

Session

by Fred Osuna

Client: Hi.

Therapist: Yep. (fast, almost sounds like the same voice saying, "Hiyep")

Client: How're ya doin'?

Therapist: Fine, what's up. (curt and quick, telegraphic)

Not much. I'm feelin' pretty good.

Why is that? (in a monotone, followed by an impatient sigh)

I dunno, I had a really good week...

Mm hm, what happened?

Um. Well not too much, um. Just work, like, as usual...

Mm hm.

...and, everyone seems to like me at work, you know I'm in that new job, and everyone's really nice to me. And it's different than my last job where they're, you know, they're giving me positives. My last job, they just, you know, sort of let me work and told me every once in a while that I was doing okay, but here I'm feeling a lot of warm fuzzies all the time, so it's really...

Warm whats?

Warm fuzzies?

Oh, okay. Good feelings, huh?

Right. (therapist chuckles) I was just, I was just really looking forward to coming, just wanted to let you know that I was doing okay.

Fantastic. (pause, chairs squeak) Good.

Yeah, I feel good.

So, how do you think that makes your future look?

It's looking pretty bright. I'm really excited about it.

Yeah?

Yeah, it's only been a, you know, one real good week, but, um, I'm sort of looking ahead positively.

What is it besides all these “warm fuzzies?” Is there something that really stands out in the week that really was, ah, made it so “super?”

I don't know, I think it started, the whole week started, um, toward the end of our last session last week.

Mm hm.

Um. Just some things that we went through, um, you know, some things you told me, made me feel really good about myself.

Mm hm.

And, uh, you know, things that...I'd just been sort of down on myself, and you sort of brought me up and, um, made me feel like I was an okay person. And, um, I don't know, I've just been thinking about that session all week, and thinking about, um, what you said, and it was, it was just really nice.

What, did things happen after, like during the week at work, that sort of reinforced that feeling?

No, I really think it was, it was what you said. I mean, I...(pauses)...I'm not used to having too many people compliment me, and it was really nice.

Good. (extended pause) Well.

Well what?

It's good that you're feeling good. About everything.

Yeah. I think so. (pause) I don't know. I had this appointment, and I wanted to come.

(silence) Is there anything you want to bring up, anything to talk about?

Not in particular.

Anything in general.

Um, no. (quietly) I can't really think of anything.

Then, that's good. I'm glad you, we, don't need to meet then maybe this frequently.

Um, well, I don't know about that.

You're doing fine by yourself.

Yeah, but I like meeting with you.

Well, it's not so good to rely on somebody else for your, I mean, it's good to get, you know, independence.

Uh huh.

And if you feel that you're off on that road, then... (pause)

I don't know, I just...

Maybe it might be best to, you know, have less frequent meetings.

That doesn't... I really don't like that very much. I just, I think...

Why not?

I don't know, it's going well now. I think that we should...(slight harrumph)... I would like to keep it going.

Why do you feel that you still need to come for therapy, if you feel that everything's going well.

I don't know, maybe it doesn't have to be therapy.

Just talk?

Yeah.

Okay.

Like, we never talk about you, very much. You know, you never tell me anything about yourself. Well, maybe I, we can use this hour to get to know each other better.

What is it you want to know?

Well, I dunno, do you have any brothers and sisters?

Mm hm. (pause) Two brothers.

I don't know, you're just, you're seeming colder this week. I mean, last week you seemed really warm toward me, and, um...

I could tell you all manner of things, I mean, everybody has a lot of things to tell about themselves.

Uh hm.

But I'm not going to start spilling my guts because there's a lot of things you probably don't want to hear.

Try me.

(laughs) I have nothing to spill.

(long silence) Gosh, I was really feeling good. (pause) I don't know, like, I might have to stop seeing you.

Well, you can keep coming in just to let me know what is going on. Cause if you need to come in if something does go wrong, it's good to air it.

Um hm.

Or just, when you feel that you need to make an appointment, let me know. We can just do it on an impromptu basis. You know, have a certain time every week, and if you don't, if you feel that week that you don't need to come in, then you don't have to.

Yeah. (pause) What do you think about, um, therapists and clients becoming friends?

I think, (pause), that that's fine.

Good. (stop) How'd you like to come over for dinner on Saturday?

I don't know about that, actually. I was just going to add to what I just said about friends that, I think that it's good for a client and counselor to have a good friendship, a good relationship, but, um, I think it's also good to keep it, that at a different level, you know, private lives.

Okay, so, we were just talking about not, you know, having me not come in...

Right.

...as much. So, how does that change it? What if I never, what if I don't come in anymore as a client?

What if you don't?

Well, then, could we be friends?

Sure.

