

# Cindy

## A fictional direct therapeutic metaphor

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Cindy was miserable. She didn't feel good about herself when she looked in the mirror. Even worse, she couldn't button the size 16 clothes she had grown into only a month ago. Cindy had a weight problem. She, like so many other Americans, had become fat.

This didn't make sense to her. She thought it seemed unfair. How come other people seemed to eat whatever they wanted and still stayed thin. Cindy was feeling resentment toward the very people she should emulate. If only she would copy the things successful thin people were doing.

But as Cindy had to plop down on the bed to get her pants buttoned and she noticed how much she missed the ability to turn a man's head the pain got to be too much for her. She didn't even have the energy to help the people she cared about. It really was time to do something.

She sat down at her kitchen table and wrote out all the things that had made her not give a damn about taking care of herself. Things like resentments she had carried around about her spouse, even resentments and anger that went back to when she was a kid.

Suddenly she noticed that it wasn't what other people had done to her, but it was her reactions to those situations or people that had done the damage. She began to consider all the options she had in the past that she had not taken.

Cindy decided then and there to be the designer of her reactions. The fog lifted and she began to notice that she could choose her reactions to daily ups and downs.

Cindy then felt a new freedom. She took out another piece of paper and asked herself a question. **"If I new I would succeed what would I want to do?"**

### Cindy's Answers...

1. Be thin and fit.
2. Be in a loving healthy relationship.
3. Be great with my kids.
4. Be financially secure.
5. Travel.

As Cindy wrote down her goals she noticed some of them were pretty big. She broke them down into small steps she new she could achieve and began to take action.

Since she knew she wanted to be thin she watched the thin people she had around herself. It became clear that:

- They ate breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- These people seemed to eat one snack a day or less.
- They liked to eat, but they noticed when they were full and stopped eating. Cindy noticed that one of the reasons they knew when to stop eating was that they ate slowly. They did not seem to eat for emotional reasons. When they were upset they had dozens of other ways to deal with it.

Cindy began to follow this map. She let her actions match the people she had observed. She found new and interesting ways to deal with stress

and change her mind. She read books on Neuro-linguistics and began to use the techniques on herself.

She really loved the concept of **modeling** (watch what works for others and do the same steps yourself). It was somewhat surprising how a simple idea can make all the difference in the world.

The basic idea of this modeling was...

1. Imagine someone you know or someone you have seen, perhaps in a film you have watched that has some mastery of the talents or skills that you want in your life. Simply imagine this person in an imaginary movie. In the imaginary movie see the person doing all of the skills you wish to have for yourself.
2. Notice all of the reasons why they can do things the way they can. The details of the actions the person takes to have things the way you wish to have them.
3. Imagine replacing the person you were picturing in your mind with yourself. Imagine yourself doing all of the things that the original person did to get the outcome you want.
4. Imagine stepping into the movie and feeling, seeing, or hearing what you will sense while you take action on the goal.
5. Use these new understandings to feel secure while getting the task done.

Some of the things Cindy noticed about her thin person models were:

- They didn't seem to worry about food the way fat people did.
- They seemed to love to move physically.
- If they sat still long they became bored.

- They tended to eat kind of light in two of the three meals of the day.
- Wow, did they drink a lot of water.
- They dealt with life's ups and downs in many ways, but they never used food as an emotional buffer.

Cindy also noticed many of the people who could be comfortably thin, even the busiest ones found time to exercise. One of them jokes that, "If you had a gerbil in a cage you would care about it enough to give it an exercise wheel. Aren't you worth more than a pet rodent?" Cindy then began to design her day in the same way as the model of thin people.

As she was interested in reading more about controlling her attitude to help her life she stumbled across a technique called **anchoring**. Anchoring happens whenever you smell, taste, touch, hear, or see something right at the moment of a peak emotional experience. Maybe you can relate to this, have you ever had a romantic moment and smelled a certain cologne or perfume at that time. Notice that whenever you get a hint of that fragrance it subtly effects your mood.

Anchors can be either negative or helpful. A good example is hearing a song at the gym that gets you enthusiastic about working out every time you hear it. A bad example is the sound of a person's voice with which you had a past argument. When you hear that voice you can end up in the bad mood you were in during the argument. Another example of anchoring could be thinking you need to eat because of watching television. Cindy used to have that problem.

Cindy found out that one powerful use of anchoring was to close her eyes and imagine feeling full and satisfied in her stomach. The feeling she picked was like she had chosen the foods just right and she was not painfully full, just satisfied. To remember what that feels like she needed to link that feeling to an emotionally fun event, like a family gathering when she felt loved and secure.

As soon as she was really into the emotion of that type of memory she would grab her earlobe firmly. Every time she had an emotional craving in the first few weeks of her new plant she would firmly grab her earlobe and she would remember the secure feelings she had created during the anchoring exercise. She really did feel satisfied by this technique when she needed a reminder of her commitment to be thin and fit.

While Cindy exercised every day by walking, riding a bike, ski machine, or swimming, she began to notice that her old beliefs about energy had been in error. She now discovered that movement is what allows your body to feel energy and a renewed vitality. The more she exercised the more she got done in other areas of her life. Even the way she slept improved.

