

MORPHEUS

VOLUME XIV

**META-PROGRAMS
AND THERAPY**

2022

MORPHEUS — 2022

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From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #1
January 1, 2022

2022 NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

Ah, a new year has dawned! May it be a truly happy new year for you! So as we move out of the hiatus of the covid pandemic and the fear pandemic which has lasted for nearly two years—it is fully time to renew our efforts and get back to normal, and to our vision of changing the world one conversation at a time, one presentation at a time. I have not trained in nearly two years and I'm personally cranking to get back on the road. What's ahead for us in Neuro-Semantics in 2022?

NSTT in February in Egypt

Can you believe it? We have not conducted NSTT in 3 years, not since Bali in 2019. So it will be a great delight to be back expanding the number of Neuro-Semantic Trainers. That's coming up very soon—Feb. 12 through the 26. The team will be meeting prior to that, Feb. 9 through 11. Contact Mohamed Tarek for detailed information about where and how.

Mohamed@lucidtraining.net

A New Collaboration Challenge.

This past year three Institutes stood out in terms of the collaboration challenge—*Egypt, Mexico, and Indonesia*. My goal was to send out the money to them by Christmas, and I'm happy to report that the money has been sent out and received. For this year, the leadership team has decided that Singapore and Philippine trainers will work in conjunction with *the Malaysia Institute* under Marzuki's guidance. Also, the Europe Institute will work in conjunction with *the Scandianian Institute*. All of this is designed to promote the learning about how to collaborate as well as more and more collaboration, working together, sharing ideas, etc.

In the next Challenge for Collaborating, in addition to the 3 best Institutes getting prizes, we will be identifying as many as *7 key individuals* for their collaborative contributions. These can be people from any Institute—people who have initiated collaborations or made collaboration possible for others and who have been a model of the collaborative spirit. I have designed a questionnaire and have attached it. I'm asking *all Institutes to use this as a pre- and as a post-measurement*. Use it now, in January, to see how your trainers and Meta-Coaches think and feel and then use it in November to measure the difference.

Neuro-Semantic Coordinated Conferences.

The leadership has also talked about and is proposing that we set a date and see if we can get all 10 Institutes to run a 1 day Conference—on the same day thereby making it a Neuro-Semantic *Global Conference*. We see this as a way to make a bigger impact in the world.

Public Service Seminars.

We are also proposing that the Institutes provide a *Public Service Seminar*—perhaps 3 or 4 times a year. This could be a 2-hour or 4-hour or full day *free seminar*. By identifying needs in the community—the theme could be presented (for example, “Overcoming Depression in the Pandemic.” “Dealing with Teen Suicides.” Etc.). Then, as public service events—you could send “press releases” to radio, TV, newspapers. This would be done, not to raise money, but to

demonstrate the Neuro-Semantic tools and models and expand your base.

Neuro-Semantic Writers.

We have a number of people writing articles for the Trainers egroup, *Framers*. And we can always use more. If you are interested, write to Sandra Vilgoen (sandra@newb.ms) to be added to the list.

New Series of Articles.

Beginning this year, I will be writing a new series of articles
Distinctions for Intelligent Clarity for Neurons.
Meta-States Extensiveness on Framers (Trainers egroup).
Meta-Programs for Morpheus (Coaches egroup).

New set of Trainings.

There is a whole new set of trainings that I've developed over the past two years ready to be presented and then duplicated by the certified Trainers. Going back to the fundamentals of our humanity, these are in the realm of *thinking and being*. Why? Because most people don't know how to think effectively and have to be taught; and most people don't know how to *be* who and what they are.

Under **Thinking** we now have *Brain Camp I through V*. Executive Thinking, Metaphorical Thinking, Hypnotic thinking, Executive Decisions, Executive Wisdom, and Executive Learning.

Under **Being** we not only have *Unleashing Authenticity*, but *Inside-Out* and *Inspiring the Heart*. We could include *Resilience* in this series.

Personal Mentoring.

Being conscious of my age and the time I have left to get things done, I am thinking about how to be more intentional and conscious in transferring my Neuro-Semantic (NLP) knowledge and skills to key people in our community. I'm thinking about conducting some intensive mentoring for specific competencies. I'm thinking about possibly doing it here in my home of Grand Junction Colorado. I am thinking about a 3-to-5 day intensive with 7 to 10 people. There would be no charge, only a commitment to fly in and stay for that period of time. One mentoring possibility could be for those who want to specialize in writing, researching, and benchmarking.

Meta-State Research

Dr. Carl Lloyd has inspired me to start thinking about setting up research projects this year. I have played around with some research questions as hypotheses that we could test. Omar Salom and I have talked about putting together a Think Tank of individuals who might be interested. From the research, we could then ask several in the community to write a research paper on the findings and publish them. My vision is that in this way we can gain more credibility for the Meta-States Model.

AND THEN — LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023—

2023 Neuro-Semantic Conference – Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This is all tentative and not even in the planning stages yet. We would establish a theme as we always have and then plan to call all Trainers and Meta-Coaches and Neuro-Semanticists together to meet there. It would be a 2 Day Conference. In preparation I have proposed that myself and others travel to Florida under Jason's guidance and hold 3-day trainings to build up excitement for the Conference. I have

proposed that we then follow up the Conference by having additional trainings led by various the Master Trainers and other Trainers.

Interviews.

After doing half a dozen interviews last year, I want to make myself fully available to do many more this year, interviews on specific subjects to highlight and promote what we are all doing. If you have a subject that you want to promote – wealth creation, leadership, collaboration, decision-making, wisdom, etc., let me know and we can do a tightly focused interview, 30 minutes, that can promote a training or a focus that you want to promote.

Neuro-Semantic Wisdoms

Very soon — January 8— we will have the next Zoom meeting. This time on the most essential element in unleash potentials — *Inside-Out*. See you soon!

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #2
January 5, 2022
Meta-Programs #1

YOUR CLIENT'S HIDDEN REALITY

There's something non-obvious about every coaching client that you have—namely, *their meta-programs are hidden and invisible*. You can't see them! Yes, they are also pervasive, ever-present, and inevitable, and yet they are also not obvious. You have to learn how to recognize them or search for them. Every client who walks into your coaching room is operating by a certain mixture or configuration of meta-programs. Yet most of them do not have a clue about them. And many clients are “clients” precisely because their meta-programs “have” them rather than them “having” their meta-programs.

Not only are some clients absolutely under the dominion of their meta-programs (and don't know it), but because of this there are times when you can perform “miracles” by coaching to the person's meta-programs. Sometimes a simply shift in a meta-program can create such pervasive changes in a client's life that it leads to a total transformation with the result that your client becomes *fully human/fully alive*. Now those are great memorable moments!

Yet, on the surface, the meta-programs are hidden. They are invisible. Often you, as the coach, don't see them and your client is completely oblivious to them. If they do notice them, they don't see them as dynamic and fluid perceptual programs, they think that they are their temperament or personality—something that just is, and something not changeable. When that happens, then there are two people in the room who are essentially deaf and blind to the dynamic structures that are defining the reality and calling out to you as the coach to be recognized.

Now obviously, we don't expect the client to walk in with an awareness about meta-programs. That's your job—your responsibility. It is in the role as a coach for you to call out the meta-programs, work with them, pace them, and expand, change, or re-contextualize them. If and when you do that, you are truly *meta-coaching*; you're working at a meta level. When you don't, at best you are only coaching external behavior (performance coaching), and at worse, you are clueless as to what's occurring and what needs to happen.

At *Coaching Mastery*, we introduce about 15 of the most prominent meta-programs that play a significant role in coaching. That's 15 out of a possibility of 60 (and 71 in the coming new third edition of *Figuring Out People*). We introduce only those that are most frequently seen and needed for coaching conversations. And admittedly, that small exposure is not enough. What's really needed is the three-day training, *Perceptual Genius* (which is part of Master Prac.). That would, at least, give you a good grounding and “heads up” about meta-programs. Even better would be a focused Meta-Coach Chapter wherein you and half a dozen to a dozen other Meta-Coaches spend 6 to 12 months going through the book.

When you learn how to recognize meta-programs and to see them for what they are, you are working with integrated and coalesced meta-states. Did you know that? That's because the higher level perceptions that become meta-programs start out as thoughts and feelings that you *apply to your thinking and feeling*, that is, to your states. Perhaps you take the idea and feeling of *options* and apply it to your current thinking and feeling about learning, leading, managing, writing, parenting, etc. Unknown to most people, they have just engaged in *going meta* and bringing a second state to their first state.

This is something that most practitioners in NLP still do not know. Yes *Figuring Out People* has been around for 25 years (first published in 1997) and far too many people finish their NLP studies and think that they "know it all." Of course, they don't. All they have learned are the foundations that gives them the ability to then *begin truly learning*.

Here's another fact about the field of NLP, outside of *Figuring Out People*, there are only a couple books on meta-programs and not a single one explains the learning origin of meta-programs. So in the next weeks and months I will be covering many of the meta-programs that are key for you to be an insightful and effective Meta-Coach.

Why Focus on Meta-Programs Now?

Recently when Sandra Vilogen wrote asking about meta-programs, I realized that I have written very, very little about meta-programs on this Coaches egroup over the years. Accordingly she asked that I write a series on meta-programs. It was good timing. Just prior to that, I had updated the book, *Figuring Out People* which Mustafa then put on "The Shop." That update mostly focused on updating #40, Goal Striving and cleaning up some of the spelling and grammar. When I talked to Geraldine about this, she asked what many others have asked, "And what about the new meta-programs? When are you going to update the book with them in it?" So, given all of that, I decided that it was now time to write a series on meta-programs.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #3
January 10, 2022

PLEASE RENEW YOUR LICENSE

Please renew your license. After all, why would you invest in a house for years and then suddenly stop paying the mortgage? You know what would happen. The bank would foreclose on you, force you out of the house, then sell the house to reclaim what is owed on it, and if it is not enough, get a court judgment against you for the remaining money. Now who, in their right mind, would walk away from an investment like that?

As a Licensed Neuro-Semantic trainer or a Licensed Meta-Coach, you have invested your money, time, effort, and heart for years. Your investment is in *yourself* and in your *membership* in an international organization which stands for high quality, professionalism, and cutting edge models. Your investment is in something bigger than yourself. Your investment gives you access to the ongoing discovery and development of the transformational models and technology of Neuro-Semantics. So, why would you walk away from that?

When Bob and I conceived of Neuro-Semantics, we did not want to make the same mistakes that Bandler and Grinder made, or that James or Robbins made. We wanted to share the intellectual property and to make it an open source for those in the Neuro-Semantic community. To initiate that, we launched a website and immediately put up 100 pages of patterns and articles. That grew to 1,000 pages and is now getting close to 10,000 pages.

Why? Because we believe that the models and tools we have can *change the world*—one person at a time. Because we believe that, above and beyond making money, we want to spread the vision of a life well-lived, of people becoming fully alive/fully human, of individuals and groups unleashing potentials that are currently hidden and untapped.

We also did not want to make the mistake of charging exorbitant fees that would enrich us to the detriment of the community. To that end, we put the Trainers' fee at \$350 a year (also \$250 and \$100) and the coaches at \$40 a year. Unlike the Society of NLP that charges \$200 *per person* certified! (I paid that fee for years when I first became a trainer). Unlike Robbins who charged \$50,000 for his franchise. In the past 26 years, Bob and I have never taken any money from those fees and, in fact, we have paid for many things out of our own pockets.

All of the fees have gone for one thing—to *support and promote Neuro-Semantics*. Today all of the money from the fees goes into the bank account of the Institutes which gives them the basis for promoting and supporting Neuro-Semantics in their country ... to the benefit of every trainer and coach.

So as I ask you to *please renew your license* with your Institute, it is to promote a spirit of

collaboration among all of us around the world.

This month and through March, *every Institute will be asking for the trainer and coaching fees*. Each Institute now has their own bank account and most have their own Paypal account. This money can be used to run Conferences, Chapters, Special Events, etc. It is up to each Institute to make that decision.

If you are in Singapore and Philippines—you are now working under the guidance of the Malaysia Institute — so Marzuki is your contact person.

\ If you are in Europe— you are now working under the guidance of the Scandinavia Institute, so Henrik is your contact person.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #4
January 12, 2022
Meta-Programs #2

YOUR CLIENT'S EPISTEMOLOGY Their Meta-Programs

Here's something I bet you did not know, or at least you did not know it in the following way. Namely, every time you meet a new client, you come up against a new epistemology. That's because *how a person knows what she knows* (her epistemology) controls how the person thinks, reasons, emotes, speaks, and acts. It is that person's way of making sense of the world which, in turn, is how the person creates his experiences.

But good news—you can learn to detect and infer a person's epistemology from that person's meta-programs. So when you learn meta-programs, and especially when you learn *how to detect* meta-programs, you gain access to the hidden meta-system that governs human epistemology. This will give you access to how you know what you know, and how your clients know what they know.

Now don't you love the word "epistemology?" I find that there's something delightful in articulating that word. And while it sounds like a big word, it has a simple definition. It refers to the process by which any of us *know* whatever we know. You are flirting with it and dancing around it every time you ask someone, "How do you know that?" And in coaching, you should be asking that fairly often. After all, clients are asserting things about themselves, others, and the world. But where did they get that information or how did they come to understand things as they do?

The question, *How do you know that?* takes a person inside to her "way of knowing things." Does she *see* something? *Hear* something? *Feel* something? Does he infer it? Does he know it due to a general principle or a specific detail? In other words, the person's meta-programs are part and parcel of that person's epistemology. The meta-programs also point to and infer an ever large (or higher) system in the background of the mind that determines how a person knows what he knows.

All this should provide more than enough reason to learn and know the meta-programs inside-out. The competency of understanding meta-programs and recognizing them in real time as your client's talk can give you a deep insight to what makes that person tick. In this way, your recognition of meta-programs puts into your hands what X-rays or a MRI scan gives a doctor. With meta-programs, you are now able to *see* a person's hidden meta-system. And once you are able to read meta-programs, you have a key to their epistemology. Now you can *figure out how people work*.

Conversely, when you do *not* know about meta-programs or you cannot detect and recognize meta-programs in real time with a client, or you do not know how to "read" meta-programs, then you will

be functionally blind to what lies before you. You will be *looking through* your own lens and when you do that, you are subject to them. They *have* you. But once you recognize meta-programs, you are then able to *look at* your own lens and your client's lens. That lens is now an *object* to you. You can recognize the meta-program and take an objective view of it.

Understanding the structure of meta-programs gives you access to your own hidden system for *knowing*—how you come to know, perceive, and attend as you do. It gives you access to how your client *knows* whatever she knows. Now you have access to the *meta-system* within which you and/or your client operates. And having access to the meta-system, often you will be able to do what will seem like “magic” in terms of transformational change. Yet because knowing activates feeling, it is your feeling system. And as knowing–feeling evokes actions— choices, behind all of it are your semantic meta-programs or assumptions and intentions.

In the coming weeks, I'll be delving into a number of the meta-programs and how you can use them to more thoroughly understand yourself and your clients. With them, you will have an elegant way to meet your client at her model of the world and to use her way of thinking as you communicate. That will obviously enhance understanding and give you the basis for facilitating transformational change. And who knows, you might end up being an expert in epistemology!

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #5
January 19, 2022
Meta-Programs #3
Attachment: PDF of Meta-Programs

IMPLIED META-PROGRAMS WHEN YOU COACH THE WFO

In both the *Coaching Essentials* and the *Coaching Mastery* trainings, you were introduced to the Meta-Programs Model. In Module III we typically cover 20 meta-programs, the 20 that are most basic to Coaching and most frequently needed. For people who are prime candidates for Coaching, these are the meta-programs that, more often than not, stand out.

Cognitive Meta-Programs: #3 Scale (big/small), #4. Relationship (match/mismatch), #5. Information Staging (count/discount), #6. Scenario (best/worst), #9. Focus (screen/not screen), and #10. Philosophy (why/how).

Emotional Meta-Programs: #20. Inside/Outside (step in/out), #22. Stress (passive/aggressive), #23 Authority (Internal/external), #24. Attention (self/other), #26. Rejuvenation (extrovert/ introvert), and #27. Somatic Response (reflective/active)

Conative Meta-Programs: #35. Motivation (toward/away from), #36. Operation (options/procedures), #37. Adaptation (perceive/judge), and #40. Goal Striving (perfection/optimize).

Semantic Meta-Programs: #48. Self-Experience, #49. Self-Instruction (strong-willed/ compliant), #51. Self-Esteem (conditional/ unconditional), #53. Responsibility (under, over, appropriate).

Now for details about all of that, you can easily refer to the book, *Figuring Out People* which we now have on The Shop at Neuro-Semantics.

As a Meta-Coach, your most basic tool is the Well-Formed Outcome questions. “Why is that?” Because coaching is inevitably about a client identifying an objective in life and you coaching him through the processes to reach the outcome. The focus for coaching clients is on generating new skills, unleashing new potentials, and coming up with creative solutions. To that end, we always begin with the WFO process. *And inside of that process, there are scores of meta-programs.*

In fact, by asking the WFO questions, you are inherently using and referring to meta-programs. So if you want to truly develop expertise in coaching—once you know how to use the WFO pattern proficiently, the next step is to tune your eyes and ears for the meta-programs that will inevitably pop up. In this and the next post, I’ll detail the meta-programs you can discover in the WFO questions.

#1. *What do you want?* When you ask this, your client will either *match or mismatch* your request (#4). Right from the get-go, your client will inform you if you have a matcher or mismatcher on your hands. Detecting this is pattern detection. The answer will also inform you whether your client has a *toward* orientation in life or an *away from* orientation (#35). And because you will be asking this question several times (and in every session), you will soon be able to tell *if this is what is stopping him from achieving his goal*. That is, if a client is always *moving away from* and *mismatching*, and

this is a life pattern— that is *not* an effective strategy for goal setting.

#2: *What does this objective look or sound like?* If your client can answer this, then he is in *sensory awareness* (#1) representation system not the meta-language system. He also may be *details* (#3) rather than global and perhaps even *quantitative* rather than qualitative (#15). A simple question and yet from it you can harvest a lot of information. How amazing!

#3. *Why is this outcome important to you?* Now you will start to hear your client's values (#60). If they are stated in the negative ("I don't want stress"), then again mismatching (#4) or away from (#35). And because you are asking this 5 to 7 times (you are, aren't you?), then you will soon recognize your client's pattern. If your client gives you lots of reasons and explanations rather than single-word or two-word *values*, she might have heard your question as if you asked "the why of source" question (#10). This one will also indicate if the person is *inside* her representations or *outside* (#20, associated or observing) and if associated, the degree of Exuberance (#21).

#4. *When do you want to achieve this goal?* Your client's answer will now tell you a lot about his constructs of "time." In which *time zone* does he live in (past, present, future) (#57)? If he is clear about the when, he is probably *through-time* (#58), if he cannot, he might be *in-time* and cannot predict or calculate the time frame. Or he may have a short time-frame (#C, which is a new meta-program). *In-time* people tend to hear this as "When will you start?" But that is *not* the question!

#5. *Where will this goal occur? (i.e., area, domain, field).* Here again, listen for *scale* (global/specific, #3), her values (#60), and sometimes the Value Preference (#39).

#6. *Will anyone else be a part of achieving this goal?* While many goals are goals that a person has to do alone, many are highly enriched by collaborating with others. If that's the case, you may be able to distinguish *Management* (controlling/ collaborative) (#45), as well as *Social Convincer* (trusting/ distrusting) (#42), *Interactive* (competitive/ collaborative) (#43), *Work style* (#30).

#7. *What do you have to do to get what you want? What actions do you have to take?* The client's answer here will give you more *Scale* (#3), *Relationship* (#4), but mostly the person's sense of authority and his "locus of control" (#23, internal/ external), also his *Somatic Response style* (#27 reflective/ active) and perhaps his sense of responsibility (#53). The actions listed will tell you whether she thinks in terms of procedures or options (#36) and whether she operates as one who adapts to the world or makes the world adapt to her (#37). Wow. Question 7 can give you a lot of information about your client!

Did you ever imagine that asking the Well-Formed Outcome Questions could do so much information gathering as a coach? Now, perhaps, you are beginning to catch a vision about the power of questions in general and the WFO questions in particular. This will be continued in the next post.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #6
January 19, 2022
Meta-Programs #4
Attachment: PDF of Meta-Programs

MORE IMPLIED META-PROGRAMS

This continues an examination of the Well-Formed Outcome questions for the meta-programs that are implied within them or required for a person to answer them.

#8. Can you initiate these behaviors? Are the actions intrinsic to you and within your control?
Again, this will highlight Authority (#23), Responsibility (#53). Further because this is a yes/no question, it elicits like many of the previous questions, the person's style of *Decision Making* (#47, cautious/ bold), her *speed* (#18, deliberate and slow/ quick and witty).

