change decisions and behaviors regarding business, leadership, relationships, and health.

3. Clients aren't broken and we don't have to be the expert to fix them. Just because the root of a challenge is hidden in a deep emotional experience, does not mean the client is broken and needs to be fixed by an expert. You can learn the skills to process that work without referring them to a specialist. My own clients will sometimes say "I don't want to go there", understandable, given the thought of going into old scary dark places in their past. We don't have to. The RIM process follows whatever shows up for the client and is led by them. Using the gentle, yet powerful tools of RIM, the client discovers how easily they can identify the root issue, and dissolve or change it, in less than an hour.
4. Emotions do belong in the workplace. Let's stop pretending they can be left at the door. The truth is, all coaching is personal work and private. Most people don't want to think about their feelings, yet they can't stop thinking about their feelings. If I have the trust, and the client is ready for real, sustainable results, I simply ask them if they are willing to try something different, they always say yes. And they are always grateful.
5. It's not about your relationship with the client. The thing is, all humans want love and connection. We can help them learn to connect more deeply with themselves and the important people in their lives. Of course, we can connect more deeply with our clients, and our connection and trust is valuable in our relationship, but it really is not about their relationship with us. We teach them to not need us in this way, and help them develop the relationship with themselves.

We really do have more control over all aspects of life than we have been taught to

believe. If you would like to explore RIM as a tool to deepen your skills, fuel a new direction for your work or just to enhance your personal journey in this world, [click here for more about learning RIM](#). RIM qualifies for 36 ICF credits and 27 NASW credits

Writer's Divine Procrastination

By Michael J. Kline

I'm a procrastinator – I admit it - especially about writing. I'll get better - one day!
Just the other day, I sat down at my computer to write – I've got several ideas for new stories – starting with hobbies we seem to be re-discovering during the pandemic. I tell myself “Kline, just sit your butt down in the chair and start writing”!

I sit down at my computer – a brand new Surface Pro – I'd seen it in the Microsoft Store window at the mall a million times - \$2600 for a laptop – that's crazy! But maybe it's just the inspiration I need – like a muse, or at the very least an invaluable tool! It's so sexy – and look at the keyboard and the magic arc mouse – and the color options – that blue is totally my color – blue enough, but not too blue – steely, soft and bold at the same time. I think it's the color of my eyes – if I still had young steely blue eyes that were soft and yet bold... never mind that. This will make writing so much easier!

So I'm sitting at my sexy, blue, soft-touch keyboard, feeling young in the... eyes... yeah.. well... I need a coffee. I make a fresh coffee – Starbucks – quarantine style. Reminds of those halcyon pre-covid days when I'd sit at the Starbucks in the mall and write – the mall with the Microsoft store. Then I realize my coffee habit costs more than the Surface pro! Focus dammit. I clear out my emails, as required if I'm to focus. Balance the checking account, clean my desk, and check Facebook to see if yesterday's video of my puppy Luke swimming has any more likes. (We were at 72 likes and three shares as of this morning).

Ok, now it's time to write – about what? Oh yeah! I was going to write about hobbies – dammit, that reminds me, I was going to start making bread again. I even got the last three packets of yeast at Publix. I wish we still had Piggly Wiggly stores here, it would be so much more fun to say I got the last three packets of yeast at the Piggly Wiggly.

If I dust off the bread machine and get something started now, it will be fresh and hot for dinner. Thirty minutes later, back at my sexy blue, soft-touch keyboard, nothing left to separate me from changing the world with a few carefully chosen words of wisdom and inspiration. I realize I could use a fresh coffee. I resist – it's time to write – look at you Kline! The very model of self-discipline! Own it! You're writing! and avoided getting another coffee!

Just then Luke (the puppy) starts barking like crazy. I rush out to see what's happening and he's sitting in the middle of the kitchen barking at the bread machine that had just started pounding and bouncing on the counter, kneading life's greatest treasures (flour, fat and sugar), into what would soon yield toasted cinnamon raisin bread lathered with a questionable amount of butter.

And maybe some powdered sugar. And what the hell, a little honey. Who am I kidding, a lot of honey. As the machine pounded and bounced on the counter, I realized I had not prepared our little Luke for this type of crazy. I had introduced him to the vacuum cleaner, the hair dryer, and the doorbell. It never occurred to me to prepare him for the trauma of a bouncing pounding machine in the kitchen that runs by itself. He'll be talking about this with doggy therapist one day. Oh god. What if we're on the Dog whisperer one day?! I'll be scolded on national television for making cinnamon bread more important than my dog's emotional well-being.

Am I over-thinking this? I don't know. I have to wonder though - what would be different in my life if my parents had not prepared me for the surprises, the curve balls and the potholes of life? What if I had never been exposed to life's proverbial vacuum cleaners and bread machines?! We can never be prepared for every specific bump (or pandemic, murder hornet migration and locust swarm), life might throw at us. We can be prepared though. We can build resilience to be able to handle whatever amount of cray cray shit shows up in life. That's it! The gift of divine procrastination has once again paid off, fulfilling my quest for the next story topic – Like a puppy with a bread machine, you don't need to control everything to be able to handle anything.

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