

**The Story of Joey**  
**Post 7 - Session 37-42**

**Session 37:**

In response to my question, Joey answers, "What's going on in my head? That's a good question." He goes on to tell me that a meeting has just started and that it's about going to school. He is missing his friends. This, his mother tells me, is new for him. He has remained very related to them even during the first six weeks of his vacation. He invited one of them to come for the weekend but he was couldn't make it. He said, I thought with both sadness and acceptance, poignancy really, that "It's OK. It's the same every summer. I thought it wouldn't be the same, but it is." He really wanted to see his friends. He was lonely for them.

When he talked further about the meeting, taking place in his left frontal lobe, about school, I asked him if it could be the case that he was thinking about going back, that that's what the meeting was, his thought process, Joey's thoughts. He understood me and he agreed. At least for that moment, he knew that he was not just the subject of the meeting but that he produced the meeting. The meeting was Joey feeling lonely and thinking about going back to school.

He reports that his new filing cabinets are working well, that his memory is better. Everything feels back to normal. "Everything was just going too fast."

He is cheerful as he leaves and makes good eye contact and a firm handshake. I made an issue of his handshake from the beginning. I wanted his presence in it and I wanted him to feel the contact with the other. He almost always remembers and when he does, he smiles at me- we smile at each other.

Protocol: C4-P4 5-8 Hz for 27 Minutes; 3 minutes at 5.5-8.5.

**Session 38 & 39:**

The next week, Joe began his course of hyperbaric oxygen therapy. The physician, also a neurofeedback practitioner, decided to suspend neurofeedback during the hyperbaric to see if she could discern the effects of the oxygen alone. The effects are not clear. When she began to train his brain she used a more standard approach, training on the left at 15-18 Hz and on the right at 12-15 Hz. (I do not have these records, so this report is from memory. At the time of this note I haven't seen Joe for six weeks.

Joey's mother called, alarmed, to tell me that he had been threatening suicide since returning to school a week ago. He woke up at the end of last week and stuck push pins in his arm. When he was asked if he would do this again, he said if he felt this bad again he probably would. She also reports that he has lost all of his spirituality. "This is not Joey." He will not be allowed to return to school until he has been seen by a psychiatrist. I made a referral and he was put on a low dose of atypical anti-psychotic. Joey is still in the throes of agitated distress when he came to see me.

He reports that he has too many thoughts. "Thoughts would come back that I tried to put away and they would become one big thought and that thought was to hurt myself." He tells me that a thought takes over his brain and he has to act. He pushed another boy into a wall. "I wasn't happy after I pushed him because I don't feel like pushing anybody at all." He is empathic and distressed when he says this. The thought of killing himself presses him hard. He tells me that he thinks his parents are scared. "Are you"? I asked and he said "Yes, I never felt this way before." He is "sad and scared." He is having trouble making eye contact with me. He has trouble falling asleep and staying asleep. No headache and no bad dreams. He tells me that his internal people "working separately from him, each working on

their own projects and they are not in communication with him". This boy is describing in essence, losing his mind. He tells me that they are "trying to figure out why his body feels this way and why his mind feels this way."

I am trying to do the same thing. His hyperbaric doctor believes that this may be a response to the oxygen treatments, but I don't think so. I think that this boy's arousal system has been pushed over a precipice by the training. He has classic symptoms of overarousal: aggression, sleep problems, self-injury, and loss of appetite among them. It is also highly unlikely that we will ever see an under-aroused person on atypical anti-psychotics. This is a neurofeedback crisis. I have no way to judge the added effects of hyperbaric, but I really don't need to. We need to train to quiet his arousal.

Training: T4-P4, 2-7 inhibit and 5-8 reward. He reports that his mind is quieter immediately after training but that there is no change in mood. He looks very depressed. I called Joe that night and he said that he still felt sad, but less sad since the training.

This is Joe's report as dictated to his mother:

"My old body left me.  
It is not coming back  
My old body was good and bad together  
I was mean and nice together

It is the first time my body has felt sad. I never felt sad before. Yes this is the first time I felt sad.

My old body had the world record of not feeling sad. I broke the promise. My new body broke the promise. I was to be the first person not to feel sad. I wanted to be the first person to live to 102 and not be sad.