#9. Can you do these actions? Do you have the ability and competency to do it? With this question your inquiry is about your client's capacity to do something. That will elicit the meta-program #50 *Self-Confidence* (low/high), *Responsibility* (#53), and *Authority* (#23). Implied also here is the *Convincer* meta-programs (#19 and #34). And because of that you can follow-up with a question about being convinced, "How convinced are you that you can do that?"

#10. Have you ever attempted to achieve this goal before? When? What happened? Implied in this question is the person's memory of the past and the ability to use past references as resources (#57). If the person has and it counts (#5) then she may propose an optimistic scenario for the future (#6). If the person discounts, then she may have a pessimistic scenario. If a client constantly cannot hold in mind a previous positive resource, suspect *Durability* (#12) that his representations are very permeable and he has a problem with sustaining them.

#11. How many things do you have to do? How many steps are there to it? Are there stages in the process? How many? This question presupposes the ability to do, at least, some detailing (#3) and some procedures (#36). Can you client go there? To what degree? If not, then this will become an important part of the coaching. Answering this question also implies the ability to *sequence* things (#58 through-time or out-of-time).

#12. Do you need a plan? Do you have a plan? To answer this, your client has to scale up to the concept of a plan and then scale down to the steps (#3) and then identify the procedures (#36). A plan and the process of *planning* also implies that in terms of *Causation* (#13) the person is internal and perhaps systemic.

#13. Do you know what feedback you will need to succeed? How will you monitor the feedback?
This implies systemic and reflexive thinking (*Movement*, #8), *Fallibility Coping* (#H accepting

errors), one's own personal security (#J, #50).

#14. Is there anything stopping you from achieving your outcome? If so, what? Answers to this question may indicate *away from* values (#35), the person's Scenario style (#6), and one's Ego-Strength (#54). With this question, as with most, also note if the person is answering *from within* the movie in his mind, or *outside* (#20). If so, what is the emotional affect of the person?

#15. Do you have the resources that you need? What resources will you need to achieve your outcome? This question will elicit Values (#60), perhaps the person's Preference Value (#39), Motivation Direction (#35 toward/ away from), Scale (#3), Counting or Discounting (#5).

#16. Is the outcome balanced and ecological for all the contexts of your life? To answer the ecology check question requires going to third perceptual position (#B), thinking systemically (#8), and accessing one's highest Intentions (#L). As a meta-state, this invites (and tests) the person's ability to do reflexive thinking (#8).

#Unnumbered: Given all of this, do you still find the outcome compelling and motivating? This question tests for #20, the emotionality of the outcome, #21 the person's Exuberance, and #60 her values.

#17. Are you going to commit yourself to this outcome? Ready to make a decision to go for it? Here you will see in open display the person's Decision Making (#47) meta-program (cautious/ bold) and convincer meta-programs (#19, #34).

#18. How will you know when you have achieved your outcome? What evidence do you need? Again, the convincer meta-programs (#19, #34), one's Information Kind (#15, Quantitative, Qualitative), one's Epistemology (#2, sensor/ intuitive).

If you had ever wondered about how the WFO pattern were related to the Meta-Programs, you now have an intimate description of the two. Using the WFO questions is where you begin as a coach, but it is just the beginning. Do it with an awareness of meta-programs and it gives you an X-ray vision into the meta-system of your client.

\From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #7
Feb. 2, 2022

WHAT A META-COACH SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SELLING

I recently heard about a Meta-Coach who said that he just did not know how to sell himself as a Meta-Coach. When I heard that, I fell out of my chair onto the floor and gasped for air. Geraldine rushed in to see what was all the commotion and when I told her that there was a Meta-Coach who said he did not know how to sell Meta-Coaching or himself as a Meta-Coach, she let out a scream that could be heard for blocks.

Eventually as we both recovered, we looked at each other with horror in our eyes at the prospect that there could be such a fantastic and unbelievable person on Planet Earth. “Do you think it’s real?” I asked. “Surely not” she responded, “I don’t see how it’s possible. How could a Meta-Coach emerge from the 8-day immersion of ACMC and not know?” I said, “It’s a mystery to me, but we better get on the Meta-Mobile and see if we can track down this sad and pathetic person.”

Okay, okay, none of that happened. I just made it up. But it could have. I mean it is a possibility that somewhere on this Planet, there could be a Meta-Coach who was on his iphone or out of the room on Day 6, or maybe had a brain fart that prevented a certain connection. Anyway, in the likelihood that such could happen, here’s what every Meta-Coach should know about selling.

Are you ready for it? Here goes: *Coaching and selling are the same thing*. Yep, that’s right partner! When you know how to coach, you have all of the secrets of selling. That’s because in coaching, you are *selling* a client on herself—how she can become the best version of herself! So you create the rapport that’s need for trusting, you ask questions that enable your client’s mind and emotions. You use meta-questions of importance to captivate the heart, you invite him to weigh the pros and cons to create a smart and ecological decision. Then with that commitment, you co-create a blueprint for the transformation as well as the first steps to be taken.

Now doesn’t that remind you of something? Does that remind you of a model that you have as a Meta-Coach that leads a person through a persuasion process? What about the Axes of Change? Ah, yes, the Axes of Change! First you get the motivational and inspirational *energy flowing* by asking the toward and away from questions. Then you facilitate the decision-making competencies of the person’s pre-frontal cortex in making a really intelligent decision and commitment. Then as you play the inner game of designing the specific blueprint for change, that leads to the first steps of change. The full integration comes later as week after week you celebrate and challenge for refinement.

The process is singular. You don’t need one process for coaching and one for selling. Both involve facilitating a client to *understand* the value of something, but not only understand, but to *feel the*

value. But motivational energy is not enough for change or for closing a sale. People need to access their choosing capacity (conation) so that when they choose, it is informed, intelligent, and ecological. That's where facilitating a great executive decision comes in. Coach before that and you will have all sorts of resistance. Close a sell before this and, again, lots of resistance. Until a person is *internally sold on the superior value*, they are not ready. They are not ready to be coached; they are not ready to sign on the dotted line.

All of that is preparation. In the Axes of Change, the first two axes *prepares a person to be ready for change*. Use the same in selling an idea, experience, or a product, and it prepares a person to be ready to decide to buy. Now the question of "how" arises. How do I make this particular change? How do we complete the sale so it is mine? That's where the Axis of Creation comes in and where you play the *inner-outer game*. First you take the person inside to work out the structure of what and how to do what needs to be done. Then you mind-to-muscle it into specific steps. It's the same with buying-and-selling. "Okay, yes, I want to buy that house (car, boat, horse, computer), so where do we start? What do we do first, second, third, etc.?"

Finally, there is the follow-up. In both changing and selling, we want to know, "What worked, what only partially worked, what could work better?" That's the Axis of Integration. Neither coaching or selling should be treated as a one-off event, but as a relationship for life. We follow-up because we care, we genuinely care that our client gets the value out of the change or the purchase.

So dear Meta-Coach, if you find selling your services or selling Meta-Coaching difficult, revisit the Axes of Change, in fact, revisit all of your coaching skills. Get to a Chapter Meeting and have your skills benchmarked to see where you are today and what you need to work on. And, of course, the key to selling anything is to deeply, deeply believe in it and use it with yourself.

Meta-Coach News

If you discover that you are not getting all of the Morpheus Articles, that some numbers are skipping, it's because you are not on the Certified Meta-Coach egroup. To be on that group requires renewing your license as a Meta-Coach.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #8
February 9, 2022
Meta-Programs #5

META-PROGRAMS AS SKILLS IN YOUR OPERATING SYSTEM

You know that each meta-program is a thinking or perceiving pattern—a way of looking at things. If it is that kind of a pattern, then it reveals a skill—a capacity, a way of *doing* something. For example, the first meta-program tells about your ability to access and create images in your mind, or sounds, or sensations or the capacity to go meta to the sensory systems and code things linguistically. The third meta-program speaks about your ability to match what is present and/or to mis-match.

When you think about meta-programs as skills, then you have to shift upward and realize that they are *meta-skills*. That is, above and beyond a skill are these meta-skills which enable the primary level behavior, or dis-ables it. This means that you will be able to learn and do some things with the meta-programs you have and without those particular meta-programs, you will not be able to do those things. Pretty significant, eh?

Whenever we model an expert, it is therefore critical (not just nice, but critical) to identify the meta-programs that make the expertise possible. So we ask the expert, “How do I need to perceive things in order to be able to do X as you do?”

Now given that meta-programs are skills, and more precisely, meta-skills, you can think of them as your *operation system*. So, just as a computer can do a great many things, whatever it does requires an operation system. When computers began to become household items, they ran by DOS (Disk Operation System). My first computer in 1983 came with a book, “DOS” which I read from cover to cover to understand the DOS commands to enter in a the “c” prompt. While most people don’t even know what the “c” prompt is, computers still run by operation systems which provide the background programs that allow you to do all kinds of things on the computer.

Your meta-programs function as an operation system, Now we can identify the operation system which is needed for a given expertise. We can ask—

- What meta-programs are needed to run *resilience*?
- What meta-programs are needed to run *inspiration*?
- To start and maintain an exercise program? Be a visionary leader? Parent effectively? To be an effective problem-solver, Etc.

In this way your meta-programs set you up and prime you to respond in a particular way and producing certain responses. To be able to effectively learn any skill, you and I need the set of meta-programs that correspond to that skills. That’s because in life we respond to our perceptions of

reality, not to reality itself.

This also identifies the fact that sometimes you (or your client) needs a particular operation system before you can learn a particular skill or set of skills. For example, what are the meta-programs you will need to learn *resilience*?

- #51 Unconditional Self-Esteem. Then the bad thing will not be about you.
- #57 Out-of-Time (Through Time). Then you won't be stuck in the past or think the present is forever.
- #6. Optimistic. So you can create a hopeful vision of the future and not think the bad thing is forever or everywhere.
- #8. Fluid Movement. So that you think of things as in process, always changing, never staying the same and so open to change and improvement.
- #4. Difference. Otherwise you might abhor change and want the return of the status quo, you will not adjust to the changes that have occurred.
- #23. Internal Authority. So that you experience "the locus of control" as with you.
- #53. Healthy Responsibility. So you own your own powers to respond.
- #35. Toward Motivation. So that you focus on solutions, not problems.
- #J. Personally Secure. So you move out trusting yourself.
- #L. Focused Intentionality. So you have a big "why of purpose."

Now imagine that you think of this list as a collection of meta-skills that function as an operation system enabling you to then run the resilience strategy. How easy it would be to *be resilient!* These meta-programs would give you a head-start as they would prime you to be ready for resilience. And just imagine the difficulty of learning and integrating the resilience strategy if you lacked this operation system. It would be impossible! You would not have the disposition for it, the attitude for it, the background beliefs, frames, and understandings. These give you the frames within which the new learning then makes perfect sense.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #9
Feb. 16, 2022
Meta-Programs #6

META-PROGRAMS FOR FIGURING OUT A CLIENT

For you, as a coach, one of the designs of the meta-programs is to enable you to *figure out* your client. So, how do you *figure out* your client? Now because every client is different and every one brings different concerns to the coaching conversation, coaching requires a lot of flexibility. That's why rigid formats and techniques do not work very well in coaching. Obviously, to *figure out* a client, you then have a pretty good idea about how he operates in the world in terms of thinking, feeling, and responding. That's why knowing the Meta-Programs Model gives you a head start.

Now while anyone of us can adopt any number of thoughts, beliefs, decisions, lifestyles, etc., and while the range of thinking patterns is pretty broad, we are also amazingly consistent within ourselves. Day after day, month after month, year after year—most people maintain an incredible amount of consistency in their “personality.” Given all of the changes around us, all of the new and different stimuli we experience via television, internet, social media, etc. on a daily basis, how is it that we are able to be consistently ourselves? A significant part of the answer lies in our meta-programs.

What's behind the consistency? Patterns! We humans fall back on habitual ways of thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting, and so we establish *patterns*. Then after months or years of repetition, those patterns become so regular and so consistent that you can count on a person systematically running the same patterns day after day. The result of this? *Character*. We develop a *characteristic way* of thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting. Now the way you operates is “in character” with who you have learned to be. It is when a person is “out of character” with himself that we stand up and notice that something is wrong!

This meta-stating process involves *applying* the same kind of thinking or emoting, the same kind of state, over and over until it becomes one's meta-program. One person repeatedly uses *options* as his pattern, another uses *procedure*; one *matches*, another *mis-matches*. Now you can “count on a person” responding in a particular way in almost any context. It's the person's pattern.

Now most people have a few of these really regular patterns, anywhere from six to ten of them, and these make up what we call “personality.” They reveal how a given person operates *as a person*. He could think or feel or speak or act differently, but he doesn't. He defaults to his consistent patterns. We all do. Those patterns then make up how he *does his personality*. In other words, “personality” is not a thing or type, it is a practiced way of being in the world. You were *not* born a certain “type” that you are stuck with forever. You learn it and it eventually becomes your systematic way of operating.

I write all of this to identify a critical factor in coaching. Sometimes in coaching a client's solution will be to learn to be a new and different person, that is, *to change her personality*. "Can you can personality?" someone asks. "Of course!" It is more involved than behavioral change, it is developmental change and transformational change. And in terms of meta-programs, it is not so much eliminating a meta-program as it is extending the meta-program.

Do you have a client whose "personality" or "character" is pessimistic, sarcastic, belligerent, defensive, overly submissive, given to self-pity, rebellious, etc.? Then that person has learned how to think, feel, speak, and act in a way with a particular characteristics. She may have some natural disposition toward a particular way of being. But that orientation is not completely determined and the person can learn a different orientation. Personality can be modified. So ask your client:

"What do you like about your personality?"

"What do you not like about your personality?"

"What characteristics do you have in the way you go about in the world that you would like to change or upgrade?"

"In what contexts do you find that your 'personality' does not serve you well or bring out the best in you?"

Asking these questions will enable you to invite your client to deeper and more pervasive change, change that goes beyond just behavioral adjustments. Now we're talking about a developmental change that will enable your client to take on a new way to *be* in the world.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #10
Feb. 23, 2022
Meta-Programs #7

YOUR CLIENT'S GLOBAL META-PROGRAM

It is very, very seldom that Coaches have a problem with a client who is too detailed. But what is very, very common is a client who is *too global*. In fact, it is precisely because most people are thinking, perceiving, and sorting at *too general a level* that they encounter multiple problems. And accordingly, that's why it is so critical to use the Meta-Model to get clients to be more specific. Ask them, "Specifically what are you talking about?"

The founders of NLP discovered that this is, to a great extent, what Perls and Satir did with their therapy clients. By getting them to "come into sensory awareness" and speak more precisely about things, many of their problems went *poof!* and immediately disappeared. Why? Because a great many human problems are functions of the language we use, especially vague language. Problems are created by language and by re-languaging them, they can be deconstructed or reconstructed.

That's why, as a Meta-Coach, you learned to ask *the clarity question repeatedly some 3 to 7 times* when a client uses a vague or ambiguous word. But, of course, most Meta-Coaches do not do that! I know because when it comes to the PCMC level, when I listen to the coaching sessions and benchmark them, the coaches are still not using the clarity question except in the most superficial way. And that's a problem created by the Meta-Coach himself or herself *thinking too generally*.

The *Scale Meta-Program (#3)* distinguishes the size of information that a person is processing from small to large, from specific to general. Here you ask yourself, "On the scale of specificity/abstraction, where is my client? Is he using sensory-based terminology or is he using evaluative terminology?" A quick way to test is to use the *Representational Tracking Test*. "Can you track the client's word directly to a movie screen in your mind?"

- "My son Jay, 6 years old, is afraid of spiders and cowers in his bed under the covers when he sees one."
- "My son has an unrealistic fear that's making him paranoid and I'm afraid it will scar him for life if we don't do something."

Surely you can tell the difference! Because you take the first statement and track it to the screen in your mind, you can easily "make sense" of your client's words. The second is impossible to track. There are too many over-generalizations "unrealistic," "paranoid," and "scar." So you have to *bring the client down to reality by asking him*, "What specifically do you mean by...?" each of those words. And if you don't? Then you will suffer, along with your client, *an illusion of understanding*. The worst thing is for you to say, "I know what you mean!" because you don't. You are only wildly

hallucinating. Just as bad is your own *general thinking* so that you don't even catch the fact that your client has not yet told you anything meaningful.

Here's another test so you can detect your client's meta-program. "What is the direction of your client's reasoning? Does she *induce upward* from facts to ideas or does she *deduce* from ideas down to facts?" With the Scale Meta-Program (#3) a person can be an *inductive thinker* or a *deductive thinker*.

- Does your client need lots and lots of facts before he draws a conclusion?
- Or does your client quickly jump to conclusions and treats the conclusion as if it were a fact?
- How many nominalizations does your client use when speaking?
- To what extent does your client *extensionalize* her words giving specific references in the real world of sensory facts?

So with the earlier example, you would ask, "How have you drawn the conclusion that your son is paranoid?" You can then follow that up with other questions, "How many times has your son seen a spider and cowered under the covers?" "How many times has he seen a spider and did not do that?" "What movie did your son see about spiders or who talked to him about spiders?"

As a coach, while it may seem that the client is talking about her son, she is actually talking about herself. So you need to direct questions to her state of mind and perceptual style. "What you use the word 'scar' how are you using that word?" Here the client has not used a nominalization, but a metaphor. She has compared a physical wound that might leave a scar to a psychological wound (the fear) which he is anticipating (predicting the future, worrying) will be a scar on the child. That's a *gigantic jump in logic*.

To refresh your knowledge about over-generalized language, review the Meta-Model for universal quantifiers, modal operators, lost performatives, cause-effect statements, complex equivalences, etc. All of these ill-formed linguistic structures shouts at you that your client is operating at a global level and is not thinking or perceiving specifically. Finally, remembering that "genius is in the details," here's to your genius coaching state.

From: roy@mindpower.com.my

Michael,

As I am reading this article, one thing came to mind. As meta-programs form the underlying pattern with which our client expresses themselves, does **context** play a role in determining how they move along the meta programs continuum? Example, a client during the coaching conversation may be running from a 'global' meta-program— sharing ambitions, goals, dreams. But when they go back into a workplace context, they may then move to a 'specific' meta-program.

That being said, for us to "figure someone out," would it be safe to say that we'd have to "figure someone out" in a particular context? So instead of asking, "What do you like about your personality?", should we be asking "What do you like about your personality when working with your team on xxx project at work?" Contextualizing would then help us be more specific.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #11
March 2, 2022
Meta-Programs #8

DEALING WITH MATCHING AND MIS-MATCHING CLIENTS

You're client is there *to learn*—to learn to become the best version of himself, but if he mis-matches himself or you, he will probably only learn that “you can't help me.” By mis-matching she proves that what you're saying, suggesting, and facilitating is not helpful and not working. Why? Because the client is focused on *what is different from* what you are saying and doing. And that makes it really tricky in terms of how to effectively coach. So ask yourself:

- Is my client matching or mis-matching what I'm saying and doing?
- Does my client say, ‘Yes, but...’ frequently?
- Does my client explain how something will not work, he's tried that?
- When you ask, ‘What do you want?’ does she describe what she does not want?
- Does your client work as a quality controller?

A client who is a mis-matcher often shows up in coaching thinking that he is simply “a negative person” or a pessimist. Because they mis-match, people often tell them that and eventually they begin to accept that. Other clients show up convinced that they are not the problem, but all of the people that they work with, associate with, or marry. They show up wanting to be more persuasive so that they can get their way more often.

The key to a mis-matcher is that *she sorts for differences*. Perceptually, he has *eyes* for what is out-of-place, doesn't fit, won't work, etc. That makes them excellent at doing quality control. It would make them very good at detective work. They see problems easily and quickly and so when it comes to doing “due diligence” they are great at doing early problem detection.

Sometimes a client walks in and he really does not know that he mis-matches. It's amazing. In my very first NLP Training that I did in 1989, I was working in front of the group demonstrating the Swish Pattern. She wanted to stop smoking, so I asked her to see whatever she sees when she begins to smoke.

“It's not that I see anything.” “Okay, well if you did, what would it be?” “It wouldn't be my desk or the cigarettes.” “Okay, and if not those, what?” “I don't know, I don't think it would be anything.”

The conversation continued to go that way—to my dismay! And at first I didn't catch on. Luckily I eventually recognized the pattern. “Are you aware that every time I suggest something, you mis-match it?” “No, I don't do that,” she said in a sincere and humble tone. “So you are not aware that you are answering the opposite of the question?” “I don't think I am.” And she really believed that.

Luckily also I had a tape-recorder playing, so I said, “May I play back the conversation so you can become aware of it?” She agreed. Then, *to her utter surprise and disbelief* there it was! She actually asked to have it played one more time. She truly had *no idea that she was not answering the questions!*

Here’s the key: When you are *learning anything new*—be sure to match the presenter. If you mis-match you only learn what you already know and nothing new. This explains the poor learning strategy of many people, they are mis-matching when they read or study or listen.

