

Some Techniques For Use In Interpreting Early Recollections

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- 1) The "Headline Technique." Consider the early memory as a short newspaper article. Write a headline that is a statement about the essence of the story, a logical abstraction. Sometimes it is helpful to begin such headlines with one or more of the following beginnings- Life is..., People are..., I am.
- 2) How is the problem solved?
- 3) Does client go forth, withdraw?
- 4) Alone, with others?
- 5) Client taking responsibility, others?
- 6) Pampering?
- 7) Give, take?
- 8) People in memory are prototypes. "Father" may mean "men" or "authority figures," probably does not mean father in client's present world. Look for client's view of role of men and women.
- 9) What does client view as circumstances that place one "up" or "down."
- 10) How are emotions used?
- 11) What is happiness — unhappiness to clients?
- 12) Does he do for? Is he done to?
- 13) Does he conform, question, accept, feel powerless, rebel?
- 14) Is rebellion open or secret?
- 15) Does client try to improve the situation or is some other motive more dominant?
- 16) Look at issue of control Who or what controls the situation. Does he seem to guard against life going out of control

- 17) Does client attend carefully to details? (A vocational clue as well as a statement about psychological situation he finds most appealing).
- 18) Is client a doer or an observer?
- 19) Birth of a sibling may suggest sibling rivalry or dethronement. (Client's action in memory may suggest the course he followed after the sibling arrived)..
- 20) First school experience may show how we view and handle the world "out there."
- 21) What obstacles does life or people present to client?
- 22) Memory of misdeeds often suggest type of behavior we are determined to avoid.
- 23) What constitutes success and failure to the client? What is the private world with which he operates. Remember that the convictions which show up in early memories contribute to the client's personal set of rules for living.