I broke my promise..When I am very old I should feel sad, Now I am broken...I feel sadness now. I do not like my new body now.

I have mostly sadness now. My new body does not understand me now. My new body does not want to listen to me now. It is my boss and it tells me what to do and to listen to my new body only. (The dictatorship of state-SF)

There are no voices...these are feelings. These are feelings not voices. My body is confused. Big time confused.

Do you think the medicine is changing my body? Maybe it is the medicine neurofeedback, medicine and hyperbaric

Maybe hyperbaric is waking up good things and bad things. I do not know what part of my body should be awake or dead."

#### **Session 40:**

Joey reports that he feels better. He could not initially name the state on his own but quickly picked it up when I asked if he felt calmer and answered for himself. He said to his mother that he could talk about feelings now. He told her that he had been bored and lonely at school but that he definitely wanted to go back. Bored! Lonely! This is our boy from another planet, sounding increasingly like those of us he lives among.

Joe was prescribed a low dose of Risperidone, but I think it's pretty clear that his response here is due to the neurofeedback not the neuroleptic.

Joey tells me that there are two new doctors in his body that want him to "push his feelings out." He reports that the virus in his brain (sic) is gone and that he now has a password for friendship.

His appetite is back. He is sleeping eleven hours at night and very deep sleep. He is able to add up the gems and there is a trace of happiness in his voice.

To limit the variables in this situation, I returned to C4-P4, 5-8 Hz.

**Session 41:**

Joey was cleared to return to school and his mother reports that he has had a "good comeback". His tutors are very impressed with him this past week, particularly with his new ability to write in cursive, beautifully. Joey says that the HBOT (hyperbaric oxygen) is "cutting through the cement and opening up dark offices. More people have light in their offices. He says that there is "new wiring, and that the light is coming from everywhere". "Different parts of my brain are opening up." He reports that he found "old furniture in the offices that used to be dark". "Brain is clearer, more room, more light." He says he is "happy again" and that "there are nice people in my body." He reports feeling more energy and wants to play sports, particularly soccer.

I have come to trust that Joe represents his reality with precision and if he feels these effects are due to the oxygen, they probably are. I think, however, that the nice people in his body and his shift in mood relate directly to the training. I am always alert to the metaphor of "wiring", since I think we are in the business of "rewiring", of disrupting old repetitive circuits and establishing new more efficient ones. So what will interest me here is the synergy between HBOT and neurofeedback and trying to discern the contributions of each. I also notice that he splits the difference in terms of how he experiences himself when he says the he is happy again and when he says there are nice people in his body. When he began he himself, Joey, didn't feel things at all. He had no access to an emotional self, really to a self at all. He was a center of operations. What we have been seeing with his training is, I think, the development of a sense of self out of the chaos that was the initial brain injury. He can still represent his states as others in his body, but this is changing and there is more "I am" in this boy. Whatever else is going on, he has apparently cleared the crisis and regained himself with the right hemisphere protocol.

**Session 42:**

This session is sixteen days later. Joe describes more and more space and fewer and fewer people in his head. "Only one person there now to check how all the systems are working, with only one person to attend to them. This person, Joe tells me is there to assess whether Joe is ready to take over his own body.(!) This person is new to him and he reports speaking to him first on the phone and on e-mail. Sounds as if Joe interviewed this new presence. He tells me that this person looks older. I asked him if he himself felt older and he responded enthusiastically, "Yes, I do." He feels older than 14 maybe 16, 17 or 18. He says he is OK with all the people out and says he would be content to be on his own with one "anger computer" working. He goes on to tell me about ongoing difficulty with feelings. He hit and kicked a boy who was feeding a dog a muffin. Joey has always felt an affinity for animals and a need to protect them. He was scared for the dog. "I feel sad", he told me. Generally he feels that his feelings come up fast without much warning and he acts on them when they do. He tells me that a friend of his is being expelled.

Joe may be describing a sense that he is waking up to the world as it is, perhaps too quickly to be able to understand, much less accommodate his new reality. He clearly needs more capacity to inhibit action in response to his feelings.

C4-P4 at 5-8 Hz.