Conversely, people who match tend to be so agreeable and so ready to say *yes* to whatever you say or present, many of them do not know *how* to stand up for themselves. They are unskilled at mis-matching and so they end up going along with things that they later disrespect themselves for going along. An extreme matcher will be so fearful of disappointing people (and you as the coach) that they will not fully tell you the truth. To become their best selves, they will need to develop their inherent right to their own opinion and the courage to say no and to disappoint others.

Matchers sort for *sameness* and this also prevents learning. Instead of taking on the new and matching it to the speaker, they sort through their knowledge base, “Isn’t this the same as...?” In that way, instead of learning something new, they keep comparing the new with what they already know.

As a Meta-Coach, discerning the matching and mis-matching pattern of your client is critical if you are to be effective with your client. What every client needs, what every person needs, is *lots of flexibility to both match and mis-match at will.*

Problems arise when either of these patterns are used exclusively. The mis-matcher rubs people the wrong way always disagreeing, the matcher becomes a people-pleaser and betrays his own integrity. This is where a single meta-program can be the culprit behind a person’s struggles. To help expand this meta-program, simply invite the person to the opposite end: “What is the same as...?” “What is different from?”

How about you? Do you have sufficient flexibility as a Meta-Coaching to shift back and forth at will? *Or does your pattern have you under its domination?* If so, grab your buddy coach and gain the flexibility that you need so that you can shift at any moment.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #12
March 9, 2022
Meta-Programs #9

WHEN CLIENTS THINK STATICALLY VS. FLUIDLY

If you were to peek into your client's mind, does he represent his world in *a static way* or in *a fluid way*? That is, would there be *things* and *static images* or would there be a lot of movement, activity, and processes occurring? Now the way the brain works, it is "normal" for humans to perceive and think in linear and static ways. Strange but true. After all, that's what we see when we open our eyes and look at the world. We see things at a macro-level, not at a micro-level or a microscopic level. So the world seems to be made up of *things—objects, solid, unchanging objects*.

Given that, we mostly focus on and represent *things*. Linguistically we call these things *nouns*. And if we do see moving things, we quickly turn them into nouns as well, those we call these *nominalizations*. That's because we have "named" the actions and now they don't seem like actions—much as just more things. This means that you can expect that your clients will more likely speak in *static language* forms rather than *fluid*. As you become acquainted with this Meta-Program (#8), you will be able to tell the difference between Aristotelian thinking and Non-Aristotelian or system thinking.

We do all of this because it is harder to see and represent moving things. It is harder to "hold" moving things "in mind." Yet these moving things that do not stand still—these verbs—are much easier to deal with when we *reify* them, that is, turn them into *things*. Relating becomes "relationship." Rejecting becomes "rejection." Smiling becomes "a smile." Doing that makes the world more solid—in our minds. Of course, doing such also means the loss of lots and lots of details and information. It often prevents us from seeing what's actually going on.

"So what? What difference does this make?" Glad you asked. It often makes the difference between your client's success or failure, well-being or sickness. *Thinking statically means that a person does not see the processes that make up an experience*. The static thinker views procrastination as a thing rather than a process—a process that she does. As a coach, when you ask, "When you procrastinate, how do you do it?" you are looking for the inner strategy. You are not only getting more details about an experience, you are also looking for the movement involved and the systems. And when you find that, you have access to how to improve the quality of what the person does.

Given the NLP premise that every experience as a dynamic structure, *asking process questions* enables your client to start thinking that way. "How do you anger at yourself?" "How do you generate fear and fill your body with it?" Then when you ask when, where, and with whom you begin to flush out the hidden systems in the person's background. That's because everything that happens,

occurs within hidden systems—the family system, the cultural system, the financial system, the health system, and on and on. Without detecting these dynamic and ever-changing systems, it is nearly impossible to create lasting change.

Yet because our brains are more wired to create static images of substances rather than dynamic moving activities, one tool that helps with this are diagrams that facilitate *visual thinking*. With a diagram like a flow chart or a storyboard, we can *learn to see* processes as they evolve and change over time. It helps to create the ability to think in terms of processes. And that’s critical because *life itself is a process and you are a process*.

Static thinking is good for getting ahead of the basic features and variables that play a significant role in an experience. But static thinking alone is completely inadequate for understanding most things—especially human things. So calibrate. “What is the basic perceptual style of your client, static or fluid?” “How much flexibility does your client have between the two?” Now you know a little more about the “clarity check” and why it is so important to ask about static words (nouns and nominalizations). I will end with a personal challenge—How do you think—statistically or fluidly? If the former, know that you are missing a lot!

For more, see the book *Systemic Coaching*. And if you are really ambitious, tackle Korzybski’s *Science and Sanity*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #13
March 10, 2022

WARNING: IT'S A THIN & UNSUBSTANTIAL SUBSTITUTE

Last week I did an executive coaching session on-line for a group study. It was okay; but not great. Afterwards, I could not shake the gnawing feeling that something very significant was missing. But what? As I stayed with the sensations, I began to feel that the screen deprived me of half of my tools and that I could not do some of the things I would have done if we were in-person. I felt I was painting a picture with a thin pencil.

The feeling was similar to what I experienced after doing APG with a group of people in Romania. I knew it was sub-par and low quality as I heard the questions from the participants. I also felt it as thin and almost insubstantial due to fact that when it was all done and over, I really had not meet and encountered the participants. So what was missing?

Embodiment. As human beings, we are embodied beings. Our thinking, valuing, caring, emoting, etc. are all embodied. “Intelligence” does not occur only in the brain—it is located all over—in every part of the body. By limiting conscious intelligence to what we see and hear, we give precedence to the visual and auditory representation systems. And we almost entirely ignore the kinesthetic systems. We also neglect the olfactory, gustatory, and vestibular system of balance and equilibrium. Then there is the far more extensive systems within us which are *outside of consciousness*— systems by which we pick up on information without consciously knowing that we are doing so.

In addition to all of that, there is our *social consciousness*. Because we are social beings, a good portion of our brain takes in and filters information through our social filters (and meta-programs). And because of our social nature, we are influenced consciously and unconsciously by a great many social dynamics.

How you experience yourself and others radically changes when you are physically present from when you are watching people on a screen in your home. Your experience is *not* the same at all. Even how you sit and pay attention to a presentation differs significantly from in-person to watching on a screen. And while you may visit a zoom room and attempt to run a pattern or experience a pattern, it doesn't even come close to the personal and social experience in-person.

In NLP we have known the power of kinesthetic anchors along with the auditory vibrations in the air of an auditory anchor. You cannot *not* respond when you are touched by a kinesthetic anchor. Your skin senses the warmth and pressure of the touch, your ears are impacted by the vibrations of the

sound waves. All of that is missing while watching a video on-line.

On-line is a very thin experience compared to the richness and fullness of an actual physical encounter with other human beings in a social context. It is like a pencil drawing compared to the textured painting of a Michaelangelo. It is like an old silent black-and-white movie compared to the experience of a movie in an I-Max Theater where you see it in 3-D, feel the seats move, and feel the sound vibrations from the massive sound systems.

The first two years of the pandemic demonstrated how little is learned via on-line teaching. School children lost 70% of what they would have otherwise learned. And because their social brain was missing out on stimuli from others, they actually suffered a decline in their development. While learning is challenging enough, it was made many times more difficult with on-line learning.

Are adults any better at on-line learning? From all of the evidence I have seen—probably not. If the ideal learning state needs a context that eliminates distractions, one's home office is *not* that place. And if paying attention is challenging enough with a highly skilled presenter, how much more challenging at home where there are children, spouses, phones, television sets, etc.?

Yes, on-line teaching and presenting is a good substitute during the days when things were locked-down and people could not get out for an in-person training. But in terms of substituting for in-person trainings, it is *a very, very poor substitute*. It is missing out on a great many of the factors that make real training *an experiential encounter*. Use it to present information and to get people ready for a training, but don't make the mistake of thinking that it is training. It is not.

* This explains why we have asked every Neuro-Semantic Trainer to devote *at least 50% of the time* of a training to doing an in-person practice following the on-line presentations. In that way the participants can get *the actual experience that makes it real*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #14
March 16, 2022
Meta-Programs #10

THE WHY AND HOW META-PROGRAM

The tenth (#10) meta-program is the *Philosophical* meta-program. In terms of the way that some people focus their mind, they first of all perceive the questions of source, origin, and/or principle—the *why*. Others focus their minds to create a different perceptual frame, one of process, solution, and practical application—the *how*. Both are important, both are needed, and both are required for any kind of expertise. But which comes first and which is most dominant in you or in your client?

The why perceptual frame of mind focuses on what caused the current situation. What was its source? Where did it come from? Why is it this way? And even, why is it important? This *why* goes primarily to origins and causes. Philosophically this describes the conceptual side of understanding something.

This is what Sigmund Freud did when he pretty much created psychotherapy, as a frustrated archeologist, he transferred his own personal fascination with history, and especially Greek and Roman history, to the field of therapy. His erroneous assumption was that if we know where something came from, we would be able to fix it. And lots of people today still hold to that assumption, “If only I know where it came from and why I am experiencing this, then all will be well.” But that’s a false assumption. Many people, after years and years of psychoanalysis, and who have a good idea as to the source of their problems, *still have their problems and don’t know what to do to fix them*. Knowing does not automatically lead to effective doing.

A further problem is that many humans use *talk* to avoid action, instead of doing something that will help, they want to talk more and more. They want “clarity” assuming that at some point, some great insight, or “Aha!” moment will solve things. That almost never works.

The how perceptual frame of mind describes a very, very different perceptual frame. Here the person skips the why question, “Why are things they way they are” and goes straight to the *how* question. “*How* can I solve this? *What can I do* to fix this? What steps, processes, techniques, etc. will give me a handle on this problem?” While this is where the action is, it often occurs too soon, too quickly, and without sufficient thought. When that happens, then the actions tend to be superficial and ineffective.

Each of these perceptions, by themselves, is inadequate. Yet together, as an integrated and synergized response, they enable us to manage both the meaning and the performance dimensions. *Why* takes us up the levels of meaning—understanding, comprehending, evaluating, etc. *How* takes us along the performance continuum from incompetence to competence and on to mastery. *Why* is also meta-

program #27, *reflective*. *How* is meta-program #27, *active*.

As a Meta-Coach you will want to calibrate these meta-programs in your clients. If a person focuses on *reflecting on the why*, there's a strong likelihood that he will be living in Quadrant III of the Self-Actualization Quadrants—the Dreamer. If a person focuses on *the active response of the how*, then she is probably living in Quadrant II—the Performer and workaholic.

What is needed is *to move into the synergy zone* which combines why and how, reflection and action, meaning and performance. Then the person dances between the two perceptions and integrates both in his or her response. Combining why and how gives you *a synergy* that puts you right in the middle of the “flow zone.” It enables you to then produce what is optimal given your understanding and skills. And yet this is the zone that most coaching clients *do not live in or operate from*. Instead they over-focus on one or the other and so lack the synergy effect.

What's the solution? *Challenge*. Challenge yourself or your client to move out of one's comfort zone and stretch to engage the opposite meta-program. Challenge to integrate the opposite side of the meta-program continuum. If your client is *why*-oriented, challenge him to move into the doing of *how*. If your client is *how*-oriented, challenge her to move into the inspiration of *why*. You need both *why* and *how*, so does your client. A warning: If either one of these are dominant, you will tend to use it when you coach which will severely limit the quality and effectiveness of your coaching.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #15
March 23, 2022
Meta-Programs #11

TO FEEL OR NOT TO FEEL, THAT IS THE QUESTION

“Is your client accessing a feeling state of the ideas and experiences that he’s talking about? Or is your client just *talking about* it as if from a distance so that he is not emotionally involved?” These two questions gets right to the heart of meta-program #20 *Movie Position*. Is your client deep *inside the movie*, being there, feeling it, seeing and hearing as if in first perceptual position (meta-program #B)? Or is your client *outside of the movie* and just observing it?

Whatever the answer is with any client, *it makes a lot of difference*. With this meta-program, it is *not* a case of right or wrong, but entirely one of—effective or ineffective. Here also, we want ourselves and our clients to have the flexibility to move in and out at will. To not be able to *step into an experience and to be able to step out* at one’s choice is to be less than human (unemotional) or controlled by one’s emotions (an emotional slave).

Associated meta-program speaks about stepping in and experiencing whatever you are talking about or thinking about. You step in to first perceptual position and now you are able to activate your body so it *experiences*, that is, somatically feels your thoughts. This involves the process of integrating things, of transferring ideas into muscle memory, and in being okay with one’s emotions. Of course, if you don’t have choice and cannot choose to *step out*, then the emotions will “have” you and you feel like a victim of your emotions. Now you are highly sensitive and emotional and unable to truly manage your emotions. This indicates the lack of emotional intelligence.

Un-associated meta-program speaks about stepping out and experience other perspectives and emotions, those which are not *about* the original experience or emotion. Stepping out is *not* necessarily “dissociation.” That only occurs in specialized cases. It mostly involves stepping into second perceptual position and seeing yourself more objective, as if from someone else’s perspective. Or you could step out into a joyous state and now see the first state from that perspective. You could step out into learning, curiosity, wonder, frustration, anger, and on and on. This is the *unassociated perceptual position*. So don’t call it “dissociation.” That not only poorly communicates, it falsely describes what’s going on.

When this is over-used, or when someone is afraid of feeling their emotions, then their emotions “have” them in a different way. Being *fearful* of feeling, the person gets out of touch with his feelings and may become “unemotional,” non-feeling, disconnected, even “dissociated.”

Now to be healthy and have a high level of personal well-being, you need the flexibility of

consciousness to shift inside and then outside, to step in and then step out. Again, it is the synergy of both perspectives and the ability to choose which one best serves the person at any given moment that makes for true effectiveness.

As a Meta-Coach, a big part of your job is *to take your clients inside so that they have a fuller experience of the skill, the resource, or the attitude that they want*. For someone strongly unassociated, this may be a significant challenge. Does the person have permission to feel? Does the person have beliefs, decisions, understandings that forbid feeling?

You also have the responsibility to enabling a client to *step out into some really resourceful observational states* and especially when a client is constantly emotional and seemingly cannot get out of a particular emotional state. A person who cannot shake out of anger, depression, fear, sadness, etc. can start looping around creating various “dragon” states for himself. That can make things a lot worse for that person! That can traumatize a person and then require therapy to heal that wounding.

Let there be a dance then between stepping in and out. Calibrate where your client normally lives her life and note where that works well and where that creates limitations. When you’re with your client, ask yourself, “Does she need to feel, to feel more, to feel less, or to feel something different?” Then coach to whichever position your client needs.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #16
March 30, 2022
Meta-Programs #12

WHO'S GOT THE AUTHORITY?

Your client comes into your office and sits in your coaching chair. You then begin the probing and provocative coaching conversation *and hidden inside that conversation is another meta-program*—the authority source. This crucial factor refers to your client's ability to deal with authority and to know when, where, with whom to reference. The meta-program governs the internal-referent / external referent dynamic. Where does the person look for authority? Where does the person go for “the right to decide” things?

When we are all born, we inevitably have, and can only use, an *external* authority sort. This makes sense because as an infant, we have not learned anything, have no experience, and can't even talk. So naturally and inevitably *we look outside*. We look outside to see what things are, how they work, what we should do, what's good and bad, what's right and wrong, etc. We *refer* to things outside because there's nothing *inside*.

Then we learn. Then we begin to make discoveries and have experiences and before long, we have the beginnings of *an inner world*. And as we grow and develop through the developmental stages, our inner world gets richer and fuller. If we are encouraged to think for ourselves, if we are allowed to have our feelings, if we are encouraged to speak up and to integrate what we know into action—then before long we start naturally *referring to our own inner meanings, beliefs, ideas, and understandings*. We are slowly developing the ability to do some self-referencing. Of course, it does not happen all at once. It takes years, yea decades, to fully develop.

Ideally, by the time you reach young adulthood (18-25), you default to *self-referencing*, but you also always check on things by doing *external referencing*. That's the healthy balance: internal reference with external check. At that point you have become “the author” of your life (“author-ity”). You write the script.

Now if you do that too much—*problems!* You don't learn well, you don't take instructions well, you don't fit in well, you may think you are always right and others wrong, you may argue a lot, and so on. If you do too much external referencing—*problems*. With this, you are always insecure, always wanting to be told what to do, what decision to make, etc.

And your client? What pattern does your client have? *To what degree* does your client do Internal Referencing first and then does some External Referencing? Is it 70/30? Is it 60/40? Or is it 20/80? And in what areas of life—career, finances, relationships, health, well-being, etc.? This is true for all of us. If you have studied a field and worked in it, you will have a lot more references to know

about that field. Every field that you are not educated in and experienced in is an area that you will want to find experts so that you can defer to their educated authority.

As a coach, *watch out for the external referencing client!* That client will lean on you and keep asking you what he should do. He will keep tempting you to “just tell me” the answer. This could possibly stroke your ego and make you feel important. But don’t fall for it. And definitely, *do not give them answers*. Provoke them to find the answers on their own.

As a coach, *watch out for the internal referencing client!* That response pattern will make it really hard for that client to learn anything new. She will always default to herself. If it is very strong, you will not be able to tell that client anything. When you give instructions or set up homework, this client is most likely not to engage.

There are various questions and processes that you can use to detect this meta-program response pattern. Questions about authority, convincers, decisions, the right or permission to make decisions, and responsibility are good ones to flush out the person’s patterns. Ideally, we want our clients to become self-determining persons, but not so much that they don’t pay attention to others or try to fit in with others.

Want more?

See the article *Own Your Own Authority*— about how to develop an internal reference.
www.neurosemantics.com/owning-my-own-authority/

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #17
April 6, 2022
Meta-Programs #13

MAY I GET YOU A DRINK?

Some people focus primarily on themselves, some focus primarily on others. Others shift back and forth in different degrees of self or other focus. Whatever is the case with your coaching client, without question it will affect the coaching experience.

This emotional meta-program is equally a *social* meta-program. And as social beings, how we think about others, how we feel, and how we conduct ourselves inevitably influences so much about our lives. This meta-program is elicited whenever there is a social context. When you think about a party, a dinner at someone's home, or refreshments at a break—where does your focus go—do you focus on yourself or on others?

If your concern and focus goes to others, you will be asking, “May I get you a drink?” You are a helper, a facilitator, a host, a caring and concerned guest. You notice such things as when someone else may have a need. Otherwise, you may be standing around and waiting, “When will someone offer me a drink?” The first is the *Other Attention* meta-program, the second is the *Self Attention* meta-program (#24).

As a Meta-Coach, you will often be able to see this in stark form in the way your clients relate to you. Sometimes when you meet your client just before the session starts, your client will ask about how you are doing, what's going on with you, and if he knows anything personal about you such as your family, pets, etc. he will ask about that. He gives his attention to the Other. If all of the focus and attention seems to go to the client, then probably he has the Self Attention sort.

Obviously, customer service jobs and front-line jobs require the Other attention meta-program. Someone with Self attention will find customer service jobs really tough—it requires so much mental and emotional work to always be thinking about others. As a client, this person often wants (or needs) coaching precisely to be able to create better relationships with others. Others may *need* this, but not know they need it. They feel some stress and strain at home or at work regarding others but do not realize that it rises out of their inability, or low level ability, to attend to others.

Those with the attention to Others meta-program suffer from very different things. They find it really, really difficult to be alone and/or to work alone. If they take on a task that involves solitary and focused work, they quickly get antsy and feel the need to go out to a coffee shop or bar or somewhere where they can mix and mingle. They also tend to translate being alone and a solitary experience as “loneliness.” They also may stay in a coaching relationship with you far longer than necessary—they enjoy the conversations and the companionship that coaching offers.

Ideally, what is best is that by extending this meta-program both ways, you can enjoy your alone times and your times with people. You can balance out the need to attend to others in a group situation and to be attended to by others. And as with all of the meta-programs, to expand it you simply need to ask questions that presuppose each side of the continuum:

- What do you need in this social situation?
- Who in this situation may need some of your attention and interest?
- What meanings could you give to your focus on X-job that would transform the aloneness into solitude?
- What meanings could you give to your focus on the others in this situation that would make it a personally enriching experience for you?

If you, as a Meta-Coach, have the Others meta-program, you may hang on to your clients too long. Or, you may slip into more of a caretaking role with them. Not good. If your meta-program is Self attention, you may struggle with the coaching requirement to focus your attention exclusively on your client and could, at times, reveal too much about yourself (your own need for some attention). As always, your awareness of meta-programs (your own and those of others) is what enables you to be more effective and appropriate in your coaching.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #18
April 13, 2022
Meta-Programs #14

THE BODILY URGE META-PROGRAM

Your client is sitting in your coaching chair and you're having a wonderful coaching conversation about his hopes and dreams. And as all of that, what is happening, *what is the somatic response pattern* that you are noticing in your client? Somatically, that is, in her body, is she getting into an active state and ready to pounce or is she getting into a thoughtful, mindful, and reflective state?

