

# Make Your Life a little Brighter

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

2.00 – 3.00pm

With Jo Bryant

[www.thehands-oncompany.co.uk](http://www.thehands-oncompany.co.uk)

## Get in the Groove

[www.drivethenetwork.com](http://www.drivethenetwork.com)

## Workbook

Please see the ideas for making a sock puppet or origami puppet documents. Alternatively borrow a puppet, a toy, or an inanimate object that has eyes!

# Puppets that guide you to where you want to be

Never feel alone again on your journey to discover:

Who you are

Where you are

How you feel...

Begin living your best life ever

Who would have thought that your greatest guide in life could be a puppet? Okay I know this all sounds a little crazy but stick with me! When we were children, we allowed ourselves to become completely immersed in our play time and often ego quietened down and we were in flow. We cherish those moments of flow now in whatever form we like to experience it in, whether through creativity, sport, exercise, work or immersing ourselves in being entertained. When decisions need to be made, responsibilities mount up and life feels heavy, why not allow some time to try a different way of examining how you feel about it all and hopefully finding your own flow?

The brain is an amazing organ which we totally take for granted and that's a good thing. Sometimes though, it's helpful to tap into how it works to make quick and helpful changes in behaviour as a simple shortcut towards living a better life. The use of puppets is an efficient way to do this, as they can trigger learning patterns that were created when you were a child. **Most of us learned through having a curious mind set, an innate desire for experimentation – all wrapped up in a natural impulse to play.**

I have used play techniques through the delight of puppets and the games I've adapted for you to try. This is a personal journey for you to approach with one puppet that will act as your guide and mentor to share these games with. This is a time for quiet insight, wow moments of meaning and the opportunity to give your true self space to come out and play.

If reading this gives you a bubble of curiosity in your stomach, or a desire to know what on earth I'm talking about, dip your toe in - or should I say pull on a pretend creature and find out more.

Let's start in a light hearted and playful way with... some ground rules:

- Have fun with this
- Keep mutual respect between person and puppet
- Neither puppet nor person will be physically or mentally hurt by the other
- Puppet will reply with kindness and positivity
- Person will be open and honest where possible
- Self-sabotage will be nipped in the bud immediately by both parties
- Heart-warming delight will be encouraged throughout

Setting up:

Effective puppetry relies on the ability to make your puppet look as life-like as possible. The good news is that with a couple of tweaks and wiggles you'll feel more confident. The number one skill is to fidget. **A puppet that moves looks real.** If that's as far as you fancy going, ignore the next part and just make sure your puppet moves a bit! If you want to try a few more things, play with different speeds of movement and experiment with how the shape of your hand and fingers can change the puppet's facial expressions and body frame. It will start to flow and feel right very quickly. Most importantly, feel comfortable with your hand and arm position. If you would like to dig a little further into the relationship between you and your puppet, start with Game 1 where puppet techniques are explained in more detail.

***Note: Try not to go too deep during these games as some strong thoughts or emotions might be activated. These are better expressed with the safety net of a real, alive helper. If it feels too much, stop the game or change the subject you have chosen to something lighter. Try to have a playful mind set, bringing a gentle curiosity towards gaining some wow moments of insight.***

## **Game 1**



Experiment with these movements to get the feel of how your puppet expresses themselves. You may want to sit in front of a mirror to get a clearer idea of what works best for you and your puppet:

- Wake your puppet up. Do they slowly stretch and yawn and look sleepy with limited eye contact, maybe even rubbing their eyes? Or do they jump awake and look around themselves ready for action? Do you need to nudge them and they shake their head 'no' as they sleepily curl into you? Or are you trying to snuggle them in and they keep jerking awake again? Play around with waking up and going back to sleep. You can use this at the start and end of your play sessions.
- You may prefer to enter and exit using another method. These are some classic puppet moves that work well: As if your puppet has bounced/flown/jumped into the space and then at the end, as if a trap door has been opened up under the puppet; in a lift as a slow and steady upwards or downwards motion; an escalator style of smooth movements across and up or down and finally; the stairs as a series of bounces, each a little higher or lower and further along than before.

