

**MORPHEUS**

**VOLUME XI**

**THE MODELING ASPECT OF  
META-COACHING**

**2019**

# MORPHEUS — 2019

\* **From Shawn Dwyer** — Let there be Meta-Coaching in 2019!

- 1) Why Some Have a Hard Time with Clarity Questions
- 2) Why Some Have a Hard Time with a Value Hierarchy
- 3) When the Coach is Ready the Benchmark will Appear
- 4) Get Your Foot Off the Brake
- 5) Driving Blind
- 6) *Cognitive Make-Over*: A Thinking Checkup
- 7) The Art of Being Coached
- 8) Measuring Self-Actualization
- 9) The Art of Eliciting – as a Coach
- 10) Skill Development — It's Not What You Think
- 11) *Thinking*: How are You Framing — Broad or Narrow Framing
- 12) What's Happening Now
- 13) It's Coaching, Not Therapy
- 14) Challenging Potentials
- 15) The Skill of Punctuating

## **The Coach as a Modeler**

- 16) Modeling as an Aspect of Coaching #1
- 17) Modeling– Tracking a Client's Experience #2
- 18) Modeling Your Client's Matrix #3
  
- 19) Origin's Of Maslow's Pyramid
- 20) Why You Should Memorize Meta-Model Questions
- 21) *Thinking*: Warning: Global Thinking
- 22) When You're Not Careful
- 23) The Art of Managing Upward
- 24) Empowering Your Memory #1
- 25) More Memory Development #2
- 26) Coaching as a Corrective Conversation
- 27) Answers to “The Test” at ACMC
- 28) Hearing the Matrix
- 29) *Thinking*: Think “Thinking”
- 30) Tell me about Your Questions
- 31) *Thinking*: When you Deal with a Short-Term Thinker
- 32) Contractual Arrangements for Collaborative Partnerships

## **Parenting 101**

- 33) Parenting 101: A Neuro-Semantic Training
- 34) Parenting 101: You Parent the way you were Parented

- 35) Parenting 101: Parenting for Healthy Attachment
- 36) *PCMC*: What's so Special about PCMC
- 37) Parenting 101: Parenting for Esteem, Not Shame
  
- 38) Writing a Case Study (38)
- 39) *Thinking*: I Imply, You Infer
- 40) *Event*: The Best PCMC Ever
- 41) *PCMC*: Working the Client's Answer
- 42) *PCMC*: The Subtle Art of Inferential Listening
- 43) Well-Formed Questions
- 44) *PCMC*: Why Every Meta-Coach Needs PCMC Training
- 45) A Possible Re-Design of ACMC
- 46) When a Coach's Needs get in Your Client's Way
- 47) How to Fail by Trying too Hard
- 48) Re-Design Results
- 49) Four Ways to Open a Coaching Session, Part I
- 50) Four Ways to Open a Coaching Session, Part II
- 51) How to Think about Your Intervention #1
- 52) How to Think Through Interventions #2
- 53) How to Think Through How to Intervene #3
- 54) Deliberate Practice

**Shawn Dwyer**  
**President Meta-Coach Foundation**

## **LET THERE BE META-COACHING IN 2019!**

Here is an article to assist your Meta-Coaching for a fresh new year, Meta-Coaching potential is within each of us, and I hope you can utilize your performances to build and maintain a meta-coaching practice. Here are some ideas for 2019 to progress your meta-coaching opportunities when you talk to other people.

It's about how effective you are at making a human connection in a conversation, not how many calls you make, but *how deep you go on each conversation*. When you evolve beyond a 'numbers game' and focus on going deep into your conversations, you create *authentic trust* with your potential clients.

Start a conversation with people by focusing on a need or issue that you acknowledge the other person is facing. Step into their world and invite them to share whether they're open to exploring possible solutions with you. Allow the other person to feel comfortable telling you the truth of what's really on their mind—the truth of what they're actually thinking. These kinds of conversation contrast to many other engagement philosophies.

Use our meta-coach mindset to first get a good understanding of what your prospects issues by facilitating through well-formed outcome questions, then you can better understand their exact needs. What you are doing here is actually humanizing the conversation early on in the relationship, so they feel that you are truly authentic about your intentions. Listen carefully to their challenges and re-engage them into a deeper conversation, all the while, creating trust.

If you deliver your languaging in a centred and relaxed manner, slowing down your pace, having empathy in your tone, showing you really care about them, you can create instant and authentic trust. The true way to make breakthroughs is to know your prospective client's problems better than they do and that your conversations with them were a deep dive into their problems. This would require you to not just be an expert on solutions, but to be an expert at their problems at a deep level.

Keep making it easy for potential clients to tell you their truth. Ask them about key problems they're trying to solve. Got a problem, great! What's your goal? Enable your prospects to feel they can choose you without feeling sold.

Make it safe for prospective clients to tell you where they stand. It's simple: all you have to say is, "Where do you think we should go from here?" You can cope with their response by keeping your larger goals in mind, your goal to establish that the two of you have a "fit" and your goal to continue to help by being an expert problem-solver. Happy New Year to all Meta-Coaches Worldwide for 2019!

From: L. Michael Hall  
2019 Morpheus #1  
January 3, 2019

## WHY DO SOME HAVE A HARD TIME ASKING CLARITY QUESTIONS?

To ask a clarity question is simply to ask about how a person is using a word, “How are you using the term X?” “What is your understanding of the term X?” While this is a very simple question, it recognizes a foundational and profound NLP fact— people operate from their *own map* of the world, and the linguistic definitions that they assume about words are unique to them. So we ask what may on the surface seem obvious. “What do you mean by the term *leadership*?” “What do you mean by *nervous energy*?” I know what I mean when I used those terms, but the truth is I do not know what you mean and your *unique definitions* unless I ask. That’s the clarity question.

Why then do some have such a hard time being able to remember to use this skill or to pull it off in a coaching conversation? How could such a simple skill be viewed as difficult?

1) *Probably the most difficult aspect is that it requires that you embrace the state of not-knowing.* Now even though the *know-nothing* state is a basic NLP state and one that is always highly recommended, most people seem to avoid it as if it was toxic poison. We like to pride ourselves as *knowing*. And we may even confuse the idea of being a Professional as being “in the know.” So to ask a question based on not-knowing seems unprofessional or as demonstrating the lack of competence. How about you? Are you okay with operating from the know-nothing state?

2) *It’s difficult to ask the clarity question because most coaches seem to **need** to know, to have the answers, to be the Answer-Man (or Answer Woman).* Far too many coaches base their identity on knowing. Many others base their reputation on it. Either we, they are too insecure to ask, “What do you mean by...?” It is the same with the *checking question* and to say, “I’m confused, what do you mean by ...?” How about you? Do you *need* to have the answers and to pretend that you know exactly what you’re doing at every moment?

3) *It’s difficult because many coaches do not understand or comprehend the power of not-knowing.* To ask about a person’s definitions of words— on the surface— seems like an admission of ignorance or confusion. Yet the power in presenting your not-knowing is that it invites your client to provide the meanings and that puts your client in the role of doing the work of defining things. It facilitates their discovery and, of course, when they discover— it is theirs. This lies at the heart of the power of not-knowing. How about you? Do you know the power and potential in not-knowing?

4) *It’s difficult because we all experience the human “understanding bias.”* This is actually one of the most fundamental of human biases. I put it first in list in the book on *Executive Thinking*. And it is quite deceptive— we have a tendency to think we understand when we don’t. Then, thinking we understand, we don’t ask, don’t explore, are not even curious. How about you? How

often do you assume that you understand what your client is saying?

5) *It's difficult because so many coaches do not have **permission** to not-know.* Because their reputation, identity, professionalism, etc. are at stake— they do not allow themselves to ask the clarity question. To do so would violate the frames they have about any one or more of those things. How about you?

The clarity check is a question and a coaching interaction that exemplifies the very spirit of the Meta-Model which lies at the heart of the NLP Communication Model.

## Clarity Question Drill

1) *Group member as a client makes a statement.* One that a coaching client could typically make.

“I want to have a more loving relationship and less conflict; I feel anxious and sick to my stomach when we get into a brawl.”

2) *Each group member picks a word in the statement.* Call out a word.

3) *Acting out the word.* After each member calls out the word, he or she then acts it out— pantomimes the word, like charades to give a VAK image of the word.

4) *The client gives a thumbs up or down signal about accuracy.* Does the pantomime give a picture of the word?

### Examples:

I am really *confused* at the moment; I don't know if I should quit my job or *stay*.

I want to get married, but I'm afraid of commitment.

I want to lose weight, but I feel stuck in making progress.

I have always dreamed of being self-employed, but I don't have the courage.

I have communication problems with my wife.

### Drill:

1) Two teams of 2 persons, moderator, and presenter of statement.

2) Presenter presents a sentence (examples above).

3) Each team has a designated person, person who raises hand first gets to ask clarity check for the team. The team of two presents clarity check question.

4) Presenter answers the question.

5) Moderator validates if clarity check question was asked and identifies the kind of clarity check.

6) Team then gives Thumbs Up if the word is now clarified or Thumbs Down if not yet clarified.

7) If word is still not sensory-based, Team asks the next question to continue clarifying.

8) If team misses (moderator says not validate), the other team answers.

9) One point for each clarity check.

10) At the end, the losing team has to dance on the stage blind-folded!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #2**  
**January 9, 2018**

## **WHY DO SOME HAVE A HARD TIME ELICITING A VALUE HIERARCHY?**

One of the pieces of information that you will definitely gather when you coach is your client's values. Do you intentionally do that? Do you know how to do that? The importance of knowing what a person values is that when you know that, you also know what motivates that person. You know what the person believes in, his or her intentionality, and much, much more. Sounds pretty important, right?

Yet you also will want more than just a list of the person's values. As important as that is, you will also want his or her *value hierarchy*. This refers to the person's level of values—from the lowest levels to the highest. When you get the value hierarchy, you have the person's priorities. What the person will put ahead of other things and that can help you help that person with regard to decisions, life direction, congruency, purposefulness, etc.

How then do you get a person's value hierarchy? Actually, as a Meta-Coach you already know how. Ask the *why is it important* question. That's question number three of the well-formed outcome questions. It is also the question that drives the Intentionality Pattern that you learned in APG. Yet as you also probably already know—there is an art to asking Question #3. My observation is that most coaches, even after experiencing APG and ACMC still have not developed the ability to ask the question effectively. So, why is it so hard to effectively ask such a simple question? There are several reasons.

1) *People tend to hide their values inside of a plethora of words.* You ask, “Why is that important to you?” and they will often talk and talk and talk, all the while thinking that they are answering your question. Perhaps they are. But the answer is not immediately obvious as they tell a story, relate a situation, tell you what they do not want, etc. In that instance, your job as the coach is to attempt to *hear* what they are saying, feed it back to them, and check to see if you caught the value or not. It is as if you have to fish in the pool of their avalanche of words. When this is the situation, you are fishing for value words.

2) *Identifying values, for most people, requires some actual and effortful thinking.* There's a reason for this, namely, most people focus on immediate benefits and outcomes, not values. In fact, here is another job for you as a coach—distinguish between value and benefit. A benefit is what the person will get out of some activity. If they do such-and-such action, they will get X. “If I do some exercise, I will lose some weight.” Losing weight is the benefit of exercising. But what is the value? What's important to you about losing weight? If the person says, “I will get more compliments.” That's another benefit. Not a value. So try again, “Why is it important to get more compliments after you lose weight?” “People will respect me more.” Ah, “respect.” Being

*respected* must be a value. Yes it is also something that the person gets, hence a benefit, but it is more. And the word helps to cue you— it is a nominalization. So are most value terms.

Health, fitness, honor, recognition, contribution, relationship, leadership, responsibility, humor, enjoyment, love, family, etc.

In coaching people through the *why is it important* question, you will probably have to keep “holding the frame.” Do that by repeating the testing question, “Is that important?” When they say yes, confirm it. “So it is important! Right.” Then ask the question, “So why is it important to you?”

3) *Many people have not clarified their values.* They value as do all human beings the survival needs (survival, safety and security, the bonding of love and affection, self-esteem, etc.). Notice that these are also nominalizations. They value the self-actualization needs— knowledge, meaning, meaningfulness, contribution, equality, fairness, beauty, order, etc. We all value lots of things. We also have been socialized to value the things that our culture has trained us to value. Now the problem with all of this is not that we do not value— but that we *value* so many things. Too many things. In fact, by not distinguishing the values and treating them all on the same level, we suffering the indecision and confusion of not knowing what we want.

Into that chaotic mess, ask the *Why is that important question?* Many people simply do not know. They have not clarified their values and so do not have a clarified value hierarchy. So in asking and getting an answer, as a coach you may have to spend some time enabling, facilitating, and helping them find their answers.

Coaching Question #3 enables you to facilitate a person’s intentionality. And as you do that *up the levels*— you elicit that person’s hierarchy of values. And when you do that— you touch something that we call “spiritual” in the person. That’s because you are enabling him or her to transcend experiences and access values and as you do that all the way you— you facilitate your client to get to his or her highest intentionality. And doing that truly makes you a *Meta-Coach!*



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #3**  
**January 16, 2019**

## **WHEN THE COACH IS READY THE BENCHMARKER WILL APPEAR**

*When the coach is ready*— a benchmarker will be there. So the question is: Are you, as a coach, ready? Are you ready to be assessed for your coaching skills to see if you are now performing at the level of competency? How do you know you are *ready*? To check that out, ask yourself a series of questions.

- *Have I been practicing my coaching skills by doing at least one coaching session every day?* If you are not having one coaching conversation every day or at least five a week, then the likelihood is that you are not ready. Because the coaching conversation skills are not normal talking patterns, you have to practice them in order to become good at them. Do you need someone to practice with? Look around. Contact some of the social clubs in your city— there are probably hundreds of people who can't afford coaching but really need it.
- *Have I been doing some coaching with supervision?* Practice, however, by itself will not do the trick. What's the problem? You can practice wrong! So to avoid that— at least once a week, get your buddy-coach to give you feedback using the feedback form so that you can receive the proper adjustments that will shape your coaching skills. "Feedback is the breakfast of champions." It is what can accelerate your learning *if only* you will use it. At the same time, be the buddy-coach to someone else and give feedback. You will learn a lot by doing so.
- *Have I been video-taping myself coaching and reviewing the video?* Here's a way for you to get more deeply acquainted with the competency levels. After a session, grab the benchmark sheet and go through looking for each of the skills. Watch the video for how you supported, for listening, for questioning. You will see both the things you are doing well and the things that you need to improve upon. Do this until you can find examples of yourself engaging in the sub-skills of each of the skills and reaching the competency level.
- *Have I attempted to teach or inform someone about coaching and the coaching skills?* If you really want to learn something— teach it. That will send you back to the ACMC manual and to the details of each skill and all of the supplementary materials that we did not cover in the live training. Can you explain it? Knowing in your head is easy, explaining it to someone is not so easy.
- *Have I been attending the local MCF chapters?* The chapters are designed to provide ongoing support and encouragement. There you can have a practice group or a study group or a master-mind group, or a business group. It's up to you and the others how to use the MCF chapters to support the practice and development of Meta-Coaches.

### **And the Benchmarker will Appear**

We are now specifying after each ACMC training, the specific persons on the Assist Team who we are commissioned as having the right to benchmark for assessment. Not everyone on the team

is capable of doing that. Some are still too new to the process and don't know all of the benchmarks. Some are too global and simply cannot detect enough of the details to be thorough enough. Some are too people oriented and so too kind to give them the honest truth, so they fudge on the score.

Those Meta-Coaches who have agreed to benchmark others do so at their own time and energy. It is a way for them to *contribute back* to the community and help to raise the quality of the Meta-Coaching community. So, to not waste their time, be sure you are ready before you engage a benchmarker to do the assessment.

Prior to engaging someone to do the assessment, video-tape yourself coaching and then benchmark yourself against the benchmark form. If you think you have made it, you can send in that video. Be sure that you benchmark yourself repeatedly (3 or 4 times) prior to asking a benchmarker to sit to do the assessment. While they are offering a highly valued service, we don't want to burden them. Also, if you have found a benchmarker who can offer you precise information, consider hiring him or her to both coach and to mentor you for reaching the competency level. Pay them as you would pay for a coaching session.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #4**  
**January 23, 2019**

## **GET YOUR FOOT OFF THE BRAKE!**

Emotions operate as the brakes and accelerator in your human mind-body-emotion system. That's what we say on Day 3 of ACMC as we introduce "States." Neurologically, you have excitatory nerve impulses in your body and you have inhibitory nerve impulses. That enables your neurology to "put the brakes on" when you encounter something dangerous, fearful, or unknown. And you can "put the peddle to the metal" when you are ready to go and make things happen. We call the inhibitory energy or impulse within the body "negative emotions" — fear, anger, sadness, stress, distress, etc. We call the excitatory energy or impulse in the body "positive emotions" — excitement, passion, love, compassion, passion, desire, hope, etc.

Now some people, not understanding these neurological processes or dynamics, do not like the descriptive terms "positive" and "negative." They rightly do not like to think of some emotions as "negative." Yet the "negative" factor is not about the emotion— but the *information* that the emotion is registering. What is *negative* is the *meaning* that the person is constructing about some thought or experience. And that meaning may be accurate or inaccurate. If accurate— if the meaning is that there is an actual threat to you as a person— a true danger, lose, violation, etc., then the *negative* emotion provides you energy to "stop, look, listen, and consider" what's going on and how to respond.

Here your neurology and physiology is preparing your body to deal with the meanings— that something is *not right with your world*. That's important. Like having brakes in your car, brakes enable you to slow down or come to a stop so that you do not crash, run over someone, slide off a mountain road, etc. Who would want to drive without brakes? I would not. I value my brakes as part of the go-stop system that allows me to drive safely.

So also with the "negative" emotions— they prepare you to slow down, evaluate your environment, even come to a complete stop, so that you can accurately evaluate what's going on and what to do to travel life's path safely. *This is the positive power of negative emotions*. When your inhibitory nerve impulses put "the brakes on" in your neurology and you feel "negative," you are enabled and empowered (with physical energy) to do something creative and effective. When your excitatory nerve impulses gives you the "green light" you can put the peddle to the metal and move on down the highway of life.

Yet there's a big difference between the positive and the negative emotions. The difference is that while *you can live in the positive emotions, you cannot live in the negative emotions*. They are not designed to "live in." Feel, detect, embrace, learn from them— but do not "live in" them. Do that and you are essentially living with your brakes on. Now imagine doing that in your car. How much more energy would it take to get going? So with negative emotions— if you *live in them*, you have a dampener in your motivation system. You will probably then have "a motivation problem" in terms of getting yourself excited, passionate, interested, fascinated, compassionate,

etc.

Feeling bad can be really useful. If that happens, detect it, embrace it, explore it, find out what that feeling is about *and then release it*. Get your foot off the brake. Conversely, if you live in it, you will shut down your drive, turn your neurological energies against yourself and in the end, immobilize yourself so you can't move. Not good.

This is also the structure for creating “dragon states.” If you access a negative emotion and reflect it back on yourself— fearing your anger; angering at your fear; shaming your fear; sad about your guilt, etc., you are first of all misusing your negative emotions and secondly, locking yourself into a negative emotional matrix. Again, not good.

Another way to misuse your emotions is to meta-state a negative emotion in such a way that you validate it as a way to live. You do that if you “feel good about feeling bad.” “Enjoy depression.” “Think you are powerful when you are angry.” There's a thousand ways to ineffectively meta-state your negative emotions that would then lock you into a primary negative emotion. “Proud of being sad.” “Joyfully fearful.”

As cars are designed to “go” or to “stop,” we humans also have a go—stop system within our neurology. Positive emotions give you the energy and power to *go forward*, negative emotions gives you the energy and power to *slow down and stop*. Next time you experience a negative emotion — use the following—

- 1) What is this emotion about? I am angry or fearful or feeling lose *about what?*
- 2) How intense is the emotion? I am feeling X emotion at a level of \_\_\_ (from 0 to 10).
- 3) What is your standard? The standard against which I'm evaluating the emotion is \_\_\_ ?
- 4) Evaluate the thought. The thinking (meaning, evaluation) that's creating the emotion is \_\_\_ ?
- 5) Embrace the emotion. As I breathe into this emotion and notice what it is doing in my body, I am aware of \_\_\_\_.
- 6) Identify the triggers. The triggers stimulating this emotion externally are \_\_\_ and those inside are \_\_\_\_.
- 7) Check for cognitive distortions. Looking over the checklist of cognitive distortions, I recognize that I am using \_\_\_\_\_ to unnecessarily amplify the emotion.

Then, as you get your foot off the negative emotions brake, and use your brakes appropriately, you'll be able to ride on the accelerator of the positive emotions and enjoy life's journey more fully.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #5**  
**January 30, 2019**

## **DRIVING BLIND**

On Graduation night of ACMC 2018 Sydney, one of our Team leaders, *Mark Moon* started his inspirational moment by recommending to the coaches that they should *drive blind*. Shocking! Then noting that this idea may seem really strange, he explained what he meant by “driving blind.” “In coaching,” he reminded everyone, “you as the coach do not determine the direction of the coaching conversation or program, the client establishes the agenda.” As a coach you guide and facilitate a client yet at the beginning of the coaching you do not know where to take the client. So regarding where you are going to take the client, you are driving blind.

Hearing that I thought— what an insightful and rich metaphor! And given that, we can infer a lot from it. First because you are driving blind, you have to ask, “What do you want to achieve in the coaching experience?” That’s also why you keep checking out your client’s words, “What do you mean by ‘leadership?’” “How are you using the word ‘development?’” You ask such questions to enable and to facilitate your client to provide you with the directions as to where to take the coaching.

As the coach, you provide the *know-how*—for clarifying where to go, how to get there, how to deal with the obstacles blocking one’s way, and much more. The client provides the destination—which gives you a target to go for. If you now think of your coaching as *driving blind*— imagine the degree to which you are dependent on the client for deciding where to go! As a coach, you do not decide the client’s outcome or objective. But you do facilitate it. You use the well-formed outcome to make sure that the objective is smart (well designed), yet it is the client who sees where he or she wants to go.

If you are driving blind, you also do not know the values, standards, and criteria of any given client regarding his or her goals. Again, you have to ask. And because clients often do not know, you have to *drive* them there (i.e., to their values) so that they can access them and then use them. That’s why we ask, “Why is that important to you?” That’s also why you will want to fully access a *hierarchy of values*. This is where they want to go!

If you are *driving blind*, you also do not know what counts for your client and/or how your client will measure either progress or success. That’s why you ask, “How will you know when you have achieved your outcome? What will convince you that you have completed things and reached your goal?” This measurement question facilitates your client to recognize the end of the journey and when to celebrate. This is important because there’s a range of things that can convince a person regarding success.

If you are *driving blind*, you will also have to ask (and sometimes repeatedly) for obstacles and interferences. “What could stop you? What could interfere and get you off track or stop you in

your tracks?” It is the uniqueness of each client that makes this question so important— because you never know what’s in the back of the mind that may be a critical factor.

Imagine the next time that you sit down with a client. As you do, take a moment or two to entertain this metaphor about driving blind. You are the blind-driver and your client is your seeing-co-pilot! As you welcome your client and set some opening frames, remember that *you do not know where the two of you are going— you are driving blind*. Your client has the destination for the coaching in his or her mind— and sometimes it may be very, very deep within, so deep the client doesn’t know. As you get started, you are moving ... you are driving blind. May you have a most fascinating journey together and safe driving!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #6**  
**February 6, 2019**

## A THINKING CHECKUP

When it comes to *the coach conversation*, the quality of the conversation that you facilitate inevitably depends on both the quality of the questions you ask and the quality of the language that both you and your client uses. And that depends on the quality of your thinking.

First, *questions*. As you know, in ACMC we monitor the quality of your opening question and have a place in the benchmarks for “wimpy opening.” That would entail a weak question that would only invite some surface level response and not getting to the heart of things. “So, what would you like to talk about?” Wimpy! More recently, after the last several ACMCs I decided I would begin listening not only to weak questions at the beginning of the coaching, but to other questions that are weak, shallow, and superficial. Weak questioning keeps the conversation shallow. Deep meta-questions takes your client inward to the heart of the matter— the person’s over-riding meanings.

Next, *language*. How would you qualify the language that both you and your client are using? Is it a high quality language of precision or is it ill-formed language— the kind of languaging that the Meta-Model is designed to challenge and update? If you have difficulty answering that question— I’d strongly recommend that you re-study the Meta-Model and get those questions so they are deeply implanted inside you. When you ask those questions, you help your client to create well-formed statements about their experience and half of the time— that in itself will create a transformative change in them.

Third, *thinking*. How would you describe the kind and quality of thinking that your client is doing? If you are paying attention to the Meta-Model distinctions, you will be catching the underlying *thinking patterns* which are creating the way your client is talking. Then there is the list of cognitive distortions. They are in your ACMC manual and they were sent to you as a separate file that you can replicate and give to your coaching clients.

The cognitive distortions refers to *childish thinking patterns*— patterns that we all learned when we were growing up. They were our first thinking patterns, patterns that enabled us to begin to learn to *think*. But they are childish patterns. They are patterns that we are designed to outgrow and to replace with more adult thinking patterns.

They are also patterns that you can learn to hear and recognize in yourself and others *when someone is in stress*. That is, we all tend to *regress* to these thinking patterns when we feel threatened or attacked or when we feel we are in danger. Whenever blood is withdrawn from brain and stomach and sent to the larger muscle groups for fight, flight, freeze— you can count on regressing to the childish thinking patterns.

When you, as the coach, call attention to the cognitive distortions and invite your client to move

from childish thinking patterns to more adult thinking— you are engaged with a true *leverage point of change*. As you do that repeatedly, you are facilitating the person’s *thinking styles* and *thinking awareness*. And that is a very powerful intervention. What we recommended at ACMC is that you give a copy of the Cognitive Distortion to your clients and ask them to read it as some of their tasking. We also suggested that you put a list of the Cognitive Distortions on the wall so that you can easily recall them and point to them.

When you do that, you have a way to facilitate your clients going through a *thinking checkup*. And that is critical since *everything*—state, experience, communication, resources, relationship, etc.— is determined and governed by one’s thinking patterns. And, as you do that, you are slowly enabling your client to move from distorted thinking patterns that create pain and misery to the higher executive thinking powers.

You might also, as an aspect of apply to self, regularly do a thinking checkup for yourself. After all, the better the quality of your thinking, the better your coaching, your pattern detection, and your ability to challenge. Far too few people think about their thinking. If they would do that, they would do better thinking.

For more about this —  
see *Executive Thinking* (2018)  
or get to the next *Cognitive Make-Over Workshop*.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #7**  
**February 13, 2019**

## **THE ART OF BEING COACHED**

For years I've been writing these posts on coaching and I have *never before* written about *being* the client. Yet this is also an important part of coaching—receiving coaching. In every one of the thirty-some interviews I have conducted with expert coaches—everyone of them said that they had a coach and regularly received coaching. That's important for your own personal development as a coach. It's one of the reasons we required 10 hours of being coached by a Meta-Coach when you want to go to the PCMC level.

What you can learn from *being* coached are many of the *insider's point of view* that you might not know or forget when all you are doing is coaching. It may also give you important insights for enabling and helping your clients be *better clients*. After all, since coaching is a conversation like non-other, most people do not naturally *know* how to be a great client. If a client asked you:

“What do you want from me so that I can be a great client?”

“What are the behaviors of someone who really knows *how to be coached*?”

### **The Art of Being a Great Coaching Client**

#### 1) *Be choosy.*

Do not just accept anything and everything the coach says or recommends, be choosy. What are your criteria for being coached? What are you looking for in someone who would be able to facilitate you to unleash new possibilities?