We have, in this meta-program, a response pattern that is as much genetic as it is learned. That's because in some of us *the motor programs* in the brain seem to be much quicker to be activated in some people than in others. If *thinking* about something seems to immediately mobilize your body to *act* or to *do* something, you have the *active* response pattern. Conversely, if you can *think* about something and you can just think and not feel any compulsion to act, then you have the *reflective* response pattern.

As the somatic meta-program (#27) this one refers to your neurological tendencies of activity. And while I don't have any research to support my opinion, I think that the majority of children are born with the *active* pattern and only a minority with the *reflect* pattern. My guess is something like 80% to 20%. When I watch young children at play or in the early grades, most seems to have a very close connection between *thinking-and-acting*. And so most have to learn to *slow down* and learn to *think* before acting.

Nurture immediately plays a role in this meta-program. The home atmosphere makes an incredible difference in how this impulse to act and/or to think plays out in a person's life. If one is raised in a home where your behavior is strictly controlled, a person may learn from a very early age, *to hold back on responding*. Conversely, one raised in a home where "anything goes," that person may learn *to hold back on nothing*.

Most people default to some point on the continuum of *reflecting* — *acting*. To a larger or smaller degree they find themselves toward one end or the other. But when this somatic pattern is a *driver meta-program*, then we have problems at both ends of the continuum. Now we have those who take a basic *inactive* stance or a *reactive* stance. And what primarily activates these extremes is stress.

And because so many coaching clients come to coaching because of stress in their lives, they will therefore show up having a pattern of *inactivity* (also showing up as procrastination, laziness, stuck, etc.) and/or of *reactivity* (also known as aggression, anger-prone, fear-prone, anxiety, etc.). So as you calibrate to your client (Is he active or reflective? Reactive or inactive?), part of the solution will be expanding the meta-program so your client has more flexibility of consciousness and can move into action or into reflection as needed.

Both sides of this *reflective—active* continuum are powerful and positive resources. And we all need both sides. People with the *active* pattern need to be more *reflective* and think through things and be less reactive. People with the *reflective* pattern need to be more *active* and to be less inactive and procrastinating. Frequently, this will be precisely what you will be coaching your client to learn and experience. For the client, it will feel counter-intuitive.

For you as a coach, what's your pattern? If you have the *active* pattern, you will tend to be a very *active Meta-Coach*, often not waiting for your client to finish, but talking over your client and/or finishing your client's sentences. If you have the *reflective* pattern, you will tend to be very quiet and reflective as a Meta-Coach so that there will be long periods of silence in the coaching session.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #19
April 20, 2022
Meta-Programs #15

MOTIVATION DIRECTION META-PROGRAM

When it comes to coaching, *motivation* is one of the big issue. Lots of clients want to have more motivation. “How can I be more motivated?” Other clients don’t understand what’s killing their motivation. “I just can’t get myself excited about X. What can I do?” Other clients want to know how to motivate others. “How can I get my staff more motivated?” “How can I get my lazy son motivated to study?”

Now we say in Neuro-Semantics, *There is no such thing as a motivation problem, there is only an intention problem.* This theme has arisen from several considerations. One is that “motives” are functions of intentions. If you don’t have the intention to do something, why would you think you would be motivated toward it in the first place? Once you have a goal and intention for something, then what will “move” you toward it depends on the richness of the meanings you attribute to it and the vitality that you maintain in your mind-body-emotion system.

There’s also the neurological fact of aversion and attraction—two primary states and two primary emotions which are built into your very mind-body system. In Meta-States we call these “primes.” They are two of the 12 primary emotions. And they apply throughout all of the levels of needs. You have a natural *aversion* to things that create pain and distress just as you have a natural *attraction* to what generates pleasure and delight. That’s true physically and its true psychologically. Psychologically, we experience it as *attracted to our values* and *aversion to our dis-values*. This gives us the *Toward* and *Away-From* meta-program (#35).

Now while all of us have both energies operating within us, some people live and experience their emotions much more on the *Toward* side and others on the *Away-From* side. Wyatt Woodsmall estimated that 60% of Americans are *Away-From*, 20% are *Toward*, and 20% are flexibly both. He said that most other groups are even more *Away-From*. Why would that be? For the simple fact that negative emotions are stronger than positive emotions. Inside our neurology, the negative emotions operate as an *Alarm System* warning us about dangers and threats. So fear, anger, grief, guilt, shame, etc. more readily get our attention than the positive emotions.

As a coach, you will frequently talk with your clients about their motivation. Even your first question, “What do you want to achieve?” implies that the person is *motivated toward* something and *away from* something else. Which orientation does your client have? How strong is that orientation? Getting an *Away-From* client to tell you what she actually wants can sometimes be a real challenge. Similarly getting a strong *Toward* client to say what he does not want can be equally challenging.

Yet both *Away-From and Toward* work together in all of us. Whatever you are going toward, you are at the same time going away from something else. Whenever you are moving away from something, you are simultaneously moving toward something. So your first task is to find out what are the two sides of this *propulsion system*.

It is a *propulsion system* precisely because we have both *push and pull forces* at work. It is the way your neurology works, away-from pain and toward pleasure. Away from futility and towards meaning. Away from sadness and toward joy. Away from getting fat and toward fitness and health. Motivationally, when you have both forces integrated so that they work together, you have a really powerful motivational system.

Now you know why you were taught in the Axes of Change to *work both sides of the motivational continuum* and to ask both aversion questions and attraction questions. Doing that helps to build in your client a propulsion system.

For more about **Propulsion Systems**, there is a book by that title on The Shop.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #20
April 27, 2022
Meta-Programs #16

LET ME REJUVENATE FIRST

There another “motivational” meta-program behind the Motivation Direction (#35), it is the Rejuvenation meta-program (#26). This perceptual filter governs the experience of re-charging your batteries when you are exhausted. “How do you best like to re-change: with people or by yourself?” Woodsmall added this to the NLP list of meta-programs, taking it from Myers-Briggs who took it originally from Carl Jung and because of that the terms used for this one are unfortunate: *Introvert* and *Extrovert*.

Normally we think of these words (*introvert*, *extrovert*) in terms of being social and one’s social skills, but that is *not how these words are used here*. Instead, the *introvert* is the one who re-charges his batteries by getting off by himself— meditating, taking a walk in nature, working on a puzzle, reading, listening to music, etc. The *extrovert* is the person who re-charges her batteries by getting with people, going out on the town, dancing, joining a club or sports group, going out to a party, etc.

Here the introvert finds that being with other people is an expenditure of his energies. He experiences himself extending himself, giving of himself, needing to be “on” when with others and so she finds it tiring. Soon she is “peopled-out” and needs some quiet time and space so that she can hear her own voice and find her soul. The extravert experiences the crowd, the party, and the group as refreshing, invigorating, and re-charging his batteries. Consequently, when the extrovert is alone and doing something by himself, he feels his batteries going down. Soon he will need to find others to be re-charged.

In this context, the terms *introvert* and *extrovert* have nothing to do with social skills or one’s social self. They refer to how one experiences being alone and being with others. What are you? As a Meta-Coach, how do you tend to re-charge your batteries? Having asked that more than 100 times in APMC trainings, the majority of coaches (70 to 80 percent) in the trainings are introverts. They love being with people and they love coaching people, they are “people-people,” but when they do, it is generally felt as giving of oneself.

Guess who comes to you for coaching? Extroverts! Well, mostly. I would guess 65% and upward, your clients will be those who need to think out-loud with a coach, engage in a probing conversation with a coach, and need the encouragement and inspiration of a coach. These will be the people who learn best with other people (and not with a book) and who find that their spirit is best revived when interacting with others.

Once you detect this meta-program in your client, if you have an extrovert, be careful about giving homework assignments that involve spending a lot of alone time thinking, meditating, journaling, etc.

Conversely, while that will be easy for the introvert, be careful about sending them to groups for various purposes.

Both of these responses are primarily and mostly *learned response patterns*. Ask if your client was an only child or one of two, or if he was raised among lots of brothers and sisters and extended family. Beliefs will also play a role in this meta-program. What does the person believe about groups and/or about being alone?

This is a meta-program that can fairly easily be expanded so that a person can do both. When I began training, I was very much on the introvert side. Being with a group was always a giving and extending of myself. Later, when I learned about this meta-program, I decided to stretch and expand it. I began asking myself, “What can I receive from others while with them and giving that would re-charge me?” As I found answers to that question, I stopped experiencing exhaustion by the end of a training and began finding myself just as energized and charged up at the end as I was at the beginning.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #21
May 4, 27, 2022
Meta-Programs #17

STRICT OR LOOSE? By the Book or By the Seat-of-Your-Pants?

An amazing thing about people is how each of us develop a way to organize ourselves as we do things, and the way we organize ourselves tends to become so habitual it creates a deep imprint in our mind, our emotions, the way we talk, and how we act. I'm referring to the Organization meta-program known as Options and Procedures (#36). And what an easy one to detect!

- When you come upon an NLP pattern, do you follow it step by step or do you immediately start wonder, "How else could I do this?"
- When you buy something that requires assembling at home, do you get out the instruction papers, read them, and follow them or do you jump in and start putting it together?

It only makes sense that the first time you encounter something—*follow the prescribed procedure!* Go step by step and don't skip any of the steps. Learn it from the ground up. That applies to learning to play the piano, learning to type, learning how to put a motor together, learning how to drive, learning to cook, fly a plane, etc. *The first time, follow the instructions.* You will learn the foundational steps and principles. Once you have learned it, *then* you can begin asking, "How else could I do this?" "Which steps are not necessary?" "How can this be streamlined?" "What would happen if I did this?"

As a meta-program, *procedures* is not only great, but essential when *learning something new*. If you don't and you skip the foundational steps, you will not develop a solid understanding. This is the case with far too many people in NLP and in Meta-Coaching. As a meta-program, *options* is the heart of creativity and innovation. It is also the way for creative problem-solving and the way to open up new areas for learning.

Both are necessary and essential if you are to be an excellent learner and if you want to work on the cutting edge of things. If there's any meta-program that you might want to expand to the farther limits of the continuum, this would be it. There are times to be stubbornly and even rigidly procedure in doing something; there are also times to be wildly creative in choosing the most outlandish option that you can think of. And if you integrate both, if you synergize both— you will have a truly full repertoire of resources for problem solving.

Conversely, if one is a *driver* meta-program at the expense of the other—you are going to have a towering strength and a disastrous blind-spot. If you have a *driver* procedure meta-program, you are going to be a stick-in-the-mud, a person who does everything "by the book," and you won't be much fun. You will tend to get irritated and grumpy when anyone doesn't follow the rules. Managers like

this drive people crazy! As a driver meta-program, you are bringing procedures to your procedures. “Now that you have the procedure down pat, what procedure can you use to lock the procedure protocol in place so it never changes?”

If you have a *driver* options meta-program, you may be creative, but probably so much so that you can’t stay focused on a single subject, that people can trust you, and that you are always changing things. As a driver meta-program you are bringing options to your options. “Those are fascinating options, yet what other alternatives do you have for them?”

Now because you know about your own self-reflexive consciousness, you know that once you have one or the other meta-program, you can meta-state each one with the other.

- You can bring options to your procedures and *optionize your procedure* . “That is such a great procedure for doing that! What other options can you imagine enriching this?”
- You can bring procedures to your options and *procedurize your options*. “What a great option! And if you really want to keep it, you need to do what you just did exactly, step-by-step each time you want it!”

Now as with every meta-program, *within the meta-program are implied beliefs and values*. Inside of *procedures* is implied beliefs about “the right way to do something,” “That there is a right way,” “that you should not change things for the sake of change,” etc. Inside of *options* is implied beliefs about creativity, alternatives, change, transformation, making things better, progress, etc.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus (Meta-Coaches) #22
and Framers (Trainers) #29
May 6, 2022

BELONGING

In April, we make *belonging* the theme of the Zoom Community Meeting. In introducing the theme of belonging, I noted that as an international community, we are interested in far more than the number of people who attend trainings or conferences. We are interested in promoting the sense that people feel like a part of, and belonging to, Neuro-Semantics as a community dedicated to presenting high quality NLP—that is, NLP with integrity, in a context of collaboration, and creativity.

More recently I read about some of the studies of Prof. Carol Dwerk on the role of stereotypes with regard to females and mathematics. She had asked classes of females in math courses about their “feelings about math.” And one question she asked was, “Do you belong in math?” And, as with studies about priming, this study also showed that the more conscious a woman would be about her gender (female) the less her sense of *belonging* to math. And women with a “fixed mindset” suffered the most. The longer they continued in math courses, they “had a shrinking sense of belonging.”

In a way that’s a funny way to talk about belonging. “Do you belong to math?” Generally *belonging* speaks about a deep and intimate connection with other people. It is more about your social relations and interactions than your conceptual relationships to a course of study. And yet ... you and I do *belong* not only to families and friends, to associations and groups, we also *belong* to ideas, to beliefs, to understandings, and to courses of study. So, we might now ask, “Do you belong to Neuro-Semantics?” “Do you belong to NLP?”

One form of *belonging* would be a membership question. Are you a member of, or do you have a license in, a given study, like NLP? If so, you could be a certified Practitioner, or a Trainer, or a Coach, etc. That’s one way of belonging.

A deeper way of *belonging*, however, speaks about your *heart* or *spirit*. Do you emotionally and experientially feel that you belong to the NLP community or the Neuro-Semantic community? That’s a very different question. You could have membership in a group and not feel that you belong. *Belonging* in the deepest sense is, like all things most human, is *inside-out*. So with the female who are a part of a math course, but who did not feel like they *belonged* to math, so a person may be a part of something and not feel as if he belongs to it. *Belonging* involves a voluntary, personal, and intimate sense of connection.

Because *belonging* is a subjective experience and because it is an experience we have all had, think about three to five experiences that you have had in which you felt that you belonged. It could be a family group, a friend or group of friends, a team, etc. What factors contributed to that experience for you?

Behind or above the experience of belonging are *beliefs*. What beliefs support you feeling like you belong to something? What would you need to believe about NLP as a Communication Model, as a description of human functioning so that you felt that you *belong to NLP*? What values would support you in feeling that you belong to Neuro-Semantics as a NLP community? Would there be any beliefs that would hold you back from belonging?

Ultimately belonging involves relating, connecting, inter-acting, etc. So what skills do you need in order to take the initiative? What skills do you need so that the sense of *belonging* would feel stronger for you? What skills would someone else need that would make you feel that you are welcomed and invited in? Have you ever supported another person so that he or she felt that they belonged to something? Here's to developing the beliefs and attitudes and skills that will empower us so that we can facilitate *the sense of belonging* in all those we influence.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #23
May 11, 2022
Meta-Programs #18

YOUR FOOTPRINTS In Concrete or In the Sand?

How you *adapt* yourself to the world or seek to get the world to *adapt* to you is the next meta-program, the Adaptation meta-program (#37). This one relates to *how you move* in the world. Do you leave a footprint? Is it a strong and robust and lasting footprint? Or is it so gentle and soft that there's hardly any indication that you walked this way? Is it like a footprint in the sand on a beach that is quickly washed away? Or is it like a footprint on Hollywood Boulevard, one that you created by stepping in wet cement so that when it dries, it would be there for a long, long time?

This *Adaptation* meta-program separates “the movers and shakers” from the “environmentalists.” If I had the privilege of naming this meta-program, I would name it *Influencers / Visitors*. I would certainly not name it *Judgers / Perceivers*. But that is the name that got stuck to it, coming originally from Carl Jung and then through Myers-Briggs. It was brought into NLP by Wyatt Woodsmall and named *Judgers / Perceivers*. “Judgers” here refers to the process of making an *evaluation* and then using that judgment, meaning, vision, and/or values and seeking to make the world in its image. It does not refer to being judgmental. It is trying to get the world to *adapt to you*.

Conversely, the opposite is the *perceiver* who just visits an area and who *adapts herself to the world*, seeking to leave it as she found it and not influence it. The idealistic environmentalists are perceivers in that sense. And I discovered how valuable that perspective is when I first began backpacking the high country of Colorado. As I would hike up beyond tree line at 12,000 feet and up to the 13,000 foot mountains and the 14,000 footers, the backpackers creed was to always pack out whatever you packed in and whatever you see on the trail (papers, plastics, trash, etc.) pack it out. The idea of keeping the wilderness pristine and as untouched by man as possible was, and is, an idea I've always tried to live.

If you are reading this, the likelihood is that 80% of you are “judgers,” that is, you are among the shakers and movers who want to *adapt* the world to a higher and better vision. That's why you are a Meta-Coach! You are a change-agent. You are all about transformation—enabling people to step up and unleash more of their potentials. You look around at things—and you see all kinds of areas that are calling for change.

Now having full flexibility of consciousness so that you can move to the *influencing side* and to the *just perceiving side* is the ideal. Then, depending on the subject and the context, you have a wider range of possibilities. After all, there are things that you cannot change—things that are built into the structure of reality and the way the world is. And there are things that you can change—that are

within our area of control and/or influence. “Judgers” tend to put a lot more things in the category of “things that can be changed” than Perceivers. Perceivers not only have a smaller category, they also have a category of “things that should not be changed.”

When you have a coaching client who is a “judge” or influencer, he has come to you to make a change. He wants it and he wants it now! The perceiver may desperately need to change, but, at least for right now, he wants to think about it, or talk about it. He is an observer rather than a doer. It may take him a lot longer to work through a change. And as he does, his concerns are for a lot of the effects of the change— the footprints that it leaves.

If you are a perceiver as a Meta-Coach, you really, really need to stretch your meta-program to the influencer side of the continuum. You may need to give yourself permission to get out of your comfort zone of just perceiving and watching and embolden yourself with the courage to launch out as a change-agent in the world.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #24
May 18, 2022
Meta-Programs #19

YOUR MINDSET: FIXED OR DEVELOPING

The *Movement* meta-program (#8) contrasts static or fixed thinking with fluid or dynamic thinking. It is the contrast between what is called Aristotelian thinking and non-Aristotelian thinking, which for NLP people should ring a bell since that is the heart of Korzybski's focus in General Semantics. He started from the scientific understanding that we live in a *process universe* where there are no absolute "things," but that everything, down to the sub-atomic elements within an atom are all moving, changing, evolving, growing, and developing. If there are no solid "things" out there in the territory, then we really *mis-map things* when we use absolute and rigid language. Yet we do and we do so constantly.

Carol Dweck took this contrast and developed it as a model for distinguishing numerous facets between people. In *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2006) she contrasted two mindsets: the fixed mindset and the growth mindset. She then conducted with associates numerous research projects to measure each and then to determine the effect of each. What she ultimately discovered was that *the fixed mindset* is a major cause of problems, non-growth, failure to learn, feeling stuck, unmotivated, lying, deception, etc. Conversely, *the growth mindset* is the cause of learning, developing, expertise, resilience, leadership, meaningfulness, etc.

In the Fixed mindset, you start from the assumption that what you are is set, you have certain permanent traits and these do not change. Your intelligence is set, it is what it is and you cannot increase it. Your personality traits are set and you cannot change those either. Intelligence and other traits are *things* that you *possess*.

In the Growth mindset, the starting assumption is that you are now and forever will be a developing person. It never ends. Whatever traits like intelligence that you start with, that's just the start, you have potentials and it is up to you to identify them, develop them, and unleash them. These traits are not things you possess, they are capacities that you can develop if you so choose.

In the Fixed Mindset success means proving yourself, it means expressing and demonstrating your intelligence, your talents, your innate characteristics. As a possession that you possess, you only need to show it. If you have to study or expend effort, then maybe you don't have it. It should come easy and naturally. You feel smart when you are flawless, make high marks, get the score, etc. Your biggest threat are mistakes, flaws, inadequacies, etc. When given a choice, you want to do something that's easy so that you can show your skill or intelligence. You don't like feedback that shows any flaw of deficiency.

In the Growth Mindset success means learning and developing, it means stretching yourself, expending effort and testing what you can do. You feel smart when you are learning, when you struggle with something that's hard and eventually you start to get it. You love feedback and you want to take on the next level of challenge.

The person with a *fixed mindset* is defeated by criticism and/or rejection whereas the person with the *growth mindset* is energized by them. Fixed mindset people focus on the outcome, the results, the grade, the score, the bottom line. Growth mindset people focus on the process of learning and growing. When a fixed mindset person studies, he reads and memorizes to spit out the right information. When a growth mindset person studies, she looks for themes, for principles, for errors, and for understanding the errors.

If traits are permanent, the fixed mindset people don't think about themselves changing as much as changing the world. "The world need to change." "Others need to change." Growth mindset people think about changing, developing, growing, unlearning some things, learning new things, and constantly transforming to be better persons.

When things don't go well, the fixed mentality results in blaming, making excuses, covering-up mistakes, intimidating others. Conversely, the growth mentality focuses on getting feedback, learning, and upgrading skills and themselves.

