

# empty chair work/unfinished business



1.) 'task marker' typically involves lingering, partly blocked, often strong, unresolved negative feelings about someone who is or has been significant in the subject's life

'cooking tips' (c.t): 'complaints' are often fused anger & sadness – and in more complex cases maybe also fear & shame

c.t: to deepen emotion – try "I am angry with you because ... ", "what I missed/needed from you"

c.t: this kind of empty chair work is usually used for neglect/abandonment; empty chair work with abuse and trauma may involve some adaptations

**f** c.t: full resolution involves complete expression, self-affirmation, change in perspective on self & other, and letting go

maybe link to specific memories

maybe self interruption or conflict split work

2.) subject expresses blame, complaint, hurt;

3.) differentiation of feelings; almost always both anger & sadness

intense expression of specific emotion

4.) mobilization/expression of core unmet need **p**

**f** 6.) resolution: self-affirmation and self-assertion –  
a.) understanding b.) forgiving c.) holding other accountable

c.t: these suggestions are taken from the book "learning emotion-focused therapy" by elliot, watson, goldman & greenberg and from seminar notes by robert elliot

negative other evoked, enacted

specific negative aspects accessed

5.) change in view of other

c.t: this is more an expressive monologue than dialogue; typically just bring 'other' in to activate emotion more

c.t: may be helpful to ask 'can you see them?'

c.t: with partial resolution, subject experiences unmet needs as valid & expresses them assertively **p**

c.t: note this work often takes time; "a lot of it is staying with it".