

# SANDTRAY SUITE

## MODULE 5: JACK IN THE BOX TECHNIQUE

This technique is one of the techniques that I created pretty early on in my career because I saw it work so many times. And before we hop into this video, that is an actual video that I filmed with one of my friends and she went through the RIST program with me, I want to kind of set this up and show you a little bit about how the jack-in-the-box technique works.

First, why is it called the jack-in-the-box? It's called the jack-in-the-box because it works every time, but sometimes you're surprised when it comes up, just like you are with a jack-in-the-box. But, with this technique and during this session that you guys are going to watch, I want you to pay attention to the work that the client did, and how she was able to really problem solve on her own without me giving her any tools. So, what the gist of the jack-in-the-box is, is it's really kind of a solution-focused way of working with the client in the sand. So, you have them build a traditional non-directive sandtray. And, as they are processing this you want to be able to look and see where the problem spots are. Usually there's this ying-yang, you know, pluralities that you'll see in the sandtray with many clients. So whatever that issue is that they are really struggling with, what you do then is you give them a prompt and you say, "OK, I see that you're struggling with weight loss, or quitting smoking, or whatever it is." And you go, "I know that's really really hard. So what I want you to do is look at the miniatures I have. I have a ton of different miniatures and choose one that would help you move forward, even an inch, just a little bit towards making things a little bit better." And so you're not giving them the miracle world question or anything huge, it's just moving forward even a tiny bit. And oftentimes what they'll say is, "I don't know. I don't know where to even start." And you say, "That's ok. I want you to do this. Just look at my miniatures and see what your eye lands on and see what you can come up with. I never ever had it not work because what happens is our left brain goes, "I don't know. If I could figure this out I wouldn't be here," kind of thing. But the magic of the

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right brain, that again is constantly working under that level of consciousness, below the level of consciousness, is able to scan those miniatures, and look and see if it can grab something to look and see if it can be used to solve that problem. And many many times the clients are surprised themselves as to what they're able to put in the tray. And, I'm often shocked as to what coping skills they are able to put in the tray to move themselves forward. And then the magic happens then, is that you as a therapist get to use that to assign as homework or something they can do to implement. And it's not something you came up with; instead, they came up with themselves. And as we know, if it's our idea as a person, then we're much more likely to implement it. And so, if it's coming from the client themselves, they're going to be much more likely to follow through with that within the next week or two, because it's something that they know they can do, and something that's come from the intrinsic place, as well. So again, watch this video that I was able to record with my good friend, Rebekah. And again, even the camera guy when we were filming this said, "Did you plan this?" I said, "No. This is really how it works." So again, I challenge you to include this in your session at any time and let us know how it goes.

Rebekah: "OK. So I decided to do a tray around the new year so far. So over here represents the beginning of the new year. You can't see it, but there's a compass over here. Just really excited. All very positive about beginning the new year. And these are some goals I set for myself, and I realize now that I probably bit off more than I can chew. But, this was I wanted to learn Spanish. I downloaded an app to do that. I'd like to read more. I have a long list of books I want to read. I wanted to take time to pray and meditate which I had not been doing lately. I downloaded an app to read the Bible in a year. I haven't even started it. I go to church regularly and fully participate in my home congregation. I joined a gym so I can lose some weight and get in shape. So, all of these are really good and I'm really excited about them, but I find there's this tremendous barrier of time between my joy of the new year and actually connecting these two. I did it for about a week. I just can't do it consistently

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because I feel like there's just not enough time to get it all done. It's really very frustrating.

Amy: So, you've done very well at identifying what is keeping you from moving forward into this wonderful beautiful life. So, I know you've probably tried several several different things, so far, but it sounds like nothing really has worked. So I want us to try to do something a little bit different, and I want you to use the miniatures. You can see all these different miniatures and so take your time and see if you can find one thing that may help you move even just a little bit forward where you want to go. And I'll just be sitting here and you let me know when you're ready.

Rebekah: OK. I can do that.

Amy: So, tell me a little bit about what you picked here.

Rebekah: Well, as I was explaining my tray to you, a couple of things stood out to me. One, was that clock I had here was so huge and so overwhelming that I couldn't even see the compass. I couldn't even see the way that I wanted to go. And this was a little bit more hopeful, in that there were paths that could hopefully get me there. But the only thing I saw was this ginormous clock. And I guess I began to feel that it has more power than it needs to have. I don't know if all of these are realistic. It's a nice idea. It's an aspirational goal. But, I think one of the things that will help me at least feel a little more peace about it, is if I can remove some of the power the clock has had and make it a little bit more reasonable and put a smaller clock in the middle.

Amy: So, it sounds like nothing is going to have to majorly change in your outward world, but how you perceive is going to make a huge difference, because even when I look at this tray now, it looks much more connected and much more hopeful. And, I'm wondering if that's how you're feeling as well.

Rebekah: I do. I still feel like I've got to make some decisions about what's realistic and not realistic. I can go to the gym, but I'm not going to look like this, so I can push myself a little less, and just plan on getting in

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shape. I may learn some Spanish, but I'm not going to master the language in a year. But, maybe I can get down just some basic vocabulary. And instead of reading the entire Bible, maybe I'll just read it more, to kind of give myself a little bit of a break about. . . There was just a lot of intensity around all the things I was telling myself I had to do or should be doing and around the power of the clock that was keeping me from it.

Amy: Right. So you were really able to figure that out for yourself just by doing the process of the sandtray.

Rebekah: Yep. Exactly. I walked into this being very anxious and overwhelmed because I just felt like there was not enough time to do it all. But I realize part of that fear is just living in my head.

Amy: hmmm. That's pretty powerful.

Rebekah: Very, very. I feel like I have new hope and I kind of know what direction I need to go in now.