There's a world of difference in this *Movement* meta-program and it all starts from the premise that the world is static or fluid. Obviously, some will be selective about the degree of movement in the world and/or what's static and what is not. And even more obvious is that this one will radically influence your work as a coach and the ability of clients to enter into the coaching relationship and find it an useful methodology. With a *growth mindset client*, the coaching will click and flow and you'll have many eureka moments. With a *fixed mindset client*, a lot of your work will be shifting him out of the fixed mentality.

Fixed or Growth Evaluation:

Which of the following states do you agree with? Put Yes for agree, No for disagree.

- 1. My intelligence is basic to me and can't change very much.
- 2. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.
- 3. No matter how intelligent you are, you can always improve it.
- 4. You can actually substantially change your intelligence quotient.
- 5. Everyone is a certain kind of person, it's your temperament and can't really be changed.
- 6. No matter what your personality, you can always change it.
- 7. You can do things differently, but you remain the same inside.
- 8. You can both do things differently and become a different kind of person.
- 9. To succeed you need to prove yourself, show your intelligence or skill.
- 10. To succeed, you need to focus on learning, correcting mistakes, getting feedback, etc.

[Fixed: 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 Growth: 3, 4, 6, 8, 10]

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #25
May 25, 2022
Meta-Programs #20

INDUCING THE GROWTH MINDSET

Given the description in the last Morpheus about the *Movement* meta-program (#8) which contrasts static or fixed thinking with fluid or dynamic, that is the *fixed mindset* with the *growth mindset*, how do you as a coach go about facilitating the growth mentality? The following pattern is designed to root out the fixed mindset and replace it with the gift of a growth mindset. Did you test yourself with the “Fixed / Growth Evaluation” last week? Are you and the qualities and traits of your person fixed or fluid?

1) Set your Intention for the Growth Mindset.

Why do you want to shift to the growth mindset? What is important to you?
And what is important about that? (Repeat 4 more times with each answer)
Once you have your highest and biggest reasons, let it permeate through you as your purpose— I am here to grow, to learn, to develop, not to prove myself.

2) Shift any and every Belief so it reflects the Growth Mindset.

What beliefs holds you back and limits the growth mindset? (i.e., “people can’t change”).
Try on these words, “I believe that everything about me is designed to develop, my mind, my emotions, my personality traits, my personality, etc.” Or, “The brain is develops over the years of one’s life.” “Everyone is capable of transformation.”
How does that settle in for you? Check for any objections.

3) Address any objections or remnants of the Fixed Mindset.

Do an audit of any fixed mindset ideas that may still have some pull on you?
How will you handle criticism, flaws, fallibility, competition, etc.?
Are there any negative emotions: bitterness, revenge, jealousy, inadequacy, self-contempt that you need to release?

4) Establish Expectations that reflect the Growth Mindset.

As you try on the growth mindset as an attitude, what do you now expect of yourself? Of yourself as a person, when learning, when making a mistake, when criticized?

5) Establish a Growth Mindset Identity.

“I am a person who am always growing ... and developing and changing ...”

6) Establish a Growth Mindset Strategy.

Is your strategy for learning and setting goals and achieving outcomes focused on the end-

product or on the process? Which gives you more joy?

When things go wrong, how quick are you to go into a learning mode rather than a blaming mode?

Install the question: “How can I learn this?” “What do I need to do to develop X?”

“Getting feedback is the key to growth and shaping new responses.” “What is the next level that I need to stretch me out of my comfort zone?” “What would make X more challenging?”

7) *Future Pace and check.*

As you anticipate taking this new attitude into your immediate future, in the next days and weeks, how does this fit for you? Any part of you object?

The Fixed Mindset leads to a desire to look smart. It therefore tends to avoid challenges, get defensive or give up easily, see effort as fruitless, ignore use negative feedback, feel threatened by the success of others. As a result, they plateau early and don't achieve their full potential. The Growth Mindset leads to a desire to learn. It tends to embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, learn from criticism, and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others. As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement. (Dweck, 2006, p. 245)

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #26
June 1, 2022

A WELL-FORMED VISION

You've heard about a well-formed outcome, what about a well-formed vision? When it comes to a vision, there are *real* visions and there are *false* visions. There are *useful* visions and *unuseful* visions. There are ego-centric and narcissistic visions and there are collaborative visions that excite a community. All visions are not the same. Some work and are actionable, many do not and therefore cannot be put into action. And pseudo-visions tend to reinforce the narcissistic goals of the top management rather than inspire all of the stakeholders. Benjamin Zander described the problem when he wrote:

“By and large, mission statements are expressions of competition and scarcity.” It has some version of “we are number one in our industry!”

Think about it for a moment and you'll realize, *that is not a visionary statement*. Zander's solution? Identify the criteria that makes for a good vision. I have taken some of his suggestions and added some more to create a pattern for developing a well-formed vision.

“A vision releases us from the weight and confusion of local problems and concerns, and allows us to see the long clear line. A vision becomes a framework for possibility when it meets certain criteria...” (*The Art of Possibility*, 2000; Rosamund and Benjamin Zander p. 169)

There's a significant difference between a true vision, and a mission or a goal. In order to construct a well-formed vision, it is important to clarify three words which are often confused and misused.

A Vision — is a picture of a desired future that excites, inspires, and provides a sense of direction. It provides a direction along with the values of the vision.

A Mission — consists of the actions that you will take in service of the vision. When you “go on a mission” to achieve the vision that inspires you, you actualize the vision in specific behaviors.

Goals — refer to specific objectives that we seek to accomplish in service of the mission. Some goals are *end* goals, some are *mean* goals that make the long-term vision possible.

Here is an example of a vision. It is the *Neuro-Semantic Vision*.

Our vision is to launch an international community of professional men and women who *love, know, and live* the principles of NLP and Neuro-Semantics. The vision is to raise the quality of NLP, to present Neuro-Semantic NLP as professional, collaborative, and ethical. It is to empower all people to become fully alive/ fully human in actualizing one's best potentials. The vision is to bring credibility and validity to Neuro-Semantics by applying it to ourselves, living with integrity and honesty.

Pattern for developing a Well-Formed Vision

1) *It clearly articulates a vision of the future that opens up new possibilities.*

It is stated in the positive and draws a word picture of a future that is possible and which is actionable.

2) *It operates from an essential human desire or value.*

A vision is inherently valuable, positive, and life-enhancing. The vision enables people to resonate with the values it states and in resonating, it enrolls people for the vision. A vision is inherently connected to the real nature of people, to their D-needs and their B-needs.

3) *It addresses an open and undetermined future.*

The vision contains no numbers, measures, or comparatives. There's no time frame for it. The vision does not give specifics of times, place, person, audience, or product. These are variables of a goal, not a vision.

4) *It charts a direction or an approach for a person or group.*

A vision is not about morality, about right or wrong, as it is about direction—where we are doing and why that's important.

5) *It presents a way of life that can begin today.*

Paradoxically, there is an immediacy to a vision, it is actionable today. While it cannot be fulfilled today, people can begin to live it today—right now.

6) *It offers new possibilities for ongoing development.*

A well-formed vision begins to create multiple options for how to actualize it. It does not prescribe a single approach.

7) *It transforms the speaker who speaks the vision.*

The vision is inherently transformative because in the process of speaking it, you begin to live it. It enters into your mind and emotions and begins to define who you are.

8) *It enables a mission to emerge with specific goals.*

“Goals are treated as markers thrown out ahead to define the territory.” Within those goals there are feedback loops for the ongoing improvement and development of the vision. Without a vision, a mission is just a lot of activity and busyness.

9) *It activates motivational energy as it establishes an inspirational hope.*

A vision gives people hope; it excites people about possibilities.

There you have it—the steps in a pattern for how to develop an inspiring vision—for yourself, your family, your business, your career, your group.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Framers #33 Morpheus #27
May 28, 2022
Report on the First Personal Mentoring
--- Rio - Brazil

WHAT I'M LEARNING ABOUT MENTORING

My first Neuro-Semantic “mentoring” has just finished. We did it in Rio de Janeiro, May 24-25 at INAP, the training center in Rio. We had a total of 11, although when Rodrigo came in and brought us some fresh Brazil chestnuts, we had 12. What *projects* did they come to learn about?

Two or three came to learn more about benchmarks— how to train benchmarkers to be more precise and effective, how to figure out how to create benchmarks for a skill that one wants to model. Several were interested in the “inner” skills—the deep personal skills that make up thinking, feeling, and most especially *being*. Several had projects that they were working on and wanted feedback from myself and their peers about the projects. For example, one was about creating a digital way to record a coaching session and keep that soft copy of the benchmarks, so that it can be followed up over time, showing the increasing development. We looked at working with and teaching teens, modeling expert skills in an organization, creating a program to Meta-Coaches for how to be more effective in business and in selling.

The resulting conversations that we had were highly focused on specific areas of concern and were driven by the questions that people asked. And they asked really good questions. That led others to then conceive of other questions and so the conversations deepened and expanded in unpredictable ways.

Then there were personal questions. Questions about how things came about in Neuro-Semantics, how I think or thought to generate various models or patterns, questions about how I figure out what to write, how to write, how to study and research, how to decided on things, etc. One wanted to know if I was a normal person. I assured her I was not. :)

At the end of the first day I asked how the mentoring was for them, ask for suggestions for what to focus on the next day, and what could make our time together better. There were numerous suggestions. One was about having two groups, a group of 7 to 12 people who have a project they want some assistance with or feedback on, and then a second group of observers—those who don't particularly have a project or questions, but who would enjoy observing the process.

I have always felt a reversion to anything that seemed to me that was self-promotion. For that reason I have never presented myself as a model or mentor before. I still don't see

myself as being able to offer that much. All I've done is read and research and think, and to be lucky enough to meet some great people to collaborate with, and have therefore happened to write a number of things that were of interest to others.

Now being conscious of my life time-line and conscious that there is a limit on how much time I have left, and the number of people I want to influence as much as possible to carry on the Neuro-Semantic vision, I decided that I would try this "mentoring" to see what would come of it. My purpose is to contribute whatever I can and spend quality time with those who share that vision and the values inherent in it. As it appears to have value for some, I will continue to offer a day or two for these focused and intimate conversations. If I can give something from what I have learned and discovered and it enhances others carry on the spirit of Neuro-Semantics and the creativity of Neuro-Semantics, then I will be richly rewarded.

To honor those who participated in the first Mentoring:

Adrián Estrada
Lidia Batista Garcia
Eliene Santos
Juliana Leal
Gilberto Chaves
Gerson
Dayana Tiberio
Alex
Cristiano Moreira da Fonseca
Geraldine Hall

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #28
June 7, 2022

NEW COACHING SKILL IDENTIFIED

If I had not had a “perfect storm” situation in a coaching session last week, I would not have come to identify and appreciate a particular coaching skill. I have often spoken about this skill, yet it is not a skill that we have set apart as one of the coaching skills. Well, until now. That’s the great thing about problematic situations, about any experience where something isn’t working, where you miss something significant, and/or where you fail to do what you usually do.

It happened to me last Friday when I encountered an extremely global processor who lived in the meta-representational system of words. To complicate things, he talked very fast, and he did not articulate very clearly, and he had a strong accent. Put all of that together with the laptop computer I was working with which had a very poor sound system, and it was the perfect storm for creating a lack of understanding—in me. I figured that, at best, I was catching maybe 70% and missing 30%. That was confirmed later when Geraldine and I watched and listen to the recording. I put it at .75 percent of the speed from the normal speaking speed. Only then was I able to hear many words that I had not heard in the session. I missed them. If I had heard them, I would have questioned them and taken the conversation in a different direction.

What was the learning? I learned just how much the coaching conversation differs from everyday talk. Everyday talk tends to be an exchange of monologues. One person talks for 3 minutes (or maybe 10), then he stops and you talk for 3 more minutes (or 10). Even two minutes of continuous talk is so much talk that about all you can do with that is a general summary. That makes it very difficult to do precise and specific *acknowledgments*. It further makes *clarity checks* harder to pull off.

That describes how *not* to do a coaching session. Do not allow yourself, or your client, to engage in monologues! *Coaching requires dialogue*. For “meaning” (*logos*) to pass “through” (*dia-*) each person, we need a conversation that operates in a more moment by moment style. We need short succinct expressions so the communication doesn’t careen down the track like a run-away train. Then the *meanings* in both persons can flow through each other.

Only when the conversation is a dialogue can you constantly stop, check words, clarify understandings, do acknowledgments, calibrate to the client’s state moment by moment. The new coaching skill that I refer to above is *dialogue*. This involves usually the ability to establish a set of exchanges that are short— 1 or 2 sentences in length. Do that by setting frames for it:

- “I will be interrupting you because coaching is a dialogue, not a monologue.”
- “I will be cuing you and interrupting when I hear a frame in your conversation which suggests we should explore that one.”
- “Because within every couple of sentences there are lots of information, I will be trying to catch what’s hidden inside and letting you know.”

Once you have dialogue, now you can become aware of the meanings (*logos*) that your client is communicating. You let it *pass through you* (literally, *dia-logos*) yourself and the other person. You notice it, embrace it, and then explore it for relevance to the subject. As you feed it back along with your impressions about it, you invite your client to adjust the meanings ever so slightly. This invite her to try on other meanings and/or to create even more potential meanings. Doing this often elicits a high quality of reframing.

The benchmarks for *dialogue* at the competency level are these:

- Coach and client are conversing in 1 to 3 sentence segments.
- Coach identifies meanings hidden in or behind client’s statements via inferential thinking.
- Coach uses clarity checks to specify details to ground the conversation.
- Coach acknowledges key statements of meaning (*logos*), then explores deeper.
- Coach asks meta-questions about the meanings inside the client’s statements.
- Client picks up on the expanded or enriched meanings via the dialogue.

While dialogue is mentioned frequently in the PCMC manual, I’m surprised that I never set it aside as a specific coaching skill. Actually it belongs at the ACMC level. Many thanks to Harvey and the team of Meta-Coaches who have been sponsoring the executive coaching sessions!

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #29
June 14, 2022

MATCH YOUR CLIENT'S META-WORDS

When you learned NLP, you learned that if you *really, really listen*, you will learn how to hear all sorts of things that are otherwise hidden and invisible. You learned that you could hear the sensory predicates (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) and recognize which sensory system your client is using and how she may be using it. You learned that you could hear meta-program distinctions giving you an elevated awareness about your client's meta-programs.

Well, there's more. Your client naturally thinks and uses *meta-words* and if you really, really listen, you can learn to hear and thereby recognize the meta-levels that your client is accessing and using. And while you do this, your client will mostly be unconscious of these very dynamics. While they are *processing* unconsciously in a way that's outside of their conscious awareness, you can become aware of these *structural elements* that explains the inside world of your client.

How fascinating! Right? So how do you learn this advanced communication skill? First and foremost, you need to familiarize yourself with the phenomena of *meta-words*. I have written about meta-words in *Meta-States*, in *Neuro-Semantics* and in various books. Even in your APG training, you learned about 26 of them. Review the Diamond of Consciousness and, lo and behold, there are 26 meta-words. In ACMC you learned the basic 10 as the foundational meta-questions that will take you just about anywhere with anyone. Have you memorized these?

1-5 — Belief, value, identity, intention, decision.

6-10 — Memory, imagination, permission, expectation, and metaphor.

Meta-words are words that describe human experiences *above and beyond the primary state*. These are the words that shout at you:

"I'm meta." "I only exist in the mind and I'm part and parcel of the meta-verse or matrix wherein people construct meaning and establish their frames for how to interpret things."

When you ask a client about a belief and he says, "Believe about criticism? I don't believe anything, I just know it is bad and hurtful." Your client has just told you the *meta-term* that he uses in coding ideas in his mind. For him it is *knowledge*. The word *believe* will not work with him, so don't use it, use "know."

Coach: "What do you *know* about criticism that's bad and hurtful?"

Client: I know that it is painful and takes away my self-esteem.

Coach: So this *knowledge* of yours involves a “taking away of your self-esteem?”

Client: Yes, that’s what I know and my *understanding* about criticism.

Now he has offered another meta-word, *understanding*. That indicates that he has put his ideas about criticism at a pretty high level in his matrix. It’s an “understanding.” It is his “background knowledge” that he relies on for interpreting “criticism.” If you ask a clarity question, “How are you using the word ‘criticism?’” He might say, “someone saying words that I don’t like.” Now you ask, “And what you *understand* is that ‘someone saying words you don’t like’ takes away your self-esteem? ... Can you tell me how that works? How does someones ‘words’ *take away* your self-esteem?”

By hearing, pacing, and following the client’s meta-words, you have invited him *inside* to his meta-verse (world of meta-frames or matrix) and you have *followed him inside*. You now are in a place where you can facilitate transformative change which, of course, is the purpose of learning to listen for meta-words.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #30
June 21, 2022

HIDDEN FACETS OF “COACHING MASTERY”

Yes, there are *hidden facets* within the *Coaching Mastery* training. There are facets that you may not be aware of even though you have gone through and experienced *Coaching Mastery*.

First, *the facet of the communication skills*. The original design for the training, *Coaching Mastery*, was to provide the required training for the knowledge and skills to operate as a professional coach. That's why it led to the credentials Associate Certified Meta-Coach (ACMC). Yet when you examine the key “coaching” skills, what are they? They are nothing more than highly developed communication skills. So no wonder that from the beginning many who attended did so, *not to become a professional coach, but simply to improve their communication and leadership skills*.

Where did they get that idea? They got it from their studies in NLP, which is essentially a Communication Model. Or they may have picked it up, if they took the “fast track,” when they attended *Coaching Essentials* and/or *Coaching Genius*. Whether slowly or quickly, they came to realize that the competency-based training of *Coaching Mastery* was essentially a way to actually practice and develop advanced communication skills. What they wanted was to learn and use the coaching *methodology* of high quality communication skills in their roles as leaders, managers, consultants, therapists, etc.

This continues to be true today. Consequently this is why we not only offer the ACMC Certificate, but also the *Professional Communicator* Certificate for those who are *not* planning to be a professional coach. While it's the same skills, they are applied in a different context and therefore used in a different application. In this, there is no greater place to learn the most advanced communication skills, but to learn how to integrate them into everyday conversations than ACMC training.

Second, *the facet of learning and meta-learning*. Almost without exception everybody gets overwhelmed with the content the first time they attend *Coaching Mastery*. Everyone! That's because there is so much material! How much material is there? Well, one indicator is the fact that the manual is 300 pages. That should give you an idea. And when I went to *write* about Meta-Coaching, I ended up writing 16 books about it with 5 additional books that supplement them. That's 21 books about communication and coaching! And you're going to get all of that in 8 days? I don't think so. Within Neuro-

Semantic NLP there is a rich data base that gives a person an extensive intellectual background for effective communication.

That amount of material now explains the following phenomena. When you first experience *Coaching Mastery*, your focus is on the *content*. That's what you learn—the coaching skills, landscape, criteria for the skills, coaching conversations, well-formed outcome questions, the Matrix Model, the Axes of Change Model, the Self-Actualization Quadrants, many patterns to prepare you for the challenge, many patterns you can use in your coaching, etc. The content that you need to know about people, communicating, changing, and coaching.

When you attend a second or fifth or tenth time, you are deutero-learning or meta-learning. While it's nearly impossible to see the patterns and connections the first time, Meta-Coaches generally begin to do that on the second experience of *ACMC*. They see connections that they were not even aware of the first time. Many a Meta-Coach has gone home and taken the manual and studied through it *unpacking the richness that is inside it*. Many have started a Practice Group so that they can spend a year or two reviewing *Coaching Mastery* and integrating the knowledge and skills to make them truly their own.

Expertise takes time. The 10,000 rule for expertise (or 10 years) tells us that it is only with intentional and deliberate practice in a disciplined way that a person integrates the learnings which can enable him or her to become an expert. No certificate can do that! No certificate can guarantee any level of knowledge or skill. *Practice* is required for that, deliberate practice, and consistent practice.

For any professional coach, set your goal to revisit *Coaching Mastery* four or five times. That will depend your knowledge and skill level and enable you to become truly professional in your coaching.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #31
June 29, 2022

THE ART OF “RUNNING A PATTERN”

I learned how to “run a pattern” in the field of NLP in the late 1980s. Since then I think I have been too lax and too negligent about it. Perhaps I have taken “running a pattern” too much for granted since I have written two books on patterns (*Sourcebook of Magic, Vol. I and II*) and 50+ manuals with dozens of patterns in each. I keep forgetting that there are lots and lots of new coaches who are also *new* to the process of “running a pattern.”

Now the first thing to know and to drive home for yourself is that “running a pattern” is *not merely reading* the questions or steps. Reading the words is just reading. Many do that and *do not* actually “run a pattern” at all. Instead of reading, the required skill to develop is that of *eliciting* and *inducing*. Doing that is very, very different from reading. In *eliciting* you are asking the question in the pattern to *call forth* a state. This requires that you use your voice and gestures so that you sound like the state you are calling forth. You are using your semantic space in such a way that it helps to make the experience real for your client.

