

# Appendix to 'If only God would give us a sign' The Role of Meta-Comments

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## Examples of Meta-Comments

The following 125 examples of meta-comments have been drawn from the verbatim transcripts of the first 20 minutes of therapy sessions with eight clients. We have underlined the words that indicate which category the meta-comment belongs to. Many of the sentences fall into multiple categories. Our aim is to provide enough examples for you to get a sense of the *pattern* of each type of meta-comment, and to notice the range of ways people indicate they are self-reflecting, it is not to produce a one-to-one mapping between particular words and a category.

## WAYS OF KNOWING

1. I suppose I must have psyched myself up.
2. I have to — I guess.
3. I wonder if it is a fear of ...
4. It may be that it doesn't make the slightest bit of difference what I do or don't do.
5. That's probably why I'm in the mess I'm in.
6. On reflection I would think that wasn't so bad.
7. Thinking about it, I am angry.
8. I've noticed I still feel a bit resentful.
9. I'm guessing it must be just a kind of ...
10. Considering ...
11. On the other hand, ...
12. Am I worried? [question to self]
13. I know I do that.
14. I kind of know that I want something, but I don't know what I want.
15. I realise that ...
16. And this is what I really don't understand.
17. I am at a loss to figure out what it is.
18. I should be able to sort it out for myself.
19. But I believe ...
20. It makes perfect sense to me.

21. I'm not sure about ...
22. I have absolutely no idea.
23. That means ...
24. The first thing that comes to mind is ...
25. It seems they work together.
26. So in that sense I am bound to make mistakes.
27. I actually need to ...
28. I can imagine I can ....
29. I'm imagining ...
30. Let me see ...
31. I feel like I'm trying to nail jelly to a tree explaining it.
32. I still feel I need something else as well, but I don't know what.
33. Hearing myself
34. It sounds like
35. I get a sense that ..

#### COMPARISON — SCALE

1. It's important.
2. The most powerful thing is ...
3. Obviously there is something significant about the fact that I can't remember.
4. I think the main question
5. Then there's a secondary issue.
6. I actually think that's a lesser problem.
7. It's a big deal for ...
8. Predominantly, ...
9. That's calmed me down.
10. The whole point is ...
11. How good is that?
12. What it's a bit like is ...

#### COMPARISON — JUDGEMENT/PREFERENCE

1. That is good/bad.
2. It would be wonderful/terrible.
3. I must be stupid/clever.
4. That's all that needs to be done to put it right.
5. Well, actually that's not true.
6. If I'm honest.
7. Let's be explicit.
8. That would be nice.
9. That's odd.

## COMPARISON — CHANGE/PERSISTENCE

1. Actually in some ways that's new.
2. It's changed.
3. It's not a new problem.
4. Here we go again.
5. I have actually more or less resolved it.
6. Here it's different.

## TIMEFRAME

1. At the moment they are in the past.
2. In future ...
3. But at this time it doesn't ...
4. I have never been one to be able to ...
5. OK, now I can do it.
6. It's very old.
7. When we started talking I thought maybe it was something I could do on my own.
8. This has happened over time.
9. I haven't had time to ...
10. Up 'til now I've been trying to ...
11. I'm beginning to wonder ...
12. This is a relatively recent appreciation of myself.
13. I think I'm at the stage where...
14. I feel that's the end of it.
15. Then it all starts over.
16. When I'm in there I can't ...
17. At this point in time.
18. That's where I always get stuck.
19. This is where it is coming unstuck because I can't decide.

## LANGUAGING

1. I would say ...
2. Let me rephrase that.
3. I can't verbalise it.
4. I get irritated by talking about it.
5. I've had a fair amount of feedback about it.
6. It's not an answer to just say I'd ...
7. The question is ..
8. To sum up ...
9. I'm being very specific.
10. In general, ...
11. The word is 'procrastination'.

## CATEGORIES OF EXPERIENCE

1. That's the pattern.
2. So, that's not the problem
3. My outcome is ...
4. We've got to the real cause.
5. I don't actually have a belief that it will happen.
6. I've no new ideas
7. My motives are ..
8. The decision is either to ...
9. It's an option.
10. There are different levels to this

## CONDITIONAL/POTENTIAL CONTEXTS

1. I would like that to be true.
2. It would be great to have ...
3. That would have been a perfect.
4. It will be a place where I can ...
5. If only I could get some new insight.
6. Almost anything can happen.
7. If only!
8. I might do something about it.

## TO FACILITATOR DIRECTLY

1. Yes, you got it.
2. No, that doesn't actually feel right.
3. I'd like to stop for a moment.
4. Let me think about that.
5. Can you ask me that again?
6. Well, you're certainly very thorough.
7. Bear in mind ...
8. We need to go deep.

## NON-VERBAL

1. [Laughter at]
2. [Tears about]
3. [A sigh]