#### 2) *Be truthful and authentically honest.*

Say what you *really* think, not what you think the coach wants to hear from you. I can't tell you how many times I've interrupted a coach and client when I've been supervising to ask the client—“Is that what you *really* think?” And the client then shakes his head side-to-side and meekly utters, “Well, no, not really.” When you are the client, you are the one *paying* for effective service to compassionately challenge you to become your best self. So speak up, say the truth, don't worry about the coach's feelings. That's not your job as the client.

#### 3) *Ask questions.*

Coaching works by asking questions—exploring and taking you where you need to go, and sometimes where you fear going. If it works by the coach's questions, it also works by the client's questions. An effective coach will be asking you all sorts of questions—testing, checking, exploration, clarity, meta, torpedo, etc. You also can ask questions of the coach.

#### 4) *Experience the coaching.*

Don't just talk about things. Intellectualizing about what you think and feel or want or fear is not what coaching is designed to facilitate. Coaching is the conversation that's designed to *take you where you need to go*. It's designed to be experiential which is why your coach should be using his voice in a way to help you *experience* whatever you're talking about. So, what are you

experiencing? Let your coach know and when she invites you into an experience— go there. Be increasingly curious about yourself and your internal states.

5) *Give your coach constant feedback.*

As the session progresses, constantly take a moment from time to time to let your coach know how you think the coaching is going. Is the coaching conversation going where you want it to? Do you understand what the coach is doing or why? Do you want to know? Then ask. Give feedback, “I don’t understand why you are asking that?” “How will that facilitate me reaching my outcome?” As the client, be sure to get your money’s worth of value.

If you suddenly have a thought or a realization, say so. “I just realized something!” “That’s strange, I just had a flashback to X ... is that important?” In other words, let your coach know what’s going on in the back of your mind as things arise. Your coach *cannot read your mind*. That’s why you need to let him or her know what’s happening, what’s emerging, where you are going in your matrix of frames. “You know you could have asked me Y...”

At the end of the session, after you have your task for the week, let your coach know what worked best for you and what your coach could have done better. Hopefully, your coach will ask you about this, but if he forgets — volunteer this information.

*Being a client* is important for you as a Coach, especially as a Meta-Coach. Get a buddy coach and work on your health, your relationships, your financial planning, your career development, your parenting, etc. when you do, you not only gain the benefit of the coaching— you get a chance to sit in *the other chair* and *see things from that perspective*. Expert coaches do it, so why not you?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #8**  
**February 20, 2019**

## **MEASURING SELF-ACTUALIZATION**

A few days ago Irena O'Brien sent out a post about Scott Barry Kaufman and his idea of how to test for self-actualization. I see this kind of thing a lot—and each time I do, I wonder if the person has done any homework. The post talked about Kaufman taking 10 of Maslow's 17 characteristics and attempting to correlate them to the five personality traits and creating some kind of measurement. And it is presented as if this is new. It is not. So I'm doubting that he did his homework.

Let's get into a time-machine and go back to 1962. That's when Everett Shostrom created an instrument to measure self-actualization—the *Personal Orientation Inventory* or *POI*. The *POI* was conceptualized and the initial scale constructs delineated by Shostrom (1964) during summer of 1962 with the consultation of Abraham Maslow. It is made up of 150 two-choice comparative-value-judgment items reflect significant value judgments as seen by therapists in practice and are based on the theoretical formulations of several writers in humanistic psychology including Maslow, Riesman, Rogers, and Perls.

### **The Personal Orientation Inventory Scale**

There are two primary measurements in the *POI* along with 8 Subsidiary Scales:

#### *1) Other versus Inner-Directedness*

The Inner directed person appears to have incorporated a psychic gyroscope, which is started by parental influences and is later influenced by other authority figures. The Other directed persons impress others at a facade level. For them, manipulations, such as pleasing others and insuring constant acceptance, become the primary methods of relating.

#### *2) Time Competency*

The time incompetence / time competence ratio is a measure of the degree to which one is time competence or present oriented as contrasted with time incompetence or living primarily in the past (with guilts, regrets, and resentments ) and/or in the future (with idealized goals, plans, expectations, predictions, and fears).

*The Subsidiary Scales* are designed to tap values important in the development of the self-actualizing individual:

- *Existentiality*: measures the ability to situationally or existentially react without rigid adherence to principles. Reflects your flexibility in applying values or principles to your life.
- *Feeling reactivity*: measures sensitivity of responsiveness to your own needs and feelings. High score reflects sensitivity to personal needs and feelings, low shows insensitivity.
- *Spontaneity*: measures freedom to react spontaneously or to be yourself. High: ability to express feelings in spontaneous action. Low: fearful of expressing feelings behaviorally.
- *Self-Regard*: measures affirmation of self because of worth or strength. High: ability to

- like oneself because of your strength as person. Low: low self-worth.
- *Self-Acceptance*: measures affirmation or acceptance of yourself in spite of your weaknesses or deficiencies. Low: inability to accept your weaknesses.
- *Nature of Man— Constructive*: measures the degree of your constructive view of the nature of man. High: man is essentially good, reflects the self-actualizing ability to be synergistic in one’s understanding of human nature. Low: sees man as essentially evil or bad.
- *Synergy*: measures ability to be synergistic, to transcend dichotomies. High: ability to see opposites of life as meaningfully related. Low: sees opposites as antagonistic. The synergistic person sees that work and play are not different, that lust and love, selfishness and unselfishness are similar dichotomies are not really opposites.
- *Acceptance of Aggression*: measures ability to accept your natural aggressiveness as opposed to defensiveness, denial, and repression of aggression. High: ability to accept anger within yourself as natural. Low: denies such feelings and avoids expression of them.
- *Capacity for Intimate Contact*: measures ability to develop intimate contact relationships with others, unencumbered by expectations and obligations. High: ability to develop meaningful, contact-relationships with others. Low: have difficulty with warm interpersonal relationships.

Now in the Self-Actualization Trainers (and Diploma) I mention all of this (as well as in the book, *Self-Actualization Psychology* (2008)). Then in the trainings, I developed benchmarks for eight self-actualization characteristics. They are in the introduction manual for the *Seeking the Peak series*. A few years ago I applied all of the following to being a self-actualizing coach and sent it out on this egroup.

1) Authenticity <i>Self</i>	Get Real! You have to be real to self-actualize.	Stop playing the Games. Stop pretending, stop posturing
2) Passionate <i>State</i>	Get emotional & excited @ something It takes energy to self-actualize. You’ve got to care, love, and feel. Become emotionally intelligent.	Stop acting sophisticated! Stop the emotional ignorance. Stop the emotional constipation.
3) Empowerment <i>Power</i>	Get response-able, claim your powers. You have to own your powers to s-a. You have to be the author of your life.	Stop being a victim. Stop playing helpless Stop giving your power away!
4) Congruence <i>Intention Self</i>	Get aligned, whole, integrated. You’ve got to walk your talk to s-a. Self-harmony.	Stop the gap between talking and doing.
5) Creativity <i>Meaning</i>	Get meaning, get meaningful You have to invent great meanings and embody and suspend limiting ones.	Stop the discounting. Stop the negativity.
6) Presence <i>Time</i>	Get into the here-and-now of today. You’ve got to be present to s-a. Become fully engaged, in the zone.	Stop the escapes into the Past or the Future. Stop narrow self-consciousness.
7) Courage	Get bold, audacious, ferocious!	Stop playing small.

<i>World</i>	You've got to take risks to s-a.	Stop selling yourself short.
8) Collaborate <i>Others</i>	Cooperate with others, work together Operate from abundance and love.	Stop being an island to yourself. Stop win/lose scarcity and self-promotion.

What does this mean? It means that we already have ways of testing for and measuring *the self-actualizing life*. And that's the theme and focus of all of the self-actualization trainings which are now eight in number.

Kaufman, as so many other scholars who seem to want to make a name for themselves, is quick to disagree with Maslow. Using his way of measuring, he says self-actualization is "unrelated to age." The problem here is that if you lower the standards—you can make that true. And that seems what he has done. Not only does it lower the standards, he seems to ignore all that's been discovered regarding adult developmental psychology in the past several decades. There are development stages and tasks for adults—and that, by the way, is what the self-actualization process is actually about.

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**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #9**  
**February 27, 2019**

## **THE ART OF ELICITING AS A COACH**

How are your elicitation skills? You learned how to elicit a state when you learned NLP (or *Coaching Essentials*). The first distinction was to *find the person's code* for an experience—what he sees, hears, and feels (the VAK). From there you learned to identify *the elements* of each system that makes the most difference for the experience under consideration. NLP calls these elements sub-modalities and because they come after the representational systems—you could easily think of them as smaller pieces. And while it's easy to draw that conclusion, doing so is a mistake. While the name “sub-modality” frames them as smaller pieces, when you call out one of them, you use a different kind of language:

*Distance* (close to far) is not a specific item or element, it is a category.

*Intensity* (bright to dim or quiet to loud) is a class or category.

*Dimension* (2-D or 3-D) also describes a category and like the other words is a nominalization.

*Temperature* (cold to hot).

*Experience* (associated inside to associated outside).

*Pigmentation* (black-and-white to color).

*Location* (front, back, to right, to the left, above, below).

*Size* (small to large picture).

*Movement* (static, slow, fast).

*Focus* (out of focus to in focus).

*Cadence* (interruptions, saccado, pauses, prolonging word, etc.).

*Duration* (short to long).

Look at all of these terms (distance, intensity, dimension, temperature, experience, etc.)— they are all nominalizations. That means you cannot see, hear, or feel them! Now, do we use sub-modalities in Neuro-Semantics? The answer is a resounding, *Yes, of course!* It's part of the basic way we code our representations. They are *cinematic features* which tell your brain–body how to feel. And what do they mean? It all depends on what *you*— over your lifetime— have come to associate with them. We have to ask more specifically, “What meaning *do you* give to an image or sound or sensation that is close?”

Now do you do this when you coach? I hope so. Sub-modalities as the emblems of higher level meanings give you a quick way into the Matrix. If a person has over-loaded something with too much meaning— you can facilitate them to unload that meaning by changing the sub-modality. When the cinematic feature changes, so does the feeling of the movie and sometimes the movie itself.

Client: I know I'm too sensitive to criticism, especially Bob's.

Coach: *How* do you know that?

Client: When I hear it, it goes right to my heart. I guess I take it personal.

Coach: If I heard what you hear, what would I hear?

Client: You would hear, “Can’t you do anything right? You’re such a clutz. Why don’t you use your head?”

Coach: That’s what he says. Okay. ... and *how* does he say that? His tone, tempo, and volume?

Client: Uhhh .. Let me think. He uses a sarcastic tone and says it really fast, and sometimes he gets louder as he keeps speaking.

Coach: When you hear that, *how* do you experience it so it “goes to your heart?”

Client: I’m not sure what you’re asking. It just goes in.

Coach: Yes, and when it goes in, is it like a needle prick or is it hot, maybe cold? Does it make your heart beat faster? Does it affect your breath so you speed up?

Client: Oh, let me see. No it is more like it hurts my feelings and my stomach feels upset.

Coach: What happens in your stomach? *How* do you experience it?

Client: I feel nausea, almost like a punch in the stomach (pause)... yes, like how I was sometimes punched in the stomach as a kid.

Here as the coach explored and identified the sub-modality code for the client’s experience of criticism, he asked questions. The coach *clarified* that “goes right to my heart. ... take it personal” was metaphorical. The actual kinesthetics (feelings) were in the stomach. Now with those cinematic features, you can do some experimenting with the client.

*Tone:* Exchange the sarcastic tone for a seductive tone, a sexy tone, a musical tone.

*Speed/ Tempo:* exchange the tempo — make it super slow so it sounds like Forest Gump or super fast so it sounds like chipmunks.

*Volume:* Whisper the words, scream the words and notice what happens.

Eliciting the representational code, the cinematic code opens up the semantic code. Typically to represent something as close and in color uses the emblematic symbols for “real.” And when it is real— people respond very differently from when it seems unreal, or a fantasy, or pretending, or as “used to be real, but no longer.” Yes, you can ask, “How is it ‘real’ for you and go from the top down. Or you can get the cinematic features and go up to find the meaning frame.

For more information:

See *Sub-Modalities Going Meta* (2005).

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #10**  
**February 27, 2019**

## **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

### **IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!**

*Skill development* is the focus of many professions— training, coaching, consulting, etc. People hire us so they can develop new skills, or enhance current level of skills, and even to replace old skills that have become redundant. So, what do you need to know about skill development in order to be as effective as you can be as a Meta-Coach, Trainer, and/or Consultant?

On the surface it seems simple. As a trainer you would explain how something works and then show them how it works. If you are a coach, you ask the person what they now know about the skill, how much of it they can do now, what stops them from performing it, why they want to learn that skill, etc. Then as either a trainer or coach, you walk a person step by step through the learning process.

Along the way you may have to help the person *understand* some things about any given skill. The trainer and consult would just explain and teach. Since coaches do not teach, give advice, or explain— you would ask Socrates questions to enable the client to discover that information. Along the way, you may also find out how the person stops himself, how she might block herself, or how the person may have to do some unlearning to clear the path for learning.

But you know all of this. None of this is new. Yet within all of this is usually an assumption that we do not flush out often enough. The assumption is that skills develop in an onward and upward way linearly. You learn this or that fact about the skill and if you find variables that are causally linked, then you expect that steady study and practice will let you to get better. And it does. Except, it doesn't happen in a linear way.

Here's the bad news: Rarely does skill develop progress in a continuous upward progression. That's why there will be times when you study and practice for months and then you become aware that you have not actually gotten better. That's when you start asking, "What's going on?" "Why am I not getting better?"

The answer is that in the development of skills there are times when *you will hit a plateau*. You reach a certain level and then it seems that you stay there, that you're *stuck* there. What's actually happening is *integration* (not "stuck," "integrating"). Often we push ourselves in sports, in a particular game perhaps chess, in a particular ability (listening, supporting, pacing, framing, etc.) and do not see any further progress. What's probably happening is that you are over-learning and getting your neurology (nervous systems) to integrate and install the skill so that it is becoming more and more available to you at the unconscious level.

When you are on a plateau the danger is drawing the wrong conclusion. You could easily make



the mistake of concluding, “That’s it.” “I won’t get any better. This is as good as it will get for me.” “Might as well back off, stop pushing myself. I’ve reached my limit.” A much better conclusion would be:

“Looks like I’ve hit a plateau. This now gives me a break from pushing for new and different skills— now is the time to focus on fully integrating the skills that I now know so they become installed neurologically.”

Here’s the lesson from this: *The route of skill develop to success is non-linear.* Expect it. Progress ebbs and flows, it goes up and down, and there are times when you hit a plateau. Progress is not a straight-line linear progress. This is another reason why you need a lot of mental and emotional stamina to persist. Persevering will enable you to get better— a lot better. But the progress will not be linear. Now, where are you at in your skill development process?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #11**  
**March 7, 2019**

This picks up on the articles  
on *Thinking Fast and Slow*  
I've been writing on Neurons.

## **HOW ARE YOU FRAMING?**

### **Are you Using Broad or Narrow Framing?**

Daniel Kahneman (*Thinking Fast and Slow*, 2011) distinguishes two kinds of framing that play an intimate role in decision making and economics. He says that there are two ways of construing a decision— *narrow and broad framing*.

- **Narrow Framing:** Framing that uses only one reference, one decision, a single criteria or concern. In narrow framing you use a small context. As an expression of System-1, it is generally the first norm or context that comes to mind. In decision-making, you opt for a single decision of two choices.
- **Broad Framing:** Framing that uses several or many references. In broad framing you use a larger context. In decision-making, you consider a comprehensive decision with multiple options (p. 336).

What's natural to us is narrow framing. It comes readily to our minds and so we have a bias to jump to a conclusion with limited information (the Availability bias). Now while "a rational agent will engage in broad framing" that not what we humans tend to do. We tend "by nature" to be narrow framers. Why? He says "because we are susceptible to WYSIATI (*what you see is all there is*) and also averse to mental effort." The first factor is a cognitive illusion— we assume (falsely) that what we see and take into account *is all there is*. That is almost never true. Consequently, this blinds us from even wondering "What else is there? Could I be missing something?" The second is what Kahneman describes as the cognitive laziness of "system 2" —conscious awareness and effort.

"Reframing is effortful and system 2 is normally lazy. Unless there is an obvious reason to do otherwise, most of us passively accept decision problems as they are framed and therefore rarely have an opportunity to discover the extent to which our preferences are *frame-bound* rather than *reality-bound*." (p. 367)

Because of this— we also naturally opt for a risk aversion and risk seeking pattern in the two possible contexts. When the outcomes are good, decision makers tend to prefer the sure thing over the gamble (risk averse). When both outcomes are negative, they tend to reject the sure thing and accept the gamble (risk seeking) (p. 368).

Obviously, it is best to broaden your framing. Regarding experienced traders in financial markets, he explains that broad framing can blunt the emotional reaction to losses and increase the

willingness to take risks (p. 339).

“The combination of loss aversion and narrow framing is a costly curse.”

The typical short-term reaction to bad news is increased loss aversion. Deciders who are prone to narrow framing construct a preference every time they face a risky choice. A broad frame operates as a risk policy. Here you take an outside view so you can adopt a broad frame for thinking about plans (p. 340). Broader frames and inclusive accounts generally lead to more rational decisions.

This occurs when it comes to handling money as well. There most people have what’s called “mental accounts” for their money which is a form of narrow framing. It is in this way that they keep things under control and manageably by a finite mind (p. 343). These mental accounts refer to the fact that I have money which is rent or mortgage money, money for food, money for school, money for everyday living, money for saving, then there is “extra money,” “bonus money,” etc. From some money as “bonus” and what most people do— they spend that money five to seven times over!

Another framing distinction that Kahneman suggests is between *frequency* framing and *probability* framing. With frequency framing, you use specific numbers and when you do you create a vivid image of something. For example, “X disease kills 1,286 people out of every 10,000.” Pretty vivid. In contrast, probability framing presents that same information in a more abstract format, with statistics. For example, “X disease dills 24.1% of the population.” Now, which sounds more threatening and ominous? Most people pick the first one and do so because it is more vivid— an image of 1,286 people being killed by the disease. Actually, the statistic of 24.1% is actually twice as large. The first would be 12.86%. Here the vividness from the way you represent things tricks you. It seduces you to think it is more dangerous, when it is not.

Now let’s apply this to coaching. When you are coaching, how narrow or broad is your client’s frame? Don’t know! Ah, perhaps a new distinction to begin making. First, ask yourself that. Then ask your client. How is the framing coded— with frequency or in probabilities? What is the effect of each of these ways of framing? What are you and your client aware of when you translate frequency to probability? How narrow or how broad is your client’s framing?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #12**  
**March 13, 2019**

## WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

When you coach using the Meta-Coaching methodology, you begin with a fierce conversation about what the person wants. “What do you want?” is the question you begin with. Now you can make it more elegant and more powerful than that— and more compelling.

“What do you really, really want?”

“What would make the most transformative difference in your life?”

Now whatever your client says, *the frame by implication is that the person does not have it right now*. If she had it, she would not be wanting it. If he could do it, he would not be wanting to be able to do it. Here, your *inferential listening* now gives you your next questions—

- “What is going on right now?” “What do you have right now?”
- “Where are you in relationship to what you want?”
- “What are the symbols that you may be experiencing right now?”
- “What consequences will occur in the future because you don’t have what you want?”

I suppose we could potentially call this *the missing Well-Formed Outcome Question*. And the reason is not only is this question not in the list, but it is also missed by so many coaches. They forget to get the difference between *now* and *then*. Yet without exploring where the person is now, today— her present state— then you never get a gauge on *the gap* between now and the person’s desired future state. And without knowing that, you actually do not know the gap that you are coaching to. So with regard to this implied question and the gap between “What do you want?” and “Where are you now?” there are multiple sub-questions which you can ask in your explorations to fully understand your client:

- If the person speaks about some unpleasant state or experience, you would want to get a sense about how bad it is. “How frustrated do you feel?” “How stressful is your situation?”
- If the person speaks about a desired skill or experience, you would want to find out how much he has developed it to this point. “How skilled are you right now in being able to achieve that?” “How do you know that or measure that?”
- Then with either one of those situations, you can explore what the person is doing to generate her experience. “What are you continuing to do that leads you to experience X?” “What do you believe about doing that?” (A meta-question in your exploration) Then if it is unpleasant, you can ask what resource does the person need to handle that? And with that you have started to hear some of the answers to question #7, “What do you have to do to get what you want?” If it is pleasant, you can build on that by asking, “If you keep doing that, will that get you what you want?” “Will you need to do anything else?”
- You can also ask about symptoms. “So given that you’re experiencing X, what are the consequences of that? And what else? And how bad is that?” Symptoms, by the way, while not the actual problem, can be very problematic and can create the away-from motivation that your client needs to achieve his objectives. And symptoms occur now in

this moment and can accumulate into the future.

Finding out about where your client is now, what's happening, what's causing it, what's resulting from it, who is it affecting, etc. enables you to ground the coaching conversation into today's reality. All of this makes the conversation you're facilitating more real. When you do this, you are getting the critical details of your client's experience. And as you gather these details, you will get a strong sense of her life, what it means to her, and why she is sitting in your coaching chair. Your client will also get a sense that you mean business and are going for what's real and not just engaging in some psycho-babble.

Your client's answers to "What's happening now?" will also enable you to test the answers to "What do you want?" Here you can challenge your client to make sure that the statements fit together. "So you want X and that will handle the situation as you described what happening today. Is that right?" And if it makes perfect sense, you can do a bit of validation and empathy statements.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #13**  
**March 20, 2019**

## **IT'S COACHING— NOT THERAPY**

When you learn Meta-Coaching and you set out to be a Professional Coach, then be sure to focus on what's *real coaching*— that is, on *challenge potentials*. And don't get suckered into doing therapy. When you met someone who is not quite ready for coaching, or someone who is hurting and needing healing, refer them to a good therapist. In fact, be sure that you are prepared and have at least one or two really good therapists that you know who you can refer to. In fact, every MCF chapter should have two or three good Neuro-Semantic or NLP Therapists who they have all their members refer to.

Do this and you will distinguish yourself as a *real Coach*, and not as a therapist masquerading as a coach. Now you can distinguish yourself as someone who operates from a special kind of psychology, not one about hurt and pain and trauma, but one about potentials, possibilities, and human strengths. I remember a time many years ago when I was planning some work at one of my rental properties. In doing so I had some constructors come by, look at the project, and make a bid for the job. As we engaged in that conversation, I was asked what I did and I said I was a psychologist.

“Oh, you read people's minds and find out what's wrong with them!”

“Actually, I am involved in a very different kind of psychology than that.”

“There's another kind of psychology? What would that be?”

“The bright side of human nature— what enables people to become their best selves, to set world records, to create new discoveries, to forge forward into the future.”

The man acknowledged that he had never heard of that kind of psychology and so I explained a little bit about Self-Actualization Psychology and how there was an entire Profession devoted to modeling experts and transferring the highest skills to others. You can do the same. You can let people know that Coaching is a field designed for those who are ready to step up to their highest levels of expertise and mastery. It is for those who absolutely refuse to sell themselves and their potentials short.

How do you know that you are interacting with the right population—the population who are coaching clients? Ask them. Here are some initial questions to begin the conversation.

Do you *want* to be challenged?

If so, what would you like to be challenged about?

What would take you to the next level of your development and potentials?

How much of a challenge would that be for you— what would be a bit more?

How ready are you to step up and take on a man-size or woman-size challenge?

Now the person you want is someone *open* to being challenged, someone who has been thinking about and planning their next step, and someone who is not shy or screamish about getting feedback or finding out about their mistakes. So again, how do you find these people? And

again, you can ask them questions to explore this area.

How well have you faced and dealt with your ego-defenses?

Are you pretty much now de-sensitized to taking things personal and getting defensive?

How open are you to feedback about your performances so that you can find your next steps for improvement?

How open are you to receiving feedback on mistakes so that you can correct them?

The coaching clients you want are those human beings who are simultaneously *open to challenge and to feedback*. Those qualities make for a great coaching client. If a person is not quite there, what can you do? Set those qualities forward as what makes a great client—someone committed to their own growth and someone who will accelerate learning and experience a desired expertise. Then coach the person for both—openness to challenge and openness to feedback. How? Use the Matrix and find their best state for each, some great beliefs that will support each, some excellent high level intentions that will self-organize each experience, then go through self, powers, others, time, and world to develop a really robust matrix for each.

My invitation to you — *keep your professional Coaching as clean as you can*. Keep it about Coaching and not therapy. That will enable you to establish your brand and distinguish yourself as a real coach!

*Post Script:*

After writing this Miral El Ramlawy wrote to me about an interesting conversation she had with a counselor she had from Egypt who attended her Coaching Essentials and APG which she delivered in Dubai. At first she was very hesitant to approach coaching. But she did when Mira shared some of my writings about how Neuro-Semantics stands on the shoulders of giants like Maslow and Rogers.

Miral then showed her our coaching curriculums. She was impressed that it had a lot of Psychology in it, so very different than other schools. This counselor then shared how many ethical violations happen from coaches in Egypt graduating from other schools and this is what made her very hesitant to explore it until she started reading about Meta-Coaching.

Then, when she experienced the content and heard Miral repeatedly say that coaches should not work with people who need therapy and counseling, her respect for MCF increased even more. The fact that we differentiate between clients who can handle coaching and those who need therapy was critical for her. I bet there's many more highly ethical counselors who feel the same way!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #14**  
**March 27, 2019**

## CHALLENGING POTENTIALS

Coaching is all about *challenging potentials*. You know that, I know that. But here is the question: Specifically how do we do that? And, by the way, what is a “potential?”

- How can you identify a “potential?”
- How do you as a coach call a potential out?
- How do you develop the potential?
- If Self-Actualization Psychology is our psychology and if human potential our focus—how does all of this actually work when you sit down to coach a client?

First, *potential*. What is potential is in contrast to what is actual. If something is *actual*, it is not potential. If something *could be*, but is not, then it is possible or a potential. Think about a small child—for most people it is easy to recognize that this small person has lots of potentials. It is also obvious that looking at the child you do not see, and cannot see, what is potential in that child.

Will this child become a musician, architect, teacher, judge, policeman, pilot, dentist, or what? So, what will the child become? How can we plot his or her future?

Well, that’s the tricky part. And that’s because the development of potentials involves an interface of several key factors: dispositions, experience, relationships, effort, learning, mentoring, attitude, etc. Whatever the path forward is, it is not linear, and it is not strictly predictable. It depends. So how does a fulfillment of potential occur? It emerges, in part, from—

- Innate growth and development and that’s a function of the person’s genetics, inborn strengths, talents, and dispositions. What kind of “intelligence” is built into a given person: musical, linguistic, athlete, visual, spatial, mathematical, etc.?
- Experience in life based on opportunities around a person, economic status and opportunities, key persons in one’s life, friends and peers who are also involved in a given domain. Further, you sometimes never know if you have a potential for something until you give it a chance and *do* it. Upon doing, you may just discover that it awakens something very deep inside you so that you feel, “I’m made for this.”
- Encouragement from people in your life and those you met along the pathway of life. This could be parents, friends, peers, teachers, mentors, etc. Some are fortunate to have a parent who patiently supports you developing a particular talent as Mosark’s father did with him.
- Challenge as in competitive games or in the challenge that someone offers that causes one to stretch in a way that one never would have without that challenge.

Now as a coach, when you are looking to identify, call forth, invite, develop, etc. a potential, what do you look for? Since it is invisible, and you can’t see it, what do you notice?

- Interests. What is this person interested in? What do that naturally take interest in? What interests could be cultivated?