After a while Cindy believed your life is only as good as your exercise and movement. She noticed in small ways first and then in more significant ways how enjoyable her life was becoming. She was truly enjoying her family and the people around her.

Measuring her waist, hips, thighs, arms and neck every six weeks is how she judged her fitness progress. The chain of emotional negativity that weighing on the scale used to create was finally broken. Each six weeks of her new lifestyle brought her a bit closer to her goal. She no longer got hooked on silly details distracting her from her goal.

On a Friday night, one of Cindy's friends called to ask her to go to a nightclub to see a band. Cindy thought about it and said no. She was still sensitive to being in social situations where she imagined people would be critical of her. As she sat by the phone she realized that if she was succeeding with this process she needed to be comfortable with feedback and scrutiny from other people. She called back and said, "All right, I would like to see the band."

When they got to the club Cindy noticed an old friend who she hadn't seen in a few months. Her

friend looked great. Cindy tried not to be noticed. Her friend spotted her anyway and rushed up to say hi. Cindy's pal actually told her how great she looked and asked if she had lost weight. Cindy blushed and said she had. Her buddy had become an aerobics instructor at a local health club. They sat down at a table in the back of the room. The two women visited about many things and the conversation eventually came back to fitness.

Cindy told her friend that sometimes she still saw herself as a fat person. Her friend said I just learned a way to change that and to know that you have a self-image of being thin and fit.

Cindy couldn't help it. She was interested. She leaned forward as her friend described the technique...

1. Imagine a color picture of the unwanted behavior or self-image you had in the past. Set it aside for a moment.
2. Imagine yourself having already become thin, trim and fit. Having achieved your goal. See yourself this new way with obsessed focus. Hear your own self-talk directing you to get the goal.
3. Imagine the unwanted picture you created first and put a small dark image of the desired picture in the corner of the unwanted image. On the count of three switch the images so the desired image is the big clear colorful picture and the unwanted old behavior is the small picture.

Repeat step 3 at least 5 times.

Notice that each time you do it the new picture becomes clearer and the old picture becomes harder to get. On the last time you put up the desired picture, imagine stepping into the image and feel yourself being the person in the new picture. You can totally get into that feeling.

Open your eyes and try in a little confusion to reproduce or pull up the old unwanted picture. Observe that it is blurred or not there. Notice that

you can believe in and associate to the new image of yourself.

As Cindy did this exercise she began to notice that she could associate with the self-image she wanted. She realized that this immediately made her more secure about being motivated to take action. Her friend added that it helps to see the goal just a little in front of you so you always know you're close. As fantastic music filled the room around them, the women enjoyed the night. The conversation, watching people, cracking jokes it was all fun.

A few months had passed and Cindy started noticing the changes in her clothes. It was fun to notice that the clothes were getting loose on her body. She noticed she was more confident. Cindy had become persistent. She was doing whatever it took to get her goal in a healthy way.

One night she got a magazine with an article about how to get along with people. In the article that Neuro-linguistic word came up again. The article said that people like people who are like them. The author said that if you lightly matched the posture, breath rate, tone and volume of a person's voice and their vocabulary level that they are more likely to be in rapport with you.

Cindy began an experiment. She was casual about this technique so she did not mock anyone. The results were astonishing. She even began to get along with a supervisor who used to intimidate her at work. The strange thing about this matching people was that it actually got Cindy in the mood to listen and learn in the same framework as the person she communicate with.

Later in the article Cindy read that people basically communicate based on visual, auditory, or kinesthetic representational systems. It said that when people think visually they talk quickly and use words about sight like see, look or view. The eyes look up left or up right as people think visually. When people think auditory (sounds) they talk at a medium pace, use words like, sounds good, loud, that rings true. Their eyes look straight side-to-side as they are thinking about sounds.

When people think kinesthetic they talk at a slower pace. Their eyes look down to the right and they use words like, get a handle on it, that's rough, I know how you feel.

Cindy began to get along with people in work and family environments better when she remembered to talk at the same pace as the person she was talking to. Understanding in her communication grew in intriguing ways.

Cindy did not weigh herself much anymore. Her progress over the months had seen a significant drop in weight (about 8-10 pounds a month) until she had dumped 55 painful pounds. Cindy is now more secure thin than she ever was while heavy. She now understands the secret to staying comfortably thin, healthy self-esteem, quality relationship skills, and a great ability to change the meaning of past stressful events.

You might be able to relate to the other issue Cindy resolved. She used to have a problem with debating herself. She always wanted to do what was right. She did not have permission to make any mistakes. Because of this Cindy would debate with herself on each decision in her life. In order to do the things necessary to succeed you must decide on each one. Cindy learned that it was OK to make decisions. If they need to be adjusted as you get more information, that is acceptable. The basic idea she learned was that if you remember the outcomes you want to achieve you are able to control you daily choices. She had an exciting reason to control her choices.

A couple of years after losing her weight she was reclining on the beach. She looked down at her flat stomach wearing a swimsuit and reflected on how easy it was to stay thin now. As she looked back all the changes seemed easy.

*This story is a fictional collage of reactions seen in hypnosis clients as they lose weight. It can be very helpful to use the real stories of past clients so that new clients can begin to model the attitudes of the people who have done well.*