

The Emotional Identity Technique – Aligning Our Identities and Relationships



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Few life experiences have been as transformative as my training as an NLP Practitioner. This journey reshaped my understanding of human behaviour and led me to create a thriving business and develop an innovative coaching technique: The Emotional Identity Technique. It's a unique combination of three modalities that can be used as a complete process or individually to suit your clients' needs.

As you read through this article, you'll notice many familiar teachings, and I want to acknowledge those who inspired me to create this fresh approach to outcome-free coaching, with its roots deeply embedded in NLP.

The roots of misalignment

Have you ever found yourself reacting to a situation in a way that seems inconsistent with your age, wisdom or skills? This phenomenon, which I call identity misalignment, often manifests in everyday scenarios. Consider a family dispute over differing values. Ideally, it should be a rational conversation where everyone expresses their opinions respectfully. However, when identities are

misaligned, such discussions can devolve into blame, shame, anger and frustration – as if we've been catapulted back to a younger, less emotionally competent version of ourselves.

It's almost as if we have a bungee cord connecting us to our younger selves, causing us to respond with the emotional competence of our child-like selves. This misalignment can have lasting negative effects on our relationships and personal growth. In Integral Eye Movement Therapy, it is "How did we learn to be this way?"

The beginnings of a new approach

My interest in identities began during my NLP training, specifically while studying Dilts' Logical Levels model. This model examines the hierarchy of processes within individuals and groups, proving particularly useful in understanding change for both individuals and organisations. While NLP can often focus on beliefs, with many techniques designed to work at this level, I found myself interested in the concept of identity.

The Emotional Identity Technique is a unique combination of three modalities that can be used as a complete process or individually to suit your clients' needs.

Early on in my training, I was intrigued by why there didn't appear to be more processes aimed at identities. This curiosity planted a seed that would eventually grow into the Emotional Identity Technique.

A catalyst for change

My training in Integral Eye Movement Therapy proved to be a turning point. This experience delved deeper into identities, unlocking the potential to create a new process. The goal was to align an individual's identity, not necessarily to their current age, but to a time and place where they had the best resources to make optimal decisions based on the information at hand.

This realisation led to the initial conception of what I called the Emotional Identity Relationship Alignment Technique. Although I later shortened the name for practicality, the essence remained: a substantial portion of the process includes relationships, acknowledging that we are constantly in a relationship with ourselves, others, and our environment.

Applications and insights

A pivotal moment in the development of this technique came while working with a client who had recently lost his life partner. Using the Family Systems in The Social Panorama teachings (my family landscape), we were able to update his perception of himself and others, especially in terms of relationships.

Initially, his family panorama showed him facing the world alone. By reintroducing his life partner into his family landscape and using sub modalities to alter his perspective, he found himself more confident and capable of navigating life with the memory and voice of his partner by his side. This experience highlighted the technique's potential in grief work and relationship healing.

Another significant influence came from a series of workshops I delivered to individuals (mainly women) considering divorce or separation. These workshops incorporated two relevant techniques: "My Family Landscape", and a sub modality shift based on Dr David Hamilton's book *I Heart Me*. The latter, which I call 'giving the gift', inspired by Kris and Tim Hallbom, is a powerful way to compassionately give love to oneself or others.

The transformative impact of these techniques on workshop participants was astounding. It became clear that discovering and giving oneself the 'gift' of needed resources could be a powerful tool for personal growth and healing.

A trauma-informed approach

The emotional aspect of this technique draws from psychosomatic theories, including the teachings of Evette Rose in *Metaphysical Anatomy: Your Body is Talking, Are You Listening?*, Dr Gabor Mate, and the work of Bessel Van Der Kolk and Connirae Andreas' Wholeness Work. These influences emphasise the importance of aligning, healing and integrating all parts of ourselves for complete well-being.

A fusion of insights

As I began to connect the dots, a new approach emerged. Anyone who knows me knows I love a good 'mash-up'. By combining the missing resources identified from identity work in Integral Eye Movement Therapy, correlating it to the wider relationship aspect of the family landscape, and utilising the concept of 'giving the gift', it became possible to:

- Update a person's identity
- Bridge the gap between different aspects of identity
- Transform how a person perceives themselves and significant others
- Provide individuals with the resources they need for more complete, fulfilling relationships with themselves and others

The underlying principle is that we already have the resources we need within us. The Emotional Identity Technique aims to unlock, align and resolve these internal resources, often in a single session.

Flexibility and accessibility

One of my goals in developing this technique was to create a flexible tool that could be utilised by coaches and therapists from various backgrounds. By moving away from the well-formed outcomes model of NLP, the Emotional Identity Technique offers a more accessible approach that allows clients to come to their own conclusions.

This flexibility is particularly valuable when working with individuals escaping and recovering from controlling relationships. In such cases, a person's identity has often been buried or suppressed. The Emotional Identity Technique creates an opportunity for them to reconnect with who they are and what they want, need, lack and desire while providing a way to access the resources they need.

A tool for transformation

The Emotional Identity Technique emerged as an outcome-free coaching tool that can be delivered as a complete process or broken down into its respective sections and implemented alongside other NLP and coaching processes. Its roots are firmly grounded in NLP, yet it has blossomed into a powerful identity-level technique that updates our internal software as quickly as a smartphone takes a full charge.

This approach is particularly effective in:

- Facilitating personal growth and self-discovery
- Improving relationships and communication skills
- Enhancing decision-making abilities

- Boosting confidence and self-esteem
- Helping individuals recover from traumatic experiences

A new addition to personal development

The Emotional Identity Technique represents an interesting avenue in personal development and coaching. By focusing on the often-overlooked aspect of identity alignment, it offers a comprehensive approach to addressing emotional and behavioural challenges.

As we explore the intricate connections between our identities, emotions and relationships, techniques like this pave the way for more holistic and effective personal transformation. Whether you're a coach, therapist, or an individual on a journey of self-discovery, the Emotional Identity Technique provides a powerful tool for unlocking your true potential and creating lasting positive change.

This technique is not just about solving problems or achieving specific outcomes. It's about realigning our identities, healing our emotional wounds, and empowering ourselves to live more authentically and harmoniously. As we align our identities, we open doors to new possibilities in our personal lives, relationships and professional endeavours.

The journey of self-discovery and personal growth is ongoing, and tools like the Emotional Identity Technique serve as valuable companions along the way. By embracing this approach, we can navigate life's challenges with greater resilience, wisdom and emotional intelligence, ultimately leading to more fulfilling and authentic lives. ■

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