- Excitement. What excites this person? What causes them to glow and gives them a rush of energy?
- Focus. What can the person naturally focus on? What captures her attention so that all of her concentration goes to that focus?

How do you begin to tap into the potential, call it out, develop it, nurture it?

- Invite: Ask the person if he would like to explore a given area.
- Validate the person: “I’d like to say that one thing I see in you— a possible potential— is X. What do you think?”
- Set up interpersonal structures to support the development of a potential— learning, mentoring, internship, apprenticeship.
- Inspire it. As you imagine it in your imagination, share that with the person in a way that inspires the person to put hope into the person.
- Challenge the person to step up. That’s what we mean by “challenge” —to give the person a stretch goal and ask him to expend the needed energy and effort.

People have potentials and coaching clients come to sit in your coaching chair to be challenged. They want to be challenged. So challenge them!

From: L. Michael Hall  
2019 Morpheus #15  
April 3, 2019

## THE SKILL OF PUNCTUATING

Who would have ever thought of punctuation as a communication skill? Who would have ever thought about taking *punctuation marks* and using them for framing and reframing? Or for Coaching? Wikipedia defines this subject accordingly:

“Punctuation marks are symbols that indicate the structure and organization of written language, as well as intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud.”

NLP Trainer, Fran Burgess quotes a famous line, “A woman without her man is nothing.” Then notes what happens with different punctuation:

“A woman: without her, man is nothing.”

“A woman, without her man, is nothing.”

comma	semicolon	colon	fullstop
exclamation mark	question mark	apostrophe	quotes
double quotes	hyphen	dash	stroke or slash
parentheses or round brackets	square brackets	ellipsis	asterix

*Oh my! Punctuation can make a big difference.* The way you punctuate your messages has an incredible power to entirely change the meaning and emotions of those who receive your message. With punctuation you have the ability to quickly restructure someone’s internal experience. Now in language we punctuate sentences to remove ambiguity and create clarity. We can use it to direct a person’s focus, attention, perception, and meaning-making.

If there is this kind of influence power in punctuating, what if we used it more intentionally in coaching? What do you think? To do that, first *start paying attention to the way your client is already punctuating his life.*

- Does he live a life of doubting? Are there lots of question marks around everything he does? ?I don’t know what I should do? ?What do you think?? [I have here used a Spanish punctuation.]
- Another person may punctuate just about everything with exclamation marks. I’ve got two important meetings today!! It’s critical that I get into the right state with each!! Isn’t that great?!!
- There’s the person with things missing... who wants to ... say something, but ... well, just isn’t accessing the ... right resources right now... [ellipses].



Now an exclamation mark “!” can mean fantastic! Surprise! Or even this is terrible! Quotes [“x”] can mean a precise quotation or something false. What you put in bracket can help explain things [use sensory-based language] or bracket something off to reduce its impact [an effect of punctuation]. Commas slow things down and invite us to take a breath. Some people seem to rush through life and so they never punctuate their sentences with semi-colons, full stops, pauses.

What all of the punctuation marks, the emoji faces, and the many other aspects of punctuating do behind the scene is establish context. Knowing that, then they are themselves context markers. I practiced this with Geraldine recently. Write two beliefs, one limiting and one empowering. On a piece of paper she wrote:

“Memory declines as one ages...”

“I am improving my memory day by day.”

I took the piece of paper and added a punctuation and handed it back to her for her response.

First, “Memory declines as one ages...”?

Then,

≠ “Memory declines as one ages...”?

Then,


≠ “Memory declines as one ages...”?




With the empowering belief, “I am improving my memory day by day.” I made several punctuations, one by one, and showed each one to her asking for her responses. Also, with my own personal hieroglyphics, I could create a stronger emphasis than use the print below.

“**I** am improving **my memory** day by day.”

“**I** am improving **my memory** day by day!”  
*Will improve*

 “**I** am improving **my memory** day by day!!!”  
*Will improve*

**Px — Take twice a day**

 “**I** am improving **my memory** day by day!!!”  
*Will improve*

Geraldine's comment about this was that she found it amazing at how her thinking and her state changed as she looked at each way of punctuating the statement, one by one. Try it. Ask your client to write a statement on a piece of paper— a belief (limiting or empowering), an emotionally laden or semantically loaded statements (an outcome, resource, block, etc.), notice how they punctuate it, even ask them to punctuate it, and then experiment with punctuating it in different ways. Each time you turn it around and show them, ask them to try it on.

From: L. Michael Hall  
[meta@acsol.net](mailto:meta@acsol.net)  
Meta-Coach [your name]

***Today's Take Away—***

**Listen** for client's statements,  
**Identify** limiting perspectives,  
**Notice** how they are punctuated,  
**Re-punctuate** for more choice.

For a quick definition of the basic punctuation marks, go to  
[www.simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punctuation](http://www.simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punctuation)

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #16**  
**April 10, 2019**  
*The Coach as a Modeler #1*

## MODELING AS AN ASPECT OF COACHING

What is it that you're attempting to do when you work with a client? Think for a moment how you would answer that question. Okay, here is mine. First and foremost, you are working to *understand your client*. Now what makes this quite challenging is this— *you have to understand your client on your client's terms*. That is, first you want to understand the person sitting before you in the same way that the person *thinks* about him or herself. If you don't do that, you can't get to understanding's first base. In the field of psychology (whether it is remedial, therapy or generative, coaching), to "understand" someone *in your terms* and *on your terms*— your models and your theories is *not* to understand the person.

This was one the learnings that came out of the Human Potential Movement and that the NLP developers found in Perls and Satir— *they started with the person*. They went to the person's model and understanding of the world so that they could speak that person's language. Today we call that matching or pacing. I like how Shelle Rose Charvet describes this. Metaphorically she says, "Go to their bus stop" and meet them there.

Next, you will want to understand *how your client does whatever it is that your client is doing or wants to do*. We call that modeling. It is the essential Meta-Model question:

- "How do you know that?"
- "How do you think about that?"
- "How do you understand that to work?"

Now the reason you ask such questions is to understand what your client understands currently. If you client wants to enhance her leadership, what does she currently understand about leadership? How does she *do* what she's calling "leadership?" If your client is wanting to create a consistent habit of exercising to get to an ideal weight and maintain fitness, then you want to understand what he understands about that. So you ask, "How do you do that?" And you may have to ask that question many times about many aspects as various aspects of the experience are discussed.

In terms of the benchmarks this is the level 3.0 "strategy process" in Listening. When you ask multiple modeling questions and then feed-it-back to your client to check your understanding, you have performed a professional competence skill— you have identified your client's strategy process. Now this is basic NLP and you may have touched on it briefly in *Coaching Essentials*. Yet for being able to fully do this, take NLP Practitioner training, and possibly several times.

Now for a secret. In this process of identifying and mapping out a client's strategy, there is "magic." It is the magic of understanding because it so often elicits from the client *the "Aha!"*

*response.* That's because as a client works to explain what he is attempting to do and how he does it, he often will experience a sudden realization and insight. "Oh, that's what I've been doing!" And with that, frequently clients suddenly know precisely what they have done wrong and need to correct. I have seen that happen scores and scores of times. And what's also happening in that mini-miracle is the actualization of the NLP principle— "People have all of the resources they need to achieve their ecological goals."

And when that happens, you have an excellent moment to validate the person. "Ah, so you just discovered something! What?" "And how good is that realization?" "Well done for finding that within your resources!"

Modeling how your client understands something, how your client has been attempting to do something, how she learns and is convinced, how he motivates and persuades himself to take action, etc. gives you an insider's view of your client's reality. Feeding-it-back then enables him to feel understood and amplifies his sense of self-awareness. Doing this also empowers both you and your client in finding those leverage points of change.

As a coach, you use modeling as a tool for understanding your client's inner world. That makes you, at least in part, a modeler.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #17**  
**April 17, 2019**  
*The Coach as a Modeler #2*

## **MODELING**

### **TRACKING A CLIENT'S EXPERIENCE**

In the first article on “Coach as Modeler,” I noted that you model your client’s experience, both what he wants and what he does not want, in order to *understand him on his terms*. The attitude that works best for this is one of *respectful curiosity*. Whatever is working or not-working for your client is a function of her model of the world about something she is currently experiencing. She has some map about things and it may simply need to be updated so that it is more accurate, or precise, or complete. Your job is to make that map explicit. And the communication principle is that the more explicit you can make it, and the quicker, the sooner you and your client will get to the heart of the matter for change or enhancement.

Sometimes your client will have a workable map and it would work if only he would act on it. But that’s the problem. He is not acting on it. Something is stopping him. Maybe he lacks a map about how to get himself to do what he knows to do. Maybe he doesn’t have a map about how to motivate himself.

Whatever it is, *as the Coach, you need to find, identify, and make explicit your client’s map* about whatever that interference. That’s why you begin by intensely engage in information gathering. And you do that by releasing everything you might “think” you know about that person or “know” about the words that she is using. Release all of your judgments and evaluations and knowledge about the person’s experience—and use an innocent and naive seeking to understand mind-set. To do that, use lots of “checking questions” — checking your own understanding.

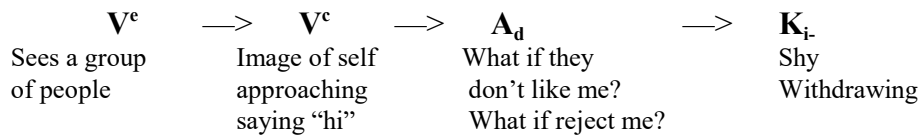
Last week in Rio de Janeiro I invited a young man to work with me in front of the room. He said he was shy and wanted to deal with it so he could do public speaking. “Ah, public speaking,” I thought. “I know about public speaking.” And given that I speak in public a lot, I figured that’s what he meant. But I was wrong. So my questions were wrong. “Where do you want to speak in public— a group at work or somewhere else?”

That’s when he corrected me. “No, I don’t go up to people to say hi. I’m shy.” I didn’t meet him at his bus stop, I meet him at mine! As we continued, I found out that when he imagined saying hi to someone, he would feel shy and he would think, “Maybe they won’t like me; maybe they will reject me.” Then he would feel passive and withdrawing.

As a modeler-coach, you model each person’s unique specific way of doing something. In his case, he drove his experience by his internal talk imagining the worse and using it to put himself in a state of shyness. Now when you model, you will not be doing a full modeling project. That’s

not needed. All that's needed is a description of *how* the person is *doing* whatever she is doing.

When I do this with someone, I like to use the basic modeling notational code and to write it down as we talk —showing it from time to time to my client any checking that we are getting the strategy right. If she says she sees something, that's a **V** and it may be **E** (external) or **I** (internal). What happens next? Perhaps she engages in some internal dialogue, **A<sub>di</sub>** (words as self-talk). And next? Perhaps some emotions, **K<sub>i</sub>**. Drawing an arrow → from one response to the next allows you to track the strategy. When the person makes a meta-move, **m**, then I use the **m** and an upward arrow, ↑ which then identifies the person's background knowledge— a logical level frame that's governing the experience.



You can learn all about this in Robert Dilts' book, *NLP Volume I* (1980) and my book *NLP Going Meta* (1997/2008). There you will find all of the notational code for tracking a person's strategy. Seldom will you need to be as precise as what is written in these books— *yet if you have that knowledge and skill* you will be able to use it on the occasion when it is needed. This will give you *the ability to track your client's experience*.



From: L. Michael Hall  
 2019 Morpheus #18  
 April 24, 2019  
 The Coach as a Modeler #3

## MODELING YOUR CLIENT'S MATRIX

**Experience** —as you know from your Meta-Coach studies is *layered*. What you see at the primary level, the performance of actions and words is the outer game. And while you do coach to the outer game, you do more. A lot more. As a Meta-Coach you coach to the inner game. Yet to do that, you have to model what's inside— and usually what's *deep* inside.

Now even though you know that mind or consciousness is *stratified*, it usually doesn't seem that way. And until you are trained to recognize and deal with the stratified layers— everything that you find inside will seem like one thing. Yet it is not. There are thoughts, and then thoughts-about-thoughts, feelings and then feelings-about-feelings. There are memories about references and old understandings about imaginations, and so on.

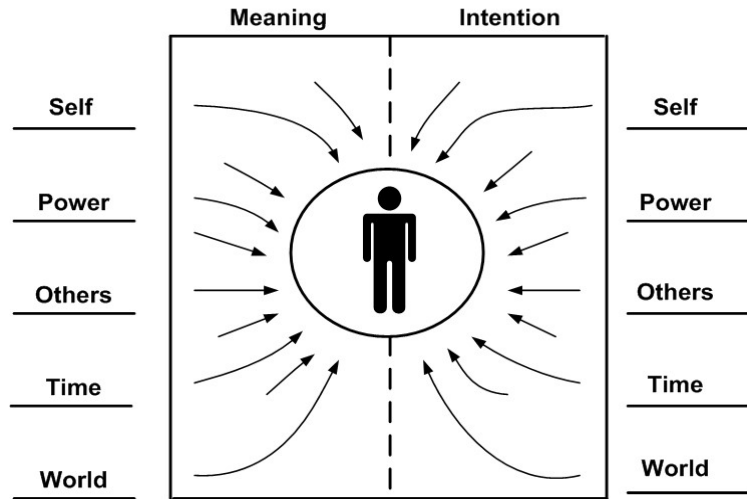
This is where the Matrix Model gives you a very usable tool for dealing with something as systemic, complex, and layered as consciousness. As a template of human experience— you can simplify things a bit as you sort out *eight significant processes*. Beginning with state, inquire about how the person has accessed that state— what is his immediate thinking and feeling, what do they within him? At this point listen carefully for which category is activated— self-value, competency, relationships, time a domain or role, an intention, or a meaning (belief, understanding, concept).

	Meaning	Intention	State
<b>Self</b>			
<b>Power</b>			
<b>Others</b>			
<b>Time</b>			
<b>World</b>			

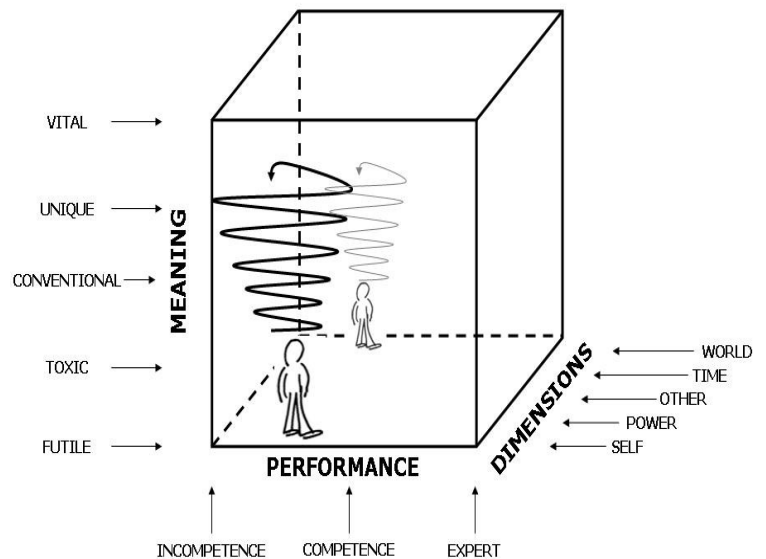
As you fill out a matrix form of the person's Matrix—you can quickly detect where a problem may be or a lack of a resource. When we model those who stutter, *the state* was the first dimension activated— one of fear, apprehension, tightening up. Then *the meaning* dimension of viewing oneself as inadequate and flawed. And then, the *Others* dimension, fearing others will mock, laugh, and reject. No wonder the very idea of stuttering was so semantically loaded! To stutter activated two fundamental fears— to be personally inadequate and to be socially rejected. No wonder the stutterer would tighten up as if in a state of threat or attack. In a way, he was under attack. Yet in the inner game, *he himself* was doing the attacking with his beliefs

about what stuttering meant. When we modeled the structure of that experience, we can see how it works. And that usually gives some significant hints about what to do to win the inner game.

If you use the matrix diagram, you have 15 places for information. About each aspect of self, there are meanings, intentions, and states. The *meaning* column enables you to detect where the semantic energy is in your client's system. You could add a number (1-10) to indicate *how much meaning* is being activated as you explore the person's ideas and beliefs. That will give you a lot of highly valuable information.



Behind the meaning column is the *intention column* and here you find out your client's purpose, goal, objective, agenda, etc. For stutterers, they all wanted to stop the dysfluency. And they all tried— mightily. Yet the problem was that speaking is a natural response as is the process of “trying to get your words.” And natural processes are not easily controlled (if at all) by exertion of raw will power. Typically that makes things worse and sets up a paradox— the more I try to control it, the worse it becomes, the less control I have. The *state* column lets you know the multiple things that your client is feeling— which can involve numerous self-contradictory states at the same time.



The second diagram illustrates the state as the overall experience which results from all of the meanings and intentions. After all, it is within the person's one body that all of the emotions are being processed and experienced. The three-dimensional diagram integrates the meaning— performance axes of Neuro-Semantics. Your focus here is on the *quality* of the meanings that the person is experiencing as well as the *quality* of the performances. What kind of meaning is your client constructing and how does it show up in his behavior? Here's to your very best modeling of your client's subjective experiences!

From: L. Michael Hall  
2019 Morpheus #19  
May 1, 2019

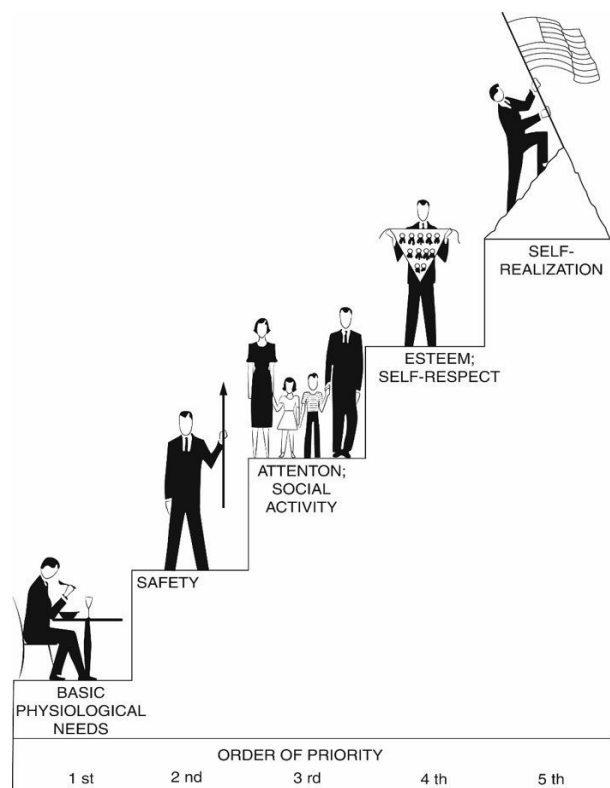
## THE ORIGINS OF MASLOW'S PYRAMID

For years I searched for the person who first drew a pyramid (or a triangle) to represent Maslow's idea of the hierarchy of needs. And for years, I was not able to find it. But now, having recently found out who did that, the secret is out.

The first hint of a Hierarchy of Needs which somewhat gives the impression of a pyramid appeared in 1957. Keith Davis, a prominent scholar of the era, and a person that Bridgman says would have been moving in the same circles as Douglas McGregor. What appeared in a book on *Human Relations in Business* by Keith Davis, as an illustration for the book of Maslow's idea.

The authors of the new study note this about the stair-case:

The metaphor of choice in this book is a set of stairs. Each step representing a different need and occupied by a generic businessman, in a suit and tie, meeting it. On the "basic physiological needs" level, for example, he is seen dining, perhaps sitting down to a power lunch. At the top, our triumphant corporate soldier is seen planting an American flag, evoking the iconic image of American infantrymen raising the stars and stripes during World War II's battle of Iwo Jima.



An equilateral triangle finally arrives in 1960, first surfacing in a business journal article called "How Money Motivates Men," by Charles McDermid, a psychologist at a Wisconsin consulting firm. McDermid calls the top-level need "self realization," as Davis had, instead of "self-actualization" as Maslow had written, the study points out. Because of this, the researchers suspect that McDermid had simply re-imagined Davis' staircase as a triangular form.

Stephen Cummings@strategybuild

“Maslow never depicted his ideas in a pyramid or triangle. Others did, then the idea was attributed back to Maslow & became 'Maslow's Pyramid'. It was a good fit with how the West saw the world and management in the 1960s.”

I have recently seen several so-called research papers claiming that Maslow’s hierarchy of needs has been disproved. Of course, that is a judgment statement by the author of the articles and in every article that I’ve seen to-date, it is based on mis-statements and mis-quotations. And when people mis-quote Maslow and mis-state what he actually said, that’s a pretty good sign that they have not read the original works but are quoting from someone who quoted from someone who quoted from someone. Here’s a mis-statement from Bridgman:

“First, we satisfy our “lower level” needs, like basic nourishment and safety, the base layers of the pyramid. Only then can we be concerned with “higher level” needs, like love and belonging, and esteem, the stepping stones to self-actualization, the reaching of one’s full potential and the pinnacle of the pyramid.”

*Only then can we be concerned with the higher level needs?* Maslow did not say that! He said the opposite. He said that a person may only gratify survival or safety needs 40% or just enough to get by, and can then move upward. The next paragraph this reads:

“If you’re a psychologist or organizational behavior scientist, however, you may reject the pyramid of needs as unscientific and outdated. But you’ve probably come to accept how ubiquitous it is as a piece of pop psychology.”

Look at that framing! The author *assumes* what he does not demonstrate, it is unscientific and outdated. But there’s no evidence of that. “Pop psychology,” oh really? Has he not read *Motivation and Personality* (1954/ 1970)? There’s no way to read that book and think it is pop psychology. It is an academic book of the highest quality.

“Indeed, the pyramid’s innate message ‘has really held us back,’ says Susan Fowler, senior consulting partner with The Ken Blanchard Companies, a management training firm. Fowler was not involved in the study, but has critiqued Maslow’s enduring hold on managers in other articles and books.”

Yes it is easy to criticize and to make over-generalized statements as the above especially when a person offers no evidence. Typically those who do such are looking to *make a name for themselves* and think that if they criticize someone famous, the star-power of the person will transfer to them. But, of course, it doesn’t really work that way.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #20**  
**May 8, 2019**

## **WHY YOU SHOULD MEMORIZE THE META-MODEL QUESTIONS**

Last week I sent out a list of **18 Meta-Model Questions** with the suggestion that *you memorized these!* I also sent that list to the Trainers egroup and recommended that every Neuro-Semantic and Modular Trainer who are teaching *Coaching Essentials* (or NLP Prac.) should train the Meta-Model in a way that people begin by memorizing the list. In that way, they can begin to get the Meta-Model fully integrated into their thinking and their coaching conversations.

The failure to thoroughly learn the Meta-Model as the basic *NLP Communication Model* is one of the biggest challenges we have in getting coaches prepared for the PCMC level. It is also the biggest problem we have in helping people become truly professional in their communication skills. As I wrote in the book on the Meta-Model, *Communication Magic* (1997/ 2001), the Meta-Model is the key to everything in NLP. And if you do not thoroughly know it, you do not understand very much about NLP. Whatever NLP pattern that you love and use regularly is a result of the Meta-Model. **Why then should you memorize the Meta-Model Questions?**

*1) First to have access to the most powerful questions in the world and have them at ready access.* These are powerful questions even though at first glance they do not seem very powerful. What's so powerful about them? The power is in using them to get to specificity. So it is not the case that you ask one question and that's it. You use the question repeatedly and you use multiple Meta-Model questions to chase down the reference and meaning of a person. By memorizing the list of 18 questions (as you did with the WFO questions), you will create a repertoire of *powerful* questions.

*2) To have a more complete understanding of how language and meaning works.* We use words to think, to conceptualize, to reason and to both construct meaning and to convey meaning to others. Yet how does that work? How is it that our linguistics enable us to do all of that? This is where understanding the NLP Communication Model comes in — and the Meta-Model Questions summarize that understanding. This is also where “the map is not the territory” premise comes in. What you *say* about anything— your words, is just that, *words*. It is a mental map *about* something that you are referring to in the world. But what? What are you or your client referring to? Ah, that is the question. If you don't question yourself or your client— and just *assume* that you understand (the Understanding Bias), then you will learn nothing. That's a great formula for feeling comfortable in ignorance.

*3) To facilitate a conversation of precision and clarity.* Because words are loaded and are often false (pseudo-words), you and I can easily be bamboozled by words. We can be hypnotized by sentences that we (or our clients) utter as we assume they are real and fail to question them. Conversely, when you know how to ruthlessly examine linguistics (your own and your client's),

you can create clarity and precision of thought. And when that happens— magic happens. That’s why the original NLP books were titled, *The Structure of Magic*, referring to the magical way that Fritz and Virginia and Milton used language.

4) *To be able to quickly model the experience of your client.* When NLP began, the Meta-Model was the *only* tool that they had for modeling. Yet with it, and from it, all of the other NLP models and tools were developed. Think about how amazing that is. This means that as they learned how to truly *listen for language distinctions* and ask challenging questions about it, they were able to pull apart the structure of subjective experiences. And as I wrote in the series on “Coaching as Modeling Clients,” that is precisely what an expert coach is able to do with a client. That, in the information gathering stage of coaching— long before any intervention is attempted— the coach comes to understand the client’s current experience on the client’s terms.

5) *To be able to more effectively facilitate the desired changes which your client wants.* When it comes to detecting, recognizing, and then using the leverage points of change in your clients— it is almost always *language* that tells the story. That is one thing that Bandler and Pucelik discovered as they were doing “Gestalt” in the early days— they recognized how Perls would like for some of the key phrases that he was attuned to and how that his responses to those phrases would often create the magic of change. Later, the same happened with Virginia. From these John Grinder then introduced Transformational Grammar and so the Meta-Model was invented (for more about that history, see *NLP Secrets: Untold Stories*).

*Memorizing a list of questions* may be one of the last things that you want to do. I understand. Most of us have not had a positive experience with regard to memorizing. Yet as you know, when you have memorized a poem, a song, a pledge, a verse, etc., then you have an internal resource *inside you* that no one can take away— and that’s at ready access whenever you need it. Here then is my challenge to any and all who want to be *truly professional Meta-Coaches* —

\* *Memorize the Meta-Model Questions.*

\* *Memorize the Well-Formed Outcome Questions.*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #21**  
**May 15, 2019**

## **WARNING: GLOBAL THINKING**

A larger crisis on Planet Earth than global warming is *global thinking*. When a person generalizes (or over-generalize) that person engages in a kind of thinking that often *prevents* one from actually “thinking.” That’s because when you “think” globally you are actually describing a category or classification, and not actually thinking about anything in particular. Isn’t that amazing?

This should also be revealing and frightening. *Revealing* because putting something into a category, “I want to be successful in my life.” “This program will make you effective and productive.” “That’s a bad choice.” you can say all kinds of things and yet, in the end, not say anything. [This is actually the key to hypnotic language patterns, the art of speaking in an artfully vague way.]

This is how politicians typically speak. They say they are for the common good, prosperity for all, better social programs for the poor, equality under the law, and on and on. Of course, we all agree with that and want the same. But what does any of that mean in terms of policy decisions? The politician isn’t saying. Now while that prevents him from offending anyone and from being criticized by anyone (a good strategy for getting votes), it also saves him from taking a policy decision so that he can be held accountable (a poor strategy for building trust over the long-term).

*Frightening* because global thinking can not only deceive others, it can even deceive you. This is a warning that should come with generalized words and statements— they can lead to self-deception just as easy as they can deceive others. What is the self-deception? Mostly the cognitive bias wherein you think *you think you understand something*.

