Below are introductory handouts designed for participants in the four-session IDL course. They are written for newcomers rather than experienced IDL interviewers and can be included in a course workbook.

The emphasis is on experiencing unfamiliar perspectives, learning to listen without interpretation, and discovering how to conduct interviews independently. The interview guides are simplified versions of the IDL process, intended to be manageable within the time available.

Recommendations for Using These Handouts

I would distribute Handout 1 at the beginning of Session 1, but ask participants to read only the sections needed for the initial exercise. Handout 2 can be used during the first group interview and then retained for independent practice.

Handout 3 should be introduced during Session 2. Because the participants will already understand the basic interviewing process, they can focus on what distinguishes dream element interviewing from life issue interviewing.

There is one important practical consideration: the guides contain more questions than beginners may be able to explore thoroughly in a short paired interview. I would encourage the course leader to select six to eight questions for a 20–30-minute practice interview, while retaining the complete guides for participants to use afterward.

For a later revision, I would recommend adding the standard IDL six-core-quality ratings and the questions about how an interviewed perspective would change the dream or life situation. Those are useful features of the fuller protocol, but the present introductory versions prioritize accessibility and confidence.

The three handouts also prepare participants for Session 3, where they will learn to distinguish recommendations from instructions and translate selected recommendations into SMARTER experiments.

HANDOUT 1

Introduction to Integral Deep Listening (IDL)

Learning to Listen Beyond Our Usual Point of View

What Is Integral Deep Listening?

Have you ever been so certain about something that you couldn't understand how anyone could see it differently? Perhaps you were angry with a family member, worried about an upcoming conversation, or convinced that you had no good options for dealing with a problem.

Most of us approach difficulties from our familiar point of view. We interpret what happens based on our experiences, beliefs, emotions, expectations, and habits. This is necessary for everyday life, but it can also limit what we notice and the solutions we consider.

Integral Deep Listening (IDL) is a method for discovering perspectives that differ from our usual way of understanding ourselves and our problems.

IDL does this through a structured interview process. Instead of analyzing a problem or interpreting a dream, we temporarily imagine that we are an element associated with a life issue or a character, object, or other element from a dream. We then answer questions from that perspective.

For example, imagine that you are worried about an important conversation. You might notice that your anxiety feels like a heavy gray cloud.

Instead of asking what the cloud symbolizes, an IDL interviewer invites you to become the cloud and speak as it.

The interviewer might ask:

"Grey Cloud, what are you like?"

“Grey Cloud, what do you like about being a cloud?”

“Grey Cloud, what don’t you like?”

“Grey Cloud, how do you see the person who is worried about this conversation?”

“Grey Cloud, if you were in charge of this person’s life, would you live it differently? If so, how?”

“Grey Cloud, what would you recommend?”

And then a follow-up question for the interviewed subject:

“What did you hear?”

The answers may be surprising. The cloud might see the situation very differently from the way you ordinarily do. So may the person being interviewed.

You do not need to believe that the cloud is a separate being or that its answers possess special authority. What matters is whether temporarily adopting its perspective helps you discover something useful.

What Makes IDL Different?

IDL is not primarily about interpreting dreams, analyzing personalities, or telling people how to solve their problems Instead, it involves three important practices.

1. Listening rather than interpreting

When someone describes a dream, we usually want to explain what it means. When someone describes a problem, we often want to offer advice.

IDL asks us to do something different: temporarily set aside our explanations and allow the interviewed perspective to speak for itself.

2. Experiencing rather than merely imagining alternatives

IDL does not simply ask, "What might someone else think?" It invites you to temporarily become another perspective and answer questions as that perspective.

This can produce responses that surprise you because they differ from your usual assumptions, expectations, and preferences.

3. Testing rather than automatically believing

An interviewed perspective may offer recommendations. Some may be helpful. Others may not be. IDL does not ask you to accept these recommendations as truths. Instead, you can evaluate them and, when appropriate, test them through small, safe experiments in daily life.

What Is Epoché?

Epoché (pronounced approximately eh-po-KHEH) is a Greek word associated with the practice of suspending judgment. In IDL, it means temporarily setting aside our usual assumptions, interpretations, and identification with our ordinary point of view.

Imagine listening to someone with whom you strongly disagree.

Normally, you might immediately begin thinking about why the person is wrong, how to defend your position, or what you want to say next. Epoché means temporarily putting those

reactions aside so you can hear what the other person is actually saying. This does not mean agreeing with them. It means listening before evaluating.

