

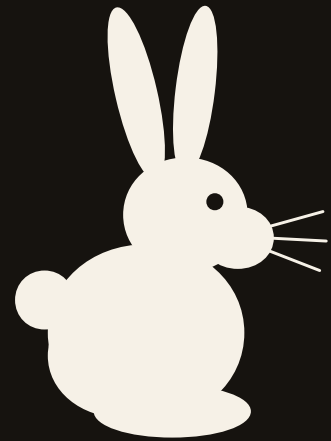


A FIELD COMPANION

The
White Rabbit
Field GuideTM

*Five Questions for Seeing the Worldview
Beneath the Client's Story*

FOR COACHES · ADVISORS · CONSULTANTS
TRAINERS · FACILITATORS



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WHITE RABBIT WARREN

FOLLOW
THE SIGNAL

THE WHITE RABBIT FIELD GUIDE™

Five Questions for Seeing the Worldview Beneath the Client's Story

By Joseph Riggio, Ph.D.

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EDUCATIONAL NOTE

This guide is for educational and professional-development purposes. It is not psychotherapy, clinical diagnosis, medical advice, or a substitute for appropriately qualified care. Use professional judgment, appropriate scope of practice, and relevant ethical standards in all client work.

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Before You Begin

A client does not arrive as a problem to solve.

They arrive inside a world.

That world has its own physics: what counts as danger, what is possible, who has authority, what a mistake means, how time behaves, what can be said, and what must remain hidden. By the time the client tells you a story, that world has already organized what they noticed, what they made it mean, what they decided to do, and what they now believe needs to change.

Most coaching attends to the visible output: the behavior, stated goal, belief, strategy, emotion, or narrative. Those things matter. But they are not the beginning.

The deeper question is:

What kind of world would make this pattern feel necessary, rational, or inevitable?

This guide is a compact practice for learning to listen beneath the client's explanation. It uses *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as a psychomythic lens—not as decorative metaphor, but as a way to recognize recurring stances of identity, power, perception, and possibility.

The White Rabbit is the first signal in the story. He is not a teacher. He does not provide a map. He appears as an anomaly: urgent, strange, compelling, already in motion. Alice follows, and the known world loses its authority.

In coaching, the White Rabbit is the moment a client's familiar explanation begins to fail. It is the signal at the edge of the story—the hesitation, contradiction, shift in tempo, repeated image, unnecessary apology, sudden certainty, or phrase that carries more voltage than the rest of the conversation.

*Do not rush past it.
Follow it.*

How to Use This Guide

Use the five questions below during preparation, after a session, in supervision, or as a quiet internal discipline while listening.

This is not a scoring tool, a diagnosis, or a typology. Do not use it to assign a client a fixed category. A person can move among different stances depending on pressure, relationship, context, and what is at stake.

The purpose is simpler and more demanding:

- Hear the structure beneath the content.
- Notice the worldview that makes the client's pattern coherent.
- Recognize your own reflexive coaching posture.
- Select an intervention that expands possibility rather than merely reinforcing the existing world.

Write briefly. Listen slowly. Treat your first interpretation as a hypothesis, not a conclusion.

What does the client experience as unquestionably real?

Every worldview has premises that do not feel like premises. They feel like reality.

A client may say:

“There is no room for error.”

“If I do not stay useful, I become irrelevant.”

“You cannot trust people with the truth.”

“It is too late to change direction.”

“I need more information before I can decide.”

“I should be able to handle this myself.”

Do not argue with the statement too quickly. First, listen for the world it implies.

If there is “no room for error,” what kind of world is this? A courtroom? A battlefield? A performance review that never ends? A world in which belonging must be earned through precision?

If “it is too late,” what has become fixed? Time? Identity? Reputation? Obligation? A story about who the client is allowed to become?

LISTEN FOR

- Absolute language: always, never, everyone, no one, impossible, obvious.
- Compressed causal claims: “That is just how it works.”
- Rules treated as natural laws.
- Invisible authorities: family, market, culture, profession, “people.”
- A repeated phrase that closes inquiry rather than opens it.

FIELD PROMPTS

- What must be true in the client's world for this statement to be self-evident?
- What does this worldview protect the client from having to feel, risk, or know?
- What possibility becomes unavailable if this premise remains unquestioned?
- Where does the client speak as though the map and the territory are the same thing?