Let’s say you adopt a new belief, “I can be successful in my career.” That’s a good capacity belief. But what does it refer to? What are you actually believing you can succeed in doing? The statement doesn’t include any particulars only a global statement about “success.” A category. This is the occupational hazard which is built into the global perspective. It seems like you know and understand what you are saying, but you do not. You do not have an internal indicator about what it is that would be required to be successful.

Global thinking lies inside of so many of our everyday problems. Consider perfectionism as an example. Someone says that they are procrastinating on an activity because they want to do it right. Okay. And what does “right” mean? Whatever the behavior is— making a sales call, exercising at the gym, writing a report, eating more healthily, etc., what are the details in doing something “right?” While the statement sounds meaningful, its vagueness makes it impossible to pin down and so while one may think that he has made a meaningful statement, he has not. So we meta-model the statement and see if we can get some details:

- How *right* does the behavior need to be? Are we talking 50%, 75%, 95%, 99.9%?
- In terms of being *right*, what criteria are you using to determine *right*?
- “Doing it right” sounds like a visionary goal, are you expecting to do it on your first attempt? How long do you think it will take you before you get it just *right*?

I was working with a trainer the other day whose goal was to change his perfectionism frame from getting it right, perfect, or flawless. I inquired about his decision and he had come to realize that “perfectionism” was a false hope, an unrealistic goal, and an impossible objective. “Great!” I said, congratulating him on his insight and decision. “So what do you want to set as your new frame of mind?” We had been talking about *principles* that one could mind-to-muscle to get it into neurology. So he said, “I just want to do my best and not have to do it perfectly.”

Having been through this one numerous times before, I immediately stopped, accessed a great big smile and with a twinkle in my eye said, “I think you have just snuck perfectionism in through the back door. You’re pretty sneaky that way, aren’t you?”

“What? I don’t know what are you talking about. Sneaking it in?”

“Ah, now you’re going to play dumb. Okay, I’ll play along! ‘Doing your best...’ Hmmmm. *Best!* Ah, yes, *doing your BEST.* and what do you think your *best* is but another description of doing it perfectly?”

“That’s perfectionism?!” he asked.

“It sounds like it to me. What do you think? If you weren’t aiming to do it perfectly, but you were doing to *do your best*, what’s the difference?” He paused. In a bit, he started to say something, stopped himself and then thought about it for a few more seconds.

“You know, you’re right. It is bringing perfectionism in through the back door.”

Global thinking is dangerous if you do not follow it up with details. *Mastery is in the details.* That’s where every expert lives— in the details which manifest the meta-level principle [hence, the meaning of meta-detailing]. With global thinking you have only started the process of thinking, you have named a category — but you have not actually engaged in a specific representation. Not yet. Are you ready to do that?



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #22**  
**May 22, 2019**

## WHEN YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL

Last week I read a book from a “Master” NLP Trainer which was at times excellent and at times a mess. In parts of the book what he wrote expanded my understandings about things, and in other parts, he made a real mess of NLP. When Geraldine saw me roll my eyes and non-verbally express my astonishment that anyone with any experience in NLP could write such non-sense—she asked me what I was reading and what I was responding to. I told her that the author is “not a careful reader or writer.” When she wanted to know more about what that meant, I said:

“I don’t know how he did it— perhaps he was reading the original NLP manual or book too fast, perhaps he is processing globally and cannot see the details and make the distinctions, perhaps his options meta-program is driving him to ignore what was developed, perhaps he thinks he knows better ... I don’t know. All I know is that he has simply got the pattern or the concept *extremely wrong*.”

I’m writing this as a warning to all of us (myself included) *against reading too fast, not spending enough time to notice the distinctions (details) which differentiate the difference, and checking with the original references*. Ironically, throughout the book the author scolds “NLP Trainers” for not knowing NLP, for being lazy, and in not putting forth the effort to be competent!

Here’s an example. When he describes the *Fast Phobia Cure* he has the first step right, but then he *thinks* (and I don’t know where in the world he gets this) that after freeze-framing the original picture, making it black-and-white, he then says to float to the back row of the imagined theater and “look at the back of your head” so that you “do *not* see the screen.”

“Oh my God! By *not looking at the screen* you cannot see whatever it was that scared you, that triggered the phobia. And that very *avoidance* is what helps to create the phobia because it assumes and implies that it is too dangerous *even to face*. Actually the whole point of sitting back in the mental theater is *to be able to look at the trigger* from a distance and not ‘associate’ into it.

To only see the back of your head watching the movie and to *not see the movie* is not the way the Movie-Rewind Pattern works. Not at all! What does “watching the back of your head” do in terms of curing the phobia? How would a perspective of a head-of-hair affect the structure of the phobia. You could end up with a phobia of hair! But then he makes things much worse. Here is what he wrote:

“Let it run all the way to the end and freeze it as a still image. Remember, all this time you are up in the projection booth watching yourself in the back row. You are not looking directly at the screen. Now run the film backwards. Run the film backward quickly ... all the way back to the start. Run the movie forwards at double speed ... Keep running the movie backwards and forwards.” (Peter Freeth, *The NLP Master Practitioner Manual*, pp. 312-313)

Again, *oh my God!* he has left out **major distinctions**.

- 1) He does not forward the movie to a scene of comfort (or pleasure).
- 2) He does not ask the person to *step in and associate inside* of the comfort.
- 3) He does not have the movie (film) run backwards with the person inside.

Those are major distinctions of the pattern ... distinctions that alter the structure of the phobia. To address the structure of the phobia here is what is actually happening:

- Meta-stating comfort back onto the phobia pictures and experience.
- Meta-stating *backwards* onto the history thereby changing the syntax of the representations.

And there's more:

- 4) Then when the movie gets back to the beginning, there is no *stopping the movie*, doing a pattern interrupt, clearing the screen and starting from the end with the scene of comfort and running it backwards. No!

Now he writes, "Run the move forwards at double speed ... Keep running the movie backwards and forwards." What? Running it forward *re-connects the syntax of the structure of the phobia*. Even if you do that in fast forward or double-speed, it still re-connects all of the pictures and feelings that created the phobia in the first place.

All in all, *it is just wrong*. That is *not* the way the pattern was set up by Bandler in the beginning. Someone has missed the details! Someone's options meta-program or self-referencing meta-program or global meta-program has seriously undermined their understanding and therefore their ability to train effectively. Here is a warning for all of us to be more careful in your reading so that you can make the necessary distinctions that actually make a process work.

### **For More Reading**

*Games for Mastering Fear.*

*Movie-Mind* (2002)

*Sourcebook of Magic, Volume I* (1997)

*Using Your Brain — for a Change* (1985, Bandler, Andreas, Editor).

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #23**  
**May 29, 2019**

## THE ART OF MANAGING UPWARD

When you manage things and systems, you typically manage things under your control. With people, it is with people that you influence. You manage the system that you set up to achieve a particular goal. Perhaps you manage your team. Typically, we think of the management process as *managing downward* to those who report to us and that's due to the position and responsibility you have to them, it determines what they do, the time factor, and the criteria. Nor is this particularly easy—it requires lots of knowledge and skills.

**Question:** Is it possible to *manage upward*? Can a person *manage* her supervisor, manager, CEO? Is it possible for us to learn skills and processes by which we can influence those who are above us in a given organizational hierarchy? **Answer:** The answer is *yes you can*. Yes, it is possible. Similarly, it is not easy as it also requires lots of knowledge and skills.

This was one of the questions that came up in Victoria Brazil last week when I was presenting *Unleashing Leadership*. Actually, it always comes up.

1) *Bring your best presence to your work.* What you are and who you are, *in your person* cannot but communicate and influence others. It is the Gandhi principle of change, “Be the change you want to initiate.” By *being your best self—your optimum person*, you send messages all around you—to the side to your colleagues, below to those who report to you, and above to those who manage you. What is your best? What would those above you think as optimum? Probably being dependable, trustworthy, optimistic, and responsible.

Think of the opposite. If you are *undependable, untrustworthy, pessimistic, negative* and always complaining, and if you are *irresponsible*—that will be a message that will definitely limit you from being promoted. A *presence characterized by these traits* will guarantee that you will not have little to no influence upward. At least no positive influence! Conversely, giving your best presence starts an influence that will reap rewards.

2) *Get in rapport with everybody around you.* The secret of rapport was unveiled at the very beginning of NLP when the founders discovered that Virginia Satir could create almost instantaneous rapport with just about everyone as she matched them. She would match their posture, tone, volume, words, values, etc. This operates on the principle that “People like people who are like them.” When you get people to like you, you activate the liking social bias.

3) *Make yourself indispensable by adding massive value.* Whatever your job, do it to the best of your ability so that the contribution you make is of ever-increasing value and so that as you keep doing that, you become more and more indispensable as a trusted and dependable employee. Volunteer when opportunities arise so that you are recognized as a “go to” person for what needs to be done. Develop the reputation of going the second-mile, and of getting things done.

Plan the question in your mind, “How can I add more value?” to the context you are in and set out to add as much value as you can. Make every conversation and interaction increasingly valuable to the others. By adding massive value and doing so repeatedly, you’ll develop a reputation for being a highly valued member in the group— in the organization.

4) *Contribute in a politically astute way.* As you become more and more indispensable, make contributions of ideas, suggestions, etc., but never take credit for the ideas. As those above you say anything close to the idea, comment about what a great idea that is— how brilliant and clever. Let the person take credit for it. Praise them for it. Typically people at higher levels are driven to want recognition and credit, so give them that. It costs you next to nothing to be generous in your praise and recognition.

All of this is *earning the right to influence.* You are becoming trustworthy as you are dependable and valuable to the organization and those above you. You say by this behavior, “I am a team player.” “I do not have a big ego which is in the way.” And with this you are learning to *manage— manage upwards.*

Influence does not depend on position, status, and title. And what you have to give to other can be valuable— even though you do not have the company’s purse or the power to grant a position or title. You have a deeper power— one that enables people to discover more about themselves, to access optimal states, to develop skills, to see opportunities, to make intelligent decisions, etc.

As you do— the more you understand and know about human functioning (needs and wants), values and beliefs, human relationships, etc., the more skill you have in truly listening, supporting, questioning, etc. the more you can manage upwards. It actually will prepare you for any and all other kinds of management. The facilitative skills of coaching are also essential to managing— whether is to downward or upward.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #24**  
**June 5, 2019**  
*Memory Development #1*

## EMPOWERING YOUR MEMORY

While having a good memory is *not* a prerequisite for coaching, it certainly helps. And while we do not explicitly train *memory development* in Meta-Coaching, it is fully implied in the NLP Communication Model. In fact, one of the things that many people discover in learning NLP is that their ability to *think*, learn, and remember is enhanced— sometimes significantly enhanced. How does that work? What implicit training occurs in learning NLP? And how can I, as a Meta-Coach, develop a richer and more robust memory?

### What You Need to Know

The first thing you need to understand is that memory is intimately connected to thinking itself. If in thinking, understanding, comprehending, believing, deciding, etc. you didn't remember anything, then everyday you would be starting all over again. All your learning and understanding would be for naught. What you remember from your reading and studying forms *a reference base* within you that you then use to build upon. And it is how your “mind” is constructed. So thank your brain structures for that— thank your short-term memory that your hippocampus processes and your higher neo-cortex and prefrontal cortex for transferring into long-term memory.

You also need to realize that memory is not a thing, but a process. Veto the idea that you “have” “a memory.” It is not a *thing* that you have. It is a process— a living, dynamic, fluid process that you utilize and maintain. That's why it is not separate from thinking, but an intimate expression of thinking. Your memory is dependent on the quality of your thinking. The process begins with inputting, processing, and encoding— what we call “memory” is *how you retrieve* your knowledge, understanding, and reference points.

### Encoding Excellence

Your “memory” can only be as good as your *encoding*. If you do not code some information very well— you will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to retrieve. This takes us to the way *you represent information*.

- Are you using all of the representational systems— visual, auditory, kinesthetic, language, etc.? Have you developed these systems so that you can use them?
- How distinct do you encode the pictures, sounds, and sensations? Do you use the full range of your cinematic features (sub-modalities)? If not, are you ready to practice doing that? That is, turn your little black-and-white pictures into big colorful movies!
- Do you know how to “snapshot” sights, sounds, and sensations which are all around you to enhance your sensory systems? Are you willing to start doing that? If you want something to be *memorable*, then encode it so it is memorable.

What you experience as your memory is to a great extent a function of your skills to *encode in a memorable way*. Start with making the information *vivid*. If the content of your thinking is *vivid*

to you— clear, colorful, bright, big, full of action, etc.— it will be easy to remember. Code the images so they are specific and detailed. As you notice a person’s semantic space, see it with crystal clarity and imagine using a colorful paint brush to paint some movements with strokes of bright blue, orange, red, yellow, etc. The more intensely visual your code, the more memorable pictures you will have in your mind. To distinguish levels, I sometimes color code the levels— blue for beliefs, gold for values, silver for identity, purple for permission.

Another cinematic feature is making the data that you are encoding *animated*. Like animation cartoons, have things move. Imagine seeing a frame of reference that a person describes and code it in terms of something that moves. “The difficult boss” becomes “a fat 600 pound wrestler” see him trying to sit on your client! Images that move, that are wild, that are bigger-than-life, that are crazy, outrageous, exaggerated, humorous, etc. are images that you will be less likely to remember.

### **Organize the Data for Memory**

Think of your computer. How do you keep track of files that you write or that are sent to you? You need some sort of sorting system so that you can classify things. I have a category for “Coaching,” another for “Training,” one for “Meta-States,” “Psychology,” etc. Then under each category are next-level categories. And I often have 5 to 6 layers of categories. A system like that enables you to keep track of things and know where things belong.

Do the same in order *to think effectively in an organized and structured way*. What things do you want to group together? By creating semantic networks— you have an organizational structure that holds information. Using NLP, I set up— *in my mind*— the natural categories of study:

- Communication Model: Sensory systems, sub-modalities, etc.
- Meta-Model: Language distinctions and questions.
- Meta-Programs: Perceptual lens, thinking patterns.
- Meta-States: States, meta-states, gestalt states, etc.
- Matrix Model: Systems thinking and processes.
- Framing: Mind-Lines, pre-framing, reframing, etc.
- Neuro-Semantics: meaning–performance, quadrants.
- Self-Actualization: pyramid of needs, theory X & Y of leadership, etc.
- And so on.

And why? We do this because of another understanding about memory— short-term memory is severely limited. George Miller’s famous  $7^{+/-2}$  bits of information at any given time explains why we can quickly get overwhelmed and over-loaded. But there’s good news— if you take the 5 to 9 chunks of information and *rehearse them* so that they get connected (associated), the multiple chunks become *one chunk*. The 9 numbers of a phone-number now become one chunk. The 26-letters of the alphabet become one— the alphabet. You can now have a category of the Meta-Model with 21 distinctions.

The way of memorizing in ancient Greece was through *pegging*. This mnemonic device refers to taking a picture of something you know very well, like your house or living room, and attaching various data to different scenes. For your speech introduction connect it to the doorway, the four

points to four locations in the living room, and the closing the door into the kitchen. That kind of thing. There are even peg systems that you can learn (rhymes or pictures for the numbers) by which once you memorize, you can encode lots and lots of information. *Chaining* is another mnemonic device. Because brains go places anyway, you can consciously choose to send your brain in useful directions and create a chain of associations (a syntax between ideas). When I think of a *state*, I immediately go to *meaning* which creates state, and then to *intention*, the backside of meaning. Then to *self*, *power*, *others*, *time*, and *world*. I have all of these dimensions of the Matrix chained (linked) together.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #25**  
**June 12, 2019**  
*Memory Development #2*

## **MORE MEMORY EMPOWERMENT**

By understanding *memory* as a *dynamic process intimately related to thinking*, there are actually lots of things you can do to develop a richer and more robust memory. In the last article I wrote about two things— *encoding* your data to make it more memorable and *organizing* so that you can easily retrieve what you want to remember.

### **Semanticize the Data — Make it Meaningful**

A great way to frustrate yourself is to take material that is random, meaningless, and irrelevant and try to memorize a list like that! This is what memory researchers often do; they ask college students to memorize meaningless lists of things. Yet what do people do in such experiments? They try to find, create, or impose *meaning* on what's essentially meaningless. They intuitively know that memory is enhanced by making something meaningful. The more meaning you give to something, the easier to remember.

There's lots of ways to semanticize data. The most common for almost everyone is to match what you are learning with what you already know. You do that to see if it *fits* into your knowledge bank. This is especially useful for material that you are familiar with and/or understanding [The problem is using this approach when learning something new. It then activates your Confirmation Bias so that you project what you already know onto what's new. You then only confirm your biases and blind-spots. Then you don't learn anything.] Otherwise, especially if you are not learning something new, connecting information with your knowledge base gives it a place (category) to put it in and a network of associations. And that makes retrieval easier.

You can make it meaningful by creating a list of *reasons why* the information is important or that it is important to code it the way you are coding it. Each reason gives more significance to the data. And *more significance* makes it more *emotionally energized*. By way of contrast, when something is trivial, menial, non-sensical— it is hard to remember. Semanticize the data by giving it lots of rich meanings.

### **Believe in Your Memory**

A cultural frame about memory is that “As you get older, you begin to forget a lot and your memory becomes weaker.” Believe that and you send messages and commands to your nervous system that will dis-empower your memory functions. So, do the opposite. Set a belief that “As I get old, my memory is getting better.” That was the belief I set in 1999. I set it because I had learned that memory is strongly affected by our beliefs and I did not want to send dis-empowering messages to my memory functions.

Another belief that dis-empowers is “Memory is automatic so I don't need to do anything about it, in fact, I can't do anything to improve it.” Believe that and you won't take the time and effort to



*rehearse the information you want to remember.* Yet rehearsing is a fundamental memory skill. Look for and rehearse similarities, rehearse links and associations. You've heard that "Repetition is the mother of all learning." *Repetition* is also the mother of memory! So, cultivate the habit of repeating data. I do that in multiple ways. When reading, I use a special marking system, I create my own personalized index, I take notes, I type out the notes, I review the notes, etc. Repetition, as a mnemonic process, strengthens your mind—that is, your thinking capacity due to the Hobbs' neurological principle, "Neurons which fire together, wire together."

Especially do not give yourself such suggestions as, "I'll probably forget this." "I don't have a good memory, I'm terrible with names (numbers, statistics, dates, etc.)." "I'm getting more and more absent-minded." If you're going to give yourself suggestions, suggest this: "I'll think of it in a moment."

### **Use your Lazer-Beam Focus to Eliminate Distractions**

When you are not "all there," but are diverting your attention to other things, your focus weakens so that your encoding will be less robust. Multi-tracking can reduce your competency in learning, remembering, and developing by as much as 30%. Being distracted undermines memory as it contaminates focus. The same thing happens with stress and anxiety and nearly every negative emotional state. These states interfere with focus and so lessens the ability to focus and remember.

The right state for enhancing your memory functions is a focused state of high intentionality. That is, the genius state. Memory, after all, is state-dependent. It works according to the mind-body state that you're in when you are encoding, which is why to re-access that same state helps with retrieval. So, step out of any negative emotional state, take a deep breath, refresh your intentions and purposes, and then for the moments that you are concentrating your focus— be fully present in a calm, delightful, and playful state.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #26**  
**June 19, 2019**

## **COACHING AS A CORRECTIVE CONVERSATION**

In Meta-Coaching we say that the coaching conversation is *not* a normal conversation; it is unique, special, and un-normal. There are many ways in which this is true— here it another way in which it is true.

*A real coaching conversation operates as **a corrective conversation** on a client's thinking, thinking patterns, and understandings of oneself and one's world.*

What triggered me to write that was a comment I read in a coaching book by someone who was part of a group when a coach was brought in to facilitate a group coaching session. He wrote:

“The conversation was a disaster as far as I’m concerned. It went nowhere, it addressed nothing, and it made all of us feel bad.”

Wooooa! In terms of feedback about how something went—that is about as bad a report regarding coaching as a person could get. *Disaster ... went nowhere, addressed nothing, felt bad.* Conversely, coaching is designed to be the kind of conversation that takes a client (or clients) somewhere useful, addresses the issues, solutions, and problems that need to be addressed, and induces us into states of inspiration, persistence, resilience, empowerment, etc. And it does that by *correcting thinking, thinking patterns, and content-understanding of things.*

Now as a Meta-Coach, you have numerous tools for this.

- *The cognitive distortion list.* That’s a key one— 14 ways that *thinking* itself can get seriously distorted and create unnecessary misery. By posting that list, by giving your clients the Cognitive Distortions Information, and by referring to it regularly, you enable your clients to keep updating their thinking from childish thinking patterns to adult thinking patterns.
- *The Meta-Program list.* This list describes the most typical typing patterns that we all use in attempting to understand things and communicate. And it is awareness of them that puts a person in charge of them. To be unaware of them (not mindful) means that they operate outside-of-a-person’s consciousness and, in that case, the person does not even have choice about how one is thinking.
- *The Cognitive Bias list.* This is the list of the seven most prominent categories wherein we have a bias to think in a certain way—a way that often works yet which sometimes does not. In defaulting to the bias, we opt for operating on automatic, unaware of the bias and how our thinking and perceiving may be blinding us to the obvious.

With all of these tools, you have many, many ways of responding in the coaching conversation that can enable and empower your client for more accurate and effective thinking. And that will offer a corrective influence whether your client is aware of it or not. And by the coaching

conversations your client becomes more and more capable of thinking more accurately, precisely, critically, creatively, thoroughly. And that's going to affect *everything*.

“Everything?” you may ask. Yes. And that's because every single aspect of human experience depends on, requires, and is a function of *one's thinking*. You perception, your state, your learning, your understanding, your health, your communications, your relationships, your business, negotiating, selling, influencing, etc. *Truly everything human depends on the kind and quality of your thinking*. Being without content-instincts—you have to learn everything. Whatever you “know,” “understand,” believe, etc. arose from your thinking.

This is equally true with your clients. Everything they experience and want to experience arises as a function of the quality of their thinking. That's what you seek to discover, uncover, and expose in the coaching conversation. And when you hear distortions, deletions, generalizations — when you hear flaws, fallacies, and biases—these are the things to question, to call attention to, to explore with your client. It is *not* about “making the person wrong.” Not at all. It is about identifying flawed or inadequate *thinking* and enabling and empowering the person to step up in his or her thinking.

The fact is—we all learn to think better. No one is a “perfect” thinker and never will be. Operating from a fragile and flawed body— one so easily affected by weather, food, experiences, people, etc., everyone can continually improve. And, given time and training, most people could become *great thinkers*. They could come up with great ideas that build businesses, generate warm and loving relationships, create new inventions and technology that can change the world, etc. And you, as a Coach, can be a vital part of that!

**From: L. Michael Hall**

**2019 Morpheus #27**

**June 26, 2019**

*Originally sent out in January of 2012*

## **ANSWERS TO “THE TEST” AT ACMC**

As you well know, on Day 8 of *Coaching Mastery*, when you return from lunch we have “The Test.” I usually try to raise the fear factor so that people wonder what will happen when they sit for “The ACMC Qualification Assessment Test.” After the last several times, numerous people have asked to get a copy of “The Test” and also get the answers. If you want to test yourself with your basic knowledge of Meta-Coaching, print this off and then get a sheet of paper so you can cover the answers as you go down the page. The first are easy, they get tougher as they go. So here goes.

1) *What are the 4 mechanisms of change for psychologically healthy people?*

Motivation, Decision, Creation, Integration.

2) *What are the 7 core coaching skills?*

Listening, Supporting, Questioning, Meta-Questioning, Inducing State, Receiving and Giving Feedback.

3) *What are the 5 helping professions?*

Consulting, mentoring, therapy or counseling, training, and coaching.

4) *What are the 5 core skills of the helping professions?*

Giving advice for consulting, guiding for mentoring, healing or fixing or reparenting for therapy, teaching for training, and process facilitation for coaching.

5) *What are the 8 matrices in the Matrix Model?*

Three processes matrices: Meaning, Intention and State. And five content matrices: Self, Power, Others, Time, and World.

6) *What are the 4 key actions or activities of a Neuro-Semanticist?*

On the meaning axis— 1) create great, inspiring and robust meaning, 2) eliminate or suspend dis-empowering meaning, and on the performance axis— 3) actualize meaning into performance (the mind-to-muscle process), 4) eliminate old programs that we have learned.

7) *What are 10 basic meta-questions that is in the manual?*

Believe, Value, Permit / Prohibit, Intention, Decide, Identity, Metaphor, Remember, Imagine, Expect.

8) *What are the 7 kinds of coaching conversations?*  
Clarity, Decision, Planning, Experience (or Resource), Change, Confrontation, Mediation.

9) *What are the 5 steps in the process of meta-stating?*  
Access, Amplify, Apply, Appropriate, and Analyze.

10) *What are the 7 models of Meta-Coaching?*  
NLP Communication Model, The Meta-States Model, The Matrix Model, The Axes of Change Model, the Benchmarking Model, The Self-Actualization Model, and the Facilitation Model.

11) *What is the 8<sup>th</sup>. Model?*  
Meta-Programs.

12) *What are the 18 questions of a well-formed outcome, in sequence and stated as questions?*

- 1) What do you want?
- 2) What do you see, hear, feel?
- 3) Why do you want that? What will it get you?
- 4) Where do you want this?
- 5) When is it possible to achieve this?
- 6) With whom will you do this, if anyone?
- 7) What do you have to *do* to obtain this?  
What actions? How many?
- 8) Are *you* able to do this?
- 9) Can you?
- 10) Have you?
- 11) How many parts are there to this action?
- 12) Do you have a plan or strategy?
- 13) Anything stopping you?
- 14) How will you monitor your progress?
- 15) Do you have the external resources?  
Do you have the internal resource you need?
- 16) Is it ecological, holistic, realistic?
- 17) Is it compelling? Attractive?
- 17) Are you going to do this?
- 18) How will you know you have achieved it?

13) *What are the 14 criteria of a well-formed outcome?*

*In italics —*

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1) What do you want?  | <i>Stated positively</i>         |
| 2) What do you see, hear, feel?   | <i>Empirical</i>                 |
| 3) Why do you want that? What will it get you?                              | <i>Compelling</i>                |
| 4) Where do you want this?  | <i>Place</i>                     |
| 5) When is it possible to achieve this?                                     | <i>Time Frame</i>                |
| 6) With whom will you do this, if anyone?                                   | <i>Relationships</i>             |
| 7) What do you have to <i>do</i> to obtain this?<br>What actions? How many? | <i>Actions</i>                   |
| 8) Are <i>you</i> able to do this?  | <i>Intrinsic; self-initiated</i> |

9) Can you?	<i>Capability, skill</i>
10) Have you?	<i>Attempts</i>
11) How many parts are there to this action?	<i>Steps / Stages</i>
12) Do you have a plan or strategy?	<i>Plan</i>
13) Anything stopping you?	<i>Interferences</i>
14) How will you monitor your progress?	<i>Feedback: Milestones</i>
15) Do you have the external resources?	<i>Resources</i>
Do you have the internal resource you need?	
16) Is it ecological, holistic, realistic?	<i>Ecological</i>
3) Is it compelling? Attractive?	<i>Compelling</i>
17) Are you going to do this?	<i>Decision</i>
18) How will you know you have achieved it?	<i>Evidence Procedure</i>

*14) What are the 8 roles of change?*

Challenger and Awakener, Prober and Provoker, Co-Creator and Actualizer, Reinforcer and Tester.