The same principle applies when interviewing a dream character or an image associated with a life issue. Instead of asking, "What does this image really mean?" we ask, "What does this image have to say for itself?"

A Simple Exercise

Think of someone with whom you disagree about something important.

Imagine listening to that person for two minutes without interrupting, correcting, defending yourself, or mentally preparing your response. Notice how difficult or easy this feels.

Now consider these questions:

- What assumptions am I making about this person?
- What might I learn if I temporarily set those assumptions aside?
- Can I understand this person's perspective without agreeing with it?

This is the beginning of epoché.

What Happens During an IDL Interview?

An IDL interview generally follows a simple sequence.

First, you identify three life issues or recall a dream.

Second, you choose an image, character, animal, object, or other element to interview.

Third, you temporarily imagine becoming that element.

Fourth, an interviewer asks questions, and you respond from the perspective of the element. Or alternatively, you can interview yourself.

Fifth, you return to your ordinary perspective and reflect on what you heard.

Finally, you consider whether any recommendations are worth testing in daily life.

You remain free to disagree with anything that emerges.

Three Things to Remember

- Be curious. You do not need to know what will happen.
- Avoid interpretation. Allow the perspective to speak without explaining what it means.
- Test what you learn. A useful interview is not necessarily one that produces dramatic insights. It is one that helps you discover something worth exploring or trying.

A Question to Take With You

"What might I discover about my life if I temporarily stopped assuming that my usual way of seeing things was the only way?"

HANDOUT 2

IDL Life Issue Interview Guide

Discovering a Different Perspective on a Personal Problem

This guide is designed for Session 1 and for participants who want to practice interviewing one another afterward.

IDL Life Issue Interview Guide

Before Beginning:

Choose a partner. One person will be the interviewer, and the other will be interviewed. You can switch roles afterward.

The interviewer's task is to ask questions, listen, and avoid interpreting or giving advice.

The interviewee's task is to experiment with answering from a different perspective.

There are no right or wrong answers. A pause means you are probably trying to figure out the "right" answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Respond spontaneously as if you were a child playing a game. Resist thinking too much.

Participation is voluntary, and either person may pause or end the interview at any time.

Part 1: Identify Three Life Issues

Interviewer: "What is something in your life that you would like to understand better or approach differently?"

Examples include:

- Feeling anxious about a conversation.
- Having difficulty saying no.
- Feeling frustrated with someone.
- Procrastinating.
- Feeling uncertain about a decision.
- Wanting more confidence or peace of mind.

Choose something personally meaningful but manageable.

My life issues:

_____

_____

_____

Choose One Issue

Identify the Feelings You Have About It

Interviewer: “When you think about this issue, what feelings come up?”

Feelings:

_____

_____

Give the Feeling a Color

Interviewer: “If that feeling had a color, what color would it be?”

Color:

_____

Let the Feeling and Color Become an Animal

Interviewer: “If that feeling and color were an animal, what animal would they be?”

Animal:

_____

Do not spend time analyzing why this animal appeared. Simply accept the first image that comes to mind, or another image that feels appropriate.

Part 2: Become the Animal

Interviewer: “Now imagine that you are this animal.”

“Take a moment to experience what it is like to be this animal.”

“Where are you?”

“What does your body feel like?”

“When you are ready, answer the following questions as the animal, using ‘I’ rather than ‘it.’”

For example:

Instead of saying, “The wolf is strong,” say, “I am strong.”

Interview Questions

1. Who or what are you? Describe yourself.

_____

2. What do you like most about being yourself?

_____

3. What do you dislike about being yourself?

_____

4. What are your strengths? What are you especially good at?

_____

5. What are your weaknesses or limitations?

_____

6. How do you see the human whose life issue brought you into this interview?

_____

7. How do you see this person's life issue?

_____

8. If you were in charge of this person's life for a day, what would you do differently?

_____

9. What recommendations do you have for this person?

_____

10. How would you like this person to use what they have learned from interviewing you?

_____

Part 3: Return to Your Ordinary Perspective

Interviewer:
Ask:

1. "What did you hear?"
2. What surprised you about the interview?
3. Did the animal see your problem differently from the way you normally see it?

4. Did you hear anything that you had not previously considered?
5. Did the interview change how you feel about your original life issue?
6. Were any recommendations worth considering or testing?

Part 4: Choose a Small Experiment

Review the recommendations. You do not have to follow any of them. Choose one that seems safe, practical, and relevant.