- Puppet eye contact is important as it brings more life to your puppet and can help you feel a bond. Remember this when you start talking with them. Ask them how they are feeling and tell them something you have done, or plan to do that day. Experiment with head movements to show encouragement or understanding. Not using eye contact is also very useful. If you ask your puppet something and they look at the ceiling, they may need some thinking time.
- Other movements to play around with are to turn their head in towards your body to express concern or shyness, or to bob them up, down and side to side to show excitement and happiness. Drop their head to generate sadness or wiggle it to show joy. Try not to let your puppet's body slump when your arm gets tired. Take breaks or rest your elbow into your hip or on a surface and keep your wrist flexed to help with this. Keep their mouth slightly open to show a small smile or keep it tight shut to produce a frown. Move your fingers behind their eyes and eyebrow area and see how that changes their expression. On some puppets, you can even move behind their nose to wiggle that area.
- If you want your puppet to have a voice, open the mouth when you speak. Generally, people do the opposite and it doesn't look effective. Getting the mouth movements right with the voice is easier to manage if you focus on moving with the sound, and keeping still when not talking. Puppets do not always require a voice. A puppet whispering in your ear or using mime works just as well.

To create a strong connection between you both, imagine you have just invited your puppet to come and live with you. Tell your puppet why you want to offer them a home and what type of person you are to live with. Tell them what help you think you might need from them as your guide and what you want to gain from the relationship.

Finally give your puppet one thing in their personality, values or ideas that feels unique to who you are. Try to think of something that would stand out as yours and not someone else's. Find a way of showing it in your puppet by a movement they make, something they say or something that underpins all their thoughts and actions. Maybe it could be something that only you would know in their back story that links the two of you together. Choose an attribute that feels like a positive link to how unique you are.

Write or draw any notes or ideas here:

Your puppet has come into your life to act as a guide and friend. I like to use the word avatar as it means an incarnation, embodiment or manifestation of a person or idea. Your puppet is an avatar to guide you to developing more self-awareness. When we don't know ourselves, we stumble through life with limited resources. Self-awareness is the number one solution to creating a happy and successful life and is a journey of ongoing learning.

## **Game 2**

This exercise gives you the opportunity to think about the stories we tell ourselves. We rarely get to speak them out loud and doing so can give us a different perspective on who we are.

Telling part of your life story to an inanimate object can free you up to be honest about your drives, beliefs and values. Speaking out loud can give a new perspective on your internal stories.

Sarah Centrella (author, coach and speaker) said:

*“Your thoughts become your beliefs. Your beliefs become your truth. Your truth becomes your story. Your story is your reality.”*

Choose from the subjects below, or decide on your own subject. Put your puppet on your hand and have a minute to feel comfortable moving it. Look deeply into your puppet’s eyes and tell it your answers to the questions. You can pick one or two, or work through them. If you feel as if you want to move your puppet (make it nod, answer back, pull faces), please go ahead and do so.

Here are some ideas to try:

**Talk about a truly happy moment**

**Tell them about a day that really changed you**

**If you won £10,000 what would you spend it on?**

**Who makes you laugh the most and why?**

**How are you changing the world for the better?**

**What do you want to leave behind?**

**What would your perfect work colleague be like?**

**If you were someone else, who would you want to be and why?**

**What will you be doing in ten years’ time?**

**What scares you the most and why?**

**Who would you most like to spend the evening with and what would you do?**

**What angers you the most?**

**What would the perfect day look like?**

**What do you do best?**

Make your puppet whisper in your ear how they feel about your answers. Allow the inner voice of your puppet to be kind and friendly and see what your imagination gives back to you.

What did your story telling say about yourself? How do you feel about it? Did your puppet 'say' anything self-aware?

Write anything helpful here:

### **Game 3**



Have a good old moan to your puppet about what is annoying you in life right now. If you don't want anyone around you to hear, imagine the bond between you and your puppet is so strong that you can hear each other's thoughts! Really let loose and tell them things you feel resentful about. Choose something that is irritating, or actually brings out anger - even the silly little annoying things that build up over time. Imagine your puppet agrees with everything you are saying and has huge empathy for your suffering.

Now imagine your puppet is extremely smart, wise and knowledgably. You might want to put a real person you admire 'into' your puppet, such as Ann Hawkins for example – sorry Ann I couldn't resist! Pick one of your moans from above, or the general feeling they all give you and ask your wise puppet one or two of these questions:

- What am I learning from this?
- Why is it happening to me now?
- What thoughts could make it better?
- What action could make it easier to deal with?
- What does it bring out in me that I could change?
- What could I do to make it go away?

To lighten these moans up a little, try some of the questions pretending that your puppet is playing other characters or people. For example: A cartoon character; a movie star; an aunt or uncle; a

prisoner behind bars; a talk show host. Sometimes this can give you a new perspective that unlocks some deep held belief that doesn't suit you anymore. Highlighting a response from another point of view, even one you would usually disregard, can help see things in a different and helpful way.

Write anything to action here:

### **Game 4**

Think of the type of customer you would like to have – your ideal customer. Imagine your puppet is your ideal customer who really needs what you can offer. They are right in front of you, just desperate to hear what you can do to help. Tell your puppet how you will save them from being without your goods/services. How is your puppet responding?