*16) How is Meta-Coaching defined in the manual? (Page 21 in the 2013 manual) What are the 7 distinctions?*

Meta-Coaching is 1) the art of facilitating<sup>1</sup> the processes with an individual or organization<sup>2</sup> 2) to a specific agreed upon outcome<sup>3</sup> 3) by means of a ruthlessly compassionate conversation<sup>4</sup> 4) that gets to the heart of things— the client’s core meanings<sup>5</sup> 5) to identify and mobilize inner and outer resources<sup>6</sup> 6) for generative change 7) to develop, unleash, and actualize the client’s potentials for achieving his or her dreams.<sup>7</sup>

1. Process Facilitating, not consulting, teaching, doing therapy, counseling, mentoring.
2. Applicable for both Individual and group coaching.
3. Using the Well-Formed Outcome process to generate a KPI: Key Performance Indicator for measurement because the client is the expert of his or her goals.
4. An intimate and open relationship created by care (even love) and toughness (confrontation).
5. The frame (interpretation, mental model, meaning) is always the real issue, not the experiences or emotions.
6. People are not broken, but have potential resources for being their best self and actualizing their highest and best.
7. The self-actualization drive within moving clients to become fully alive/ fully human and performing their highest meanings.

*16) How is self-actualization defined using the Meaning—Performance axes?*

Self-actualization is the *synergy* of meaning and performance, when you actualize your highest and best it is a performance that is highly meaningful to you.

*17) What is the form and structure of the Facilitation Model?*

It is structured on the Meaning/ Performance axes with the facilitation skills of listening, supporting, and receiving feedback on the meaning axis and questioning, meta-questioning, and giving feedback on the performance axis and state induction in the middle and a synthesizing factor.

*18) How does Meaning/ Performance Axes define “facilitation” in Meta-Coaching?*

It defines facilitation as having a compassionate challenging style— compassion on the meaning axis for the client and challenging on the performance, or to use the words of Graham Richardson, to be ruthlessly compassionate.

19) *In the Facilitation Model, what skills are on the Meaning axis? On the Performance Axis?*  
Meaning Axis: Listening, Supporting, Receiving Feedback, State Induction  
Performance Axis: Questioning, Meta-Questioning, Giving feedback, State Induction.

20) *What are the two loops of communication? What are their directions?*

There is the horizontal loop of information in from the outside and energy out in response, this is the sensory-based Stimulus-Response loop.

There is the vertical loop of information in from one's own thinking and concluding and energy out into one's body as emotions and responses, this is the evaluative based thinking-feeling loop.

21) *What does it mean to "follow the energy" through the system? What model does that involve?*

It involves the Matrix Model. You "follow" the client's "energy" (thinking, feeling, relating, concluding, meaning-making, etc.) through the Matrix of frames systems by identifying by the person's language (linguistics) and gestures and relate them to the sub-matrice which they indicate have been activated. We can then address that activated matrix by pacing (matching) the language we use with the client's. If someone says, "I just don't think I can do that." they are indicating the Power Matrix ("can do"). If someone says, "That's just not me to do that." they have identified the Self Matrix ("not me").

22) *What does it mean to "hold a frame?"*

To *hold* a frame for a client, repeat back a statement that the client has used and ask him or her to respond to it. "You said, 'if it was possible, you' give it a go,' tell me what you think of that idea of "if it was possible." What does "if it is possible" mean to you?

*Holding* a frame may involve taking something from the client, repeating it, and then using it as a classification or category. "You said it's scary because you might fail. So in your mind "fail" or "failure" is a category that you use to sort out things.

23) *What are the models for each of the 5 parts of the question?*

1) How do you know 2) what to do, 3) when to do it, 4) with whom to do it, and 5) why?

24) *What is semantic space and how is it important in coaching?*

Semantic space refers to how we all externalize our inner mapping, our mental models and representations, and then show it in our actions, gestures, where we look, etc. In the physical space around us we put things— beliefs, future, past, present, scales, etc.

Watching where a person looks and how he or she gestures *and simultaneously* speak enables us to see, recognize, and work with semantic space. The semantic space operates as the person's choreographed world in which he or she lives.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #28**  
**July 3, 2019**

## HEARING THE MATRIX

*If you listen, really listen, you can hear the matrix.* And if you listen with your eyes, really look intensely, you can *see the matrix*. A person's matrix of meaning, intentionality, emotions, and sense of self is there for the seeing and hearing—if you have ears to hear and eyes to see. How are your eyes and ears? Test yourself with the following statement. See what you can detect.

“I really do want to become an effective leader who can inspire the best in people, bring out their best, and use my personal congruency. But I fear that I don't have the capacity to do that. I can't even imagine myself being like that.”

The sentence begins with *intention*. The word “to” reveals that (“I really do want to...”). The *world* is leadership. *Others* are the objective of the desire (“inspire ... bring out the best”). *Self* is spoken in the phrase, “I ... use my personal congruency.” *State*: fear. *Power*: “I don't have the capacity...” “I can't imagine.” *Meaning*: “can't imagine.” *Time*: the word “want to...” imply what the person does not currently have or is.

So much in so little! How did you do? The key is to know the eight dimensions of the matrix and listen for words that indicate those dimensions of the three process areas— state, meaning, intention and the five content areas (all about one's sense of self) — person, powers (resources, skills, competencies), others (relationships), time, and world (domains). As you familiarize yourself with these eight dimensions of the matrix— what is entailed in each, then the words that directly and indirectly refer to them becomes cues and signals about what aspect of the matrix is activated and being referred to as a person speaks.

Next, as you *tune your ears to really hear— listen for emphasis*. Where does the person put his or her emphasis? What word/s does he stress? What word/s does she gesture with a definite movement of hands? What word/s are repeated several times? This will give you a clue about where the person's semantic energy is focused.

“I to become an effective leader...”	— Intention.
“I really do want to an effective leader...”	— Self, Time, Intention (again)
“...and use congruency...”	— Power
“... that I just can't do that.”	— State/Meaning—the block that's interfering
“... but I fear that that.”	— Power

Seeing and hearing the matrix of a person means paying lots of attention to the information the person is selecting, sorting for, giving attention to— which is on the outside. And then attending to the information processing and selecting that the person does on the inside. To discover this requires asking questions and meta-questions. It requires calibrating, testing, checking, etc. From the information going in— then it requires attending to the energy being created in the body (embodiment, state accessing) and then the energy expressed in speech and behavior.



In this example, was the emphasis on the first part of the sentence or the later? Was it on *what he wanted* or *what was stopping him*? Wherever the emphasis— go there. Pace the person, test what he is saying, and then address that. That would be the part of the matrix where the person is focused and where the person is living.

Try this one:

“But I’m not at fault, Bill started it as he always does calling me a goofball and then saying it was just a joke. But it is not a joke, it is an insult and he knows it. I wish I could speak up and tell him to cut it out. But I’ve never been good at conflict, I guess I fear it too much.

Others: Bill.

Power: fault, Bill started it, can’t speak up, can’t tell him, “not good at.”

Meaning: calls me goofball, insult, mind-reading thinking pattern (“he knows it”).

Intention: I wish...

State: insulted, fear of conflict.

This one strikes me as mostly focused on the *Power dimension* of the matrix where the person feels incapable, unable to speak up, unable to handle conflict. That’s where the energy seems to be and where I’d go in response.

When it comes to us humans, the eight categories of the Matrix Model offers you a way to cut through the complexity and focus on one of those eight dimensions. It’s there right in front of you— if you have eyes to see and ears to hear.

\* For an indepth study of the Matrix Model, get the book by that title.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #29**  
**July 10, 2019**

## **THINK “THINKING”**

At the heart of what you do when you coach is offer a *different kind of thinking* than the thinking of your client. A good beginning assumption is that *if* your client could figure out what he wants, how to get it, what’s blocking her, what blindspot is interfering, etc., your client would not be sitting in your coaching chair. Your client is sitting there *precisely because his or her way of thinking* is not empowering, enabling, unleashing, and resolving whatever needs to happen.

If it is the person’s *kind and way and style of thinking* that is *not* working, then as a Meta-Coach, this is your forte. After all, you have been trained with NLP’s Meta-Model, Communication Model and Neuro-Semantics Meaning–Performance Axes, Self-Actualization Quadrants, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and especially the Meta-Programs of perceptual patterns. You of all coaches have been trained to listen for *the kind of thinking which is within and behind the person’s communications*.

This gives you a great advantage over all other Coaches. Focusing on and recognizing your client’s *thinking patterns* tells you precisely *how* your client has created his or her model of the world and what you can do as an intervention. You do listen for the person’s *thinking patterns*, right? Yes? No?

My recommendation, if you’re serious about coaching, and especially if you ever want to move to the PCMC level, is to practice listening for *thinking patterns*. How do you do that? Here’s some ideas.

*Begin by learning and listening for the basic meta-programs.*

When you do this, don’t aim for the 60 listed in the book, *Figuring Out People*. Instead aim to thoroughly notice the basic 15 that we introduce at ACMC. Take them one by one and learn the language and the external expressions of each one until you can do so automatically.

*Familiarize yourself with the Cognitive Distortions.*

These are in the ACMC manual. They are also in the handouts that we send out and encourage you to give to your clients. Enlarge one for your office so that you and your clients can see it during the coaching session. In that way you can call attention to any cognitive distortions used repeatedly by your client.

*Familiarize yourself with the seven categories of Cognitive Biases.*

If you don’t know them, here are the seven basic biases: Understanding, Availability, Confirmation, Consistency, Experiential, Social, Context. These short-cuts to thinking sometimes work, yet because we’re biased to default to them—they dangerously threaten to undermine the quality of one’s thinking and create blind-spots.

Then, when you are practicing *listening for thinking patterns*, plant these questions in your mind (and write them down so you keep refreshing your memory):

- What *kind* of thinking is my client using right now?
- Is my client's *thinking style* at this very moment helpful or unhelpful, resource of unresourceful, ecological or unecological?
- Which of the Meta-Model questions can call out this particular thinking pattern?
- How aware does my client seem of the thinking pattern that he is using right now?
- Is my client actually *thinking* or is he on automatic?

Finally, conduct a running awareness on your own thinking patterns. How are you thinking? What kind of thinking styles and skills do you use? How often do you step back and *think* about your thinking?

- To what extent might my client be defaulting on thinking and/or seeking to avoid real thinking?

Underneath (and within) the things that your client says are *thinking patterns*. They determine and govern her communications. They also show up in the semantic gestures that he expresses. And when you get to the thinking pattern— you usually have one of the *leverage points of change* in your client's matrix. It's the thinking pattern that is most likely to be the source of difficulty for your client. That is, it is *how* she is thinking more than *what* she is thinking.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #30**  
**July 17, 2019**

## **TELL ME ABOUT YOUR QUESTIONS**

One of behaviors under the category of *Listening*, and one at the level of three (3), is “hearing a client’s questions.” What makes that important is that when a client poses a question to himself, it is probably an area of actual and genuine *thinking* within that person. And, there are often some attempted answers which the person has tried or at least considered. So when you hear the question, invite the person to respond by saying, “And your answer is...?”

Now what happens about half of the time is that the client does not even hear her own question. So you have to call attention to the question. You repeat the sentence (an acknowledgment) so that the person hears himself and then you again say, “And your answer is...” When she says that she doesn’t know, you don’t leave it and move on. No. Instead suggest that she guess. “Well, take a guess. What would you guess might be an answer? Any ideas?”

Given that *we think via questions*, questions that your clients pose are like open doors to the person’s inside world. That’s why we encourage you to *listen for their questions*. But that’s not the only thing you can do to get through that door. From time to time in your coaching, you can call for a meta-moment and invite your client to notice if there’s any questions in the back of his mind that he’s not externalizing.

“Given what you just said. What was the question in the back of your mind which led you to say that?”

“Given that you did what you just described, what was the question that led to that behavior?”

A person’s internal silent questions reflect that person’s thinking and thinking patterns. So when you call attention to that person’s questions, you are beginning to get back to the thinking. And usually, *the kind of thinking that creates a problematic situation* is not the kind of thinking that can solve it. What’s needed is a new and different and better kind of thinking. And when you get that, you will also get a new and better questions to answer.

This goes to the “core” question that we use in Trainers’ Training. There we ask, “If your presentation is the answer to a question— what’s the question?” This originated from Leslie Cameron-Bandler who invented the Virtual Question.

“What are the unsuspected personal questions that frame your reality, the knowing of which could help you understand your limitations— and transcend them?”

Given that questions direct attention and program a listener in terms of where to focus, as a Meta-Coach, you will want to make your client’s internal questions explicit. When you do that, it enables her to be *meta* to them, rather than being imprisoned by them. Most of the time, clients

are not only *unaware* of the questions in their minds and how they are directing her attention and energy. They are also *unaware* of the thinking patterns which are driving those questions. Clients often have all sorts of unresourceful questions in their minds— questions that they aren't even aware that they are asking themselves. For these, many are even ashamed of saying them out-loud. Yet it is usually transformative when they do.

- Why am I always doing this to myself?
- Why can't I lose weight like others do?
- Why can't I get people to understand my ideas? They are just stupid, aren't they?
- What's wrong with her that she says such idiotic things?
- How can I show him that I'm right?
- Is he trying to blame me again? What I can do to put him in his place?

Where there is a question, there is a *kind of thinking*. And it's the *thinking* that is the key to personal development and transformation. And as a Meta-Coach, you know how to call out the hidden internal questions. So go there. Take your client there. Yes, it will make your coaching personal, emotional, and intense. It will also make your coaching *real*, and when it's real, that's when transformation occurs.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #31**  
**July 24, 2019**

## **WHEN YOU DEAL WITH A SHORT-TERM THINKER**

Short-term thinkers— these are the people who focus on the short-term benefits, gains, and results when going after a goal. This would be a good thing except that they are so focused on the short-term, they do so to the exclusion of including the long-term goals, objectives, consequences, and symptoms. This is what, in turn, creates some really significant problems. The way they evaluate things are premature. Consequently, they fail to consider *what else* is and will occur due to the actions and/or choices that they are making. They evaluate by this quarter's results or return-on-investment and fail to balance that off against the longer-term results.

In business this results in an organization constantly changing procedures, plans, and strategies and this makes the organization susceptible to the sarcastic criticism of going after yet another "fad of the month." Now a key assumption behind short-term thinking and one which promotes it is *linear causation thinking*. This refers to seeing the world as comprised of simple cause-effect relationships. Oh, that the world was that simple! And that assumption then seduces us into another assumption—that of thinking that we can predict the future. This is where so many middle-managers fall short.

In an effort to gain respect, to establish their own credibility, to be seen as the "go to person" in the organization, many middle-managers over-trust their ability to predict the future as they engage in short-term thinking and making decisions with that criteria. As a short-term thinker, they ask such questions as:

- "What's the return on investment if you coach this person?"
- "What increase in productivity can we see this quarter if you do this training?"
- "How will this team be better able to reach their sales targets if you coach the team?"

But there's some major problems with these questions. The assumption behind them is that *results can be quickly seen and detected*. Now with machines and computers that may be true. But with people—that is definitely *not* true. It is not true with human capital — intelligence, creativity, emotional intelligence, relationships, etc. With human capital, things take time— time to learn, to develop, and to integrate.

This time distinction is essential for anyone who works to develop human capital. Any manager, leader, coach, consultant, therapist, etc. who aims to develop human potential has to learn to think long-term. And that's because the underlying processes of thinking, learning, incorporating, implementing, growing, becoming, etc. all involve time, and usually lots of time. Will that eventuate in greater competence, productivity, and results? Yes, it will *if* the development is allowed to continued. Yes, *if* it is nurtured, supported, given the right environment, etc.

Obviously this *yes* is conditional and therefore probabilistic. It is this *yes* that we work with as trainers and coaches— we can say *yes* to the question about Return-on-Investment *conditioned* on ongoing and continuous learning.

Imagine asking a first grade teacher the previous questions about the children they are teaching:

- “What’s the return on investment from teaching this child?”
- “What increase in productivity can we see this quarter if the child passes?”
- “How will this group of kids help reach the school’s targets?”

Such questions are obviously ridiculous, are they not? And why? They are ridiculous because we all know that the human capital and potential in the first graders is going to take time. Lots of time. Twelve years later, the first graders will be graduating high school, another four years, college. And for more advanced skills, even more years of training and preparation. Give all of that, how silly do you now find it for a manager, or anyone in a position of needing to develop human capital, to ask, “What’s the return on investment if you teach, consult, train, or coach someone?”

Obviously, *the investment is for the long-term*. This is the shift that we have to make, from short-term thinking to long-term thinking; from results and product thinking to *process thinking*. And it is this kind of thinking that trips up so many leaders and managers. It may even trip you up. If you have not cleaned that kind of thinking out of your system, you may think that way or be tempted to buy into this kind of thinking when offered it by a business leader.

Here then is a caveat: Beware of short-term thinking when dealing with the development of human beings! As systems (mind-body-emotion systems) human beings live within multiple systems (family, business, ethic, cultural, religious, etc.). And that means that *time* plays a significant role as information enters into the system, is processed, is mobilized, is integrated, and is transformed into energy for actions.

Check out [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) — search for **NSTT Bali Indonesia 2019** and you will have lots of choices about seeing the evening presentations.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #32**  
**July 31, 2019**

## **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

Here at NSTT Bali during the Leadership Summit, the International Leadership Team recently discussed the following question. I sent this out to the Trainers Egroup and then thought that this would also equally apply to Meta-Coaches.

“How do we integrate two seemingly contradictory drives? First, the drive of any and every trainer to run a profitably training / coaching business and second, the drive to be a part of a collaborative community?”

The report from many places around the world is that for some, these drives seem to be in conflict. Or at least there is a lack of understanding in many people regarding how to integrate the two drives. Numerous concerns arise from these. Here are a few that we discussed:

- If I have a client, someone I introduced NLP or Neuro-Semantics to, what do I do or say if another trainer “steals” him away from my training?
- If I invite another trainer to come in and co-train with me, how can I prevent him or her from taking my clients away from me?
- If a person wants to do training with me, but that person was introduced to NLP or Neuro-Semantics by someone else, do I need to pay a “finders fee” to that first trainer?
- If I pay a commission (say 20%) to another trainer who first introduced someone into this community, how long do I have to do that?

As you can tell from these questions, these could be some pretty “hot” issues— concerns that could result in a lot of unproductive conflict if not handled very well. Let’s begin the process of *thinking things through* by beginning with some basic principles. This is the value of principles. When there are conflicting positions and sides, basic principles, and a hierarchy of principles, can help us navigate otherwise confusing issues and questions.

### **Principles for Managing Collaborative Relationships**

*Principle #1: No one “owns” anyone.*

People who we contact and get interested to learn NLP and Neuro-Semantic do not belong to us. They are *not* ‘our’ participants in some kind of “ownership” way. We do not “possess” them. They are human beings who have the right to choose who to work with and who not to work with. This idea of “owning a client” assumes scarcity and control— two unhelpful concepts when dealing with people. We need to stop talking about “my” clients and “my” participants.

*Principle #2: We honor the work of others.*

Complementing the first principle is the principle of recognizing and honoring the



investment that someone makes in marketing, influencing, and reaching people and then bringing them into trainings and seminars. While those individuals *do not belong* to that person, at the same time we need to recognize and honor them for what they have done. This means that we recognize the relationship of the influencing person on the new person. They have spent effort, time, and money to bring this person into the field of NLP/ Neuro-Semantics. What does this mean practically?

- We *do not* go to the influencing person's seminars or trainings and talk privately to the new people about coming to our trainings. That would be unethical.
- We inform the influencer that the new person has approached us about coaching or trainings. In that way we keep the communication channel open. And we establish a relationship that is open and above board with no hidden agendas.
- We pay a "finder's fee" (20%) to the influencer for the first two (2) times that person attends one of our trainings or coaching programs. That gives the influencer some passive income and recognizes them.

*Principle #3: We are all working for the same vision and objective.*

While we all have separate businesses and companies, these are under a larger umbrella—the umbrella of credibility which Neuro-Semantics (ISNS) provides. In this we are not competitors, we are collaborators. When one of us creates positive marketing and trainings, it enriches all. The brand of Neuro-Semantics (or Meta-Coaching) gets richer and more robust and that is valuable for everyone. When people operate from a frame of mind of collaboration, they see each collaborator as a business partner and each person's strengths and gifts as complements of their own.

*Principle #4: When we think long-term, collaboration is good for everyone.*

It is the short-term perspective that activates fear and scarcity and then trying to control those who we think we "own." Short-term thinking is also one of the key problems of most managers and leaders. Conversely, it is long-term thinking that puts things in perspective and enables us to see that we are developing the brand and the capacity of the larger community. And as "when the tide comes in, all boats rise," so by developing the larger context in an area (city and country), everybody has more clients.

I'd suggest integrate these principles into your thinking and responding. They will enable you to *be* the collaborative leader that you can be. It will enable you to create healthy collaborative partners with others. From the principles you can then set up healthy contractual arrangements with other trainers— contracts that will reflect the principles of collaboration.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #33**  
**August 7, 2019**

## **PARENTING #101**

### **A New Neuro-Semantic Training**

I don't remember when or why I first did the "*Parenting 101*" introduction. I don't even remember who asked for that. But once I did it, we discovered that it was a good introduction not only to Parenting, but to NLP and Neuro-Semantics. As it turns out, we in Neuro-Semantics have a lot to say about parenting. After all, when we train and/or coach, we inevitably come up against the results of good and bad parenting.

This was originally discovered in NLP, but there was very, very little that was applied to parenting. How *parenting* arose was mostly when some consequence of ineffective parenting created a pattern that persists in an adult which, in turn, blocks his effectiveness as an adult. In NLP that led to such patterns as *Personal Change History*, *The Decision Destroyer*, etc. Among common examples of parenting errors are the following statements which in Meta-States led to such patterns as *Power Zone*, *the Pleasure Pattern*, *Meta-States Self*, etc.

<b>Parenting Error</b>	<b>Consequence in an Adult</b>
• "Shut up! Kids are to be seen, not heard."	Can't speak up, fear of asserting one's own thoughts and opinions.
• "Don't you dare say 'no' to your father."	Can't say "no" and stand by it. Timidity to assert one's own boundaries.
• "Now share with your sister. Saying it is yours is being selfish."	Can't feel an "ownership" of what belongs oneself.
• "Get that smile off your face. You're in school ... be serious."	Can't enjoy learning or simple pleasures.

It was Richard Bandler who once said regarding the *Personal Change History* pattern, "It's never too late to have a happy childhood." The reason it is never too late is because *memory* is a construct and a choice, we are all *remembering* things in a certain way. If it is not resourceful, we can change the code. We can alter the memory so that we code and frame it in a way that allows us to have learned from our experiences and move on.

When I first began *Parenting #101* I focused on some of the myths of parenting that dis-orient some people and on some of the most basic parenting errors. Perhaps the most dangerous of all the myths is that "children are little adults." If someone believes that, they miss the whole *developmental process* that children go through— mental developments, social, interpersonal, sexual, etc. And the failure to take that into account means a parent will completely fail to deal with a child *as a child* and *on a child's terms*. This, in turn, is one of the primary causes for child abuse, neglect, and trauma.

As *Parenting 101* has developed, I detailed with every new edition more and more of the facts

about a child's mind and emotions, sense of self, social sense of self, skills, etc. And more and more we have had good size crowds —70, 120, 200, etc. as parents and promoters have discovered that there is a lot more to parenting than most of us ever suspected. In fact, what's demanded of a parent is astonishing when you think about it.

- A parent is to be a developmental psychology understanding the inner workings of a child's mind and emotions.
- A parent is to be a full-time attendant for the first several years given the child is nearly completely dependent.
- A parent has to be a lover par excellent— loving without expecting anything in return. In the first years the baby can't even hold a decent conversation with you! You have to love unconditionally no matter how you feel or what time of night it is.
- A parent has to be a teacher, scholar, educator answering questions that the little curious one or ones inevitably ask.
- A parent has to be a chauffeur, body guard, and policeman as you keep the child safe and secure and transport the child to school and other places.
- A parent has to be a sociologist understanding the social development stages as the child reaches puberty and begins to differentiate from family to peer groups.
- A parent has to be a systems thinking able to balance kindness and firmness, love and discipline, holding on and letting go.

Now if you are going, "Oh my God!" remember, that is the short list. There's more. And oh my, the number of skills you need, the range and flexibility of states you need, and the patience. Yes, the patience. Lots and lots of patience.

*Parenting #101* is now both a half day or full day *Introduction* (that's what I do). It is also a 2 or 3 day training for Parents and there's enough material for more days than that. It could easily be used for a 2 or 3 hour evening workshop that a trainer or coach could present, say every Tuesday night. And there's a big need for it. I will describe more of the details in the next post — for those of you who are training and/or coaching with parents.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #34**  
**August 14, 2019**

## **PARENTING #101**

### **You Parent as You Were Parented!**

Would like to hear something really scary? *You will tend to parent as you were parented.* Now go ahead and scream and get it out of your system. That's right, and a little more screaming, and that should do it. Yes, *what you received* is generally speaking, *what you have to give.* And give it you will. This is why and how really good parenting tends to pass on through the generations and why and how really bad parenting also dominates in families.

This also explains why so many people wake up in their 20s and 30s saying to their own disbelief: "I have become my mom!" "I have become my dad!"

"I swore I would *never* do to my kids what was done to me, but now I hear myself say things and see myself do things that I never thought I'd see or hear. What's going on? I don't understand why I act as I do or get so irritated!"

Not only that but things actually get worse because *how you make sense of your experiences during childhood have a profound effect on how you parent your own children.* We can easily explain this in NLP and Neuro-Semantics. Here's the explanation.

We are all born with a profoundly under-developed brain— yet one with tremendous potentials. It is a brain which has no innate content understanding of things. That's why it has to develop. And it develops *in the context of our early home environment.* That's why early experiences are so impactful. Like any "first impression," your first impressions about human life, love, and liberty come from your experiences with your caregivers— mom and dad. In other words, how they *related* to you, *interacted* with you, *nurtured* you, *cared for* you, *communicated,* *treated* you, etc. that was the first context in which you learned what you learned.

How was it for you? Studies in *Attachment Theory* in the past three decades have established some basic attachment patterns that are typical by parents. After the categorizing of these patterns, research has traced the effect of these attachment patterns in people's lives. As a result, we now understand that the patterns of attachment profoundly influences a person's well-being, mental health, social intelligence, memory, resilience, learning capacity, and much more. What are the categories?

- *Secure attachment.* A bonding pattern of love and support, parents giving compassion, patience, time, etc. Parents able to "read" the infant's signals, respond empathetically.
- *Avoidant attachment.* A non-bonding pattern. Parents essentially not available emotionally or mentally, preoccupied, busy, stressed-out, etc.
- *Ambivalent attachment.* An on-and-off bonding pattern. Parents sometimes available, sometimes not. Sometimes highly intrusive, sometimes completely dis-connected.

- *Disorganized attachment.* A dis-orienting non-bonding pattern. Parents themselves unstable and therefore frightening to the child.

These categories are in Daniel Siegel's work, *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are* (1999/ 2008) which he took from the original work of John Bowlby, a British psychoanalyst and psychiatrist. Later he wrote a simpler book, *Parenting From the Inside-Out* (2004). And at the heart of that work is his point about *meaning*. If you are unable to "make sense" of the experiences of your childhood, and have leftover issues or unresolved issues, then there are things that can (and will) get in your way of parenting.

*Translation:* You have got to get yourself healthy and present in order to do a good job parenting. Otherwise all sorts of things in children (their dependence, neediness, vulnerability, exploration, incessant questioning, complaining, crying, etc.) can and will *trigger* you to respond in an automatic way.