Recommendation I might like to test:

_____

One small thing I could try during the coming week:

_____

How I could recognize whether it helped:

_____

Important Reminders for Interviewers

Ask questions rather than interpreting answers.
Avoid statements such as:
"That wolf represents your anger."
"You're really afraid of your father."
"This means you need to be more assertive."

Instead, always address the interviewed perspective, not the interviewee:
"Grey Cloud, what do you mean by that?"
"Monster, can you tell me more?"

"Monkey, how do you see that situation?"
"Car, would you recommend?"

If the interviewee begins answering from their ordinary point of view, gently address the animal:

"[Animal], is that you speaking, or is your human answering for you?"
If necessary, ask:
"[Animal], how do you feel about your human speaking for you?"

Remember that the goal is not to produce a particular answer. It is to allow an unfamiliar perspective to express itself.

After the Interview

The interviewee decides what the experience means and whether anything should be tested.
The interviewer does not need to agree with the answers or interpret them.
The most important question is not whether the animal was right. It is whether listening to it helped the person discover something useful.

Interviewers write down or record the interview. This is to have a record to give to the interviewee. There are several reasons for this:
1) Interviewees need to focus on speaking from the perspective of their interviewed perspective during interviews, not on trying to remember what has been said:
2) Interviewees will normally forget both what has been said and the quality of being the perspective they have interviewed. This is because when they return to their normal everyday waking perspective, its priorities and worldview will either assimilate all

information into it or ignore that which does not fit. This happens automatically, out of awareness.
3) So having a copy of the interview is important, even essential, if its content is not to be forgotten.

HANDOUT 3

IDL Dream Element Interview Guide

Discovering What a Dream Character or Object Has to Say

This guide is designed for Session 2. It builds on the life issue interview but introduces the distinctive IDL practice of interviewing elements that emerge spontaneously in dreams.

Identifying three current life issues before selecting a dream element helps participants examine whether dream perspectives offer information relevant to waking life without assuming in advance that the dream has a particular meaning.

IDL Dream Element Interview Guide

Before Beginning

Choose a partner.

One person will conduct the interview, and the other will answer from the perspective of a dream element.

You may switch roles afterward.

The interviewer's responsibility is to listen and ask questions without interpreting the dream.

The interviewee does not need to understand the dream or know what it means.

The purpose is to discover what the dream element has to say from its own perspective.

Part 1: Identify Three Current Life Issues

Interviewer: “Before we talk about your dream, what are three things in your life that are currently important to you, concern you, or that you would like to understand better?”

These might involve relationships, work, health, personal goals, decisions, or emotional concerns.

Life issue 1:

_____

Life issue 2:

_____

Life issue 3:

_____

“Which of these is particularly important to you right now?”

_____

You do not need to explain how this issue relates to your dream.

Part 2: Recall a Dream

Interviewer: “Tell me a dream you remember.”

It can be a recent dream or one from many years ago.

It does not need to be dramatic, frightening, or especially meaningful.

Brief description of the dream:

_____

Choose a Dream Element

Interviewer:

"What character, animal, object, place, or other element from this dream would you like to interview?" Possible choices include:

- A person.
- An animal.
- A building.
- A vehicle.
- A tree.
- A river.
- A frightening figure.
- An unusual object.
- Something apparently insignificant.

There is no need to choose the most important or dramatic element. Avoid initially, during first interviews, selecting a family member or someone in your waking life that you have strong feelings about. This is because the object is to take the perspective of the other, not your own, and when we have strong feelings toward someone we know, they easily can color the answers with our hopes and fears. Later, when you get used to IDL interviewing, you can interview close waking contacts.

Dream element selected:

_____

Part 3: Become the Dream Element

Interviewer: “Now imagine that you are this dream element.”

“Take a moment to experience what it is like to be this character, animal, object, or place.”

“Notice what it feels like to exist as this element.”

“When you are ready, answer the following questions as the element, using ‘I.’”

For example, if you are interviewing a tree, answer as the tree:

“I have deep roots.”

“I enjoy sunlight.”

“I dislike being cut down.”

Avoid speaking about the tree as if it were something separate from you.