Then you calibrate to your client to see the effect your words, tones, gestures, etc. are having on your client. “Is he going there?” “Is she experiencing the state?” Client can, and do, resist such elicitation, so you have to create a relationship of trust and rapport. You have to set frames so that what you are doing makes sense and seem inevitable.

As you continue to calibrate to the person and his experiencing, you check in repeatedly with him by asking what he is seeing, hearing, and feeling, and to what degree. You also keep calibrating to the ecology of the overall experience. This is the way that you make sure that what you are doing helps and doesn’t hurt, and by no means, create some trauma.

Running a pattern involves working through a series of “steps.” It means going from one step to the next and then the next. When you do this, you are inviting your client to *transition* from one state to another, one activity to another, one step to another. “Is your client moving along?” “Is she skipping any of the steps?” As you invite to the next step, you will often summarize where your client is in the process. If you don’t do this, you can lose your client. She may not know where you are in the pattern or how to take the next step.

Additionally, be sure to always *follow the steps in the prescribed order*. If “options” drives your thinking and responding, shift to “procedures” when you guide a client through a process. Fail to do that and you will have numerous moments wherein you will wonder why a pattern did not work.

At the transitional places be sure to calibrate to the person that he is actually making the transition. “How is that so far?” “Are you ready for the next step?” Often, the questions and statements in the pattern give you ways to facilitate this transitioning.

What’s critical is that the person is *experiencing the process* and not just checking off the steps. To do that would make it more of an intellectual exercise rather than an experiential one. Here you “hold the space” as it were for the person, and you do that mostly with your words, yet you also do that by your interactive reality with the person. For this reason, by all means *do not bury your head in the manual* when giving the process instructions of the pattern. I see that far, far too often! Read the sentence to yourself or out loud. Then turn to the person, look at him, and say it to the person as direct instructions about what to do next. If you need to practice that, then do so. While your short-term memory can easily hold a sentence or two in mind, you may have to practice this so that you can do it with some elegance and grace and therefore make it sound conversational.

In calibrating throughout the process, it is often helpful to ask the person where she is in the process. Ask her to nod as she processes something and completes it. Ask him to speak out loud so that you know where he is and how it is going. After all, you cannot mind-read and you can easily guess wrong about what’s going on inside.

Keys about *running a pattern* include giving the person time to process things, noting their predicates and matching the representational system that one is using, repeating the question or ask it with some other words, and anchoring the responses (states) in all systems and not just kinesthetically.

When you run a pattern, you can do so explicitly. You can tell your client that is what you are doing and explain why. Once you run a single pattern two dozens times or more, you can then begin to do it conversationally and implicitly. There is an art to *running a pattern* and as a Meta-Coach, it’s your responsibility and skill to learn to do it elegantly.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #32
July 6, 2021

WHAT SHOULD A COACH KNOW ABOUT THERAPY?

Two weeks ago I presented a zoom meeting on Meta-Therapy (which is the next book I'm working on). I presented it to 50 psychologists and psychotherapists in Ukraine. Most knew something about NLP, but hardly anyone knew about Meta-States or how therapy occurs at a meta-level as a meta-function. That got me thinking about the contrast between *Coaching* and *Therapy*.

In the very first manual for *Coaching Mastery*, I put several pages on the *difference* between coaching and therapy. There are still several pages that distinguish the two so that as a coach, you can be crystal clear about what you are doing and what you are not doing. Central to that distinction is *the presence of ego-strength*. As a coach, you challenge people. Yes, you do so out of compassion and care and even love, but you *challenge* people. You *disturb their peace*, you *shake* them up so that they awaken to their possibilities and potentials, and you *stretch* them so that they do not stay in their comfortable and familiar comfort zones.

Do that with a person who needs therapy *and you can make things a lot worse*. Do that and you can activate the person's fragile ego-system and then all sorts of abreactions can occur. The person may become overwhelmed with anxiety, have a panic attack, fall into a comma, positive or negatively hallucinate, fall into a deep depression, start feeling suicidal, etc. Insufficient *ego-strength* refers to one not having sufficient inner strength or capability to "face" some aspect of their "reality" without falling apart or collapsing. Then in fight/flight they react in extreme ways trying to protect themselves.

That raises a very legitimate question: How much do you, as a Meta-Coach, need to know about therapy? How much do you need to know to stay clear about when to coach and when not to, when to refer to a professional psychotherapist, and when you could facilitate the needed healing?

Much of the answer is in your APMC manual, so that's a good place to start. Use the questions about coachability. Is the person *okay* in his person or is there a deep *not-okayness*? Is the person *living in the past*, and reacting to the past as if it is present? How *defensive* does the person seem to be? Does she present herself as open to feedback and finding out how to work on self and improve oneself?

Does the person talk about peace or growth? While the coaching client is focused on solving problems, growing, stretching, unleashing potentials, exploring new possibilities,

and generally, taking on more, not so with the therapy client. The one who needs therapy (healing) wants peace, tranquility, the cessation of striving, pushing, achieving, the release from stretching, etc. These are two very different orientations and they indicate that the therapy client is tired of the struggle, tired of things not working, tired of the internal conflicts, and just wants a reprieve from them.

To be effective as either a coach or a therapist requires both *knowledge* and *skills*. Your studies in NLP and Neuro-Semantics have led you through a lot of the knowledge that you need. It has prepared you for understanding *communication* and how the coaching dialogue can work. You've learned about the filters people use to process information when you learned *Meta-Programs*. You learned about the construct of meaning and the layering of meaning when you learned *Meta-States*. You learned about the processes of change when you learned *The Axes of Change*. You learned about unleashing potentials when you learned *The Self-Actualization Quadrants*. After that came the more rigorous and difficult challenge of learning *the coaching skills* so that you can actually *do* it.

To be effective as a psychotherapist also requires both *knowledge* and *skills*. Here knowledge has to include Abnormal Psychology, how things can go wrong and how to identify what has gone wrong, how, and to what extent. Included in abnormal psychology is the structure of neurosis, the presence and structure of personality disordering, how and what gets *traumatized* within a person, and much more. You need to know about projection, transference, abreactions, etc.

For that, I recommend that you read and study *The Structure of Personality: Ordering and Disordering Personality with NLP and Neuro-Semantics* (2001). That was the book I put out with Bob Bodenhamer along with Richard Bolstad and his wife Margot Hamblett (who has passed away since). It was reprinted in paperback in 2011 and has recently been translated into Arabic by Ayman Mahmoud.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #33
July 13, 2022

THE HIDDEN SECRETS IN APG

You may not know it, but there are *secrets* which lie *hidden* (and buried) deep inside of the content of APG. I have hinted at some of them in *The Psychology of APG* and I must admit that I did mention some of them in *Meta-State Magic*. But for the most part these secrets have remained hidden because they are not a part of the way we commonly present APG. Actually, there's a lot more going on in APG than most people suspect, even trainers who train it. Generally speaking, the first time you experience it, it is just a primer that gets you ready for it. The four hidden themes: Empowerment, Healing, Programming, and Ecology.

APG DAY 1

The design is to empower yourself as a doer, a human *being*, a meaning-maker, and as a valuer. Your innate powers to take effective action (Power), to *be* a valued person (Self), to create meanings (Belief), and to establish values (Pleasure). These are your core powers.

Theme 1: Empowerment via Replication. While I repeatedly talk about Developmental Psychology in the patterns of Day 1, I usually only briefly mention them. In truth, however, the first four patterns are designed to finish any unfinished work that a person may have lingering from childhood. Unspoken is the realization that when people use the patterns, and use them properly, they inwardly go through the developmental stages and recapitulate the developmental process. As a result, this allows them to become fully grown up and ready for the challenges of adult life. As they claim (or reclaim) their capabilities, their self-value, their confirmation skill, and their ability to enjoy, they often experience what amounts to a re-birth—they are reborn into the joyous adventure of being human.

A recapitulation of the developmental stages and processes.

1) ***Powers.*** The focus here: About *you as a human doing*. *Owning your Powers* is a pattern for developing meta-program #23, Internal Reference. This reverses the *outside-in* dynamic that we all learn and experience in childhood. Now we turn that around so we can begin to live *inside-out*. Now we become the architects of our own minds and hearts—and lives. This is the foundation for adult thinking, emoting, and responding. It is the foundation for developing as a *responsible person* who is empowered within. This is the foundation for critical thinking so that you can live by your own values, visions, and beliefs. And by refreshing the basic powers, it enables you to trust your own senses thereby connecting you to reality. Run this pattern well and you facilitate true personal empowerment, proactivity, initiative, and productivity. Distinctions here: cause/ response; self/ powers.

Focus: Your powers as capacities and potentials.

Distinction: Self-Trust — Self-Confidence/ Self-efficacy

Foundation: To live Inside–Out, to reverse the outside–in orientation, to develop critical thinking (mind), emotional intelligence, to be proactive and productive.

2) **Self.** The focus: *You as a human being.* Design: *Establish a robust sense of self* by distinguishing *being* and *doing*. Fail to do that, and life becomes the drama of seeking to do the impossible—become okay, become a somebody. Impossible because whatever *conditions* you set, or your culture sets, is ultimately self-defeating. That’s because if you have to always and continually meet those *conditions*, then your “sense of self” will always be in question. *You* will “be” what you “do.” Your *doing* will forever define you. This pattern activates meta-program #59, Being / Doing / Having. By claiming your *unconditional value and worth as a human being*, you start from the idea that you were born *a Somebody!* No one can take that away from you. No experience, event, action, failure, etc. can take that away from you. You are a precious and loveable *person* from the beginning. Now life is all about *developing and expressing* that inner *being*. So as you *accept yourself* and life for whatever it is, you can focus on *appreciating your gifts and possibilities*.

Distinction: Being and Doing

Foundation: Healthy love of self, otherwise, operate with a map of self inadequate so that *you* become a problem to yourself.

3) **Beliefs.** Focus: *You as a meaning-maker.* The *belief change* pattern identifies that, as a human being, you both think and believe, and these are not the same. *Thinking* enables you to consider and question any and all information that comes your way. *Believing* enables you to build up your internal *meta-verse* or matrix of frames—meanings, values, understandings, decisions, identities and every other meta that makes you human. Structurally, you are a believer; you cannot *not* believe. But the *content* is up to you. Because you have the power of confirmation and dis-confirmation, you are in charge of your matrix. You are the CEO of your *meta world*. Make it a great one! This pattern activates meta-programs #19 and #34 (convincer meta-programs) by which you become *convinced* that something is real or valid.

Distinction: Thoughts / Beliefs.

Foundation: Create your *meta* place (meta-verse), access your neuro-semantic power to construct and de-construct reality so it serves you well.

4) **Pleasure.** The focus: *You as a valuer.* The *pleasure enrichment* pattern enables you to make all of life enjoyable. At the primary level, you experience it as pleasure, at the meta level, *pleasure of pleasure* are your values. The power of joy, of enjoying, of pleasuring yourself with the things of highest value—is your power to create *values*. The *being-purpose* of your life are your values which, in turn, give your life meaning and significance. It identifies that *misery is a human choice, not destiny*. Given that your neurology is wired for ten-thousand pleasures, pleasure is your destiny if you choose it. And meta-pleasures is how you create the joyfulness of your *being* life. You can connect *joy* or pleasure to

anything and everything you do. Here you activate meta-programs #60 (values), #39 (preference value), #32 (emotional attitude).

Distinction: Pleasure and meta-pleasure (= values, meaningfulness, what you care about).

Foundation: Motivation, energy, vitality, establishing a value hierarchy.

APG DAY 2

Theme 2: Healing the mistakes. With the renewal and rejuvenation of your essential powers of being, you are now ready to *clean out any problems in your meta-verse*—problems in your emotions, your ideas (your thinking, conceptualizing), and/or your states.

5) **Emotions.** Focus here: **Healing prohibitions.** The *Permitting Emotions* pattern works to undo any prohibitions you picked up during childhood that prevents you from having the full range of emotional vitality. When someone reprimands you for having an emotion and you accept the prohibition or taboos, you can experience a constriction in your being and probably a case of *pseudo-guilt*. Yet because it is false, there's no solution. The ultimate effect will be an inexplicable depression, a "pressing down" of the energy of your soul. By accepting and embracing *every* emotion, you develop a robust emotional intelligence (E.Q.) and social intelligence (S.Q.). You activate your energy system because your meanings activate your emotions so that you have all the vitality you need to live fully and to be productive. This pattern activates meta-programs #20 (experience of emotion), #21 (exuberance), and #25 (emotional containment).

Foundation: vitality, EQ, aliveness, your energy system

Problem: Taboos which constrict your sense of aliveness, imprison.

Solution: Permission that frees and liberates.

6) **Concepts.** Focus here: **Healing misunderstandings.** The *Renewing Thinking* pattern cleans out any dis-empowering idea or concept that you may have picked up that limits your full development. As you *think*, you *conceive* of all sorts of ideas as concepts that form the structure of your *meta-verse*. Some of these, however, limit you. Traditional concepts as family opinions, dogmas, rituals, myths, etc. are often accepted as irrevocable 'truths.' This conceptual system sets up boundaries that stop you from doing what others seem to easily do. Because this is the structure of every "stuck" state, you are not the problem—*the frame is the problem*. By meta-stating the concept, and blowing out the old system of limiting beliefs, understandings, decisions, etc., you get a new lease on life. You unlearn what was falsely learned which then free you to build up a matrix of frames that gives you a directional map so that you can go where you want to go. This activates meta-programs #8 (movement) and #7 (classification).

Foundation: Structure of the *meta* place.

Problem: Imprisoning concepts.

Solution: Liberating concepts.

7) **Dragons.** *Focus here: **Healing states turned against oneself.** The *Dancing with Dragons* pattern uses the metaphor of a dragon—a powerful internal force that has somehow turned on you so that you are contaminated with something that’s undermining your highest and best. The “dragon” state is mostly a state wherein you have turned your energies *against* yourself leaving you in a state of inner conflict and emotional distress. If this “dragon” is an emotion, *you can tame it or even transform it* so that it unleashes new forms of energy. You can transform fear into excitement, for example. If it is a false and delusional idea, you can slay that dragon so it disappears. This corrects the misuse of meta-program #7 (classification) when one’s reflexivity has been misused. Now free from the old state dependency, you are free to pursue your potentials.*

Problem: The misuse of reflexivity, turning energies against oneself.

Solution: Readjust the energy by taming or eliminating.

Theme 3: Programming a Single-Minded Focus. If you have been stuck in any development stage, in the first 7 patterns you experienced a replication of the needed resource or development. Now with that clearing of the path, that healing of the mistakes and that empowerment of your core self, you can now focus on *enriching your meta-verse* and specifically on creating a top-down meta-stating so that you can completely focus on the expertise of your choice.

8) **Mind-to-Muscle.** *Focus here: **Programming great principles.** The *Implementation* pattern that we call “Mind-to-Muscle” gives you the ability to take some of your very best concepts, beliefs, understandings and put them on automatic. By intentionally creating some automatic programs, you get to be your own best programmer. This frees up your mind so you don’t have to devote mental energy to the things that you know are true and that you want to commission yourself to do automatically. In the *Mind-to-Muscle* pattern, you take a great idea or principle, and because you are a neuro-linguistic being, you program it in linguistically. Starting high in your matrix, you use meta-program #3 (scope) and work deductively to transform the principle into a belief and then a decision. As you then transform these into the energy of your emotions, you have the momentum to begin acting on the principle in the way you live. When you have done that you’ve activated meta-program #27 (active somatic response).*

Foundation: Program an idea or principle to make it automatic, to become the architect of your *meta* place as you choose the principles to live by.

9) **Miracle.** *Focus here: **Programming your creative imagination.** As an *As If* pattern, the Miracle Question taps into the power of your imagination in such a way that you can step aside from all of structural assumptions (problems) that have been holding you back. When stuck, we typically lose our creativity and begin to view things in the same repetitive way, over and over. The problem is that the kind of thinking we used to create the stuckness cannot solve it. So without “fixing” whatever was wrong in your meta-verse, simply *imagine a future without that limitation.* Here you recover another power of childhood—the power of pretending and make-believing. You bypass “the reality limitations” that have constrained you and *imagine the possibilities* using the metaphor of a*

miracle. Playing with the idea of a “miracle,” you use a phenomena that “transcends the laws of nature” so that you can briefly step out of reality to create an imaginary bridge to the future. Now you can start out on a whole new premise. You can now solve a problem without needing to know what the problem was. This is the foundation of the solution-focused approach and it activates meta-programs #38 (possibility operating style) and #17 (non-conventional).

Foundation: To step beyond a problem and start with a desirable imagined future, to program creative imagination and use the “as if” framing.

APG DAY 3

10) **Intention.** *Focus here: Programming a robust Intention.* *The Intentionality* pattern is powerful for activating several executive functions in your prefrontal cortex. It activates your temporal cortex that deals with time, “future,” your capacity for deciding and choosing, and for establishing values and ethics. It activates the highest parts of the brain wherein you anticipate the future and begin to “predict” what you can make happen. By identifying a single *intention*, you establish a direction for life and a purpose. This enriches your sense of value and meaning. Here you are developing your *big why* for doing and living as you want. With this you focus your attentions in a laser-beam fashion so you fully concentrate and hold that concentration. This activates the meta-program on *focus* (#9) so you screen out distractions and the intention meta-program (#L) so you access high purposeful intentions.

Distinction: Attention / Intention.

Foundation: To program intentions as your ultimate motivation, to establish your purpose and direction, to create a laser-beam focus top-down.

11) **Genius.** *Focus here: Programming Executive Decisions.* *The Engagement state* pattern is designed to intentionally use *state dependency* to your benefit so you can intensely *focus* on personally meaningful engagement. This gives you the key to the “flow” state so that you can turn it on and off as you wish. You here transform it into an automatic program saving you from having to do it consciously. You commission (or program) your outside-of-conscious mind to run the program when and as it is needed. You make a set of *executive decisions* about your optimal state. This is the foundation for expertise, for mastery, for greatness, for “genius.” Here you program your unconscious mind for an optimal state of creativity and *being-ness*. Doing this enables you to live the authority sort meta-program (#23) and the persistence meta-program (#33).

Foundation: To program executive decisions for your expertise state, to turn the flow state on and off at will.

4) Theme 4: Ecology in Living your expertise. Having access your core powers as a person (doing, being, making meaning, valuing) and having healed any mistakes regarding emotions, ideas or states, and having programmed your highest executive powers in the *meta* place (principles, creative imaginative possibilities, intentions, and executive decisions), you are ready to live your expertise. Could anything mess this up? Yes.

Excuses, internal conflict, and incongruency. So now we will focus on the ecology of wise decisions (based on legitimate reasoning), harmony (that ends internal conflict) and the congruency of alignment.

12) **Excuses.** If excuses and illegitimate reasoning can mess things up, *The Excuse Blow-Out* pattern can enable you to *wisely distinguish* between true reasons for holding back and false reasons or excuses. By this you develop the **wisdom** to tell the difference between when to act and when not to. If the “reason” is illegitimate, it is just an excuse and a way to undermine your effectiveness and productivity. If the reason is legitimate, then you want to *wisely* pay attention to it and take measured responses. But how can you tell the difference? The answer is simple: By applying the ecology of your values to the thinking and reasoning that you’re engaged in. Then if it is just an excuse, you can *blow it out* so you become unstoppable. By speaking the truth to yourself you activate meta-programs of *truth speaking* (#F) and *fallibility coping* (#H).

Problem: Illegitimate reasons (excuses), by which you sell yourself and your potentials short.

Correction: To distinguish reasons from excuses, make wise decisions in service of your expertise.

The ecology of smart / wise goals

13) **Icons.** If internal conflict can mess up your expertise, then we need to use *the Resolving Inner Conflict* pattern (“Spinning Icons”) to bring about inner **harmony**. If you have multiple goals or intentions *and* they interfere with each other, the situation is *not* that one is bad and one is good. They are both good *and* they are getting in each other’s way. You want to succeed and be wealthy *and* you want to be humble and contributing to those less fortunate. Sometimes you can just sequence the two parts in time, in activity, or in some other way. But if you can’t consciously figure it out, then as a pattern, *Spinning Icons*, may help to sort things out. This relies on your outside-of-conscious awareness to come up with an answer and it does so by activating non-propositional representations. This is the foundation for a lot of creativity as well as playfulness. This activates the communication meta-programs (#11, non-verbal) and the epistemological meta-program (#2, intuitor).

Problem: Inner conflict, two differing objectives or intentions that get in each other’s way.

Correction: Sequence the two states for harmony.

14) **Alignment.** If incongruency can mess up your genius state, then *the Alignment* pattern enables you to straighten that out and create **congruency**. Start with one activity that you know how to do and you do competently, an activity that you know you have more potential for taking to a much higher level. Your intention is to be even better at it, more effective, more gracious, more charming, more—something. Here, by backing up through your meta-verse (matrix) *about* that one singular behavior, you align all of your higher frames to it. Focusing on the activity, you activate belief frames, value frames, identity frames, decision frames, and a metaphorical frame so that everything in the *meta* world is

aligned to it thereby enriching it in many, many ways and increasing your productivity tenfold. To do that requires you activating your reflexive (meta) meta-program (#7).