"When we become parents, we bring with us issues from our own past that influence the way we parent our children. Experiences that are not fully processed may create unresolved and leftover issues that influence how we react to our children." (2004, p. 1)

Talk about a great big motivation for *Parenting #101 Training!* That's it. Due to our infant brain at birth and our childhood brain as we grow up— *we make sense of things the best we can with a child's brain from the experiences that we have.* That's why highly stressful experiences, and worse, traumatic experiences, for a child have such a profound effect. But that's not all. There's something even worse. Because the child's brain is just developing, all "memory" in the first two years is "implicit memory." No wonder the child will not remember it and will not remember how she encoded it. This will also be generally true for the first 5 to 7 years of life.

What the child will have is an implicit non-conscious mental map deep within of "how life is," "how he is," "what people are like," etc. And because it is non-conscious, it will operate as an automatic program making that child, when he grows up, *reactionary as an adult.* It is in this way that the cognitive distortions are still so much alive and well deep inside the mind of the new parent and ready to be activated by the annoying things kids do. No wonder that adult who can seem so mature and grown up in so many aspects of life, can be unbelievably *triggered* to behave so badly at home.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #35**  
**August 21, 2019**

## **PARENTING #101**

### **Bonding for Healthy Attachment**

What does it mean to *parent*, to *raise healthy children*, to be a “good” parent? While we can answer that question in lots of ways— at the heart of parenting is *bonding*. It is to connect and to bond with the infant or child so that there is a healthy attachment between parent and child. Now the good thing about this is that every child is genetically wired to seek this attachment. Every child seeks proximity to the parent— seeks to be soothed, feed, nurtured, loved, stroked, embraced, etc. And this will occur if the parent is mindfully present to the child— compassionate, caring, patient, understanding, etc.

Ah, but here begins a problem. Young parents are often busy, stressed, impatient, and do not understand much of what’s going on within the mind and emotions of the infant or small child. Many young parents are not ready for the infant at all. Many times they are hardly out of their own childhood. And others are in a place of life where figuring out who they are, what they are about, what to do (go to college, start a career, develop some quality skills), how to pay the bills, etc. are the most demanding, and even over-whelming, questions they are facing. And now there’s a baby?

All of that has led me to say for many years, *people need to be licensed before they become parents*. Parenting is not for the uninformed, the stressed-out, the preoccupied, or the psychologically unwell. No. Parenting is for those who are informed about what parenting requires, for those with the time, energy, and patience, for those who have completed the unresolved issues of their own past, for those who have learned how to be present to another, empathetic, and disciplined. And that’s a lot!

Generally speaking, *it takes a lot of self-development and self-awareness to be ready and able to be fully present for the demands of bonding for healthy attachment*. Those who train as Coaches learn Coach Training in ACMC and learn the challenge it requires, that it requires a basically psychologically healthy person in order to *listen, support, receive feedback, and manage your own state*. These are the requirements if you want to bond with a client as a professional coach.

If that’s the case in handling a grown-up client, imagine being able to do that with a screaming infant at 3 a.m.—a little person who can’t talk, can’t manage his state, who doesn’t know what he needs or wants, who can’t tell you and who is screaming. Truth be told— parenting is a very demanding profession and one that most of us enter into without any (or very little) preparation.

Let’s begin by seeking to understand the psychology of attachment for an infant and small child. The child’s *attachment* to mom and dad (or any other care-giver) provides the context for safety, protection, and love. *Attachment* is what enables the little person to begin to create implicit

memory maps that says, “The world is a safe place,” “I am valued and loved unconditionally,” “There is someone there for me,” “I am free to grow and learn and explore,” etc. This describes *the secure attachment pattern*.

*Attachment* also enables the child’s developing brain to rely on, depend on, and use the parent’s brain for development. That is, the way the parent talks, communicates, attends, interacts, etc. with the child gives the child the kind of experiences that provides a model for his own brain. Parenting thinking patterns intimately play a developmental role in the child’s developing mind. The child’s mirror neurons, in part, makes this happen. Genetics only play a partial role in brain-body development, *experience* plays the other part of the formula — and perhaps the most significant part. This is called epigenesis which refers to how gene expression is a function of the experiences (or environmental contexts) in which we learn what we learn. That’s why the experience of attachment plays such a profound role in the child’s mental, emotional, social, and spiritual development. And we can see this most clearly by the problematic forms of attachment.

### **Attachment Patterns**

- *Secure attachment.* A bonding pattern of love and support, parents giving compassion, patience, time, etc. Parents able to “read” the infant’s signals, respond empathetically.
- *Avoidant attachment.* A non-bonding pattern. Parents essentially not available emotionally or mentally for the child. They are preoccupied, busy, stressed-out, etc.
- *Ambivalent attachment.* An on-and-off bonding pattern. Parents sometimes available, sometimes not. Sometimes highly intrusive, sometimes completely disconnected. The child cannot depend on them due to inconsistency.
- *Disorganized attachment.* A dis-orienting non-bonding pattern. Parents themselves unstable and therefore frightening to the child. They scream at the child, hit, beat, abuse, etc.

When a parent is not there, the child *learns* a pattern of avoidance and learns to *dismiss* connection with parent and then others. With the ambivalence pattern, the child learns to be anxious, unsure, insecure. With the disorganized pattern, the child finds the world and especially the social world chaotic and crazy. In these ways, we fail our children, fail parenting #101. Here also is an opportunity for every Meta-Coach.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #36**  
**August 25, 2019**

## **WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT PCMC?**

In announcing that the only place this year where we will conduct PCMC is Hong Kong, one Meta-Coach wrote and asked:

“What’s so special about PCMC? Isn’t it just more of the same? Unless a person is planning to make Coaching their fulltime business, what would be the value of attending PCMC?”

Here is a common misunderstanding yet an understandable one. And there is some truth in the fact that *Professionally Certified Meta-Coach* is the next level after ACMC where any Meta-Coach would want to achieve if you plan to make Coaching your central competency and focus. That’s why we have added such skills as pattern detection, framing, and tasking to the basic seven skills. Yet beyond that, there are many, many other reasons for attending the PCMC training.

*PCMC level communicating quickly gets to the heart of the matter.* Conversations are always about something, but what. Isn’t it amazing that a client can appear, put money down, begin a coaching program, and yet still be confused or unclear on what he really wants? In Meta-Coaching we use acknowledgments along with testing and checking questions to hone in on the subject. “So this is about X, is that right?” “If I’m not mistaken, you are wanting Y. Is that accurate?”

Coaches-in-training often spend a lot of time, perhaps the whole session, trying to *get the subject*. Isn’t that amazing? Well human beings can be their own worst enemy in terms of having multiple frames and desires, and conflicting beliefs and understandings. They can be convoluted in their thinking and indecisive in making a commitment. It’s one of the reasons for getting a coach! At the PCMC training, we provide lots of exercises for “getting the subject” and locking it in and doing so by cutting through the periphery. As a communicator, this requires more directness, the ability to interrupt effectively, and catching semantically loaded words, phrases, sentences in the moment.

*PCMC takes the heart of Coaching— Conversation— to a whole new level.* What makes coaching itself so special is that you engage a person in “a conversation like none other, an intimate, personal, and challenging conversation that gets to the heart of things” in order to facilitate learning, development, discovery, transformation, etc. That’s what a person *begins* to learn in Module III (ACMC), at the PCMC level, this becomes the critical focus. To that end, the first three days of training focus on being able to detect the client’s frames of meaning and then shift the conversation to those frames. Here the idea that “the person is not the problem, the frame is always and only the problem” governs and guides the coaching conversations.



When you attend PCMC you will discover afresh, or as never before, the essential nature of being able to hear your client's frames. That's a whole new level of listening— frame listening. From there, you will begin to develop the skill of framing and reframing via your questions and explorations. And again, that takes the conversation to a whole new level.

*PCMC deepens the personal connection of Coaching so it moves both coach and client.* In Meta-Coaching we constantly emphasize that if you can't connect (support, match, listen) you can't coach. Establishing a trusting relationship is first and foremost. Actually this is true for all relational conversations— with your loved one, your children, friends, etc. With the foundation of NLP, you already know about calibrating to the other's state, at the PCMC level your calibration skills enable you to detect and catch "coachable moments." This is about the timeliness of your responding.

The degree to which any client is *open* to self-discovery, going inside to her matrix of meaning, is always a matter of degree. Some are very open, some are not so much. Some are even somewhat closed. Yet in any intense and personal coaching conversation, there are typically a few moments where a person suddenly and briefly *opens up*. That's a "coachable moment." Yet being able to recognize it in the moment and respond to it, ah, that's the art of this skill.

### **Two Different Trainings in the One Training**

There are two radically different training experiences in the PCMC training.

- In the first three days, the training fits into the general format of presenting a skill, demonstrating it, setting up exercises for practicing it, and then debriefing. We cover something like 12 to 15 practices in those three days— *lots of hands-on practice and feedback.*
- On days four through six the training shifts to *being in the coaching room and observing a real coach and client at work.* These are the "on the stage" assessments, as ACMC coaches who think they are ready who take on a "real" client (sometimes people from off the street who never heard of NLP or coaching).

During that *live experience* I (or another Meta-Coach Trainer) will intervene if necessary to facilitate the session and then provide 15 to 30 minutes of feedback after a 45 to 60 minute session. Many, if not most, observers say that they learn much more in the assessment training sessions than in the traditional training. Often those in the audience are "benchmarking" the skills they are observing to see what they can detect. And there's always time for questions from them at the end.

PCMC training offers a great experience for everyone, it's one of my favorite trainings. It is an advanced training and it turns out advanced coaches— coaches who can and will transform thousands of people. Come and join us.

From: L. Michael Hall  
 2019 Morpheus #37  
 August 28, 2019

## PARENTING #101

### Parenting for Esteem, not Shame

When it comes to the emotional state of *shame*, all “shame” is not the same. There is healthy shame and there is toxic or dysfunction shame. On the positive side, shame as an emotion is one of the social emotions that helps us to become socialized, even civilized. It occurs along the continuum of one’s awareness of being seen. Being seen and observed by others typically evokes a feeling of self-consciousness, and at first (as a child) we connect that with feeling vulnerable, with having our weaknesses seen. Then in our teenage years, we connect it without a sense of awkwardness and judgment. Obviously, *being seen by others* can be positive or negative. Yet either way, the person seen must have a strong enough sense of self (ego-strength) to handle it and that usually means sufficient self-awareness and social skills.

Vulnerability — Humanity						
Rejected	Shame	Embarrassment	Observed	Praised	Proud of	Valued

Sometimes when we are seen, and we feel self-conscious, it divides our attention and awareness to such a degree that we cannot function very well at all. We become awkward and clumsy. This occurs when we become nervous when we speak in public, whenever the spotlight is suddenly put on you, and/or when you suffer performance anxiety. What we’re afraid of is judgment— the other person or persons’ critical evaluation of us, of what we’re doing, of our ability, etc. Often we even join the chorus by adding our own judgments against ourselves.

What we typically feel in such a situation is *embarrassed*. We’re aware of being watched and so we feel embarrassed and self-conscious. If what someone catches us doing is socially unacceptable, we feel ashamed. Shame shouts that you have violated a social law, a culturally acceptable way of acting, talking, or relating. This is a healthy sense of shame. It is about behavior in a social context. “You should be ashamed of yourself for doing that!” Given this, let’s create another scale, let’s put shame on a continuum of “sense of doing wrong.”

“Sense of Doing Wrong”	Social wrong	Interpersonal wrong	Moral wrong
Feeling bad about a situation	Embarrassed	Ashamed Shame	Conscientious Guilt Pseudo-Guilt

This shame is an essential emotion for children to experience in order to learn to self-regulate their states of mind and emotion and their behavioral impulses. Yet although this form is inevitable and necessary, parents should not use it intentionally as a strategic form of parenting and that’s because it is too easily misunderstood by children.

The not-so healthy form of shame comes when we shame a person for *being who he or she is*. This shame addresses and attacks the person rather than the behavior. If we *humiliate a child* so

that he feels unworthy, less than others, an inferior human being, we shame that person, not behavior. As a result, one of the interesting things that happens (and this is cross cultural with most groups), the child veers his eyes away from our glance. In fact, often a child is then unable to hold eye contact when in a state of dysfunctional shame.

In *The Developing Mind* and *Parenting Inside-Out*, Daniel Siegel appeals to Attachment Theory to say this about shame. Shame of self *as a person* is “the emotion evoked when a child’s arousal state is not attuned to by the parent.” By this he means that it arises in a child when the child is in a strong activation of the parasympathetic system (the “stop” emotional system, sense of being wrong, doing wrong) while simultaneously in the very face of a highly charged sympathetic system (the “go” system). As this confuses the child, the child tends to think that he is wrong.

Schore proposes that “not connecting with a child’s active bid for attunement leads to shame.” Here a child is trying to connect with parents and if what the child does (behavior) isn’t recognized and in fact, treated as an irritant, the child will experience toxic shame. Here as parents, we may misread the child’s behavior and then treat the child as doing something wrong. But “shame on you!” in this context is taken as against the child as a person. Here the child learns something— namely, *that he is bad or wrong*. Children naturally personalized (a cognitive distortion) and so a child can develop an understanding, belief, decision, and identity as being inherently wrong, inherently bad, as flawed. This is toxic shame.

Because this distinction can be subtle for a child, as a parent you have to be explicit and crystal clear.

“You as a person are just fine. You are unconditionally loved and valued. Now when you do X, that’s not-okay behavior.”

Here it is up to the parent to make this distinction and then *live this distinction in the way one talks with a child*. If you *esteem* them as a person, a human being, unconditionally, then social shame becomes entirely about behavior— social behavior.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #38**  
**September 4, 2019**

## WRITING A CASE STUDY

Several Meta-Coaches who are planning to attend the PCMC training in Hong Kong have recently asked about writing a case study, one sent a case study that she wrote out, and two others have asked that I give an example of a case study. As I don't have any of my own, I sat down and wrote the following. While it is not from an actual coaching client, it very well could be. The purpose here is to provide a way for you to think about your coaching sessions and how to write up a case study so that you can learn to think in terms of structure, patterns, frames, processes, interventions, etc.

### Session #1

**Client:** John Johnson, 28, married, father of two sons, engineer, BS in engineering.

**Presenting Outcome:** To get clear about career, should I return to University, not happy with job, frustrated about not being able to talk about the job with immediate manager.

**WFO Questions:** Subject— career. Then Inability to Communicate, then outcome was overcome fear of saying the wrong thing. Turned into positive statement: courage and freedom to know my own thoughts and speak them out.

- Spent 40 minutes on WFO. John's speech was convoluted at first, went back and forth trying to figure out what he really wanted. Chose "Speak up to Manager" but when explored *why is that important*, it turned out to not be that important.
- John made an aside comment, "if only I wasn't so afraid." I asked, "Is that what we should really talk about?" He became activated with that, asked him to turn it around and state in positive— "to have the courage and freedom to know my own thoughts and speak them out."
- Checked Q-3: *why is that important?* And found lots of hidden values.
- Q-7: He did not know what to do to get the courage and freedom. Guesses? He guessed that maybe he needed to release the fears of what others thought, release need to be perfect.
- Q-12: He agreed that he needed a strategy or plan to reach his outcome.
- Rest of the WFO Q refined the outcome.

**Intervention:** With the last 20 minutes, I focused on his fears— how did he know he was afraid of other's thoughts, being imperfect and how intense. First was at 7 to 8 level; second was 9. He said "the need to be perfect is what is stopping me." Asked, "Who took permission away from you to be imperfect?" He said his dad always pushed him to do better. Ran permission – frame behind that popped up, "What if I disappoint him?" Held question and let him answer his own question. "Well I guess he will be disappointed." Used Q-8 again and that gave him some relief.

**Tasking:** Run the permission to be imperfect 10 times at top of each hour until you feel fully free to be imperfect. Write a list of all the fearful things that will happen if he doesn't please everybody's thoughts about him.

## Session #2

**Two weeks later:** John reported doing the permissions for two days at which time he said he felt free to be imperfect. He brought his list of “the worse case scenarios” when he worried and feared what others would think. He said he did that for several days and then it began to strike him as humorous instead of fearful.

**WFO Check:** I checked that his long-term goal for the coaching program was still the same, to develop the courage and freedom to know my own thoughts and speak them out. He confirmed that it was.

**Intervention:** I framed that behind his fear and hesitation to speak up would be informed and governed by his beliefs or decisions or understandings and that coaching is designed to get to the heart of things. Given that, “Are you ready for some meta-questions to find what’s been in the back of your mind and causing the limitations?” He said he was. I framed that it might be challenging, he said to “bring it on.”

I used the *Exploring a Matrix of Beliefs Pattern*. Upon grounding the state of fear of speaking up and frustrated worrying and feeling frustrated especially about not speaking up to his manager, I said, “Let’s say that’s true, what do you believe about speaking up to your manager?” That led into several limiting beliefs about being vulnerable, being dependent on what others would or could do. We continued until we got to a belief that the only security is knowing exactly what and how to do something.

**My mental processing:** It seemed we were back to perfectionism. I used Meta-Program #40 and asked about how he strove for goals. His focus was on the final product and not the process at all.

**Intervention:** I gave him feedback, “By making product more important than process, you are at every moment ready to judge success or failure, and not giving yourself a chance to learn as you go, to enjoy the process. Seems you are pretty hard on yourself, ah, maybe demanding as your dad was on you. [Long pause.] What do you think?”

**A coachable moment:** John’s eyes became teary, he tried to talk, but choked up. I held the space and let him be with the emotions that were coming up. Finally he said, “I resented dad for being so demanding and never saw that I was doing it to myself. I thought I was resisting him, but I was actually just learning to do it to myself.”

**Closing the session:** We celebrated the insights. For **Tasking** we set up the activity of catching *product thinking* and exchanging it for *process thinking*, by asking himself, “Ah, that’s the product I want, what are some of the steps that will get me there?”

Now continue for Sessions 3 through 6 or 8. Summarize what happened, how you thought about it, what you said or what pattern you used, how your client responded, how you opened and closed the session, etc. Ideally, when someone reads it, they can make a movie in their mind of how the session went. To your developing expertise as a Meta-Coach!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #39**  
**September 11, 2019**  
*The Inferential Listening Skill*

## YOU IMPLY, I INFER

One aspect of “thinking” is *inferring*. We all do it. In fact, you cannot *not* do it. Whenever you think, you are not only dealing with, and facing, what’s directly in front of you which is obvious, clear, objective, etc., you are also dealing with other matters. You are dealing with things that are not obvious, not clear, and instead of objective, subjective. For that you have to make inferences about what it is and then inferences about those inferences— what it means, what to do, etc.

This is *inferential thinking*. In Meta-Coaching, it is one of the level-three skills under listening and something that we introduce at ACMC. We also introduce it in NLP when we teach the linguistic distinction of presuppositions (assumptions) in the Meta-Model. We also introduce it in *Brain Camp* (Executive Thinking) as one of the fundamental aspects of “thinking.”

Inferential thinking in the field of Logic shows up as how mentally moving up and down the levels of specificity—generalization works. You might have noticed this in the book on Meta-Programs (*Figuring Out People*) and the two complementary types of thinking— inductive and deductive. Or in NLP terms, global and specific.

In inductive thinking you begin with some facts, some see-hear-feel facts, and you *induce* an idea. You come up with a generalization, a principle, a category, a classification. In this way you move up from the tangible facts to mental conclusions about things. That is you begin to create a mental maps about your world.

In deductive thinking, you do the reverse. You start with a premise or principle (a guideline, a proverb, a conclusion) and then you move down to specific the pieces within that classification. In formal logic you would create a syllogistic formula which you could thereby test to see if the way you are reasoning is logical—that is, does it make sense.

Does the conclusion legitimately come out of the premise?

In both cases, inductive and deductive thinking means that you are *inferring*. This is especially true of deductive thinking. Here you here a sentence, a statement, a phrase, even a single word and you *hear more than what is said*— you hear what is implied. Now when you mishandle this, you will be *inferring what is not there*. In the NLP Communication Model, we call that “mind-reading.” You are imagining and even hallucinating things that are not implied.

This highlights the fact that when you do *inferential listening*, what you “hear” may not be true and accurate. You may be using far too much of your own history, beliefs, experiences, etc. as you come up with what you think is implied. So as with any skill, you have to learn and practice and make distinctions in order to effectively and accurately *infer what’s implied*.

Now some things that you infer are obvious. It is very close to the sentence or word.

“Brother,” “sister,” “father,” “uncle” etc. all imply a relationship.

“What a messy room!” implies a rule about ordering and organizing a room.

“You’re escalating things.” implies that the person, in some way, is feeding something into the system so that some factor is increasing.

“Oh that’s bonus money.” implies that the person has different ways of classifying money, different frames, and that all money is not the same. It implies that the person also has different rules and criteria for relating to different categories of money.

Similarly, some of the inferences which you make from a person’s physiology can be pretty simple and obvious implications:

Flushed cheeks — generally implies a heightened body temperature which in turn, implies an aroused state, positive or negative. That something is emotionally significant to that person.

Paleness in the face— generally implies a lowered body temperature which, in turn, implies an emotion that’s moving the person to withdraw, hence perhaps fear, anxiety, dread, etc.

Many times when we infer something, what we infer is one possibility. There are others. If someone speaks about going home and finding that there are some missing items in his house, we may infer that there was a neighborhood theft. Or we may infer that the person’s memory is less than it used to be, or that the person was preoccupied and didn’t notice where he put things. While driving into mainland China last year, I saw a sign in Chinese and in English. The English sign read: “No drunk driving area.” The first thing that I inferred from that was, “So where is the drunk driving area?”

I recently over-heard someone at Starbucks say to someone, “Having a fat tire is a catastrophe. I just don’t think I could handle that.” When I heard the word catastrophe, my mind went to hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, volcanos erupting, asteroids hitting the planet and wiping out all life. I inferred something major involving loss of life, astronomical costs, etc.

As a Meta-Coach you often hear statements and what you have to *infer* is the context. So you ask yourself, “What could be the context that this person is operating from that would make these words, behavior, and response meaningful?” The case is *not* that you can avoid making inferences. As a person who thinks, you inevitably will do so. The question is about the quality and accuracy of the inferences you make.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #40**  
**September 13, 2019**

## **THE BEST PCMC EVER**

We have had 16 PCMC trainings over the years. And of all of those, the last one which we have just concluded here in Hong Kong was by far the best. While we only had 28 people in the training, they were all Meta-Coaches. Usually it is opened to coaches of other schools, but this time we did not have anyone but Meta-Coaches. As a result, there was a very deep sense of connection as we all share the Meta-Coaching system, values, and methodology. For the 3-days of *Coaching Integration*, we had ten (10) who decided to set for assessment.

*What made it the best ever?* First of all, and most importantly, was the spirit of learning. Those who flew in from Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, Mauritius, Malaysia, China and those who drove in from Hong Kong demonstrated *the best learning attitude and spirit* that I've seen in Meta-Coach Training. There was almost no talk at all about getting a Certificate. That was not the focus. The focus was on learning and becoming competent with the skills. As a trainer, that made it easy and fun to train. I didn't have to wrestle, argue, and justify "the score." The score was secondary.

Second, there was a great spirit of *receiving feedback*. We used the deliberate practice for feedback in the first days and then sometimes in the Integration days and *every single person* took the feedback as a pro. I've never seen that before! And it was not just a quiet passive compliance. In receiving feedback, those setting for assessment and performing in front of an audience *always asked for more*. "What else can I do to improve?"

The last time we did PCMC training in China in 2015, we had two or three who vigorously argued about the feedback and one person could not even stay and receive the feedback. He got up and walked out. Later he confessed that he was "deeply depressed." He had unrealistic expectations about himself and his skills (he was much less competent than he thought) and he took the feedback personal— as if about himself as a person rather than about his skills. He lacked the self-esteem (being) / self-confidence (doing) distinction and also suffered from several cognitive distortions. So what a difference this time!

Third, all of the ones who sat for assessment read the materials to prepare themselves and they practiced after hours every day. Talk about a passionate and committed group of people. I was impressed. This PCMC stood out to me as comprised of people who are excellent learners and who know that excellence requires lots of effort, self-discipline, and self-commitment. I think a big Meta-High Five should also be given to those who trained them for creating that spirit or keeping it alive.

Fourth, everybody who volunteered to be coach *made it real*. There was no sense of role playing. Everybody brought what was real and personal to them and so there were many, many coachable moments and therefore transformations. Some who sat for assessment had been Trainers for



years, had been coaching in organizations, coaching executives, had been running successful coaching practices — and yet they made themselves open and vulnerable.

Now in the past there have always been someone reach competency and get all 3.0s on the skills, and you might think that we had lots of people reach that level, and that's why it's the best. Yet not this time. Several got one or two 3.0 on one or another skill. Additionally they got 2.7s and 2.8s. That is, there were several who were just on the edge of the full 3.0s and probably at any given coaching session could have nailed it. In spite of that— all had a great attitude and knew that *it is just a matter of time*.

Many will be coming to the Assist Team Training for ACMC in China (November), or the ACMC in Hong Kong (December), or in Indonesia (March), etc. and see if they can reach 3.0 then. They know it is just a matter of time— and practice. During the training, I updated the PCMC manual. Both Mandy Chai who reached PCMC level many years ago and Geraldine Samson who reached PCMC last year in Brazil gave feedback along with me and both provided excellent and focused feedback.

Mandy deserves a big thanks for leading out in this area and in going the second mile to make this kind of training available for people. She created numerous collaborative partners and arranged for very dedicated translators. In terms of knowing how to be a leader and entrepreneur and collaborate— you can choose no better than Mandy Chai for modeling.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #41**  
**September 18, 2019**

## **WORKING THE CLIENT'S ANSWER**

In coaching the basic dance is that you ask a question and the client gives you an answer. But then what? Is that the end of the communication exchange? Of course not! It is *the beginning of the dialogue*. It is the beginning of how you and your client co-create *meaning* for the client's outcome. So, when you begin and you ask the well-formed outcome questions, after you receive an answer, you usually have to *work* that answer over in order to harvest from it the high quality of information that you need to coach.

- What does it mean to *work over* the answer?
- How do you *work over* an answer?
- How do you know when you are doing it right and when you are not?

This last week at the PCMC training, I found myself numerous times recommending that the coach “work over” the answer. “You’ve got the answer. It’s in your lap, now work it.” “Your client has just given you the key, but you need to work it over. Do you know what to ask now?”

The objective of *working over the answer* from your client is to formulate the answer in such a way that it releases potentially insightful information about your client, about the outcome, about what’s in the way, about the next step, etc. In writing that, I’m implying that often times the “answer” that your client gives is insufficient. It is a beginning, yet it is not enough. It initiates the conversation, but it certainly does not conclude it.

1) Theoretically, Neuro-Linguistic Programming explains this in terms of map and territory. It’s best to view what your client says as a mental map of some territory. You ask them to focus in on a specific area, and they give you a map about that area. Yet as with every map, things have been left out (deletion), things have been over-generalized (generalization), and things have been twisted (distortion). So in *working over the answer*, you are essentially getting from the client a sufficiently good representation of whatever it is that the person is describing.

2) To work over an answer, use the Meta-Model questions that you learned in NLP 101. That will enable you to recover the deletions, specific the generalizations, and straighten out the distortions. For what’s been left out, you can say, “Tell me more about that.”

For deleted nouns and verbs, work over the word asking for more specific details. “How did he *criticize* you?” “Who are you *leading* and what is the nature of this *leading*?”

For over-generalized statements, not only are things left out but the statement over-states things. “So *everyone* at work criticizes you? Is that what you are saying?” “So *failure* is a permanent aspect of how you define yourself? *Always*?”

For words and statements that have been distorted, you will be exploring the processes or structures. “Exactly how does she *make* him angry? What does she do and how does he process that information or behavior so that he responds with anger?”

You can also *work over the answer* by asking testing questions to test the statement, test the person to see if he really means what he said. “Is it really true that you never succeed at anything?... [pause] ... Really?” You can *work the answer over* with clarification questions. “How are you using the term ‘self-esteem?’”