Capture one or two things you just said that might be helpful in the messaging you offer customers:

Next your puppet is a disgruntled, unhappy customer who truly believes you have done them a disservice. What was the first thing that came to mind when you read that sentence? That is most probably a part of your business that worries you. Now imagine your puppet is highlighting the problem. How will you respond?

What is the problem and how can you fix it for your customers?

This exercise can help you gain confidence in your ability to offer something that other people want, an understanding of what issues may arise and what you would do to sort them out! This is a game





Work Environment

Routine

Business Planning

Productivity

Strategy

Time in Flow

Creative Solutions

Interaction with Others

Marketing

Sales

Cash Flow

Please add anything else that is relevant

How do you truly feel about that inspector's report? Is there anything there that can be outsourced or worked on in a way that is more productive? What are you proud of? Next, sit still with your puppet in a relaxed manner. Take some slow, deep breaths down into your stomach. At the same time, focus on your puppet. The puppet has changed from an inspector into a well-loved pet and so if it is soft, stroke it while you breathe calmly. Take a breath and then tune into your body and see how it feels. Fidget until you are comfortable. Take another breath while concentrating on your puppet pet. Let any images or thoughts float across your mind, as you focus on breathing and looking at your puppet. When you feel relaxed and in a good frame of mind, remind yourself of what you love about your work? Think of this for a moment and decide if you are happy overall with how it is going. Are there some changes you can make to keep things running smoothly? Does anything pop in your mind as you focus on your puppet? Now sit up straight, stretch and wiggle as you properly come back into the room. Whisper in your puppet's ear what you love most about life right now. Imagine your puppet is telling you what it thinks is great too. Thank your puppet for its guidance and keep it somewhere safe to use again at another time.

I would change:

Right now I love:

And this is great:

## **Game 7 – something to try another day**

*“All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.”*

- **Walt Disney**

When we set goals, it is all too easy to expect too much for the time we have, or to lose sight of why the goals are important to us. This exercise helps to readdress the energy and time needed to reach our goals with ease.

Take a minute to think about your life up to this point. Think about the goals you have achieved so far and acknowledge the successes to yourself. Feel thankful that there is time to achieve more goals in your life moving forward. What goal would you like to achieve?

The brain wants to help with goal setting. As soon as you decide on a goal, it searches for information and resources to help it along. The brain starts looking for a way of supplying the ‘want’ behind the goal. Your subconscious mind needs the wish, good idea or vague thought to turn into something specific and measurable in order for this to happen. Sometimes it feels quite magical, as if the universe starts putting things your way, but it is often sources and opportunities that are already there but just not recognised yet.

Sometime our dreams and aspirations can be seen as our needs. By examining your needs and deciding which ones are positive and important to you, you can begin to plan how to satisfy them. A need can be met by realistic goal setting. Nothing succeeds like success! Setting realistic goals leads to a higher chance of success and this in turn leads to confidence in setting future goals.

Choose three goals you want to achieve today. Make them attainable for the time you have. Keep the first goal to yourself but estimate how long you think it might take to complete it. Work on the goal and then note the actual time it took.

Explain the second goal to your puppet, telling them why you want to achieve it and how long you think it will take. Place your puppet somewhere close and regularly talk to them explaining how it is going as you work through the goal. Note the actual time it took and then celebrate the fact it is done by choosing a good song to dance to with your puppet.

Estimate the time your third goal will take and then shorten it. Aim to complete the third goal in the quicker estimated time. Decide how much you want to challenge yourself with this one. Note the actual time. When all three goals are completed, give yourself a well-earned treat.

	Estimate	Actual
First goal		
Second goal		
Third goal		

- Did making an estimate in advance add to the sense of satisfaction or make you try harder to achieve it? (when we plan a timeframe and action steps for our goals it is easier to start working on them and to continue the effort)
- Did declaring your estimate to your puppet followed by a celebration make any difference? (by sharing our goal plans we become accountable and can gain support from those around us)
- Did the addition of competition make any difference? (For some people, the competition heightens the desire to succeed with a goal. Sometimes competition with ourselves is just as effective)

Often it is easy to plan what you want to achieve and write goals into your life, but how do you actually complete them? Moving goals from paper to reality takes effort, determination and the ability to envision their success. Practicing these skills can help you understand what personal satisfaction feels like and can get you on track to experiencing the real thing. And finally, doesn't a puppet make the best cheerleader for success?!

***When I was young, my ambition was to be one of the people who made a difference in this world. My hope is to leave the world a little better for having been there."***

- Jim Henson