Interview Questions

1. Who or what are you? Describe yourself.

_____

2. What do you like most about being yourself?

_____

3. What do you dislike about being yourself?

_____

4. What are your strengths? What are you especially good at?

_____

5. What are your weaknesses or limitations?

———

6. How do you view the human who had this dream?

———

7. What do you think about the life issue this person identified before the interview?

———

8. If you were in charge of this person's life, what would you do differently?

———

9. Why do you think this person had this dream?

———

10. What recommendations do you have for this person?

———

11. How would you like this person to use what they have learned from interviewing you?

———

Part 4: Return to Your Ordinary Perspective

Interviewer: Ask,

1. What did you hear?

_____

2. What surprised you about the interview?

_____

3. Did the dream element see you or your life differently from the way you usually do?

_____

4. Did it say anything that you had not previously considered?

_____

5. Did it offer information relevant to any of your current life issues?

_____

6. Did your understanding of the dream change?

_____

7. Were any of its recommendations worth testing?

_____

Part 5: Consider a Practical Experiment

An interview may produce recommendations, but they are not instructions that must be followed. Ask yourself:

"Is this recommendation relevant to my life?"
"Is it safe and realistic?"

"Would trying it help me discover something useful?"

Recommendation I might like to test:

_____

One small action I could take:

_____

How I could evaluate the results:

_____

Important Reminders for Interviewers

Do not interpret the dream.
Avoid saying:
"The house represents your personality."
"The snake symbolizes sexuality."
"Your dream means you are afraid of change."

Instead, ask the dream element:
"What are you like?"
"How do you see the dreamer?"
"What do you think about what happened in the dream?"
"Why do you think the dreamer had this dream?"
"What would you recommend?"

Allow the element to provide its own perspective. If the interviewee begins answering as themselves rather than as the dream element, gently ask: "[Dream element], is that you speaking, or is your human answering for you?"

If appropriate, follow with: "How do you feel about your human putting words in your mouth?"

What If I Cannot Remember My Dreams?

You can interview an element from a dream you remember from childhood or many years ago. You can also return to the life issue interview process and interview an image associated with a current problem.

Dream recall is not a prerequisite for practicing IDL.

What Should I Do With the Results?

You do not need to believe that your dream element is an independent being or that its recommendations are automatically correct. You also do not need to decide what the dream symbolizes. Instead, consider:

"Did this perspective show me something I had not considered before?"

"Did it change how I understand a problem?"

"Did it suggest something that I can safely test?"

A dream interview becomes particularly valuable when it helps you move beyond your usual assumptions and discover possibilities that can be explored in waking life.

A Final Question

"What might your dreams have to teach you if, instead of interpreting them, you allowed their characters and elements to speak for themselves?"

HANDOUT 4

Selecting and Testing IDL Recommendations

Turning Insights Into Practical Experiments

Why Test Recommendations?

During an IDL interview, a dream character or a personification of a life issue may offer recommendations about how you could approach your life differently.

Some recommendations may be surprising. Others may confirm something you already know but have not acted upon. Still others may seem impractical, irrelevant, or inappropriate.

IDL does not ask you to believe or automatically follow recommendations. It invites you to evaluate and test them.

An interview can produce a valuable insight, but insight alone does not necessarily change how we live. To discover whether a recommendation is useful, we need to translate it into an action and observe what happens.

The purpose of this worksheet is to help you do that.

Part 1: Review Your Interview

Date of interview: _____

Life issue or dream: _____

Perspective interviewed: _____

What surprised me most about the interview?

_____

_____

Did the interviewed perspective see my problem differently than I normally do? If so, how?

_____

Part 2: Identify the Recommendations

Write down up to three recommendations that emerged during the interview.

Recommendation 1:

_____

Recommendation 2:

_____

Recommendation 3:

_____

You do not have to follow any of them.

Part 3: Evaluate Each Recommendation

For each recommendation, consider the following questions.

Question Recommendation	1	2	3
Is it relevant to my life?	0–10	0–10	0–10
Does it seem realistic?	0–10	0–10	0–10
Does it seem safe and appropriate?	0–10	0–10	0–10
Am I willing to experiment with it?	0–10	0–10	0–10

A score of 0 means “not at all.” A score of 10 means “completely.”

These ratings are aids to reflection, not a formula for deciding what to do. A recommendation that raises serious safety concerns should not be tested simply because it scores highly in other areas.

Which recommendation would I like to explore first?

_____

Why did I choose this recommendation?

_____

Part 4: Turn the Recommendation Into an Experiment

An interviewed perspective might say: “You need to stop worrying so much about what other people think.”

That may be helpful advice, but it does not tell you what to do. You could translate it into a small experiment: “During the next week, I will express my honest opinion at least once in a situation where I would normally remain silent because I fear disapproval.”

Now the recommendation has become something you can test.