Problem: Incongruency in a behavior or lack of full congruency as you express your expertise.

Correction: Enhance, enrich and empower the skill so fully aligned in your *meta* place.

Align all of your meta verse to the expression of a particular behavior.

APG Secrets

Now you know, at least conceptually, some of the hidden secrets which are hidden deep inside of APG. Now you know that there are four themes:

Theme 1: Empowerment via Replication.

Theme 2: Healing the mistakes.

Theme 3: Programming a Single-Minded Focus.

Theme 4: Ecology in Living your expertise.

And given that, there are some much *deeper experiences* that you can derive from APG. 1) As you experience the first 7 APG patterns, as you replicate the most core developmental psychology experiences, you can finally *fully grow up as an adult*. 2) As you go through the three *healing* patterns, you can clean up some of the messes leftover during childhood or as you became an adult. A deep cleansing, renewal, and/or rejuvenation of your spirit could occur so that you become “fully alive/fully human.” 3) When you experience the four *programming patterns*, you tap into the highest part of your brain, your executive functions, and from a top-down position, you meta-state yourself so your expertise gets set on *automatic*. Then you have it whenever you need it! 4) When you experience the *ecology* patterns, you take care of the three most common ways that people mess up excellence.

Trainers— Learn the four themes and how each of the patterns fit into the process and you will never again wonder how the patterns relate to each other. You will know. You will know how to frame each pattern and what you’re attempting to *train* with each pattern.

Coaches — Now you have a way of knowing *which pattern to use* with a given client. If the person needs core empowerment, use the four empowerment patterns. If the person needs healing, or programming, or ecology, now you know!

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #34
July 20, 2021

WHAT ABOUT THERAPY SHOULD YOU KNOW?

In Morpheus (#32) I talked about the fundamental differences between therapy and coaching. Most of that material is in your ACMC manual, and so should be no surprise. Now for a slightly different question.

“What about therapy should you know?”

“And ultimately, what is therapy anyway?”

First and foremost, *therapy is about healing*. And if it is about healing, that implies there is a hurt, a wound, and/or a trauma which needs healing. The metaphor comes from medicine, which is where psychotherapy began. The idea at the turn of the 20th century was that if a person is not normal, and not okay, *and* we can't find any physical cause, then the hurt must be psychological. Freud, as a medical doctor, first worked with hysteria and could not find a physical, external cause. This gave birth to psychiatry and then to psychotherapy.

But still, what are we talking about? What is wounded? What is hurting? What is inflicting the wounding or trauma and where is it? Is the wound mental—somehow the mind is damaged? Is the wound in the emotions—and somehow the emotions are damaged? The answer is *no*. It's a metaphor! If there are actual physical wounds in the brain, that's the domain of neurology and the neuro-sciences, not psychology. The answer to these questions is tricky because the questions themselves are still too vague, undefined, and imprecise.

What's wrong in a person's mind and emotions who needs psychotherapy is not a tumor, brain lesion, concussion, intoxication by some chemical, etc. What's wrong are *the cognitions*. Maslow wrote, “They are cognitively wrong.” There are mis-understandings, myths, false information, dis-information, cognitive distortions, cognitive biases, etc. And when a person is *thinking inaccurately and falsely*, so the emotions will go astray as will the way the person talks, acts, and relates.

In *The Structure of Personality* (2001) I, along with my co-writers, presented the cognitive errors that causes a person to go astray and end up *dis-ordering* one's personality. Then, using the NLP guideline that “all behavior makes sense to the mental maps which govern them,” we then identified how the insane, abnormal, and distressful symptoms arise, and how they make sense. Then using NLP and Neuro-Semantics we offered corrections and

multiple patterns for *re-ordering one's personality*. Because the focus of that book is on personality, I listed the 14 Personality Disorders of the DSM-IV (now the DSM-5) and how the models and technologies that we have can be used to straighten out what went wrong.

That now raises the next question. If therapy is about healing, how does a *conversation* enable psychological *healing* to occur? How do you *heal*, or facilitate healing, with words or by just talking? Again, it was Sigmund Freud who described psychotherapy as “the talking cure.” Much later, in studying schizophrenia and writing about it, Gregory Bateson identified its double-bind structure (*Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 1972) and showed that it was by changing the meta-communicative habits of the individuals that healing occurs.

No wonder NLP went in this direction from the very beginning. Bateson was the teacher and mentor of all of the original NLP developers and from him they discovered *meta*, ecology, framing, and the basic communication guidelines. This was also the subject of my dissertation (*Languaging: The Linguistics of Psychotherapy*, 1996). Therapeutic change occurs as a person re-languages himself, eliminates the cognitive distortions that create the misery and hurt, and adopts a more precise language. That is the essential purpose of “the Meta-Model of Language in Therapy” which we now call *The Meta-Model*.

So what gets hurt or wounded? *The person's mental map of reality*. And because your internal model of the world is all that you have for navigating the territory of everyday life, when your mapping system is wrong—everything is wrong. What *hurts* is the confusion, disorientation, misunderstanding, false expectations, etc. that you have which keep being defeated. And when your mental mapping is distorted and false, then lots of things, perhaps even most things, which you conceptually build (your self, your skills, your relationships, your goals, hopes, dreams, etc.) also get messed up—wounded, torn in pieces, dysfunctional.

What you need to know about therapy are the basic patterns of distortion—the neurotic systems that are developed and then run a person's life. You need to know the ways and means by which thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting can get messed up leaving a person suffering on the inside.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #35
July 27, 2021

HEALING IN THE *META* PLACE

What is amazing, what is actually incredible, and still an inexplicable mystery, is how *words can heal*. “Words can heal?” Yes, words can heal; isn’t that fantastic?! At first glance and on the surface, the idea sounds ridiculous—‘words can heal.’ How could that work? Well, yes, first you have to shift your focus because it only makes sense if you recognize that they heal in the *meta* place, not in the real world.

In the real world, words are impotent. They can’t do anything. They are inert. You can say, “Abracadabra!” all you want and mountains will not open secret doors to you. You can yell at the TV screen during a sports event, yet for all of your words and all of the volume you can project, it will not affect the result of the game. It may give you or someone else a headache, but that’s about it. Yet it is an entirely different story when it comes to the *meta* place—there words are like lightning bolts full of energy and power.

In the *meta* place words activate the mind so that you either find or create their referents. Then the referents play out in the theater of your mind as representational movies, as diagrams, as stories, and/or metaphorical narratives. It’s in this *symbolic* way that words are powerful and there “we live in the world of language.” In the *meta* place, words serve as tools calling forth memories and imaginations so that we recall or construct our inner *meta-universe*.

It is here, and due to activation, that words can heal or hurt. How does this work? It works symbolically. At first the words only function as symbols standing for other things (persons, places, activities, events, evaluations, etc.). Then with use, the words are processed so quickly and unthinkingly that they come to be equated with their references. I no longer distinguish the word ‘strawberry’ from my images and smells and tastes of a strawberry. The word has become its reference *inside us*. There, in the *meta* place, the map is now the territory.

Yes, of course, *intellectually* we know that the word ‘strawberry’ is not the strawberry, just a symbol of it. But *experientially* as the link between symbol and reference and experiencing the reference becomes stronger and faster, *we experience the referent* nearly at the same time we hear the word. And as *the processing speed* increases, the map becomes the territory—for us inside our neurology. That’s how a word can hurt. “You are a son of a bitch, you idiot...” gets processed so quickly, there’s not a nano-second for *a thought*.

What's the problem? *The linking* of a symbol (a word) with its reference and human neurology finding, or creating, the reference *as an internal experience*. We are actually *hurting* ourselves with the symbol. It is the way we are processing the word, the mindlessness of it, and the fusing (con-fusing) of symbol and referent that is the problem. It happens so fast. In the book that launched NLP, Fritz Perls said:

“Somebody calls you a son of a bitch, and you think you are suffering. You feel hurt. But you don't really; you don't feel hurt. There are no bruises, there are no actual injuries there. It is your so-called ego or vanity that is hurt.” (*The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy*, 1973, p. 128)

As words work symbolically, and as we use them to think, evaluate, emote, and internally *experience*, the words activate constructs in the *meta* place. The big question for every one of us is, “What words have you used to construct what constructs in your *meta* place?” “What internal ‘realities’ have you created in there and that you now live with and how well do they serve you?” That's the big question in coaching, in therapy, and in life.

Now you know how “words can heal.” Working as symbols, some words do damage and harm, some words create suffering and dysfunction. Other words create healing and renewal. It all depends on both the symbol that you're using, what it elicits inside you, and how much mindfulness (or mindlessness) you have as you use words. Use words that enhance, empower, create beauty and honor, etc. and words bring life and joy into your *meta* place.

This now begins to explain how “the talking cure” (e.g., therapy, Freud) works. It is the languaging that is co-created between therapist and client that generates new experiences and that can put an end to the suffering of trauma. So also with coaching and why at the heart of coaching are *the coaching conversations*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #36
August 3, 2022

THERAPY, LIKE COACHING, IS IN THE *META* PLACE

As I've been studying and writing about therapy for a new book (to be titled, *Meta-Therapy*), I have been focusing attention on the *meta* place. I've been doing that as a way to say something new and different from all of the thousands of books on therapy, namely, that therapy occurs in the *meta* place. Now you, as a Meta-Coach, would already know that, or at least guess that, because *meta* is the place where we create and experience our humanness.

NLP picked this *meta* idea up from Bateson and introduced it as "going meta," as meta-parts, meta-position, meta-model, meta-programs, meta-tactics, etc. What is this *meta*? It is the next *higher* level thought, emotion, experience, etc. I adopted *meta* for meta-states in 1994 when the idea struck me that there could be a state *about* another state. And with that, I developed the Meta-States Model which has proven to an exceptionally rich and productive model as it has led to so many other things.

Meta is your self-reflexive mind at work. When you *think* or *feel* a second thought or emotion *about* a first experience, you have just "gone meta." You have moved up to a higher logical level to the experience and now the first experience is what you are referring to, thinking about, feeling about. Seems simple. But don't be deceived, it is not. What you do whenever you make a *meta* move to a *higher* position is that you have expanded your awareness and perception. You are now setting a frame or category over the experience which now *interprets* the meaning of the experience. This describes how you are meaning-making.

You have just created your *meta* place. This is the place, in your self-reflexive mind, where you build up understandings, beliefs, values, decisions, identities, memories, imaginations, permissions, prohibitions, and on and on. You create all of your *meta*-levels in your *meta* place and this becomes what and how you *interpret* things. It is here that you can create effective strategies for how to do things. It is here you can create wonderful understandings that make life delightful and relationships rich. It is also here that you can create systems of thinking that makes life a living hell and relationships living nightmares.

Well-being and neurosis are both created in your *meta* place and you live in that *meta* place all the days of your life. It is from there that you have your sense of who you are (your personality), what you are about (your intentions and purposes), what you can do (or not

do), your possibilities (and impossibilities), etc. Further, everywhere you go, you take that invisible *meta* place with you. Call it your mind. Your personality, your temperament. Your history. Your beliefs and values. Call it your matrix of meanings. Whatever you call it, it is *the most unique thing about you because it determines the quality of your life*. Pretty important, wouldn't you say?

Now because it is not only pretty important, it is *the most important and critical variable* in your life—that's what we coach to, it is also the object of therapy. For the Meta-Coach, you seek to enter your client's *meta* place to find out how to tune things up, unleash potentials, empower all of the person's innate capacities, and enable the person to actualize her highest meanings into her best performances. That's coaching. With coaching, you don't need a problem, only *a goal*. "What do you really, really want to make your life about?"

Therapy is very different. With therapy, there is a problem. There is a hurt, a wound, there is something inside which is suffering from some kind of trauma. Of course, we're talking metaphorically. Therapy is about *healing the suffering*. That's why therapy is problem-focused and coaching is solution-focused.

What's suffering in the *meta* place for a person who needs healing? While it can be all kinds of things, it is mostly and primarily something that's wrong with the person's mental maps. What the person understood, believed, valued, expected, wanted, predicted, hoped for, etc. did not work out. Something went wrong. But what? The symptoms and results of what went wrong are usually obvious. But the symptom is never the problem. The problem is always the frame— *the meaning frame in the meta place*.

Now coaching clients can sometimes be locked into a frame-of-mind and find it hard to shake loose from it. Sometimes he can be imprisoned by a limiting belief or memory. But for the therapy client, this is much more prominent and to be expected. He hates to be wrong. He gets really defensive about being put "in the wrong." She is not open to accepting responsibility. And why not? Ego-strength. The person lacks the ego-strength to face it. That's why therapy is much more about loving a person back to health than challenging them (as is the case with Coaching). The good news is that in the *meta* place there is always the possibility of change. What is messed up can be straightened out. It can if you know how to heal in the *meta* place (next week's subject).

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #37
August 17, 2022
Distinguish Therapy from Coaching

AIM FOR A GOOD DESPAIR

That's what he wrote, "Aim for a good despair?" Who would ever say something like that? And why? *Despair* sounds like an absolutely terrible state of mind and emotion. *Despair* sounds like something that no one in their right mind would ever want to feel or consider good. So what's with this injunction, "Aim for a Good Despair?"

The answer goes to *context*. Of course, that's obvious because meaning is always context dependent. So, hmmm, is there a possible context where despair would be a good thing? Something that you would look forward to? Surprisingly the answer is yes if we're talking about the context of psychotherapy.

I'm not talking about coaching, or even counseling, I'm talking about *therapy*. That's because therapy is for individuals who have been "wounded" from a trauma of some sort and who, as a result, have adopted a neurotic pattern of life. Now the author who made that recommendation was Andras Angyal. In *Neurosis and Treatment: A Holistic Therapy* (1965) he says that the neurotic life pattern involves a whole set of attitudes (e.g., beliefs, values, etc.) and understandings as the person's way of defending against and/or escaping from a dysfunctional experience. And it works. Well, it works to a certain degree. At least it has enabled the person to survive (the positive intention behind it).

But, of course, in surviving the person often pays a terrible price inside. Mental understandings are full of distortions, emotional states full of anxiety, fear, anger, loss, sadness, etc. and behavioral defenses make the person odd to others. *Inwardly, the neurotic person hopes to keep the false attitudes of his pattern* (a much deeper and more pervasive problem than what occurs in coaching). After all, he has spent a lifetime developing it and using it to survive. But then, in psychotherapy, that neurotic pattern is exposed, accepted, fragmented, and challenged. So as the healing begins, a time often comes when the person senses that he is facing a hopelessness to his way of life.

As the person who has lived inside the neurotic pattern learns that his neurotic thinking, feeling, and acting does not work, *he gives up hope that it will succeed*. This is *not* what he originally thought the therapy would be accomplished. He entered therapy to get rid of the symptoms, especially anxiety, depression, anger, fear, etc. But then, as he experiences therapeutic experiences with the therapist, the neurotic structures melt away as if in a crucible. And that can lead to a profound despair if the neurotic hopes are shattered and he sees the futility of his old life pattern.

Part of the despair may arise from the fact that now he no longer knows how to live life. Everything he knew and used is gone. What now? He cannot see a future before him. Andras Angyal says that “the work of demolition culminates in the bankruptcy of the neurosis.” Yet as one hope dies (the neurotic one), another emerges, “the constructive part of the personality grows.”

In psychotherapy, it is the sweeping away experience of the bankruptcy of the neurotic pattern that enables a client to break out of the old enclosure. That leads to despair, which actually is a crucial step in the cure. The despair leads to a depression as the person gives up the old ways of life, as he lets them die. That is the demolishing work of therapy in which the preposterous hopes of the neurotic pattern are killed and destroyed.

All of that describes a *good despair, a good grief*. It indicates the ending of an old world and the dawning of a new world. As Angyal described the positive use of a death-inducing despair (1965, pp. 224-225) in a book in which, none other than Abraham Maslow wrote the Foreword, he tapped into one of the Human Potential Movement’s (and NLP’s) premises— *there is a positive healthy energy underneath all behavior*.

Why have I written this? I hope that this description deepens your appreciation of the difference between coaching and psychotherapy. And because of the differences in objective, there is also a significant difference in skill sets. Is coaching therapeutic? Yes, of course. It is very healing because it provides the richest of meanings. Is coaching for people with neurotic patterns? No, it is not. That is the domain of psychotherapy.

From: L. Michael Hall

2022 Morpheus #38

August 24, 2022

Distinguishing Therapy from Coaching

WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER ASK WHY

You know, do you not, to *never ask your coaching client why*. Right? How clear are you about that? Could you possibly need a reminder about the reason that NLP made “never ask why” a mantra in doing therapy, coaching, and generally in communicating?

Now especially in Meta-Coaching, we avoid *the why of history, the why of causation, and the way of explanation*. When you ask those *whys*, you will not get useful information that will facilitate your client’s unleashing. Instead, ask the *why of importance*. That’s question three in the WFO questions—“Why is X important to you? What is the value of X? And when you get that value, why is that value important to you?”

The other *whys* only distract. They will distract you from moving with your client into her *meta* place where both of you will discover *how* her inside world is working and *how* it creates whatever is being created. That *meta* place is the world of meaning and meaning attribution. It creates your client’s understanding, beliefs, decisions, permissions, prohibitions, values, identities, etc.—his model of the world. And *from that model of the world, everything makes sense*. No matter how deluded, ridiculous, ineffective, even down-right stupid it may be— it makes sense to that person. It is psycho-logical.

That’s because with a model of the world, each of us has developed our own psycho-logics. We have “reasoned” from experiences, readings, and conversations to the conclusions we have drawn and it is that meta-stating process (applying our reasoned conclusions to ourselves) that we have built up a psycho-logical model. And we are inside it. That’s why we can hardly see it or understand things from other perspectives. And that’s why we need a coach or therapist or a professional communicator to help us identify our frames.

This means that happened in the past *does not cause or create* anything inside of a person. The past was just the occasion and place where we learned something. And it is that *learning* (if it is wrong, distorted, over-generalized, etc.) that’s doing the damage. It now operates as a frame and it is generating whatever symptoms that one’s experiencing that’s blocking one’s full self-actualization. That’s why the past does not matter. It is only incidental to whatever model of the world your client has created at some previous time.

Fritz Perls explained this in the pre-NLP book that Richard Bandler edited, *The Gestalt Approach* (1972).

“The techniques of the conventional therapies [psychoanalysis] are based on the theory that what the patient lacks is an understanding of the whys of his behavior, and that these

whys can be uncovered if we dig deeply enough into the past, into his dreams, and into his unconscious.” (1972, p. 51)

“A second reason we feel therapy oriented to the past is invalid is because the *whys* of the patient’s neurosis really explain very little.” .. If a man is neurotic ‘because’ his mother died in childbirth and he was raised by a stern maiden aunt who gave him no chance to do anything he wanted ... how will an explanation which makes the aunt the villain in the piece solve his problem. On the contrary, such an explanation only gives the patient license to project all his difficulties onto the aunt. It gives him a scapegoat, not an answer.” (Ibid. pp. 53-54)

Perls then stressed an obvious fact: You can only work and achieve something if you work *in the now, in the present*. You cannot achieve anything if you are oriented to the past and trying to solve past problems. He said that in previous centuries, we asked ‘why.’ We tried to find causes, reasons, excuses, rationalizations. And we thought if we could change the causes we could change the effect, but that was all an illusion that deceives. Then he announced:

“In our electronic age, **we don’t ask why anymore, we ask how**. *We investigate the structure*, and when we understand the structure, then we can *change* the structure. And a structure in which we are most interested, is the structure of our lifescrypt. The structure of our lifescrypt—often called karma or fate—is mostly taken up with self-torture, futile self-improvement games, achievements, and so on.” (Ibid. p. 122)

Now you know where Bandler and the early NLP developers got it! And the really good news is that when you focus on *the what and how*, you have to become aware of “the obvious.” That’s why Perls focused on “losing your mind and coming to your senses.” Why? Because “everything is there.” (Ibid., p. 121). *Everything is there ... right now ... here and now, before you — with your client if you can open your eyes and ears and mind.* “Every neurotic is a person who doesn’t see the obvious.” (Ibid., p. 121)

So as a Meta-Coach, learn to see what is happening at every given moment with your client. Whatever problem there is—is it happening *now*. That’s why there is no need to go to the past. Asking questions that start with *why* are of little therapeutic value and little value for self-actualizing.