How do you think, how do you feel about that? Would you want to?

About still being friends, but being...?

About being my friend. Do you think I am worthy of your friendship?

You mean, do I think that I'm on a higher level than you are?

No! Do you think that you'd want to be friends with me?

Sure, you're a decent person. Why wouldn't I want to be friends with you?

Mm. (pause) That's sort of why I came to you in the first place. I was having a hard time meeting people. Um, but, you know, with your help, I've...

Mm.

...I've managed to feel good about myself...

Mm hm.

...and make some new friends...

Mm hm.

...and, uh, you know, um, you know, it feels okay that you're not rejecting me, but I just, I still feel distance.

Do you feel it's good that you have an objective viewpoint that you can go to?

That's not really what I wanted.

(silence) What are you thinking?

(long pause) I'm thinking that, as a client, I sort of have, you know, not become dependent on you, but I enjoy seeing you and I like coming in...

Mm hm.

...and, um, you've really helped me a lot.

Mm hm.

And it's a real, um, strong relationship...

Mm hm.

...the client-therapist relationship. Um. But now that I'm doing okay, and you want to cut down therapy, it's not going to be as strong a client-therapist relationship as it was.

You don't think so.

Hm mm.

Why not?

Well, it'll be the same when I'm in, but I won't, you know, I won't be coming in as much. And I'd like to see you more often.

But you said that not coming in as much will take away from the relationship being as strong as it is now.

Yeah, I mean...

Why... Don't you think that, that after a certain point a relationship tends to stay on basically the same level?

Yeah, but there's also, you know, there's so much time in between seeing the person...

Mm hm.

...that, um... I don't know, I just, I just think that the amount of time you spend with someone is important, too, to a relationship.

Mm hm.

Um. I don't know, I was never one to like long-distance romances because you don't see the person as often as you'd like...

Mm hm.

...and that's the way I feel here.

Well. (pause) Um. (very long pause) I think that it would be best to keep it at the level we're keeping it now. Come in as often as you want, or as infrequent as you want...

Uh huh.

...but to keep it on more of a counselor relationship. I mean, we still can have great rapport and still have that same, you know, what is it, "warm fuzzy?"...

(laughs)

...or strong relationship, like you coming to me and talking, telling me about what's happening. But I think I would be more comfortable leaving it at that. And I think that's working out well. All right? Your thoughts...

Well, you know, I would probably, I would probably like more. But, you know, if that's all I can get, then that's, uh...

Well, you came originally because you wanted to meet more people, and you were sort of lost and you didn't really know, I mean, you weren't relating to many people and you were having a hard time with that.

Right.

And I think that, um, you should try to... I mean, you've got to have somebody to come to with your problem, or with your happiness, or whatever it is.

Um hm.

I'm just afraid that if you try to project all that feeling that I've suggested back to me, that you won't have anybody to go to from there, later on.

Mm.

You know what I'm saying?

You mean...? No. It sounds like if we were friends that you couldn't still do that for me.

It would be more difficult. Because I wouldn't have as unbiased a viewpoint as I have now. We're trying to see if, you know, your coming to me with your dilemma or your situation and I, I'd like to view it as impartially as possible, to see what would be best for you, what would benefit you most, and how you could, you know, solve it on your own best. And I think that if the relationship got too strong that that would be very hard for me to do. Sometimes impossible.

(long silence and a sigh)

You look very pondersome.

Yeah. (chair squeaks) I don't know. The last three months that we've been, you know, I've been seeing you, I've just really grown, um, to like you a lot.

Mm hm.

And, you know, everything you say that's right on, that, you know, really gets right in there, and, you understand so well where I'm coming from, um, it just seems like, seems like we have a lot in common. And, uh, I just wanted to know, I thought we could be friends.

Don't you think we are now?

Eh.

Why not?

Because I pay you to see you. I've never paid a friend to see a friend.

(quick, almost indiscernible exhalation) Is there anybody else that you've become friends with since we started...?

Oh, sure...

Yeah?

...Sure, there's a ton of people I talk to.

Do you think, do you feel that you might be able go to them with a problem?

Yeah.

Do you ever?

(defensively) Yeah.

And how do they respond?

Fine.

Mm hm.

Um, you know, friends always give more suggestions and, and, uh, a lot of advice, but, you know, you sort of weave through it and you get what you want. I think I'm actually in more of a healthy spot than where, you know, where before, where I was before I came in to see you, at all.

Mm.

And I was confused and I, you know, you, sort of set me in a right direction.

Mm hm.

And, um, I just feel a lot better about myself.

(silence) That's good. I think maybe we can just leave it there, at that. I don't see how that's going to make you feel any less better about yourself, do you?

No. (mutters something quietly)