My selected recommendation:

_____

One specific action I could take:

_____

When and where I will try it:

_____

How I will know whether I did it:

_____

What I hope to learn:

_____

Part 5: Observe What Happens

After each day of trying your experiment, before bed, answer the following questions.

Did I carry out the experiment?

□ Yes
□ Partly
□ No

What actually happened?

_____

What did I expect would happen?

_____

Was the result different from what I expected?

_____

How helpful was the experiment?

0 = Not helpful at all

10 = Extremely helpful

My rating: _____ / 10

What did I learn?

_____

Part 6: Decide What to Do Next

There are several possible outcomes.

The recommendation helped.

You may want to continue testing it or make it part of your regular behavior.

The recommendation did not help.

You may want to modify it, abandon it, or interview another perspective.

The recommendation produced an unexpected result.

You may have discovered something important that neither you nor the interviewed perspective anticipated.

The recommendation was difficult to implement.

You may want to explore what prevented you from trying it.

For example, if you repeatedly forgot or procrastinated, you could interview the personification of your resistance.

What would I like to do next?

□ Continue the experiment.
□ Modify the experiment.
□ Try another recommendation.
□ Interview another perspective.
□ Stop this experiment.

My next step:

Remember:

A recommendation is not necessarily correct because it came from an IDL interview.

An experiment is not necessarily unsuccessful because it failed to produce the desired result.

The purpose is to learn what actually helps you live more effectively, not to prove that an interviewed perspective was right.

HANDOUT 5

SMARTER Planning Sheet

Making IDL Recommendations Specific, Measurable, and Testable

What Is SMARTER?

SMARTER is a practical method for turning recommendations into actions that can be tested in everyday life. In this introductory IDL course, SMARTER stands for:

S — Specific
M — Measurable
A — Attainable
R — Relevant
T — Timely
E — Evaluated
R — Rewarded

The objective is to make your experiment small enough to carry out, clear enough to measure, and important enough to be worth trying.

Step 1: Identify Your Recommendation

The perspective I interviewed:

_____

Its recommendation:

_____

_____

Step 2: Make It SMARTER

S — Specific

What exactly will you do?

Choose something small enough that you can begin immediately and observe results within days rather than weeks.

Instead of: "I will become more confident." Try: "I will express one opinion each day that I would normally keep to myself."

My specific action:

_____

M — Measurable

How will you track your progress?

For activities that are either completed or not completed, use a checkmark:

✓ = Completed

— = Not completed

For gradual changes, use a scale from 0 to 10. For example:

"How anxious did I feel during today's conversation?"

0 = Not anxious
10 = Extremely anxious

What will I measure?

_____

How will I measure it?

□ Completed/not completed
□ Rating from 0 to 10
□ Another method: _____

A—Attainable

How will you do it? What's your plan?

_____

R — Relevant

Why is this experiment important to your life right now?
"This recommendation matters to me because:"

_____

T — Timely

When will you practice the recommendation?
When will you record your progress?

Try to measure your results every day, preferably before going to bed. If useful, also record observations at other times during the day.

"I will practice this recommendation:"

_____

“I will record my progress at:”

_____

“My experiment will begin on:”

_____

“I will review the results after:”

□ Three days
□ Seven days
□ Another period: _____

E — Evaluated

Before going to sleep, take a moment to review your day. Ask yourself:

“Did I remember my recommendation?”
“Did I carry it out?”
“What happened?”
“What did I learn?”
“Do I want to change anything tomorrow?”

This evening review is especially relevant to IDL because reflecting on unresolved concerns and recent experiences before sleep may influence the themes that appear in dreams.

My evening review question:

_____

R — Rewarded

How will you acknowledge yourself for remembering to measure and evaluate your experiment? The reward does not have to be elaborate. You might simply think:

"Good! I remembered!"

You might listen to a favorite song, share your progress with someone, or take a moment to appreciate your effort. Reward yourself for remembering to practice and evaluate the experiment, not only for obtaining the result you hoped for.

My reward or acknowledgment:

_____

Step 3: My SMARTER Experiment

Complete the following statement:

For the next _____ days, I will:

_____

I will measure my progress by:

_____

I will review my results each evening at:

_____

I will acknowledge my effort by:

_____

Step 4: Daily Tracking

Experiment: _____

Day Did I practice? ✓ / — Rating 0–10 (if relevant) What did I notice?
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

Step 5: Weekly Evaluation

How many days did I carry out the experiment?

_____ out of _____

What changed, if anything?

