


PACT A Psychological Approach to Couple Therapy® 1

INFORMAL TRANCE INDUCTION IN COUPLE THERAPY: PARTNERS IN A POSE




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Posing

- Posing is the use of specific static physical positions to evoke psychobiological reactions from both partners.



King & Queen



Lover's Pose

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LOVER'S POSE



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AGENDA

Introduction

- How is it used?
- When to use it?

Process

- Pre-operational phase
- Operational phase
- Post-operational phase

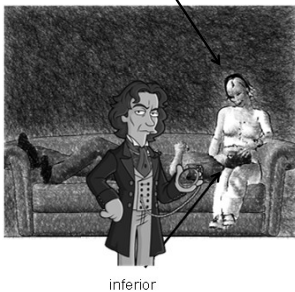
Casting

- As the lovers
- Parent-child
- Inner child
- Lost person

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How is it used?

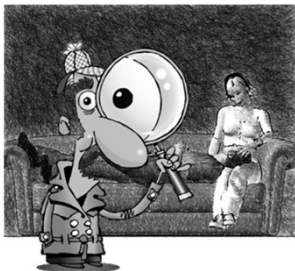
- Therapist puts one partner in the inferior position and other in the superior position
- Therapist should position him/herself as close to the couple as is possible and at median height



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How is it used?


- Observe the couple getting into position
- Pay close attention
 - Getting into position
 - Settling into position
- Faces, breathing, skin color, muscle tension, eye contact, pupil dilation, heart rate, limb placement




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How is it used?

- Decide who's on top and who's on bottom
 - What do you want to see?
 - What do you want them to experience?
 - Which choice is the most dramatic?
 - You can always switch them
 - When in doubt, just pick




YOU DECIDE!




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When to use it?

- Whenever you wish
- When you have enough time to get them in with plenty of time to get them out and roadworthy
- When you have a therapeutic alliance
- When you feel inspired




YOU DECIDE!




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When to use it?

- When you want to prove something or demonstrate something
- When you want to craft a drama to heal or repair
- When you want to craft a scene that involves early attachment figures
- When you want to make them a couple



YOU DECIDE!



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Pre-operational Phase

- Trance induction
 - Increase space between your words and sentences
 - Use language in a continuous manner such as,
 - "As you look at your partner does she seem relaxed to you?"
 - "And as she says that to you what do her eyes do?"
 - Use cross questions and cross comments to focus partners attention on each other's eyes and face

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Pre-operational Phase

- Cross questions
 - "As you look at your partner does it seem as if he's comfortable in this position?"
 - "As you look at your partner's face that she feel trustworthy to you?"
 - "What is he thinking right now?"
 - "As you look at her, does she trust you?"
 - "Do you like where his hands are right now?"
 - "What do you see in his face right now?"
 - "What do you think she's feeling at this moment?"
 - "As you look at him do you think he believes you can handle him?"

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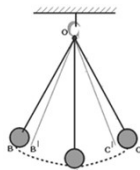
Pre-operational Phase

- Cross comments to focus attention
 - "Notice the change in his face."
 - "What did you see?"
 - "What do you think happened?"
 - "There's sadness."
 - "There's anger."
 - "There is fear in his eyes."

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Pre-operational Phase



- Check vocal pressure, volume, cadence, prosody
- Everyone should be swinging to the same metronome
- Keep partners eyes on each other at all times



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Operational Phase


- Use cross questioning and cross commenting to stitch them together

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Operational Phase

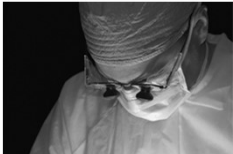
- Do surgery
 - Exploratory work on the couple system
 - Exploratory work on the early attachment system
 - Repair work on both
- Be patient and lead by following the couple
- Keep it simple
- Remember it's couple therapy



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Operational Phase


- You are the casting director
- You are a dramatist
- You are the outside voice
- You are re-sculpting implicit memory
- Affect affect affect
- Bridge, callback, link, synthesize, reframe narrative



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Post-operational Phase


- Sit partners up and have them face you
- Monitor sensorium
- Gradually move your energy up with your voice
- Gradually move them toward a normal waking state
- Stay in this phase until they look bright and alert



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Post-operational Phase


- Discuss the exercise
- If time, move on to next piece of work



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Casting

- As the lovers
- Parent-child
- Inner child
- Lost person



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Lovers Pose

- Keep it simple
- Don't overload the material
- You don't have to reverse the partners
- Don't be afraid to just end the exercise

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Purpose

- The entitled, dismissive, and overly powerful partner is lowered while simultaneously provided a powerful role through acts of chivalry and service to something or someone greater than himself or herself.
- In other words, the partner's narcissism remains unchallenged but is rechanneled in a manner more consistent with mutuality, humility, and secure-functioning, while providing an authentic presentation of grief, remorse, shame, and penance for having betrayed the relationship.