Another way to *work the answer over* is to use inferential listening and check out what the person is additionally *implying* with her answer.

“If she has put up a wall and won’t communicate with you, sounds like that suggests she must be feeling unsafe in your presence. Is that fair to say? I wonder what behavior in you that she is interpreting as threat or danger. Do you know?”

3) In all of this *working over the answer*, you are seeking clarity and precision. You are seeking to be able to understand your client *on your client’s terms*. The test that you do is that you can take his words and *track them directly onto the movie screen of your mind*. We call this Representational Tracking. You ask about the answer until you can make a mental representation of the territory to which the person is referring.

After you run that test, then invite the person to test it. Present what you have heard and see if they confirm or disconfirm that is what they are seeking to present.

In these ways the coaching dialogue goes back and forth like a dance. You are dancing with the client’s meanings and understandings. Maybe the client knows and just needs your prodding and questions; maybe the client doesn’t know and needs your inducing and framing so that he engage in “a transderivational search for his internal reference.” That’s the original NLP language for a client going inside to discover what she really means. Think of it as an adventure, a discovery for hidden treasure. Within your client’s answers are all sorts of suggestive indicators— but you have to work it.

From: L. Michael Hall  
2019 Morpheus #42  
September 25, 2019  
*The Inferential Listening Skill*

## THE SUBTLE ART OF INFERENCE LISTENING

When it comes to inferential listening, you cannot *not* infer. It's part of how your brain works and how language works and so is inevitable. What is not inevitable, however, is the quality and precision of your inferring. In fact, behind mind-reading as a cognitive distortion is inferential listening. It happens that as you listen to someone and interact with them, you draw conclusions about what they are thinking and feeling, what they are intending and wanting, and then you start a sentence with "you."

"You are trying to put me down, you always have to win."

"You are not listening to me, you only think about yourself, you are very selfish!"

In these mind-reading statements, the speaker is *telling* the other person what he or she is thinking, feeling, wanting, intending, etc. And several things make this "mind-reading."

First, the speaker is asserting this *inside* information about the other person without offering any evidence about how he knows this. Did the person say this? Are there behaviors that the person can point to, from which he has drawn these conclusions?

Second, the speaker is not making the statement tentative, that is, he is not *owning* the statements as his map of the other person. He is asserting them as if they were absolutely true and obvious to all.

Third, nor is the speaker giving any room for the other person to offer correction.

Yet what unites these distorted and accusatory statements is that they arise from *the person's way of inferring*. It just so happens to be wrong and inaccurate. This shows how *not* to do inferential listening. Yet sadly that is the way most people do inferential listening and, as you catch that as a Meta-Coach or as a professional communicator, you have the opportunity to facilitate people becoming more skilled in communicating.

This post follows up the previous article on Inferential listening (Morpheus #39 Sept. 11). Given that you cannot *not* infer and that you can erroneously infer, it's critical that you refine your inferential listening skills so that it supplements your coaching and communication skills. How do you do that?

First, *check out the implication*. Put into your mind the question, "Given this, what is implied?" This will enable you to be more mindful when you infer. Now you can expand this. "What is logically implied by these words, this phrase, this way of talking?" This will enable you to make some guesses which you can then test. "To what extent is this logically implied? What other things could be implied other than this guess of mine?"

I see a lady without a wedding ring, does that imply she is single? Maybe. Does it imply that as part of a couple, she has decided to not buy a ring until they are more financially stable? Possible. Could it be that they belong to a religion or culture that does not wear wedding rings? Maybe. Could it be that she is going through divorce and took her ring off? Maybe.

All of these are possibilities. When a person says that “my relationship is causing me to suffer from low self-esteem” what can you infer from that? Which of the following would you infer in your listening? Could any of them be a legitimate inferential listening conclusion?

His self-esteem is conditional (contingent) on his relationship.

He is blaming his self-esteeming on the condition of the relationship or on his partner.

He is mis-using the term “self-esteem” and means social-esteem or self-confidence.

He is confused about the cause-effect relationship between his relating and his esteeming.

The ability to inferentially listen is not so black-and-white as to be an easy non-controversial thing. What you infer is usually one of many things that you could infer. So go gently into the night of inference! Is your client’s mid-life crisis a problem for him, a challenge for developing new potentials, or an opportunity for personal growth? What would you infer?

Second, *offer your inference tentatively and respectfully*. Whatever you infer is *your map*, and not necessarily reality or true. So offer it tentatively, not absolutely. Frame it with such phrases as “it seems to me,” “I could be mistaken but this is what I’m sensing...” “One possibly inference I could draw from that is...”

Third, *give your client the chance to correct your inference*. This is an aspect of respect and something always to do. “What do you think? Does that make sense?” “Correct me if I’m not getting this right.”

Inferential listening is one of your skills (and tools) as a Meta-Coach. Yet it can be misused. Train yourself for using it properly and powerfully. It will distinguish you as a professional coach.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #43**  
**October 2, 2019**

## WELL-FORMED QUESTIONS\*

During the training of Trainers (NSTT) this year, I came up with a criteria list for asking good questions. The reason for that is that by the time a person has studied the basic and advanced levels of NLP and various Neuro-Semantics trainings, a person should *know how to ask good questions*. Yet many do not. In past years, I have often had to spend significant time helping a trainer-to-be formulate his or her question. Sometimes I have pointed out the kind of question that one is asking and then asked, “Is that really what you want to ask?” “If your question is just to confirm your understanding, then ask your team and team leader. They are there for that purpose.”

[\* Note: This is *not* well-formed *outcome* questions.]

In NSTT we use the asking of questions as an additional *Speaking Activity*. To facilitate that we say—when you have a question, stand up, go to the microphone stand, and present your question as cleanly, succinctly, and effectively as you can. We then offered the following *criteria* for what a truly excellent question would be like.

- **Relevant** — rather than irrelevant and unuseful, it is relevant to the current topic.
- **Concise** — rather than complicated and/or convoluted (several questions rolled into one), it is short and sweet.
- **Precise** — rather than ill-formed, vague, or worse, unanswerable.
- **For all** — applicable to everyone present, and not just for the person asking the question. In that case, ask the speaker at a break. It needs to be for all and not for the speaker to call attention to himself.
- **Invites resourcefulness** — rather than evokes an unresourceful state as an either/or question would since it would polarize and invite false answers.
- **Legitimate** — rather than illegitimate, loaded with hidden and unuseful assumptions, rhetorical, or takes the speaker and the group somewhere you don’t want them to go.

A question and the way a question is asked can be problematic. In other words, all questions are not well-formed. Yes, we say to an audience *beginning* studies in NLP that there are no “dumb questions.” We do that because we want to encourage questions and can use even “dumb” questions to communicate the structure of NLP as a communication model. Yet there are questions that are unuseful, irrelevant, and that can be destructive.

- Pre-mature questions: questions that need to be thought through more carefully.
- Convoluted questions: multiple questions sending the brain in different directions at the same time.
- Unanswerable questions: questions that are riddles, tricks of language, etc.

This brings up the question of this article. What is a well-formed question? How do you know you are asking, or your client is asking, a well-formed question?

## Well-Formed Question

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1) Subject identified      | What do you want to know?<br>What is the subject of your question?  |
| 2) Answerable              | Is it possible to answer the question?  |
| 3) Important/ Relevant     | Why answer the question?<br>Why is it important to answer?<br>What is your intention in asking?                                 |
| 4) Source                  | Who has the answer? Who else? Where is the answer?  |
| 5) Time                    | When do you need the answer?<br>How long will it take to get the answer?  |
| 6) Process                 | Do you know how to get the answer?<br>Do you need others to assist in getting the answer?                                       |
| 7) Skill                   | What skills are required to be able to answer the question?<br>Do you have the required skills and resources to get the answer? |
| 8) History                 | What has been the answer up until now?<br>Do you already have the answer and just don't know it?                                |
| 9) Interference            | Is there anything that's blocking you from the answer?  |
| 10) Evidence               | How will you know when you have the answer?<br>What will be your evidence that you have an answer?                              |
| 11) Format                 | Is the question well-stated?  |
| 12) Precise, simple        | Is the question stated in a precise and concise way?  |
| 13) Assumptions identified | Do you know the assumptions that are implied in the question?   |

To be well-formed, a question may not need every one of these distinctions. Nor does every question need a 'yes' answer. If the answer is 'no' or 'I don't know' that may be highly relevant and significant as part of the ongoing conversation.

How about you? How well do you ask really *well-formed questions*? You might take this criteria list and use it to examine the questions you ask. You can also use it to note the quality of questions that your clients ask. After all, inquiry is the essential condition for *thinking*.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #44**  
**October 9, 2019**

## **WHY EVERY META-COACH NEEDS PCMC TRAINING**

Do you know why you, and every other Meta-Coach, needs to attend PCMC training? If you have been to a PCMC training, then what I will be revealing in this article— will not surprise you or be new. But if you have not—then the following may be quite surprising. Now in writing that, if you are doing inferential listening, a good inference is that there are some misunderstandings and even myths about PCMC. Ready for some myth-busting?

Obviously, the design of the PCMC training is, first of all, for any Meta-Coach who is committed to him or herself to become fully professional and develop the highest competencies as a coach. It is the module designed to take the basics of coaching, the ACMC level, to the level where you can easily establish your personal brand and competency as a professional coach. Yet it is not only for that. It is also for the Meta-Coach at the ACMC level.

The training materials in the PCMC manual certainly focus on enabling you to take the basic competencies of Meta-Coaching to a higher level of competence. While we introduce more and new skills, more important than that is another objective— namely, *unifying or integrating all of the skills*. What does that mean?

It means shifting around the very thinking we invited you to do at the ACMC level. When you take Module III of Meta-Coaching, we ask you to think of the coaching skills separately and to deliberately practice each one, one by one, until you habitualize each skill. We focus on each, we give feedback for each, we benchmark each. We do that because that is how the learning process works— you learn a complex skill piece by piece until you integrate it so well, it becomes an automatic response and thereby opens up your conscious awareness to focus on other things.

Here is the surprise. After you do all that work in a mind-to-muscling process, at the PCMC training we invite you to shift your thinking from all of the pieces of the coaching expertise to the gestalt of the coaching competency. While we hint at this in Module III, we make this much more focal in Module IV.

How your question and meta-question reflects how you are listening and supporting, mirroring, and inducing state. Think of these seven skills as *all of one piece*. Your overall *skill* in facilitating the coaching conversation which gets to the heart of things, catches coachable moments, establishes a challenging contract, and frames what's happenings as it is happening is a *single response*. It certainly involves many sub-skills and yet it is *the one thing you are doing*. This is the switch in thinking that we invite you to in the PCMC training.

- Think about how you are *supporting* while questioning.
- Think about what and how you are *listening* while you are receiving and giving feedback.



- Consider how you are *frame* and *detecting patterns* while you are supporting.
- And while listening, are you catching *coachable moments*.

The first three days of the PCMC training provides you indepth training, analysis, and probing into the sub-skills of coaching, adds several new advanced skills and the focus is *putting all of the skills together for the coaching conversation*. Why?

The reason why is for your *essential credibility as a coach*. After all, the best way to build credibility is to develop your actual competence in facilitating an excellent conversation. The more *quality* and *robustness* in your skills, the more credibility you have.

Generally when a person reaches the PCMC level, he or she can *do so much with so little*. That is, the way the Meta-Coach asks a question may *at the same time* be supporting, doing inferential listening, inducing state, and giving feedback. That is, the coach isn't doing just one thing, but multiple things at the same time which then explains *the impact* of the coach's conversation. Of course, this is a benchmarker's nightmare. When benchmarking at the PCMC level, I often miss many of the things that the coach is doing at a given time. Often it is in giving feedback that I discover that the coach had also been performing other skills, skills which I had not caught in the moment.

“Oh yes, that question was also an awareness question, catching a coachable moment, and inducing a state of suspense.”

As a Meta-Coach you can deepen, enrich, and integrate your basic coaching skills when you attend the PCMC training. You can refresh your understandings and catch a glimpse of what a high level advanced coaching conversation looks and sounds like. And even if you do not set for assessment, the PCMC serves to renew your ACMC license for four years.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #45**  
**October 16, 2019**

## A POSSIBLE RE-DESIGN OF ACMC

*While we're doing a lot better, I'm still dissatisfied with the results we are getting.* So, this coming week when we do ACMC in Guangzhou, China, I will be experimenting with a new design for ACMC. The design is not a complete re-design, I am mostly juggling things around on Days 2, 3, and 4 of *Coaching Mastery*. In this post I will describe what I'm thinking, why, and how the new design will go, and as always invite you to write me (use the email above) if you have ideas.

**The Why.** While I believe that a solid training in *NLP Practitioner*, and even at *Coaching Essentials*, should provide the necessary training for people to learn how to calibrate to another person and therefore to be able to sufficiently listen—that does not seem to be the case for 90% of people who enter into Module III of Meta-Coaching. When they begin they are not able to hear, and even after eight days, many are still at level 1 or below 2 in terms of the competencies.

The problem is that if you cannot *hear*, if you cannot *listen deeply* to your client—you really cannot support, effectively question, or understand and deliver value to your client. This has been a problem from the beginning, and in spite of all of the things we've innovated, I cannot say that we have a good handle on the problem yet. Of course, some get it, yet most do not. So to be able to *deliver* on the promise of the training—that you can use the benchmarks to learn to calibrate and listen, the following will be attempted as a prototype.

**The What.** What are the key skills (sub-skills in the area of listening and supporting) that coaches-in-training still struggle with after Modules I, II, and III? Some (approximately 10%) still cannot repeat even a single sentence from the client precisely—they keep changing the words and introducing their own words. Most (another 70%) cannot distinguish between a sentence that is semantically or emotionally loaded and rich in implications from factual sentences. Consequently the “acknowledgments” which they do are ineffective and often completely irrelevant. Those few who can *hear* the sentences that need to be repeated verbatim either jump in with questions or challenges before *acknowledging* them.

The same applies for *clarity checks*. By Day 7 most of the time 50% of coaches still think that any question that asks anything about clarity is a *clarity check*. Of course, it is not. This *definitional question* focuses entirely and exclusively on the use of a term, “How are you using the term X?” The very idea of using language and not clarifying *use* and *definition* of terms ought to strike every Meta-Coach as ludicrous, as utterly ridiculous, and as laughable. “You didn't check on terminology?” “And you present yourself as a professional communicator?”

Ditto for *semantic gestures*. In ACMC training after ACMC training I keep hearing coaches confuse gestures with *semantic* gestures. They are not the same at all! For a gesture (or a movement, posture, sigh, etc.) to be *semantic* (full of meaning), it has to be related to a word,

term, or some expression. And if it is a semantic gesture, the term-and-the-gesture will go together repeatedly, not just as a once off thing.

**The How.** With that significant *why* and with these three *whats* and under overall heading of really listening, the experiment will be to put off Day 2 until Day 3, eliminate the activities of the morning of Day 4, and introduce a new schedule for Day 2.

Current ACMC Schedule	New Experiential Schedule
Introducing Exercises to deepen skill of Listening	<b>Day 2: Deepening Listening</b> Acknowledgment Exercise Acknowledg. in Group Listening for Framing Listening with eyes for Semantic matching Listening for WFO Q.
<b>Day 2: Exploration/ Questions</b>	<b>Now — Day 3</b>
<i>Kinds of Questions</i> Primary / Meta Distinctions Well-formed Outcome Q.	
<i>Mirroring Skills</i> Giving Feedback Receiving Feedback	
<b>Day 3: Performance/ States</b>	<b>Now Day 4</b>

What will be eliminated? The theme of Day 4 — *Systems* and introducing the idea of systemic coaching, and the pattern “Coaching to the Matrix.” We will keep the *customized* Matrix for Listening and Supporting and for Receiving Feedback (now on Day 4). We will also keep the Matrix Business Plan (Day 4). States, emotions, emotional intelligence, induction of state will go from Day 3 to Day 4.

Will this work? I don’t know. It is *an experiment*. I have a hypothesis that if we spend more time on listening at the beginning and deliberately practice listening for most of Day 2, it will much more likely focus attention on listening. And the only way to find out is to try it out. It might not work, but if it doesn’t, it is not a failure because we will have *learned* something significant. And learning is always a success. And if it turns out that it significantly increases the learning skills and capacities of the participants, then we will do one more test run and if it still makes a difference, we will innovate that change.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #46**  
**October 23, 2019**  
*Ego Investment and Coaching*

## **WHEN A COACH'S NEEDS GET IN YOUR CLIENT'S WAY**

It can happen. *Your* needs, drives, and unfinished issues can get in the way of your client reaching his or her goals or even experiencing an effective coaching session. Unlike many professions where the agent's congruencies, beliefs, psychological state do not matter, *in coaching it matters*. In many professions, what the person thinks, feels, and believes is irrelevant because it does not affect her ability to apply her skills and achieve an outcome.

But in coaching, *you primarily use yourself to conduct the coaching experience*. And because *you* are the "tool," the condition of *you* as the means of transformation is critical. That's why your emotional drives and needs can get in the way. And because of that, that's why we work on releasing judgment and getting the ego-investments out of the way on Day 1 of ACMC. That is also why we repeatedly say that whatever happens in coaching session, *it is not about you*.

In spite of that, I often hear coaches, even Meta-Coaches, worry about what they would do if this or that happened. "What if the client wants to know personal things about me?" "What if my client rejects me?" "What if a client criticizes me?" Inferentially any of these concerns implies that the coach is making the experience far too much about him or herself. That would be an example of how your unfinished business gets in the way.

One reason for you, as a Meta-Coach, to revisit APG from time to time, is to refresh the foundations of your own personal flow or genius state. After all, if you feel powerless in handling something, or if your self-esteem hinges on your performance or the client's outcomes, then you are working from a undeveloped self (perhaps a false self) and your need for unconditional self-value is getting in the way.

In the coaching experience, as a coach you need to be fully present *to your client* and to the situation being described so that you can flexibly think, problem-solve, think creatively, and think critically. But if you have some rigid ego-investments that causes your sense of self to be needy, that will interfere with effective information processing and coaching facilitation. Your thinking will be shallow and superficial, self-focused, and probably defensive. And when you come from that kind of place you will not be effective.

To coach you really need to get yourself clean and clear. By *clean and clear* I'm referring to completing any of the socio-psycho-sexual stages of human development that Piaget, Erickson, and others identified. The person who is stuck at some earlier level of development isn't *clear* and therefore will not be able to be *cleanly present* for their client. While a great many of the

NLP and Neuro-Semantic processes in Modules I and II can take care of personal growth and development and internal conflicts, sometimes a person needs either a coach or a therapist to clear out any remnants of unfinished business.

When there are struggles within any of us— it could be as simple as two legitimate frames warring against each other. There could be a frame war in a power struggle for dominance. Or it could be the function of a limiting belief, decision, understanding, identity, etc. And because these are frequently our blind-spots, no wonder we are often the last person to recognize them.

Now your needs, especially your unconscious drives, can get activated while you are coaching. There's nothing abnormal about that. When that happens, use that awakening as indicating a next level of development for yourself. Get with your coaching buddy or supervisor to understand and address that need or drive. The more you work on you— the more you keep yourself clean and clear as an instrument of facilitating for your clients. You will then be able to more clearly hear your client and support them.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #47**  
**Oct 30, 2019**

## **HOW TO FAIL BY TRYING TOO HARD**

Did you know that *the way you try* can cause you to fail? It can. Lots of people, and I mean *lots* of people, fail not because they aren't trying, but precisely because they are. They fail because they are trying *too hard*. That's right, they are *trying* too hard. Here's an example from baseball.

“In baseball, Mel Wearing, a slugger for the Rochester Red Wings, is a powerful guy and a hotshot hitter. When he first started on the team, people were expecting him to hit a home run every time he stepped to the plate. The problem was the he was also *expecting* it of himself. According to his own account, when he joined the Red Wings he set out to impress people—to knock it out of the park time after time. He gripped the bat too tightly and swung too hard, he said. At the beginning of each season *he would bear down on himself*. He tried to use his power to do the job, but it didn't work. His performance was disappointing, and he felt bad about himself.”

Does that sound familiar? Put high unrealistic expectations together with demandingness inside one's mind along with the ability to push oneself really hard and you've got an essential formula for anxiety and stress. Not good. Here's the end of the story as told by Edward L. Deci (1995) in *Why We Do What We Do*.

“Finally, one year, Mel Wearing realized that he would be better off if he stopped worrying about it, if he stopped trying so hard, if he stopped hinging his self-worth on being a slugger. All he had to do, he said to himself, was make contact with the ball. And sure enough, the less hard he tried, the better he did. He began living up to his potential because he stopped trying to. He had given up his ego involvement. It's a paradox.”

Charlotte Selver who developed the practice of Sensory Awareness said, “If you dare to be fat, then you can be thin.” That was an idea that Milton Erickson used in his tasking of clients. For a person trying to lose weight, he would first order them to gain some weight. Paradoxical! Deci, in his development of self-determination theory and practice, said, “Allow yourself to fail and you will more likely to succeed.”

Using the Meta-States Model, you can see how this paradoxical intervention works. At the primary level there is the experience and *frame-by-implication* and *inferential listening* there must be a meta-dimension frame working against it. It could be a demanding frame pushing and pressuring. It could be a taboo frame forbidding it. It could be an identify frame positing one's worth as contingent upon it. Regardless of what frame is driving it, when you “allow yourself to fail,” you step out of that whole frame structure. That's the magic. You are no longer inside of a self-defeating matrix.

Are you trying too hard? It can be, of often is, an occupational hazard of high achievers and people who want to become self-actualizing. They falsely think that success will come to them by pushing harder and harder. “But it ain't so.”

Pushing harder and harder and trying harder and harder is all about *you*. Now the success with a client is no longer about them and what you are offering and the difference it will make in their life, it is about *you*. That's why it is doomed to fail.

When we were in Hong Kong on PCMC, Geraldine reflected on how she reached the competency level the year before in Brazil. While there, after seeing so many *trying really hard to do their best* and for some— the harder they tried, the worse they did. By contrast she decided that she would give up trying. So she decided to *not* try. She decided to just attend to her client. That's when and that's why she succeeded.

I see this same principle happen constantly due to the many times people set for assessment. They want to do well. Great! They have practiced and prepared and are ready. Great! They truly care about people and intellectually know that it is about the client. Great! But then they divide their awareness between their client and the benchmarking. Not so great! Now that do not hear as well, do not respond as skillfully as they can. Now that are anxious about how they are doing.

The solution is paradoxical and will not make sense to linear thinking. To linear thinking, it will seem confusing, illogical, and silly. But if you're thinking systemically, in non-linear ways, it makes perfect sense— stop trying! Release the end-product goal and focus on the process-goal of being present to your client. Are you ready to quit *trying*?

"There is no try, only do..." Yoda, Jedi Master

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #48**  
**November 7, 2019**

## **RE-DESIGN RESULTS**

On October 16 (Morpheus #45) I wrote about *an experiment in possibly redesigning the ACMC format*. We then ran the experiment in Guangzhou China October 28 through November 4. We ran 7 drills on Day 2 for acknowledgment, clarity questions, validation, listening while asking the well-formed outcome questions, etc. Then in the next days we used the time which we used to use for the “Drills for Skills” project to run more drills — getting the subject, refining questions, framing, meta-questions drills, etc.

Several things happened as a result of this change. One change concerned the role for the Assist Team. As a group of experienced Meta-Coaches they actually had to take a more active role in both leading and coaching the group. They spent much more time with their team and were more involved with them. It shifted them from focusing on getting the group to work together and coordinate their talents and skills (which occurred when we give the team a project), to being more and more a learning team. It also required the Assist Team to be more skilled at coaching these foundational skills.

Putting that much material into Day 2 preparing for the first Coaching Lab on Day 2 evening meant shifting Day 2 to Day 3, Day 3 to Day 4. And that mean deleting the “Systems” Information on Day 4. I wondered how that would affect things, but as it turned out, things were just fine. There was enough of The Matrix Model offered for participants to know about the Matrix Model, confirming to me that the material is probably advanced and needs to be done at PCMC level.

### **The Experiment Continues**

Next week in the Sydney ACMC, we will continue this experiment. I have updated the ACMC manual with 3 pages of drills and am in the process of designing a way to turn the drills themselves into a project. I have also already sent the new schedule to all of the Meta-Coach Trainers and some of those in the internship to become Meta-Coach Trainers. And we will do it again in Dec. in Hong Kong.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #49**  
**November 13, 2019**  
*Part I*

## **FOUR WAYS TO OPEN A COACHING SESSION**

When you attend Module III of Meta-Coaching, you learn *two primary ways to open a coaching session*. Do you know those two ways? Stop for a moment and identify them in your mind. Do you now know them? What are your guesses?

The two ways that you have been trained to open a coaching session explains why we use two different feedback forms. While each feedback form is the same in terms of creating the relationship of trust and rapport with your client and inducing states— they differ in the questions that you ask. Does that give you a hint about the first two ways to begin a coaching session?

If not, then consider this. When a client shows up and you invite that person to sit in your coaching chair— what do you want to know from that person? Let's assume the person is coachable and ready for coaching. Then what? You may want to *find out what the person wants to achieve* in the coaching. Since coaching clients are people who want to achieve their goals, that may be one way to go. If so, then you will ask “What do you want to achieve in the coaching?” and then probe that question deeply by asking about questions in another seventeen categories.

That's one way to go. Another way to go is to ask about *change*. After all, to be a coach is to be a change-agent and to facilitate change in individuals and groups. So you ask, “What change do you want to make?” If you do that then like the previous question, you have a series of probing questions to explore, this time in eight categories along four primary axes. These axes define the four central mechanisms by which a psychologically healthy person changes and, at the same time, provides you the details for four kinds of coaching conversations: motivation, decision, creation, and integration.

So there you have the first two most basic ways to open a coaching conversation. You can ask, “*What goal do you want to achieve in coaching?*” Then you can use the 18 category of questions in the well-formed outcome pattern to deeply probe what the person wants, gather high quality information about the goal striving of the person, engage in a needs analysis with that person, and create a coaching contract. Wow! You're doing a lot of things in a single activity. And there's more. You are also intervening as you are doing that intelligence gathering— you are enabling your client to become clear about the goal and make a decision. So in the well-formed outcome questions, you are having a clarity conversation and a decision conversation simultaneously.

If, however, you decided to go for change, then your opening question will be, “*What change would you like to make today?*” This also will gather information and do a needs analysis with the client, but even more obvious, you will be eliciting and working with the person's

motivational dynamics. What is this person wanting to move toward and what is this person moving away from? In which direction does the person seem most energized and motivated? How much so? Here you are actually having a motivational conversation and if you are doing it right, you are activating the person's values— motives — internal drives and thereby putting the person into an increasing motivational state.

There's also something else you are doing— you are probably hearing the person talk mostly about symptoms and problems and/or desired symptoms (effects of reaching a goal) and dreams. This is normal and to be expected. It is also why the person is sitting in your coaching chair and not able to make the desired change. Why is that? Because the person is focused on the externals, not the internals. Yes, of course the symptoms will change. Yes, of course the emotions will change. And the behaviors and maybe the environment.

But what really has to change? If and when you move from the outer game to the inner game, then what has to change there? It might be a belief. That's the most common frame that has to change. However, it could be a memory, a meaning, a prohibition, an identity, etc. It could be almost any of the meta-level frames that inform and govern a state. And as a change-agent, that is what you have to find. That also is what most clients cannot find (i.e., they are inside the frame and can't see it). Here you earn your money and provide a value that will be the difference that makes a difference.