_____

What surprised me?

_____

What made the experiment easier or harder?

_____

Did the recommendation help? How do I know?

_____

What would I like to do next?

_____

Step 6: Accountability Partner

An accountability partner is someone who helps you remember your commitment and reflect on your results.

Their responsibility is not to pressure you, judge you, or tell you what to do.

Their role is to support your experiment and help you learn from it.

My accountability partner:

_____

When we will check in:

_____

How we will communicate:

□ In person
□ Telephone
□ Message
□ Other: _____

Questions for Accountability Partners

“What did you plan to do?”
“What actually happened?”
“What did you learn?”
“What would you like to try next?”

If the experiment did not happen, ask:
“What got in the way?”

Avoid:
"Why didn't you do what you promised?"

The objective is learning, not compliance.

Remember, the success of a SMARTER experiment is not simply whether you carried out a recommendation. It is whether you learned something useful about yourself and your life.

HANDOUT 6

Learning to Interview Others

Family Members, Friends, Colleagues, and Children

Why Interview Other People?

When someone we care about has a problem, our first reaction is often to offer advice, reassurance, or an explanation. We may think we understand what is happening and know what the person should do. Sometimes our advice is helpful. Sometimes it is not. IDL offers another possibility.

Instead of telling someone what their problem means or how to solve it, we can help them discover perspectives they might not otherwise consider.

The purpose of interviewing others is not to make them agree with us. It is to help them discover their own answers.

Interviewing others can also help us become better listeners. We practice temporarily setting aside our own assumptions, expectations, and interpretations. This can improve the quality of our relationships, especially when we disagree with someone or feel strongly invested in their decisions.

1. How to Invite Someone to an Interview

Keep the invitation simple.

You do not need to explain the entire IDL method.

For example, you might say: “I’ve been learning an interesting way of looking at problems from different perspectives. Would you like to try it?” Or:

“Sometimes our dreams contain characters or objects that see things differently from the way we do. Would you be interested in finding out what one of yours has to say?”

With a child, you might ask: “Would you like to find out what that animal in your dream thinks?” Or: “Would you like to talk to the monster in your dream and ask it some questions?”

Make it clear that participation is voluntary. If the person is not interested, respect their decision.

2. What If Someone Is Skeptical?

People may ask: “Are you trying to analyze me?” “Do you think my dreams have hidden meanings?” “What if I think this is silly?”

You can explain: “No. I’m not going to interpret your dream or tell you what it means. We simply try imagining that you are one of its characters and see what happens when we ask it questions.”

You can also describe the process as an experiment.

“You don’t have to believe anything about dreams. We can simply try it and see whether you find it interesting or useful.”

Avoid trying to convince someone that IDL works. Let the person’s experience, rather than your persuasion, determine whether they find it valuable. However, sharing your own experience and what you have learned can help people understand its benefits.

3. What If Someone Does Not Remember Dreams?

Dream recall is not necessary. You can interview a personification of a life issue instead. Ask:

“What is something in your life that you would like to understand better?”

Then help the person identify a feeling associated with that issue.

Ask: “If that feeling had a color, what would it be?”

Then: “If that feeling and color were an animal, what animal would it be?”

The person can then imagine becoming that animal and answering questions from its perspective.

4. What If Someone Has Difficulty Becoming the Perspective?

Some people find it easy to imagine becoming a dream character or animal. Others find it unfamiliar or awkward. Do not force the process. You can begin with a simple image or animal of the person’s choice. Allow time for the person to imagine what it feels like to be that character.

If the person begins speaking about the character rather than as the character, gently remind them to use “I.”

For example: Instead of

“The lion is angry.” Try: “I am angry.”

If the person appears to have returned to their ordinary point of view, you can ask the interviewed character: “[Character], is that you speaking, or is your human answering for you?”

If appropriate, you can also ask: “[Character], how do you feel about your human speaking for you?”

These questions should be used gently and playfully, not as corrections. The goal is to help the person explore the perspective, not to make them perform the exercise correctly.

5. Remember the Difference Between Interviewing and Advising

During an IDL interview, avoid telling the person what their answers mean. Do not say: “That animal represents your fear.” “Your dream is telling you to leave your job.” “This proves you need to change your relationship.”

Instead, ask the interviewed perspective: “What do you think about that?” “How do you see the situation?” “What would you recommend?”

After the interview, ask the person:

"What did you hear?"

"What surprised you?"

"What, if anything, seems useful?"

Allow them to reach their own conclusions.

