

Appreciative Summaries and Transitions

In counselling summaries are very helpful when the counsellor is not sure what to do next or not clear on the client's priorities. For instance a client may bring up a number of topics at the beginning of a session and it can be hard to tell which one they really want to focus on. Of course you can ask, however by reflecting a summary back to the client it shows you have listened, gives the client a chance to correct your perception of what you have heard and pulls together what has been put out in such a way that the client has a clear choice about what to follow through on. For example, Counsellor: "So we have talked about A and how it affected you and B and how that affected you and C..." ...[Pause]... It is funny, when you pause and wait until the client speaks, they normally then focus on the issue they want to run with: if you can cope with waiting for them to do so. They initiate, which frankly leads to the best results. How does this apply to facilitating the Immanuel Approach?

When is an Appreciative Summary a good choice to lead into the next part of the session?

During a session, after your client has had an interaction with the Lord it is natural that they tell you about it, sit with the implications and in a sense get their left brain to do some work of putting words and a story to what just happened. This is important and helps the left brain update its predictive ability taking this new right brain experience into account. This is all good and important. After this the person is likely to be in left brain dominance and hence not quite ready to jump back into seeing, hearing and sensing what the Lord is up to.

A simple way to help the client to refocus and move them into a receptive state so they can pick up on what the Lord wants to do next is to offer to pray for them and pray an appreciative summary of some of the territory that you have just covered. By slowing the pace a little, using the words and images the client has reported and what the Lord has shown it does not take long to lead the person back into connecting with God. So the purpose of an appreciative summary is not to give a clear summary of content, it is a means to help the client move attention toward where the Lord is and what he is doing: that is, where He wants to go next. After such a prayer then ask God for guidance on where to from here. For example:

- *"What good thing do you want to do now?"*
- *"How else do you want to bless (name) now?"*
- *"What else do you want to do for (name) today?"*

Then, help them notice and report what is coming into consciousness. And again keep directing the client's questions toward the Lord. For example, "Can you ask Jesus about that?" or "Jesus, what do you want ... to know about that? It is not uncommon for the Lord to move through a number of discreet things he wants to focus on within one session. So don't be shy to ask, "is there anything else that He wants to do?"