When you get that, you move on to facilitating the Decision Conversation with two more sets of questions. The first set enables the person to analyze the decision in terms of pros and cons and the values (standards) they are using. The second set activates the person to draw a line in the sand, make a decision, and stand up to that commitment. Once you have that commitment, you're ready for the fun part of co-creating the new strategy for achieving the change. The first set of questions activates the creativity of the mind to imagine and invent and the second set of questions to mind-to-muscle the solutions into *lived activities* that create the new momentum. The four conversations occur in the weeks and months that follow as the new plan becomes integrated fully into life style which you enable through reinforcement questions and testing questions.

When you revisit ACMC— now you will be more informed and hopefully, more motivated to use the supervised laboratories for practicing the Well-Formed Outcome questions on Days 2 through 4 and the Axes of Change questions on Days 5 through 7. What you are practicing is the most *generic opening* around goal-setting and a more specific *change conversation* that gets to the heart of things.

With these two openings, you are ready and able to open a coaching conversation, to get started right, to create an achievable coaching contract, to do top-notch information gathering, and to be the change agent that you can be as a Meta-Coach.

How do you open a coaching conversation as a Meta-Coach?

- 1) Ask, *What do you want to achieve that is of ultimate value and importance to you?* Then use the Well-Formed Outcome questions to do indepth probing as you gather information and create a coaching contract.

2) Ask, *What change do you want to make today that will make a transformative difference in your life?* Then use the Axes of Change to manage the eight categories of questions empowering you to hold coaching conversations on Motivation, Decision, Creation, and Integration.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #50**  
**November 20, 2019**  
*Part II*

## **FOUR WAYS TO OPEN A COACHING SESSION**

In the last post, I offered you the first two ways to open a coaching conversation. Now we are ready for the next two.

A third way to open a coaching session is with the *how* question. “*How do you do X?*” This could be about *how* a client is doing anything which the client does not want to do from procrastinating, to being perfectionistic, to being critical, self-contempting, anger-prone, anxiety-prone, etc. “How do you do X?” is then a question about strategy. It comes from the basic NLP premise that every behavior has a structure. Given that, when we become aware of *how* we do something, we are at a choice point for change, for doing it in a different way.

“How do you do X?” is the modeling question par excellent and so enables us, as Meta-Coaches, to identify *how* a person achieves an undesirable result. The amazing thing about this approach is that often *knowing how something works* informs us about how to change it. Sometimes that means a small adjustment, a small tweaking that essentially messes up the old strategy so it no longer works. Sometimes it means starting a fresh so that we begin right because the problem with the old strategy is that it started wrong.

This question, “How do you do X?” also applies to desired activities. How do you effectively manage people, lead a company, delegate, sell, negotiate, discipline yourself, exercise regularly, etc. You can even ask this question with someone who doesn’t know the answer. If the person says, “I don’t know.” Acknowledge this and ask him to take a wild guess. “If this was ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’ and you had this question and it would cost you nothing to guess what would you guess?” It’s amazing what the invitation to guess often produces.

Here you can use all you learned in NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner about Strategy analysis, detection, streamlining, and designing. This is where all of that applies. Here also you can use the Matrix Model to map out a matrix of meanings for the new activity. Actually, you have already done that! Remember Day 1 of ACMC when you designed a matrix for listening and supporting? Remember when you designed a matrix for receiving feedback.

The fourth way to open a coaching session is with the idea of *unleashing* and *self-actualizing*. “What do you want to unleash in yourself?” What do you want to be unleashed *from*? What do you want to be unleashed *to*? Coaching is about *actualizing one’s highest meanings and values into one’s best performances*. So begin here. “Think about your highest meanings, how well are you now performing those meanings in your everyday life? Would you like to focus on being able to do that?” Now there’s a powerful way to start a coaching session! Here you can use the

Hierarchy of Needs from Maslow, the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale and the Self-Actualization Quadrants based on the meaning and performance axes. In those four tools, you have a lot of things that you can do in terms of identifying what has to be unleashed and how to go about it.

Now to be well informed about unleashing—the book *Unleashed* (2011) offers you two dozen aspects of the unleashing process. The book *The Crucible and the Fires of Change* offers you a way to deal with old programs that need updating and/or eliminating. There is also *Achieving Peak Performance*, *Unleashing Leadership*, *Inside-Out Persuasion*, *Get Real*, etc. The best thing in terms of developing the competency for all of this, however, would be to get through the Self-Actualization series of trainings.

### **How do you open a coaching conversation as a Meta-Coach?**

1) Ask, *What do you want to achieve that is of ultimate value and importance to you?*

Then use the Well-Formed Outcome questions to do indepth probing as you gather information and create a coaching contract.

2) Ask, *What change do you want to make today that will make a transformative difference in your life?* Then use the Axes of Change to manage the eight categories of questions empowering you to hold coaching conversations on Motivation, Decision, Creation, and Integration.

3) Ask, *How do you do the undesired behavior? How do you do the desired behavior?* Then use the basics of strategy analysis and design as you work with the hidden structure that makes the performances of your client possible. You can also use the Matrix Model to model the new desired behavior.

4) Ask, *What do you want to unleash in yourself so that you can actualize your highest meanings into your best performances?* Then use all of the self-actualization tools in Neuro-Semantics as you take your client into the construct, the crucible and the zone. Take them from the deficiency needs to the *being* needs in the hierarchy and let them move into the zone of their optimal state.

That's Meta-Coaching!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2018 Morpheus #51**  
**November 27, 2019**  
***How to Intervene #1***

## **HOW TO THINK ABOUT YOUR INTERVENTIONS**

After the coaching contract comes the intervention. Finally! But how do you think through *what and how to intervene*? I've been hearing that question increasingly and with more and more Meta-Coaches moving to the PCMC level, that has come up repeatedly. What I first wrote about interventions last year (Oct. 2018) is here updated and expanded.

When you coach, you first get a definition and description of the coaching conversation which the client wishes for the session or for the coaching program. First comes the quality time you spend as you engage your client in a very special kind of conversation— one that most people would love to have, but do not because they do not have a well-trained coach who can facilitate it. First you lead a person through *a well-formed outcome* to make sure that the transformative conversation will deliver what the person both wants and needs. By the end of the outcome conversation, your client will have a clear idea of what would be worth his time, effort, and money to achieve. And you have a contract!

*Now you are ready to do an intervention.* You will intervene to facilitate *what* your client wants. If you had been doing interventions *while* gathering information, you are probably “jumping the gun” out of your own impatience. It's only *after* you get the contract that you intervene. But, are you ready to intervene? Do you know how to intervene in just the right way and deliver what you have promised?

We say repeatedly in Meta-Coaching, *do not do an intervention until you have completed the 18-well-formed outcome questions and before you have a clearly defined objective that the client has owned.* Do not do it before the client gives you the “green light” regarding what he wants because to do so is highly likely that you will work on the wrong thing. But once you have the green light, once the outcome has been clarified, do you know how to think about and formulate the right intervention? Here are some general guidelines.

**First, Think Coaching Conversation.** Ask yourself, “What kind of conversation has my client indicated that she wants?” For example, suppose your client needs *clarity*. Then your intervention will be about enabling your client to become clear about something. Therefore any pattern that enables clear thinking, learning, understanding, gaining knowledge, unlearning, releasing cognitive distortions, etc. could be an appropriate intervention. Also, think strategy. What is your unique client's strategy for getting clear? Is it visual, auditory, kinesthetic, language, or some mixture of these?

Do the same if your client wants a decision conversation, planning, experiencing, change, or any of the two dozen other *kinds* of coaching conversations. You will find extensive descriptions of these in a number of the Meta-Coaching books. There are also previous Morpheus Reflections that have summarized those kinds of conversations. We have a section in the PCMC manual just for this.

***Second, Think Strategy.*** Each of the kinds of coaching conversations is an *experience* and every experience has a strategy. What then is your client's strategy for deciding, planning, experiencing, changing, etc.? What is the strategy of the client for creating his current experience? Do you know? If the client wants to deal with whatever is blocking or interfering, what is the strategy by which the client has created that? Find out. Make that your first intervention. This is where "strategy analysis" in Listening comes in.

There are several interventions that occur when you find a strategy. You can streamline it to make it better. You can alter various features of it to make it more robust or to cause it to break down and not work. You can push the variables of the strategy to an extreme and, depending on what you're trying to achieve, you can blow out the strategy or take it to new levels of achievement. Because every experience has a strategy, when you find the leverage point in the strategy, that is the very point where it is made or it breaks.

***Third, Think Meta-State Interfaces.*** Go *meta* for perspective and for reframing. While thinking "strategy" takes you *into* the experience which the person wants or doesn't want. Thinking meta-state interfaces takes you *out* of the experience to a meta-level. From there you can take the client *out* as you transcend the experience and facilitate a larger-level perspective of things. Usually that enables you to get a pretty good idea about what and how to *outframe*. When you do that, you can generate all sorts of new responses—in your Meta-States APG manual you have 16-interface responses that you can create when you meta-state an experience. Do you remember those? Do you need to go revisit that manual? You can solidify or loosen an experience, you can create humor or paradox, you can texture and qualify a state. There's many, many things that you can do! And each one is an intervention.

***Fourth, Think Stability / Instability.*** Is the experience that your client wants (or doesn't want) stable or unstable? For change, if it is stable—induce instability. Confuse, surprise, shock, overwhelm, mis-direct, etc. By taking the experience out of the stable category, the system of that experience will then go to work (be activated) as it seeks homeostasis. And when it does, you will be able to catch *how that experience works*.

For stabilizing things, if it is unstable—induce stabilization. Set boundaries, confirm, validate, elicit a hierarchy of values, etc. This will take a weak, and perhaps off-and-on, system and make it more firm, robust, and energized. Do the same thing with the distinctions of simple and complex. For a fuller discussion of that, see *Sourcebook of Magic Volume I*. There is an entire chapter on this.

[More next week]

From: L. Michael Hall  
2018 Morpheus #52  
December 4, 2019  
*How to Intervene #2*

## THINKING THROUGH HOW TO INTERVENE

Interventions do not pop out of thin air, you have to identify them, define them, and create them. You have to *think through the coaching process of need, outcome, and process facilitation* in order to create the right intervention for your client. The first four recommendations for how to think about an intervention are the following which were in last week's Morpheus post.

- 1) ***Think Coaching Conversation.***
- 2) ***Think Strategy.***
- 3) ***Think Meta-State Interfaces.***
- 4) ***Think Stability / Instability.***

5) ***Think Thinking–Patterns.*** When it comes time to begin thinking about how to intervene, consider your client's meta-programs. What are the dominant meta-programs or thinking patterns that you have detected? Get out the meta-program sheet with the 60 meta-programs and go through the central 15 that we highlight in Coaching Mastery. You don't need to do an intense and thorough analysis— simply answer this: “What are the key meta-programs that seem to govern my client's thinking, feeling, and choosing?”

As you ask that question, ask yourself, “Which are *the three meta-programs* which are most dominant?” It is very, very seldom to be more than three. Next, consider how to *match* your client's way of thinking, feeling, and choosing. Begin by matching to gain and be in rapport as you start. Then, if a meta-program shift would be an intervention in and of itself, then do that. This is especially true for *driver meta-programs* because while they comprise the person's towering strengths and they also indicate one of the person's blind-spots.

Here you might intervene with expanding the meta-program formally (using the pattern) or here you could simply plant questions which to answer will require the opposing polarity of the meta-program. “What is similar to X?” would be the kind of question for a mis-matcher. “What is distinctive about Y?” for the matcher.

6) ***Think Patterns.*** Interventions are typically and often, maybe even most of the time *patterns*. But, which one? How do you decide? The key that we stress to all of the Neuro-Semantic Trainers is *the elicitation question*. That question is the key to knowing which pattern to use. So when you know the elicitation question of a pattern, you will know if a given pattern is the right one to use. For more about patterns, make sure you have a copy of *Sourcebook of Magic, Volumes I and II*. There you have 77 patterns in the first and 143 in the second. That should keep you busy and well stocked with patterns.



**7) Think Categories.** To decide on the right intervention, match it with the category or classification of the need (problem) or outcome (desire). Did you feel a bit intimidated by the fact that there are 220 patterns in the two volumes of *Sourcebook of Magic*? No worry— the patterns are organized in those books in certain categories — Foundational, Parts, Identity and Self, States, Linguaging, Meta-Programs, Meanings, and Strategies. So what category does your client need? What category have you been talking about with your client as you gathered your original information? Another way to sort through the patterns is to know which category or dimension of the Matrix Model they fit into. Knowing those dimensions you can quickly go to your APMC manual and look at the list of patterns under each section. Is it in Power, Others, Time, etc.?

**8) Think Information-Gathering.** If none of these choices immediately come to mind, then begin your intervention with information gathering about how the person does the experience. I often do this. There are many videos of the coaching demonstration wherein this is the first thing I do. I have gathered enough information to know the general subject, but not enough detail. So I begin by clarifying the person's meanings and understandings so that I know precisely where my client is and what he wants.

In those instances, I typically find out the person's strategy for whatever the undesired experience is. This is modeling. I model the client's current experience and when you do that, it often tells you what you can do to streamline the old strategy, fix it, and/or move into a new strategy.

**9) Think Trance.** Ask yourself this question, "If my client is in a trance with regard to what she does not want, what trance is she in?" Viewing an experience in terms of trance is part and parcel of the NLP methodology. By definition a trance is "a highly focused state of narrowed awareness" and it typically results in various effects that, when undesired, can be the very presenting symptoms of the client's problem. Is your client in a procrastination trance? An envy trance? A performance anxiety trance? If so, then de-hypnotizing your client may be an incredibly powerful intervention. If so, use the Meta-Model questions— that's an excellent model for de-hypnotizing. Also see *Executive Thinking*.

There's lots of things you can do to *intervene effectively* with a client. There are lots of models in NLP and Neuro-Semantics to give you many ways to respond to a client that will bring resolution, resources, and solutions. To your effectiveness when you intervene.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2018 Morpheus #53**  
**December 11, 2019**  
***How to Intervene #3***  
**More Choices for Intervening**

## **THINKING THROUGH HOW TO INTERVENE**

**Interventions**— let me count the ways. There are dozens, even hundreds of interventions. An intervention is a tool for solving a problem, and in the case of coaching— a human problem. It is as way to facilitate *coaching a solution* to a person’s desires and wants and to a person’s blocks and interferences. Now the thing about human problems is that they are multi-factorial, multi-dimensional, systemic, and always unique to each person. In addition to all of the ways to think through how to intervene in the previous two articles, here are some additional recommendations for conceptualizing how to choose an intervention.

**10) Think Uniqueness.** Milton Erickson has famously noted that he used no psychotherapy theory when approaching his patients, rather he invented a new theory of each person. Incredible! How in the world did he do that? The answer is actually a lot simpler than you might suspect— the answer— he intensely and continuously observed his clients. It is said that he was perhaps the most skilled observer who ever lived. He observed their breathing patterns, micro-behaviors in how they used their eyes in terms of focus, defocus, blinking, rate of blinking, licking of lips, sighs, and much more. He observed to detect patterns and from the patterns he figured ways to use the pattern to create rapport or resistance or trance or whatever he thought would tap into that person’s unconscious resources.

Your client’s uniqueness goes to how he draws conclusions, uses past experiences as today’s references, copes with the basic human needs and drives, develops limiting ideas, beliefs, decisions, etc. It is in recognizing a person’s “way of being,” style, patterns, and “personality,” that gives you as a coach a way to determine which intervention at what time.

**11) Think Systems.** To think systemically, consider how the different factors in a client’s experience, life, and context *interact*. That’s what a system is— a set of relationships and interactions. The first question then becomes, “What are the key factors at play in this client and how are these factors related to each other?”

Then, using the Matrix Model, examine the *information* that has entered into your client. What has he focused on? What has she selected in the world to foreground in her mind? As that information has entered, what thinking patterns has your client used? What cognitive distortions? What meta-programs? What thoughts-and-feelings (states) have your client used and bring to his primary state? Continue observing and detecting the key beliefs, understandings, decisions, etc. which your client has used to process that information?

Along with the information in, what messages to the body, emotions, and energies have these ideas generated? What emotional and/or physiological states were generated? What skills and potentials did it activate and mobilize within you? As you follow the information in and energy out of your client's system, what have you become aware of?

Thinking systemically also involves noticing the contexts and contexts-of-contexts, the environmental factors, the contributing factors, etc. All of this expansive thinking will often enable you to identify the leverage points of change which will give you a way to intervene in the system. The good news about systems is that your very presence in a system influences the system. So take into your client's system compassion and care, interest and curiosity, respect and exploration. For more, see *Systemic Coaching* book.

### **The Psychology of Intervening**

As a Meta-Coach, you gather information and do lots of intense and detailed observing in order to formulate how you will intervene with a process that will empower and enable your client. The psychology of intervening is one of *diagnosis before prescription*. After all, what doctor would dare prescribe medicine or some intervention without first diagnosing the situation. We analyze the client and his situation in order to intelligently identify what to do. This requires patience, critical thinking, and an informed understanding of all of the tools available to you.

Here's to all Meta-Coaches doing this with more compassion and grace so that we establish, world-wide, a reputation for excellent diagnosis and prescriptions.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2018 Morpheus #54**  
**December 18, 2019**

## **DELIBERATE PRACTICE**

For two years we have shifted to using *deliberate practice feedback as we practice coaching*. There are many reasons for doing this— not the least of which is the importance of *timely* feedback. The closer to the action that you can receive feedback, the sooner you can make critical distinctions and adjust your actions. What we now know in terms of developing expertise is that *if you really want to become an expert*— you need to practice in a diligent and contracted way while receiving clear specific feedback in the moment.

Anders Ericsson, who invented the idea of deliberate practice, noted that it is very effortful, that is, one of effort, focus, concentration, etc. and not much fun. Practicing for fun and enjoyment is *not* deliberate practice. Instead, it is highly focused on a particular behavior which you want to improve and so involves an appropriate level of difficulty — “appropriate” signifying that it is not too easy nor too hard. It involves hard work around a critical distinction. What are the *characteristics of deliberate practice?*

- 1) *Repetition*. You take an activity, something that you *do*, and you repeat it over and over until you can do it, and then practice it until you can do it smoothly and naturally.
- 2) *Focused*. You focus on a critical action and zoom in on precisely what is required. If it is framing, then two distinctions— *what* you are framing (the activity, experience) and *the meaning* that you frame it with. In deliberate practice, you deliberately focus on the most difficult aspect of a performance.
- 3) *Immediacy*. You get feedback *in the moment* which is the time that is most timely for finding out how you did with your performance. Did you get it or not? To what extent are you now doing it right?
- 4) *Checking*. The immediacy of the feedback allows you to check externally with the eyes and ears of someone else who can also make the distinction, namely the benchmarker or the Meta-Coach giving you feedback.
- 5) *Validation*. The best feedback both reinforces what the person is doing right and offers corrections for what the person is not doing right. It involves statements of “Well done!” for successfully making a distinction.
- 6) *Questions*. The best feedback also involves training a person’s mind to see, catch, and detect distinctions and does this best through questions rather than advice. So we ask questions: “What was the meaning you gave to X?” “Are you aware that you raised your inflection at the end of your statement?”
- 7) *Effortful*. Don’t expect deliberate practice to feel like fun, expect it to feel like work because it is often it is the work of breaking an old habit.

Here is what Anders Ericsson wrote about deliberate practice:

“The core assumption of deliberate practice is that expert performance is acquired gradually and that effective improvement of performance requires the opportunity to find suitable training tasks that the performer can master sequentially—typically the design of training tasks and monitoring of the attained performance is done by a teacher or a coach. Deliberate practice presents performers with tasks that are initially outside their current realm of reliable performance, yet can be mastered within hours of practice by concentrating on critical aspects and gradually refining performance through repetition after feedback. Hence the requirement for *concentration* sets deliberate practice apart from both mindless, routine performance and playful engagement, as the latter two types of activities would, if anything, merely strengthen the current mediating cognitive mechanisms, rather than modify them to allow increases in the level of performance.” (2006, p. 692)

From this the criteria for deliberate practice involve the following:

- 1) The feedback is designed to improve performance.
- 2) The action is repeatable.
- 3) The action is sharply defined.
- 4) Feedback to it is continuous.
- 5) The action is a stretch which is beyond the person’s current ability.
- 6) The action requires focused concentration.
- 7) The action is not easy, not inherently fun.

### **To give deliberate practice feedback**

1) *Identify, interrupts, and ask about it.* Identify where a skill could have been used or where the response by the coach was not very effective. “Did you get the response that you wanted? Do you know why?” “Do you know what to do?”

2) *Offer some possibilities for how to improve the skill.*

“Do that again and this as you replay the acknowledgment, say it slowly and emphatically, and end it with a moment of silence as you look caringly at your client.”

3) *Identify the point where to restart the conversation.*

To the client, “You just said Y. Hold that in mind; we will start again with that in a moment.” Or, “You just asked Z, in a moment we will start from this question.” At that point, say, “Okay, Take 2, let the coaching begin again.” Then, watching and listening, the benchmarker may interrupt two or three more times to “coach” the coach to be able to do it accurately, precisely, graciously, etc. When it works, that is, when the coach performs the specific skill, the benchmarker just calls out— “That’s right. You’ve got it!” and let the coaching continue.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #55**  
**December 25, 2019**  
***Do the Bits, Learn the Skill***  
**See Attached Files**  
**\*\***

## **LEARN THE PIECES AND THE SKILL WILL APPEAR**

Last week I sent a post about deliberate practice. The central idea is to take a small piece of a skill, a piece that you can discern a beginning and an end, a piece that is regular and systematic, and practice it under supervision, until you can perform it with precision and excellence. This fits the Benchmarking Model which I developed in Neuro-Semantics from the foundational ideas of the Meta-Model. That is, by identifying the *behavior equivalents of a skill*, and then sequencing them to identify the order in which they occur, you could thereby break down the behaviors of a skill into their component units, and practice them until you became competent.

For many years in ACMC training (2005–2017), we asked the teams to do a “Benchmarking Project.” Out of that project many began developing their skills in meta-detailing and as they did, they took their benchmarking skills to higher levels. It was not easy. Many, in fact, found it very difficult. Everyone who worked as Team Leaders and Coaches know how much we all worked in helping the teams understand the benchmarking process. After more than ten years, we shifted to doing the Drills for Skills project (2017—2019). And we did that for nearly three years.

The next development came this past November. That’s when we shifted to the *Skills Experiment*. Having all of the work done in terms of detailing the component parts of a skill—we found ourselves with the sequential pieces of the fundamental coaching skills. That led to the paperwork attached to this post whereby you as a coach can focus on the pieces of a skill and practice over and over using the “Drills for Skills” until the skill itself emerges.

The design work of the attached files was a collaborative group project. I designed the first format for ACMC that we did in China in November. We then redesign it for ACMC in Sydney, that’s when Ana and Adam put their talents to format it in its current form. Then Shawn Dyer created a similar format for the Axes of Change skills, which I updated and Sherran in Hong Kong created the final form.

With these forms, *you can now take each skill and deliberately practice each component of the skill*. Imagine that! You can do that intentionally and under the supervision of another Meta-Coach until you get each of the skills down pat. Do that repeatedly until it becomes an automatic response. As it habituates, you then have available a skill that you can consciously and intentionally use in a coaching session. That’s when you *execute the skill*.

Knowing the pieces of a skill is one thing. That's intellectual. Being able to perform those pieces is the next thing. That's implementation. After that comes the step of being able to put all of that together into the proper sequence. Do that and you have habituated a new communication skill that you can now use in coaching. That's when the column "Execution" comes into play. This takes additional practice. Ideally, if you are practicing with another Meta-Coach or at a MCF Chapter meeting—someone could supervise your coaching session by cuing you, "Now is a good time for an acknowledgment." "Right now you could do a clarity check." Doing that repeatedly then enables you to deliberately practice *the right timing*.

Finally, there is the last column, "Quantity." This refers to how many times you would need to do the skill in a thirty-minute coaching session. For example, "7" times for acknowledgments and 50% of the time for when the client provides a semantic gesture which externalizes his or her internal space.

What does this approach allow you to do? It provides you a way to learn new skills and integrate them into your coaching in a way which Anders Ericsson discovered is typical of people who become experts in a field. Experts engage in deliberate practice. And now you can! You can take the two documents attached and use them to deliberately practice these fundamental skills and thereby take your coaching to a new level of competence.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2019 Morpheus #56**  
**December 31, 2019**

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## **HOW MUCH BETTER DID YOU BECOME IN 2019?**

It's the end of the year, *the very end*, so question: During 2019— how much better did you become as a coach? As a Meta-Coach? How many more skills did you add to your repertoire of coaching skills? Have you been able to demonstrate a 2.5 coaching competence on a regular basis?

*Becoming better at what you do* is an integral piece to live an ongoing self-actualizing life. It means you are *actualizing* something, you are increasingly making it more and more real as a present reality in your life. At the end of each ACMC, we always talk about “Where to from here?” and “What to do to become fully competent and proficient as a Meta-Coach?” The answer that I give is something to this effect:

- If your scoring on the skills is at a level 1— you are looking at five to eight weeks of daily practice and supervision. You probably still have some old listening and conversational habits to break and many of the new coaching skills in incorporate into your coaching.
- If your scores are around 1.5— daily practice and supervision for 4 weeks will probably get you to the 2.5 level.
- If you are scoring 2.0 area — 2 weeks or so should get you there.
- If you are scoring above 2.0 — 1 week of daily practice will get you to the 2.5 level.

*The key to all of this*, however, is *daily practice* as well as *practice under supervision*. If you are not doing at least one proper coaching session every day, your skills will take a lot longer to improve. If you are only doing one a week, your skills could very likely deteriorate. Yes, *deteriorate!* New skills, especially complex communication and coaching skills, need to be repeated over and over until they become so *habituated* that they become programmed in at an unconscious level. Actually, this explains why there are only a select few of the nearly 4,000 Meta-Coaches who have reached PCMC level.

The other piece of the puzzle that I always mention on Day 1 and Day 8 of ACMC is that it is *a matter of your own commitment to yourself*. No one can make you competently skilled at the coaching skills. You can learn about them. But until you yourself mind-to-muscle them into your conversational repertoire, they will be something that you “know” but cannot do. So, how is your own *commitment to yourself*? Are you committed enough to practice every day?

With a commitment to yourself, you can regularly video-tape your coaching session with your iphone and then grab a feedback sheet and benchmark yourself. Watch it for your Listening and Supporting skills. Watch it a second time for your questioning and meta-questioning skills.



Watch it a third time for your state-induction skills. If you do that with one or two coaching sessions every week, your integration of the skills will accelerate significantly.

For supervision, get a buddy coach. Ask another Meta-Coach who is working toward the PCMC level to provide you detailed feedback on each of your skills. Then provide the same for that person. That's one way to get the kind of deliberate-feedback that will take your skills to a higher level. Another way— get to a MCF Chapter or start one! You have that right and privilege. Now that would really show your own commitment to yourself ... and beyond yourself to the larger Meta-Coach Community.

Years ago I began sitting a goal for my writing, my training, and several other activities. My goal was to become 5% better in the year. To achieve that I aimed to become .8 better each month (0.833). That's not a lot. If you are bench pressing 200 pounds, the goal would be to increase that by 10 pounds by the end of the year— to 210. On a monthly basis that means about 0.8 of a pound per month (8 tenths of a pound). Not a lot. But it accumulates.

It accumulates— and that's the point. You can get better, a whole lot better, little by little. *Perfectionists*— pay attention and notice(!)— you can get a whole lot better by aiming to consistently get just a little bit better month by month. How much better did you get in 2019 as a Meta-Coach? How much better will you be in December of 2020? The answer lies in your self-commitment and your willingness to practice.