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Cautions

- Only use on a couple with whom you have a strong therapeutic alliance!
- The King and Queen Pose works only if the couple's culture supports the inherent gender roles.
- Gay and lesbian couples will often sort out as king and queen despite being of the same gender.
- You can also use an alternate mythology that conveys the notion of equal but separate powers; involves a declaration of devotion to something greater than the self (e.g., the relationship); or elevates the disempowered partner and/or lowers the unyielding, non-invested, or over-entitled partner.

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Steps

Assume position.

- If your couple are male and female, have the male lower himself to his knees in front of his seated partner and have him take her hands into his.
- Explain that the roles of king and queen require that each partner fulfill the positions with the appropriate posture. For example, the queen should not be collapsed or harsh and punitive; she is expected to be regal, assured, and powerful even if in reality she tends to be otherwise.

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Steps

Speak lines. Feed the kneeling partner the following lines, while observing the reactions of both partners:

- "You are my queen."
- "I live to serve you."
- "Everything I have is yours."
- "I will fall on my sword for you."
- "I willingly surrender myself to your happiness and well-being."
- "Your wish is my command."

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Steps

Improvise lines. Ask the kneeling partner to speak lines that are tailored to his or her particular relationship issues.

- The queen needs equality, respect, loyalty, allegiance, and real contrition to heal.
- The king needs humility, honor, purpose, and a pathway back into the relationship.
- Both the king and queen need to understand their role as leaders and examples to their children, family, friends, and community.

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Steps

Switch lines.

- Have the king and queen switch lines but *not* positions.
- Hold the queen to her role and sell her declarations with the same sobriety and sincerity you used for the king.
- Continue adding, adjusting, tweaking, and refining declarations that satisfy the psychological and dramatic needs of each partner.

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Steps

Interpret. Bring the couple out of the pose and discuss what they experienced.

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VIDEO


King and Queen



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VIDEO

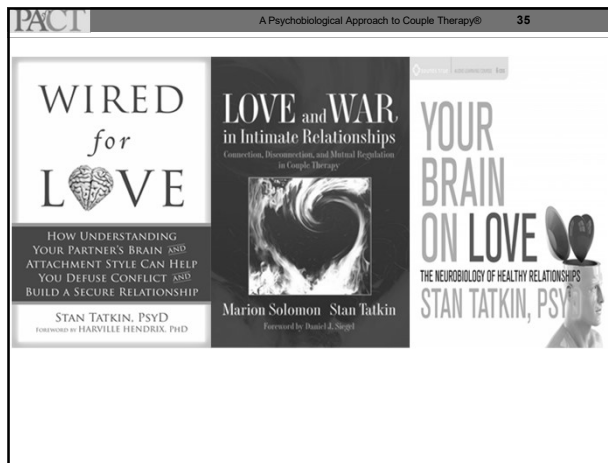
King and Queen

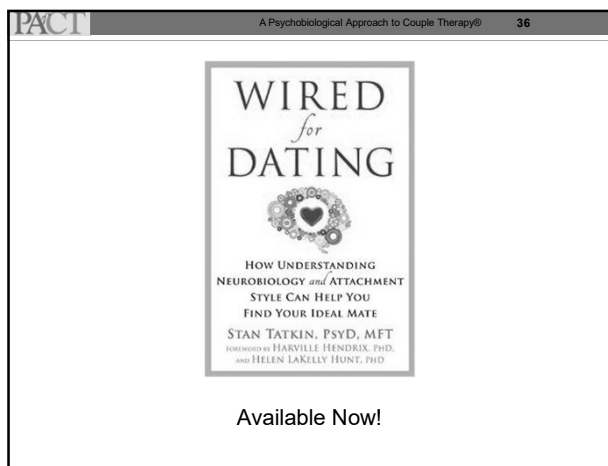


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Conclusion

- Before we can do anything, we must be clear about what it is that is in front of us
- People lie, deflect, defend, hide, mislead, and most of all, make things up in the absence of knowing why they do what they do
- Real time is too fast
- We are all automatic
- Memory drives state, and vice versa
- State changes alter perception
- The couple therapist must apply pressure and maintain a certain level of stress and distress otherwise partners won't care or be interested
- Cross track, cross question, and cross interpret (comment) as a way to sew partners together





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