NOTES

Client phrase or premise

The world implied by it

What becomes impossible inside this world

What does the client's language make possible—and what does it make invisible?

Language does more than report experience. It selects a world.

Consider the difference between these statements:

- *“I have to manage my team.”*
- *“I need to build conditions in which my team can think.”*
- *“I am bad at boundaries.”*
- *“I have learned that belonging requires availability.”*
- *“My client is resistant.”*
- *“The intervention may not yet make sense inside the client's current world.”*

Each sentence makes different action available. Each establishes a different relation to power, self, other, time, and responsibility.

Listen for the verbs, metaphors, pronouns, time frames, and identity claims that organize the client's speech.

LISTEN FOR

- **Verbs:** fight, manage, survive, fix, prove, earn, hide, wait, control, build, choose, create.
- **Metaphors:** trapped, drowning, carrying, climbing, performing, navigating, defending, disappearing.
- **Pronouns:** Who has agency? “I,” “we,” “they,” “people,” “one.”
- **Time:** Is the client trapped in a past verdict, a future threat, or an urgent present?
- **Identity statements:** “I am the kind of person who...” or “I have never been able to...”

FIELD PROMPTS

- What roles does the client assign to self and others?

- Does their language position them as agent, defendant, victim, performer, rescuer, observer, or architect?
- Which words create movement? Which words create confinement?
- What question could introduce a more spacious vocabulary without invalidating lived experience?

NOTES

Words, verbs, metaphors, or repeated phrases

What this language makes possible

What this language makes invisible

Which problem is the current pattern solving?

A persistent pattern is rarely random.

It may be costly. It may be exhausting. It may be outdated. But somewhere in the system, it is still serving an organizing function.

- *Overpreparing may protect against exposure.*
- *Control may protect against disappointment.*
- *Overexplaining may protect against being misunderstood.*
- *Deferring a decision may protect against grief, responsibility, conflict, or the loss of a previous identity.*
- *Endless self-analysis may protect against the risk of acting before certainty arrives.*

This is not an invitation to blame the client for their pattern. It is an invitation to recognize intelligence where the surface description sees only failure.

LISTEN FOR

- The payoff hidden inside a complaint.
- A strategy that once made perfect sense.
- The feared consequence of giving the pattern up.
- A bodily shift when the client gets near a real choice.
- The difference between what the client says they want and what the current pattern loyally preserves.

FIELD PROMPTS

- If this pattern disappeared tomorrow, what would the client have to face?
- What does this pattern prevent, postpone, contain, or preserve?
- Whose expectations might become harder to satisfy if the pattern changed?
- What dignity, loyalty, or survival intelligence is encoded in the pattern?

NOTES

The visible problem

The protection or function it may provide

What changing it might require the client to risk or grieve

Which Wonderland stance is shaping the conversation right now?

The following figures are not personality types. They are recognizable postures that can appear in clients, coaches, organizations, and conversations.

Use them as temporary lenses. Ask: **What is currently organizing the exchange?**

WONDERLAND FIGURE	ARCHETYPAL STANCE	WHAT IT MAY SOUND LIKE	DEVELOPMENTAL OPENING
Queen of Hearts	The Defender™	"This is unacceptable." "Someone needs to take control." "There is one right answer."	Shift from threat and enforcement toward discernment, consequence, and choice
White Rabbit	The Performer™	"I am behind." "We need a plan." "There is no time."	Shift from urgency and motion toward presence and signal
Alice	The Aligned Self™	"Who am I in this?" "This does not make sense anymore."	Support inquiry without trapping the client in self-analysis
Cheshire Cat	The Contextual Navigator™	"It depends." "There are many ways to see this."	Preserve perspective while restoring values, direction, and responsibility
Hatter / Caterpillar	The Architect™	"What if the premise is wrong?" "Who are you?"	Use paradox and pattern interruption without abandoning human contact
Wonderland / Dreamer	The Sovereign Signal™	A quiet coherence; a widening of possibility; less need to defend the self	Let the field settle; do not over-explain what is already reorganizing

The Six Wonderland Stances™ — the six archetypal positions of the OLAM™ model.

FIELD PROMPTS

- Which figure most resembles the client's current stance?
- Which figure may be active in me as the coach?
- Is the current coaching intervention reinforcing this stance or opening a next move?
- What would an adjacent, more spacious stance make available?

