

Chapter 7

Therapist Anxiety

It is normal to have anxiety when we learn something new. If that new thing has real risks for real people that we care about, the anxiety may be even more acute. Often, we have to learn the lessons over and over again that 1) we can learn new things, 2) we become better and better at the things we do often, and 3) the stress related to new things gets better the more time passes in our engagement with it. In short, your comfort with EMDR therapy with complex clients will get better the same way every other thing you have ever accomplished gets better. It just takes time and practice. All the time and practice in the world will not make this work effortless or easy with clients with complex trauma. This is just a little reminder that I hope finds you on a day when you lose track of what makes you remarkable at what you do: you can be good at something and that thing can also be really difficult.

I still remember the days after my Part II EMDR training when several of my clients fell into the quicksand of attachment wounds, and I did not know how to help them. Every resource I tried wasn't helpful. I remember driving home sad and frustrated. Some of the client's existential loneliness that filled the room was still sitting in my chest and stomach. I have a clear memory of driving past a field of cows and yelling out loud: "F* trauma!" "F* EMDR!" "I should have been an accountant!" "I should just drive a UPS truck!" There will be days like this. Now, I can look back with gratitude for those difficult sessions and the important information they communicated. These experiences have instructed, shaped, and cultivated the words in this book. These difficult days will make you a better EMDR therapist, assuming you find strategies to navigate them.