

Introduction to The Updated Phobia Protocol
by Michael Elkin

Although admirable in many ways, firefighters are justly famous for causing trouble for their hosts. Firefighters who generate addictions and compulsions get all the press, but I would be prepared to argue that those who have phobic reactions can hold their own with the big leaguers.

Simply put, a *phobic reaction* is a radically amplified emotional reaction. For example, many people feel some anxiety when they are called on to speak publicly, but for a considerable number of people, that anxiety goes through an amplifier and is experienced at an intolerable level.

Most people who experience such a reaction will understandably go to just about any length to avoid it. I have had clients report leaving jobs they loved to avoid giving a speech, or driving cross country to avoid a plane ride. Some people force themselves to remain in the presence of a phobic trigger, but this must be recognized as an act of heroism.

It must be stressed that a phobia is not an irrational fear; one can be phobic to ax-wielding madmen. It is the amplification which defines the phobia, not the level of true danger presented by the trigger, but a person with a phobia to public speaking will have a much greater reaction to the threat of a speaking engagement than to an armed terrorist.

Many phobias remain hidden because the triggers can be successfully avoided, but others can have a major impact on a person's life. Phobias related to driving flying are ubiquitous and are obviously inconvenient, at the very least, in our society. But less recognized as phobic, but possibly much more troublesome, are amplified reactions to conflict, decision making, or social contact. Absolutely anything can be a phobic trigger.

Phobic reactions, being extreme by definition, trigger extreme reactions. I have, for example, often seen them trigger domestic violence or other rage full behavior, binge drinking or eating, or buzzer social behavior. Often resolving the phobia radically reduces the intensity and frequency of the reaction, or even stops it.

Because I have training in hypnosis, and therefore in the perception of micro cues, I can easily detect phobic reactions visually. Phobias are the very easiest of phenomena to detect in this way, because a phobic reaction generates a quite dramatic change in a person's appearance: the texture and color of the skin changes, breathing stops, and often there is a noticeable startle reaction. I can often teach novices to recognize phobic reactions in one session.

But as useful as this skill can be, possessing it is not necessary to detect most phobias. When you perceive a suspicious pattern of avoidance, you can ask “When you think of discussing this with your wife (for example) Do you experience a distinct unpleasant feeling in your body?” If the client says that it does, you can proceed with the following protocol.

I am very phobia conscious, so I am constantly on the lookout for them. As you become more aware of them, and more confident of your ability to resolve them, I would not be surprised if you are too.

Updated Phobia Protocol

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1) Contact and unblend the phobic part

Ask the client to put attention on the phobic feeling. *There is no need to let the feeling become strong; the merest hint will suffice.* With attention on the feeling, have the client request that the part communicate, and further request that the part separate for the clients body. Ask the part to pull in its feelings, or move back until the client has no phobic bodily sensations.

2)Help the client manifest Self

Ask the client to focus attention on the phobic part, and notice reactions toward it. Have the client notice any parts feeling anything but friendly curiosity, and request that they unblend and move back.

3)Ask for a memory

Ask the client to have the part focus on that awful feeling, and let a memory from its childhood come to it. Have the client ask the part to send the memory to the client when it appears.

4) Scan the memory for a shameful feeling

Let the client know that we are looking for a feeling that the child in the memory believes is unacceptable. The child thinks that the fact he or she is having this feeling means that there is something seriously wrong with his or her character.

It might be something as simple as the child is afraid, and believes that means he or she is a worthless coward. Abused children often believe that they are weak or stupid to crave the abusive parent’s love or approval, even though they know they will never get it. The child may may believe

that reveling in admiration or praise means they are egotistical and think they are better than others, ect.

5) Have Self help the child know that there is nothing wrong with them or their feelings.

You can coach Self to cognitively reorient the child. Once it is clear the child *really* gets this

6) Have the part return to the phobic situation.

There should be **NO** phobic response. Have the client imagine other aspects of the phobic experience to discover related phobias.