

# Handout

## The 'Hidden' Client

Hi there! This handout is about an idea we have spoken about in a coaching session. The idea is **"The Hidden Client"**

We all of us have many different thoughts in our heads and sometimes they can seem to be very crowded together and confusing. Many of these thoughts are fairly light and simple and relate to how we spend our day, things we have to do. Other thoughts are about other people, what we think about them and how we see them. Yet more thoughts are about ourselves and our lives, what we think of ourselves and our actions, what we want and the thoughts we have about getting what we want. All of these thoughts make us feel our feelings, often in such small ways that we hardly notice them.

Some of the thoughts we have can be very strong and make us feel strong emotions. Some of the thoughts we have about ourselves are negative and cause us to feel strong negative emotions such as guilt, shame and fear, anger and rage.

In people who may be trying to sort out issues like drinking too much or taking drugs or maybe gambling or having too many relationships there can be a set of thoughts and beliefs that seem to tell us it is okay to do some of these things and to make decisions about doing these things when there are other parts of us that know and feel differently.

It may feel almost as if there are different parts of yourself that in many ways in opposition to each other. For example, part of you may want to skip work and go off drinking with your friends for the day when another part of you knows that if you do this you might end up in getting a result you don't want, like money taken from your pay, or maybe you might lose your job. It may be that you will end up spending money on activities such as drinking or taking drugs that in fact you need to be spending on food or other items for you and your family, if you have one.

The part of you that talks you into making these choices even though you know they may be risky and destructive for you is a part of you that keeps you on

the road to using somehow. This part justifies these decisions and behaviours and tells you it doesn't matter or minimises the consequences.

This part is what we call the "Hidden" client.

### **Why is it called the Hidden Client?**

In recovery coaching it is called the 'Hidden' client because people tend to keep this part of themselves and the thoughts that go with it secret from their coach and other people. We tend to want to please people and it can be that you might find yourself not wanting to tell the truth as you feel you will be judged for it. The Hidden client also does not want anyone else trying to stop you pursuing some of your behaviours and so it hides its presence and agenda so that it is more likely that you get what it wants you to get. It may well prompt you to lie about what you are doing or what you are planning so that it can get you to get what it wants.

It also can, in some cases, keep itself Hidden from you as well. It sounds odd I know but many clients only really notice this part of them that seems to have only using as an objective when they learn about it.

### **What does the Hidden client want?**

The Hidden client usually only has one purpose and that is to keep you using the alcohol, drugs or behaviour that is causing you some difficulty. Why would it do that? In an odd and paradoxical way, the Hidden client is also trying to serve you. It may be that if you are experiencing negative feelings about your life and or relationships that the Hidden client thinks that changing these feelings might be a good thing for you. Perhaps feeling relief from anxiety, anger or fear would be nice thing especially if replaced by happy even euphoric feelings. If you are psychologically, physically and emotional dependant on a drug or behaviour then it may be that it perceives your best interests to one of using more of the drug or behaviour so as to help you avoid the pain of withdrawal.

What ever it's agenda we can see that to keep itself free to decide for you how you will respond to decisions around your using, it tends to keep various defences established in you. This helps you in a way as it keeps you away from really understanding the impact and consequences of some of the decisions you are making in your life.

### **Why does it matter that I know what my Hidden Client wants and thinks?**

If you want a thrilling full and happy life and recovery, then it is most likely that you will want to be able to create it. If your issues around certain behaviours (e.g., using substances, gambling etc.) is not a problem in your or anyone else's life then you will most likely have no problems achieving and experiencing what you want in life.

If though, you are finding they are getting in the way of what it is you want to do or even stopping you starting living the kind of life you really want then you will most likely want to develop ways that you can manage or stop the behaviours that are getting in the way. It may also be making you do and say things to people close to you or who you hang out with that you regret afterwards or are ashamed of. The Hidden client is quite good at making us do these things and then justifying them to us.

If some of your behaviour and thinking is being managed by this Hidden part of you then the sooner you get to know it, understand how it operates and take steps to make **you** the **boss** of it rather than **it** the **boss** of **you** and your life, the better.

### **Is the Hidden client a Saboteur or Gremlin as explained to me by my coach?**

Yes, it's a good way to look at it and work with it.

You will have talked with me about gremlins already so if it works for you then you can see the Hidden client as a big gremlin but one you want to keep a careful eye on.

### **Will you, my coach, bring it up in our coaching sessions?**

If we agree that this will be helpful and that you want to work with this concept in this way then yes, if I notice it and you don't I will bring it up. However, what you do in response will always be up to you.

That's about it. If you have any further questions or wish to talk about this further, please tell me at any time in our sessions and we can dig into this topic further.