Naomi's Clinical Column From Fall/Winter 2004 Newsletter

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE VALIDATION TRAINING INSTITUTE

CLINICAL COLUMN

"ROOM 314 WINDOW"

VALIDATION® WITH SOMEONE NEW

By Naomi Feil

(Mona's thoughts:) Those walls are not my walls. This is not my house. I don't know where I am. What am I doing in this chair? Who is that strange person? I can't see who she is? She tricked me. Where am I? Dear God, how did I get here. Where is my mother? She left me alone. I'm all-alone. My heart is beating so fast I'm going to die. (Outloud:) "Mother, Please come back. Please." *She'll Never come back. You know she doesn't love you. She's too busy for you.*

"MOTHER! WHERE IS MY MOTHER? HELP ME!" Mona's panic tumbled out, echoing over and over through the hall. The overworked CNA in the geri-psych ward of the 2000 bed hospital, squinted her left eye, dropped her lower lip a fraction, and keep writing her report. Her routine reaction to the shrill wail that has permeated the halls for the last 8 hours was to ignore it. That evening, she would confide to her husband: "314 Window. That woman never learned how to be alone. 92 years old and she acts like our two-year-old. She'll yell until she learns that I can't be with her every minute." The overworked CNA finished her report, and closed the wailer's door, with finality. As she shut out the screech, she shouted with authority, piercing the old woman's ears: "Mona, you'll have to wait like everyone else. You just got transferred. Sit tight!"

Who is that woman. How does she know my name? What does she want from me? Why is she keeping me here? Dear God, let me go home. I don't understand what she's saying. I have to get out of here. I don't do anything wrong. Daddy's angry at me. I was late last night. I was bad. I Shouldn't have let Harry touch me. Daddy's punishing me. He sent me here because I was bad. But I didn't do anything wrong. I won't go out with Harry any more. If I yell loud enough, Daddy will hear me and let me come home.

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"ROOM 314 WINDOW" continued

(Outloud:) "DADDY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE BAD. I'LL NEVER LET HARRY TOUCH ME THERE AGAIN. PLEASE COME AND GET ME. DADDY, PLEASE, LET ME COME HOME. PLEASE."

He isn't listening, He's too busy. And Momma doesn't care. I can't breathe. My chest is so tight. Am I going to die now? I have to stop crying like a baby. I'm 17 years old. But I'm so scared. I'm going to die here all alone. "DADDY! HELP ME!" She screams outloud.

The walls are moving in. I have to get out of here. I can move my leg. Oww. It hurts. Move slowly Mona. You can make it. Remember, God always helps you when you're in trouble. You can get out of this horrible place. You can find your way home. Daddy will forgive you. It's OK to talk to talk to yourself. Nobody is listening. You got one foot on the floor. Now, the other one. The hall is empty. If I move fast, that awful woman with the screechy voice won't find me. Oh, my leg hurts so bad. Don't think about it. Just move, Mona. There's a door. I think Daddy's there. "Daddy!" *He doesn't look angry any more.*

Mona pleads: "Daddy, Are you still mad at me? I'm sorry. I will never go out with Harry again. Don't hit me, Dad." Ramon, the orderly, a Certified Validation Practitioner, turns to face the old woman. Her bony arms outstretched, beseeching. Her doe eyes blurred with cataracts are streaming tears. Massive wrinkles cover every inch of her bony face. "Please take me home, Dad. I'll be a good girl from now on. I promise," she begs Ramon.

Oh! Something's happening to my foot. I'm falling.

George sprints towards Mona, catching her. He eases her heaving body into a wheelchair. Gently, her strokes her upper arm, his voice soothing, soft, asking: "You're new here, aren't you?" "Daddy! Don't leave me, Dad. Please take me home." "She's kooky, Ramon." Manny, the R.N., adjusting his new toupee, winks.

Breathing slowly, Ramon **"Centers."** He blocks out Manny's smirk to focus on Mona Johnson's physical appearance: uneven breathing; blurry eyes fixed on him; high pitch, clear speech; muscles loose; body shaking as if in fear. Ramon's inner voice speaks Validation theory: She's probably in **"Time Confusion."** She's lost track of clock time. People in the present become people from the past. Present day emotions attract similar emotions from the past. She's afraid of something that happened long ago when she felt abandoned and she panicked, like now. She doesn't see well. She looks at me and sees her Dad.

Mona grips Ramon's sleeve, sobbing. Ramon uses the non-verbal Validation techniques for the "Time Confused." He **"Mirrors"**, measuring his breath to her rhythm. He **"Matches her emotion."** He feels the fear filling her body, spilling out of her eyes. He remembers when he first came to America, a boy of 15, alone. With empathy, Ramon **"Says her emotion with emotion."** "Mrs. Johnson, You're scared." Ramon's voice holds fear. Mona Johnson's eyes widen. She nods. Her sobs of panic change to heaves of relief. As fear loses its hold, her fingers relax their clutch on Ramon's arm. Her cloudy eyes clear. She smooths Ramon's shirtsleeves. "Daddy, I was so scared. I was afraid you would be ashamed of me. And you wouldn't love me anymore. I didn't do anything wrong, Dad. I didn't."

Ramon uses the Validation technique: **"Ambiguity."** He doesn't lie and say, "Yes, I am your Dad." He doesn't argue and say, "I am Ramon, not your Dad." He knows that in this moment, he is a symbol for Mona's father. She shuffles pages from the past to resolve unfinished business. Ramon uses the vague pronoun, "he" to designate Mona's father.

"Are you afraid that *he* will punish you?" He asks gently. "Yes." Mona whispers. "I've been bad." "What did you do?" Ramon explores, using **non-threatening, open questions.**
Ashamed, Mona studies her knobby knuckles. Silence. Ramon uses **"Touch."** He softly strokes the back of her head and neck, the upper cervical

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vertebra, the place where a father often touches a child. Each cell remembers. Mona smiles a wry, little smile, knowing that her father loves her. She points to her breasts. "Harry touched me, here," she whispers. " But **only** twice."
"Is that the **worst** thing he did? Ramon uses **"Polarity."** Mona nods, contrite. "I'm sorry, Daddy. Do you forgive me?" Ramon helps Mona answer her own question. "Do **you** think **he** forgives you?"

Silence. Mona looks long and hard at Ramon. Finally, she says in a clear, firm tone. "Yes. My father loves me. Always, and forever. Until the day he died." The old woman smiles, her eyes remembering. Safe in her knowing, secure with Ramon, Mona returns to present time. On a deep level of awareness, Mona knew that Ramon was not her father. She had held her father's hand when he died. Mona will never forget that. **"Time Confused,"** she has buried her knowing, using Ramon to finally erase her guilt. Mona, her muscles relaxed, her eyes twinkling, takes Ramon's hand. "You are a good looking young man. Are you new here?"

• Validation theory and 15 verbal and non-verbal Validation Techniques can be found in the book: **V/F VALIDATION:** Revised 2003, and **THE VALIDATION BREAKTHROUGH**, Revised 2003, Edward Feil Productions, 4614 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44103