NOTES

Client stance

Coach stance

How the two stances may be interacting

A possible next opening

What signal, metaphor, or intervention could create productive dissonance without forcing collapse?

Transformation does not always arrive through explanation.

Sometimes a client needs a cleaner question. Sometimes they need a precise reflection. Sometimes a metaphor reveals the prison sentence hidden in ordinary language. Sometimes silence is the intervention. Sometimes the coach needs to stop being the White Rabbit—driving pace, producing tools, keeping the session moving—and become still enough to let the actual signal appear.

The aim is not to destabilize for its own sake. The aim is to create enough dissonance that the client can see the limits of the current world without being abandoned inside the uncertainty that follows.

A useful intervention has three qualities:

- **It is proportionate.** It meets the client's actual capacity in the moment.
- **It is precise.** It interrupts the operative pattern, not a superficial symptom.
- **It leaves agency intact.** It invites perception; it does not impose a new identity.

POSSIBLE INTERVENTION FORMS

- **Reflect the premise:** *"You are speaking as though one mistake would make you permanently unsafe. Is that the world you are living in?"*
- **Shift the time frame:** *"What changes if this is not a final verdict, but a threshold?"*
- **Name the role:** *"For the last ten minutes, you have sounded less like a leader deciding and more like a defendant making a case."*
- **Offer a metaphor:** *"What if the problem is not that you are lost, but that the old map only contains roads you have outgrown?"*
- **Use paradox:** *"What would happen if certainty were no longer the prerequisite for integrity?"*
- **Return to sensation:** *"Before you explain it, what changed in your body when you said that?"*
- **Create a choice point:** *"What becomes possible if you do not solve this from the identity that created the problem?"*

FIELD PROMPTS

- What is the smallest intervention that could make the current world visible?
- What must not be challenged yet because it is still holding the person together?
- What question would return the client to sensation, choice, or authorship?
- What is the intervention I most want to give—and what in me is driving that impulse?

NOTES

The pattern to interrupt

A proportionate intervention

What I will watch for afterward

A One-Page Session Debrief

Use this page after a session. Do not aim for perfection. Aim for a clearer next conversation.

1. What story did the client bring?

2. What world did that story assume?

3. What language, image, or bodily shift carried the most signal?

4. Which Wonderland stance was most active?

5. Which stance did I occupy as the coach?

6. What did the pattern protect or preserve?

7. What intervention opened possibility? What intervention narrowed it?

8. What is the smallest honest next step?

Read a World, Not Just a Person

For the next seven days, choose one novel, essay, film, client conversation, leadership meeting, or public interview. Do not begin by asking whether you agree with it.

Ask instead:

- What does this world treat as real?
- What does it treat as dangerous?
- What does it make admirable?
- Who has agency here?
- How does time behave?
- What kind of transformation can this world imagine?
- What cannot be said from inside it?

Then ask the more difficult question:

Where do I inhabit a world this narrow without knowing it?

This is the practice behind the Twelve Book Journey™: not consuming books, but apprenticing oneself to alternate architectures of perception.



Follow the Signal

The White Rabbit does not explain the world Alice is about to enter.

He simply appears with enough incongruity, urgency, and precision that the familiar world can no longer fully contain her attention.

The work of a transformational practitioner is not to become strange for effect. It is not to destabilize a client in order to seem profound. It is to become capable of noticing the exact place where a life has become narrower than its own possibility—and to offer a question, reflection, silence, metaphor, or presence that makes another world briefly visible.

That is often enough.

Not an answer.

A door.



CONTINUE THE JOURNEY



Inhabiting Wonderland™

Embodying Worldviews as a Coaching Technology

A free live webinar for coaches, advisors, consultants, trainers, and practitioners who want to see the hidden worlds organizing coaching conversations.

IN THE SESSION, JOSEPH RIGGIO, PH.D. WILL EXPLORE

- The six Wonderland / OLAM™ archetypal stances
- The worldview beneath the client's visible problem
- Fiction and nonfiction as developmental technologies
- How to work with signal, narrative, and perceptual architecture more precisely

RESERVE YOUR COMPLIMENTARY SEAT

Educational Note. This guide is for educational and professional-development purposes. It is not psychotherapy, clinical diagnosis, medical advice, or a substitute for appropriately qualified care. Use professional judgment, appropriate scope of practice, and relevant ethical standards in all client work.

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