6. Interviewing Children

Children often respond naturally to imaginative exercises involving animals, dream characters, and unusual objects. However, interviewing children requires particular sensitivity.

Keep It Playful

You might begin by asking: "What did you dream about?" "Which character would you like to talk to?" "What would you like to ask it?"

A child who dreamed about a frightening dragon might enjoy imagining becoming the dragon and describing what it likes, dislikes, and wants.

The interview does not need to be long. A few questions may be enough.

Let the Child Choose

Allow the child to choose the character or image to interview. Do not insist that the child interview a frightening figure. If the child would rather interview a friendly animal, a toy, a tree, or another image, that is fine.

Use Age-Appropriate Questions

Instead of asking: "What recommendations do you have for your human?"

You might ask: "What would you like [child's name] to know?" "What do you think would help?" "What would make things better?" "What would you like to happen next?"

Do Not Interpret the Child's Answers

If a child says: "I am a dragon, and I want everyone to leave me alone!"

Avoid saying: “That means you’re angry with your parents.”

Instead, ask the dragon: “Why do you want everyone to leave you alone?” “What happens when people bother you?” “What would you like them to understand?”

Let the character explain itself.

Do Not Use IDL to Obtain Compliance

IDL should not be used to make children agree with what adults already want. For example, if a child refuses to do homework, the purpose of an interview should not be to persuade the child to obey. Instead, an interview might help the child and adult discover previously unrecognized feelings, concerns, or possibilities. The child’s autonomy matters.

Respect the Child’s Willingness to Participate

If the child becomes uncomfortable or wants to stop, respect that decision. You may gently ask the interviewed character: “[Character], it looks as though [child’s name] doesn’t want to continue. Do you have any thoughts about that?” However, this should never become a way of pressuring the child to continue. The child’s comfort and willingness to participate are more important than completing the interview.

If a child becomes distressed, stop the exercise and respond to the child’s immediate needs. If a child discloses abuse, danger, or another serious concern, prioritize their safety and appropriate support rather than continuing the interview.

7. Let Other People Interview You

One of the most useful ways to help someone learn IDL is to allow them to interview you. You can explain the basic questions and invite the person to read them aloud. You then respond from the perspective of a dream element or a personification of one of your own life issues. This gives the other person direct experience conducting an interview. It also demonstrates that interviewing is not about being an expert who knows the answers. It is about

creating a space in which unfamiliar perspectives can express themselves.

8. After the Interview

Ask: “What did you hear?”

“What surprised you?”

“Did anything change in how you understand your problem?”

“Did the interviewed perspective offer any recommendations you would like to test?”

Do not insist that the interview was meaningful or helpful. Allow the person to decide. If recommendations emerged, you can explain how to turn them into small SMARTER experiments.

9. Building a Community of Practice

People who learn to interview one another can continue practicing together. They may exchange interviews, discuss what they learn, and support one another in testing recommendations.

Such a community can become an IDL Sangha: a group of people who share an interest in developing greater self-understanding, mutual respect, and the ability to learn from unfamiliar perspectives. This builds a shared culture that respects autonomy and builds intimacy.

Participation should remain voluntary, and members should respect one another’s autonomy, privacy, and differing interpretations of their experiences.

Three Principles to Remember

Invite rather than persuade.

Listen rather than interpret.

Support experimentation rather than demand agreement.

The objective is not to make others think as we do; it is to help them discover perspectives that may expand their understanding and improve their lives.

HANDOUT 7

My IDL Reflection Journal

Discoveries, Questions, Experiments, and Next Steps

This journal provides space to record what you experience during the four-session introduction to Integral Deep Listening.

There are no right or wrong answers.

You do not need to have dramatic insights or unusual experiences.

The purpose is to notice what happens when you explore unfamiliar perspectives and test what you learn.

Session 1: Discovering a Different Perspective

Date: _____

My Life Issue

What problem or concern did I choose to explore?

_____

My Interviewed Perspective

What animal or image emerged?

_____

What I Experienced

What was it like to become this perspective?

_____

What surprised me?

_____

Did the perspective see my problem differently from the way I usually do?

_____

Did my feelings about the problem change?

_____

What I Might Try

Did the perspective recommend anything?

_____

Is there something I would like to try before the next session?

_____

Questions I Still Have

_____

Session 2: Discovering What Dreams Have to Say

Date: _____

My Dream

Briefly describe the dream you worked with.

_____

My Interviewed Dream Element:

Which character, object, animal, or other element did I interview?

