

EFT Images and Metaphors: The Violinist and the Drummer

A symphony orchestra can provide the backdrop for a metaphor helpful in the blamer softening process. In particular, it recently provided enough safety while examining views of self and other during the “processing fears of reaching” (theme two in the blamer softening mini-theory).

The charming melodies of the first violin, sometimes punctuated with chords and percussive single notes dancing proudly through the air can seem to dominate the orchestra. In contrast, the drummer stands almost on the sidelines with a finely tuned ear, awaiting the precise moment to offer the few integral beats which shape the overall feel of a piece of music.

Courageously and with trepidation, Paula was exploring her fears of self-worth in reaching to her partner. “I must be a bad person to have SO MANY fears, and to need to talk SO MUCH to you. I’m sure you must get absolutely fed up with me doing all this talking (But I need so much for you to hear me!)” Walter responded adamantly, “No! I don’t get fed up with you. I want to listen. I want to hear about your fears because we are in this together!”

Again Paula was flooded with shame, “But I say way too much...I must be a bad person!”

“You are my rock,” says Walter. “I may not say as much, but you are my safe place -- you are the one I rely on when the stress of work threatens to undo me. I always know I have a safe place with you for shelter.”

The metaphor of their relationship duet being part of a symphony began to calm Paula. She settled as she began to find comfort in this picture of their differences. “I am a violinist and you are the bass drummer!” The air lightened as they played with this metaphor of their different styles, and how listening acutely to one another’s different style of music was part of what kept them alive. Like the interdependency of the strings and the percussion, Walter said to Paula: “I depend on you as much as you depend on me.”

Slowly Paula began to trust that may-be she could risk asking for the comfort of his listening ear without becoming unlovable to him. The safety grew as they played with this musical metaphor of views of self as lovable and worthy and of other as reliable and responsive. It helped Paula gather the courage to reach for Walter and to ask, “Can you really find me lovable

when you see who I really am with all my fears and little-girl needs?”

I offered the metaphor to validate and capture Paula’s fear of being unlovable with what she judged to be excessive fears and requests for Walter’s reassurance. She struggled with a sense of shame for frequently needing his comfort, especially when she conveyed self-assurance to the outside world. Seeing that Walter was drawn to her vulnerable side that needed his calming, I felt the metaphor would also “seed” a picture

of safety in this relationship. It would validate how much Walter values being the one who can comfort her and how touching it is for him to experience that his quieter and attentive presence is reassuring to Paula.

The metaphor captured their different attachment fears: Paula’s fear that she was “too much” for Walter; Walter’s fear of not being enough for her. The metaphor created an image of interdependence between the musician who plays a lot of notes and the one who attends closely to provide a few stable beats. Paula’s sense of shame and fear which intensified as she reached to Walter and asked to be assured that he can still love her in the midst of all her talking, all her needs and fears, melted into relief as Walter reached back with open arms and the drummer’s beat, “I love you just as you are, just as you are.....” It was a bonding moment increasing feelings of safety and connection for both partners.

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