_____

What I Discovered:

What surprised me about the interview?

_____

How did the dream element see me?

_____

Did it have anything to say about my current life issues?

_____

Did the interview change my understanding of the dream?

_____

Recommendations

What recommendations emerged?

_____

Are any of them worth testing?

_____

Questions I Still Have

_____

Session 3: Turning Insight Into Experiment

Date: _____

My Selected Recommendation

Which recommendation have I chosen to test?

_____

My SMARTER Experiment

What specific action will I take?

_____

When will I practice it?

_____

How will I measure it?

_____

When will I review my results?

_____

How will I acknowledge my efforts?

_____

My Accountability Partner

Name: _____

How and when we will check in:

_____

What I Notice About My Resistance

What might prevent me from carrying out my experiment?

_____

If I experience resistance, what might I learn by interviewing it?

_____

Questions I Still Have

_____

Session 4: Learning to Interview Others

Date: _____

My Experience as an Interviewer

What was it like to interview another person?

_____

What was easy?

_____

What was difficult?

_____

Did I notice myself wanting to interpret, advise, or correct?

_____

How did I respond?

_____

What I Learned About Listening

Did I discover anything about how I usually listen to other people?

_____

How might I listen differently in everyday conversations?

_____

Interviewing Others

Is there someone I might like to invite to an IDL interview?

_____

How could I introduce the idea without pressuring them?

_____

What questions or concerns might they have?

_____

Questions I Still Have

_____

Final Course Reflection

1. What Did I Discover About Myself?

_____

2. What Did I Learn About Listening to Others?

_____

3. What Was Most Surprising About IDL?

_____

4. What Was Most Difficult?

_____

5. Did Anything Change in My Everyday Life?

Think about your relationships, emotions, decisions, habits, or responses to problems.

_____

6. What Would I Like to Continue Exploring?

_____

My Personal Learning Assessment

Rate yourself from 0 to 10.

0 = Not at all confident or comfortable
10 = Extremely confident or comfortable

Question Beginning of Course End of Course
How confident am I that I can understand a personal problem from a different perspective? ____ / 10 ____ / 10
How comfortable am I listening without interpreting, advising, or correcting? ____ / 10 ____ / 10
How confident am I that I can turn an insight into a practical experiment? ____ / 10 ____ / 10

What Changed?

_____

What Might Explain That Change?

_____

My Next Steps

After completing this introductory course, I would like to:

□ Continue interviewing my own life issues.

□ Interview elements from my dreams.

□ Continue testing recommendations using SMARTER.

□ Continue working with an accountability partner.

□ Practice interviewing friends or family members.

□ Learn more about interviewing children.

□ Join or help create an IDL practice group.

□ Continue my IDL training.

□ Take time to reflect before deciding what to do next.

One Thing I Would Like to Try During the Next Month

_____

How I Will Know Whether It Was Helpful

_____

A Final Reflection

Think back to the beginning of the course.

Perhaps you arrived with a problem you wanted to solve, a dream you wanted to understand, or simple curiosity about an unfamiliar approach.

You may now have experienced what happens when you temporarily set aside your usual assumptions and allow another perspective to speak.

Some of those perspectives may have surprised you. Others may have challenged your expectations or suggested actions you had not previously considered. You do not have to accept everything they said. You do not even have to conclude that IDL is useful for you.

What matters is that you now have a method for exploring possibilities beyond your familiar point of view and testing whether those possibilities make a difference in your life.

The purpose of IDL is not to tell you what to believe. It is to help you discover what you can learn when you listen more deeply—and then test what you discover.

Two Suggestions for the Course Leader

First, distinguish between completing an exercise and discovering whether it is helpful. The SMARTER sheet measures whether participants carried out their intended actions. The recommendations worksheet goes further by asking whether those actions actually improved their lives. These are different questions. Someone may successfully complete an experiment and discover that the recommendation was not useful. Conversely, someone may struggle to implement a recommendation and learn something important by interviewing the resistance that arose.

Second, use the reflection journal to encourage cumulative learning. At the beginning of each session, invite participants to look back at what they wrote during the previous session. Ask what they tried, what happened, and whether anything surprised them. This helps prevent the four sessions from becoming disconnected experiences.

The central educational sequence is:

Interview → discover an unfamiliar perspective → evaluate recommendations → design an experiment → test it → observe the results → reconsider and adapt.

By the end of the course, participants should understand not only how to conduct a basic IDL interview but also how to begin evaluating its usefulness through their own experience.