“The ‘why’ questions produce only pat answers, defensiveness, rationalizations, excuses, and the delusion that an event can be explained by a single cause. The why does not discriminate purpose, origin, or background. Under the mask of inquiry *it has contributed perhaps more to human confusion* than any other single word. Not so with the ‘how.’ The how inquires into the structure of an event, and once the structure is clear *all the whys are automatically answered*. If we spend our time looking for causes instead of structure we may as well give up the idea of therapy and join the group of worrying grandmothers who attack their prey with such pointless questions as ‘Why did you catch that cold?’ ‘Why have you been so naughty?’” (Ibid. p. 77)

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #39
August 31, 2022

UPGRADE YOURSELF

As Neuro-Semantics has set *quality*, and high quality, as one of its distinguishing features, we have—since the very beginning—urged Meta-Coaches to engage in continual learning, practice, and development. We have urged “apply to self,” implementation, mind-to-muscle processes, and practice groups—all in an effort so that people will be continually upgrading their skills.

Personally, I have done the same as I have focused continually on upgrading every model, every pattern, and every training. I’m never satisfied. I believe that everything we do can be significantly improved. I am forever asking, “How can we make this better?” “What is not as good as it could be?” “How can we improve X?”

This is *upgrading*—an essential feature in the pursuit of excellence, of self-actualizing, and of “going for gold.” As you probably know because I have said it so many times, every year I set an upgrading goal of becoming 5% better as a trainer, 5% as a writer, 5% as a modeler.

What follows from this and what is implied in this is *measurement*. After all, how will I be able to *quantify* that at the end of the year I have improved in my skills 5%? If it is only a subjective feeling (“I feel 5% better”), then it is a very poor and prejudicial assessment. To answer the question, I have to specify *criteria* and once I do that, then I need to *operationalize* each activity. Only then will I be able to distinguish *in behavioral terms* what is poor, medium, good, or great. Or, instead of these evaluative words, I could use a number system, say 0 to 4.

That’s what the benchmarks are—a *numbering system that helps you quantify and measure what you do in sensory-based terms*. Benchmark is not about passing or failing. Benchmarking is about learning to distinguish degrees of an activity or performance. Benchmarks let me know the level at which I’m performing. It makes the performance objective and empirical and that’s at the heart of having high quality confidence. Repeatedly performing at a certain level reassures my confidence and lets me know when I’m ready to step up to the next level.

Obviously a single benchmark is not sufficient. Generally I want to repeat the behavior that I’m working on seven times consistently. Then I will truly know, “I can do that!” Everyone will have exceptionally good days. On those days everything comes together just right. You feel that you are “on” and “in the zone.” Such peak performances are delights

that urge you to continue. Even though you can't "turn them on" and perform at that level regularly—at least not yet.

Everyone also has days which are exceptionally awful. Nothing you do seems to click or connect, you seem to be all thumbs, and so your performance drops significantly. It's just the nature of the beast. When that happens next time—don't make much of it. Focus on learning what you can. "What did you fail to do?" "What did you forget?" "What did you do at a lower level?" "What state were you in?" Benchmarks can identify the factor/s that went wrong thereby giving you important insights into the inner workings of the performance.

Benchmarks use numbers, but they are not about the numbers. Benchmarks reveal the critical features at work in a performance, the factors that undermine a performance, the best sequence, the timing, etc. It reveals the best strategy. If all you take away from a benchmarking experience are the numbers—you have missed the whole point! You have overlooked the truly important aspects and you have also misused the tool.

But the biggest misuse of benchmarks is to personalize them. The truth is that benchmarks are not about you! Benchmarks are about your *behavior* and *performance*. Not you as a person. That's why we have the little song or poem. "I have a score, I'm not my score; I am more than my score."

Nor is any benchmark or the benchmarking process is perfect. The quality of the benchmarks depend on the skills of the person doing it, the state the person is in, the relationship he has with you, how you're doing that particular day, the client you have, the subject that's brought up, and much more. Yet though not perfect, it is a pretty good tool. It is the best we have for measuring subjective intangible subjects and one that a person can become much better with via practice and benchmarking.

Would you like to upgrade yourself—your skills, your competence, your confidence, your ability to make a difference in the world? Then add benchmarks and benchmarking to your tool chest. I'm glad I did, I think you will be glad when you do.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #40
September 7, 2021

ARE YOU STRUGGLING AS A COACH?

Here is something about coaching and the experience of coaching that I think you should know and be able to live—*effective coaching is effortless*. Or at least should be. If you have learned the basic skills of coaching and you understand the basic premises of self-actualizing coaching, if you are in the right state, and if you are on track with your client—there really should be no *struggle* in coaching. Ideally, given those basics, coaching should never be a struggle. But what if it is? What if you find yourself *struggling* in the coaching session? What then?

Before answering these questions, let's be clear about what we mean by the word "struggling." *Struggling does not mean merely exerting effort*. You can exert effort, and lots and lots of it, and still not experience struggling. People do that all the time. Think of children playing intensely, running and jumping, and getting out of breath while playing, and yet, experientially—it is not a struggle. It is fun. Adults do it with any sport, invention, hobby, work, etc. that they love, that they care about, and that they have become basically competent in.

In that case, the effort you exert simply *flows*, it "moves with the current" of whatever the event is so that it leads forever forward and achieves the results and outcomes that you want. Then you don't even think of it as a struggle, but as expertise at work or being in the flow state.

What we call struggle does not even fall into the category of *having a conflict* with a client. After all, that's to be expected, isn't it? You can expect clients to fight to maintain whatever they have been doing. If they knew how to change or what to change to—they would have already done that. But no. They have come to you to facilitate those changes, and yet the homeostasis of their mind-body system will sometimes fight against the change. And for a coach, isn't that part of the fun of being a facilitator?

Struggle is mostly about your own internal conflict—the conflict inside of you. When you are struggling you are fighting against yourself. You are struggling perhaps against your expectations or your assumptions or your mind-reading of the client, or your own personal goals, etc. Perhaps you have personalized what your client says or does or does not say or do and that's the struggle inside you.

Or, you have stopped facilitating the coaching process and you have turned the coaching conversation into a contest or fight about who is right. I have seen coaches get into a real

struggle because the coach just had to win! I have interrupted coaches in training sessions, “It seems like you are trying to win. What are you trying to win?” I’ve seen other coaches who cannot or will not allow the client to choose his own way—even if you consider it stupid and the wrong choice. They wanted to impose their own values and beliefs. No wonder there was a fight and struggle!

Another aspect of struggling involves getting too serious in the coaching facilitation—getting serious and losing perspective. Often the coach feels that she just has to succeed with a client and cannot *not* succeed and so the struggle ensues. But as a coach, you cannot and will not always succeed with your client.

If you find yourself struggling—stop. Take a break and gain perspective. Step back so that you can gain perspective about what’s going on. Run a check on yourself: Are you in the right state? Have you spent sufficient time pacing and matching your client—entering into his world and using his meaning constructs to understand him on his terms? What is your intention right now? How clean is it? Are you there solely and exclusively *for* your client or are you letting some ego-investments get in the way?

Then, *back to basics*. Put yourself in a compassionately curious state, get into sensory awareness, and make yourself fully available to the other person. As you do, drop any and all facades and personas. Be yourself, be your real self so that you can accept and welcome your client unconditionally as a person.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #41
September 14, 2022

THE MORAL NATURE OF COACHING

- As a coach, especially a Meta-Coach, can you coach about morality? Should you?
- What is the role of ethics and morality in the experience of coaching?
- If morality is a legitimate subject for a coach, *how* do you effectively and ecologically coach morality?

I will start with the bottom line: *Morality is inevitable in coaching because we human are moral beings.* While psychotherapy in general and most coaching schools say almost nothing about morality, the place for discerning *right and wrong* cannot be eliminated from coaching (or therapy). After all, it cannot be eliminated from life or society. All society is based on morality—doing what’s right and not doing what’s wrong. Societal laws encode a basic morality: do not kill, do not steal, do not hurt, do not lie, do not deceive, treat people with respect, honor your commitments, tell the truth, etc.

Now where there is morality, there are standards—the standards that define right and wrong, good and evil. And where there are standards, there is human evaluation. It’s one of the most basic aspects of *thinking*. In fact, *to think is to evaluate*. Every time you *think* you are make an evaluation that something is good, makes sense, has value, or it does not. To think is to weigh values, consider consequences, balance pros and cons. Our brains naturally make these kinds of judgments.

Ah, yes *judgment*. It’s so easy to think that “judgment is bad, therefore don’t do it.” But it is issue not that simple nor can we *not* judge. To think is to make a judgment and those who make good judgments consistently are those we consider wise, intelligent, well informed, and effective. So obviously, clients often come for coaching to have you help them make *good and wise judgments*. Foolish judgments mess things up and create all sorts of pains and blocks.

For these reasons, morality is inevitable. When a person is trying to make a decision about who to marry, what job to take, how to balance hobby with work, etc., those decisions imply various standards of right and wrong. What’s ultimately *right* for every person is to face up to his responsibilities, to speak truth to oneself and others, and to assume responsibility for actions taken. As a coach, ask, “Are you doing right?” “Do you think that X is reasonable?” “Are you taking the responsible course?” “What standards or values are you basing this decision upon?”

Poor and destructive coaching fails to bring up the subject of standards and values and seeks to help client feel more comfortable in their irresponsible actions. Yet the job of a coach is *not* to lessen the pain of being irresponsible, it is to empower the person to step up to her responsibilities.

Now ultimately the morality of any given person *is up to that person*. It is *not* up to us as coaches. After all, it is their life and it will be the consequences of their behaviors that they have to live. Our job is to facilitate them examining the reality of what they are doing, to examine the implications and consequences, and then encourage them to make what they believe is the correct course. You cannot do this for your client. She must do it for herself. You induce him to move to choice point, help him to think through things, to use his best critical thinking skills, and then to boldly take the risk that each of us takes every day of our lives— to act on our mindful values and choices.

So, yes you do coach to the subject of morality. Yes, the subject of whether an action is right or wrong is a legitimate subject— that's where we all live. And sometimes when a situation presents a moral dilemma, the answer is not easy at all. And *how do you coach about morality?* Start with clarifying your own standards and values and then living by them as best you can. Then bring the subject up. Don't hold back. Judgment is one of the meta-levels in the *meta* place, so go there. Find out the quality of thought the person has put into trying to live a good life and doing the right thing.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #42
September 21, 2022

WE NEED SOME ELABORATION HERE!

*“The reason most companies don’t face reality very well
is that their dialogues are ineffective.”*

Execution, p. 103

Here’s something you should prepare yourself to say with most coaching clients, “Please elaborate on that word.” Why? Because so many words that are presented in coaching by a client seem sufficient for the client. After all, she knows what she’s talking about. But you don’t. So you have to ask. “Would you elaborate on what you mean when you say X?”

The most generous view of the lack of precision by clients is that they know what they mean and they have in their own mind a rich mental picture of it. Yet that’s not the only thing that drives clients failing to provide a rich sensory description of their situation. Some use vague and evasive words so that neither they nor you will understand the problem. Nor do they do this intentionally, it is driven mostly by unconscious forces fearful of fully speaking their truth.

Others are simply lazy about learning how to be precise and specific. Some have simply never been taught how to speak in sensory details. But words matter if you and they are to use them as symbols to convey meaning. Without details, the story they tell is like reading the headlines of a newspaper thinking that’s sufficient and so skipping over the actual story. This is where the lazy aspect comes in. It is easier to state an abstract idea, a title of something than to describe an experience so it can be recreated in the other person’s mind.

Now it is not that *details*, in and of themselves, are all that important. A person can get lost in details and get so overwhelmed, he doesn’t know where he is. Details are only important *when contextualized* in a relevant meta-frame. When you have that, you have the holistic and dynamic experience of meta-detailing. And that’s where the power is.

The words we speak to each other and especially the words your clients speak in coaching reflect, reveal, manifest, and highlight what is in their *meta* place. Words are the keys that we have for opening up the hidden doors in their mind and especially in the back of their minds.

It is our elementalism (reducing things to their elements) that causes us to separate words (the linguistic symbols) from their references and from their source inside our nervous systems. That leads most people to think of “words” apart from their contexts and from

their source. The result is that most people do not realize that words are *neuro-linguistic* and therefore are *psycholinguistic*. But you do. You've studied NLP— neuro-linguistic programming. You know that a person's programming, and your programming, is coded neuro-linguistically. And when you study neuro-linguistics, you know *how and what words do in your neurology*.

So, when you ask your client to elaborate on a word, you are actually inviting that person to begin to explore his neuro-linguistics. Now the Meta-Model gives you lots of hints about this. There are some words that indicate the *kind of world* your client lives in. We call them modals or modal operators. The person who lives in a world of *cans* lives in a very different world from the person who lives in a world of *can'ts*. So also the world of *possibility* versus the world of *impossibility*. The world of *must, have to, and should* versus the world of *want, desire, and can*.

The question is always, What does X-word *do* inside you? How are you *experiencing* it in your neurology? How are you *using* a word, that is, what *message* are you sending to your body? And the amazing thing is—you *never know!* Someone says he is depressed. "Please elaborate on how you are using the word 'depressed.'" The client, at first, may not even know how to answer you. So you help them out until they begin to understand that lots and lots of things can be stuffed into a single word.

"Well, if you are depressed, are you 'down,' 'sad,' 'moping,' 'without energy,' 'tired,' 'stressed out,' 'exhausted,' 'bored,' 'discouraged,' 'without hope,' or what exactly?" "I'm down and discouraged." "And you are down and discouraged about what specifically?" "About my job." "That you have a job and get paid? Is that what you're down about?" Here a little humor helps to sort out that there are some things that the word "depressed" does not apply to. "No, I'm down and discouraged because my job seems to have no future." "They are making your job redundant?" Again, a little bit of creative misunderstanding on your part can help the client *fight to be correctly understood*.

"No, I just don't see my job going anywhere." "So you are pushing something down and discouraging yourself because you can't see your job going anywhere. (Pause) Are you depressing yourself about anything else?" All of this is *seeking first to understand your client on your client's terms*. That's because you can't effectively intervene if you don't adequately understand the situation and how it is a problem.

Elaboration— a key skill in coaching. We score it when you ask clarity questions, when you ask exploration questions, when you ask contextual questions, when you ask meta-detailing questions.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #43
September 28, 2022

FOCUSING AND ELABORATING

*“Being specific is very important. Life is lived specifically...
it’s the details that count.”*

William O’Hanlon

In writing about *the skill of getting your client to elaborate on things* (Morpheus #42), I wrote about the importance of detailing and asking great questions. When you get the hang of how to elaborate, you will be much more skilled and competent in creating an effective and transformational focus in your coaching sessions. How do you get started? Initiate the focus by asking the question that starts all coaching conversations, “What do you want to achieve in this session that’s critically important to you?” (WFO #1).

It’s a great question but, surprisingly and typically, most clients will *not* tell you specifically and precisely what they want. But you already knew that! So what will they tell you? They will tend to tell you what they do *not* want. They will tell you about a fear, an apprehension, a problem, a block, an excuse (although they may think it is a legitimate reason), a conflict, etc. They will say, “I don’t know,” or “That won’t work,” or “I just need clarity...”

Then, all of a sudden, there you are with your client and it may truly seem to you that *there’s nothing to talk about*. You look at your watch. You have 57 more minutes in the session. Now what? One thing is essential for you is to realize that at this point the client has essentially *shut down* the session. Now isn’t that absolutely interesting? Here is a paying client, someone investing time, energy, and money *and closing off all possibilities*. Why is that? What explains this reticence?

There are many possibilities. He may simply not know *how to talk* about his inside world. That’s common. He may know how or could do so hesitantly, but he’s afraid, he feels embarrassed, or he thinks it is weird, etc. She might want to but simultaneously afraid of opening a can of worms and not knowing where it may go. She may fear that her secrets will not be kept confidential. There’s lots of reasons.

More important is realizing that what’s needed at this point for you is *to open up the conversation and create the space for the coaching conversation*. That’s the skill you need at that moment. This skill involves several things—communicating a sense of safety, a sense of trustworthiness, and a sense of respectful interest and commitment.

- “You’re experiencing something inside you that’s stopping the process. How ecological is that for you in terms of your goal of achieving X?”
- “Tell me about what you are aware of right now. That will help us get started.”
- “Are you willing to continue exploring X? Is that what you truly want?”
- “Are you willing to put this block on hold for right now and we will come back to it later?”

You will also need the *framing skill*. Set up two or three frames as you get started and refresh them during the conversation—frames that let your client know that for you to get to the heart of things with them—the inner meanings which are actually creating their felt sense of reality—they need to say whatever comes to mind and not censor it.

“You are not here to please me or to gain my favor. You already have that—I’m here on your behalf to facilitate you unleashing your hidden potentials and becoming the best version of you.”

“What pops into your mind, especially if it seems embarrassing or insignificant may indeed be a signal to the assumptive frames that’s stopping you full development and empowerment. So just say it, everything is confidential here and whatever it is, it is just *human stuff*.”

As a Meta-Coach, it’s your job to keep your client focused on his or her long-term goal and the relevancy of the conversation. Let your client elaborate and bring up all sorts of seemingly irrelevant subjects. And when they do, welcome it. Then use your inferential thinking/ listening to see if you can detect any hidden connections. And as always, check it out with your client. It may be relevant, it may not. Your client may be ready for it, or not ready. Either way, coaching is a process, a journey, and an adventure. Let there be elaborations!

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #44
October 4, 2022

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND META-THERAPY TRAINING

Now you would think that after all of the emphasis we put on *distinguishing coaching and therapy*, that I would be the last person to encourage you to attend the new **Meta-Therapy training**. But no. Actually, I'm the first person to encourage you to do that. "Why you ask?" "How can that be?"

While I wrote the book *Meta-Therapy* and have designed the training on *Meta-Therapy* primarily for therapists and people in the mental health field, it is *not exclusively for them*. Actually, it is for *anyone* who wants to understand their own mental health, well-being, and how to facilitate mental well-being in others—friends, colleagues, family members, children, etc.

From the very beginning of Meta-Coaching in 2002, we have distinguished key factors that determine a person's readiness for coaching in contradistinction to therapy. Three conditions stand out: ego-strength, good sense of self, and living in the present. Of course, none of these are absolutes, all are relative. *Each one is a matter of degree*. That's why in your ACMC manual, there is a pattern, "Strengthening Ego-Strength." That's right, a person's *strength of self (ego) can be strengthened!* And you can coach a person to experience that strengthening.

Key questions we ask to distinguish a person's readiness for coaching are, "Are you ready to be challenged?" "Are you ready to be stretched out of your comfort zone?" If we get a *yes* answer, we then ask, "Are you ready to make the distinction between yourself as a person, a human being, and what you do—yourself as a human doing?" If we get another *yes*, then the person is probably ready for a coaching conversation.

While the line between coaching and therapy is not a definitive line (not a black-and-white line), as a coach, it is really important (crucial, in fact) that you know when a person is definitely *over the line and needing psychotherapy rather than coaching*. And that is something you'll learn in the *Meta-Therapy* training. You will also learn a lot about *the meta place*, how it is structured and how it operates—this is actually brand new in Neuro-Semantics and something that is currently in development.

Fundamentally you will learn more thoroughly the distinction between *content and structure* and how that all "internal work" (coaching, therapy, personal development) is *inside at the meta-level*. You will learn about the dynamics of *meta*; you will learn about

meta as a system; and you will learn about the *meta* skills—many of which you already know, for example, meta-questions. In *Meta-Therapy* I have put a lot of emphasis on the experiences that send a person to either therapy or coaching—trauma, hurt, disharmonies, failures, pain, etc. And as you know in Neuro-Semantics, it is *not* the “event” itself that is the problem, but a person’s *interpretation* of the event that creates problems for us and that occurs in the *meta* place.

While this will be the very first presentation, I anticipate that the training will be highly therapeutic for everyone who attends. That’s because it is designed to enhance your inner well-being and mental health. It is designed to enable you to actualize more of your own inner potentials so that you can truly live *inside–out*. So while the training will *not* turn you into a therapist, it has the potential of making you a more therapeutic *person*, more *healing and loving* in your personality and therefore a force for well-being in the world.

And as a special bonus—everyone who attends this first training will receive a copy of the book *Meta-Therapy* (as a PDF book, the actual book is still being printed and will not be available until November).

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #45
October 6, 2022

A SECOND APPEAL FOR META-THERAPY TRAINING

Some years ago I put together the first one-day training on *Parenting #101*. Afterwards I repeated it many times in many different countries—and almost always to 100 to 200 people or more. It seemed like a subject whose “time had come.” At least there was a lot of interest in *how to raise emotionally healthy kids*. Eventually I added to the one-day manual so that it could be taught as a 3-day Parenting Course. Today there are a number of trainers who train it and Meta-Coaches who are specializing as *Parenting Coaches*.

Each time that Geraldine has attended that one-day course, she has come away saying, “It’s like being on a retreat and being re-parented.” She has also promoted the *Parenting #101* presentation as something every trainer and Meta-Coach should attend and promote. What I became aware of in putting that course together and in presenting it is *the incredible and long-lasting influence of parenting*. Good or bad, parenting is how each of us start life, and if our parents get it wrong—you and I pay the price. And sometimes that price is a very big price. We pay it in terms of being undeveloped, being stuck at a childhood development level, programmed with some very limiting beliefs, programmed with prohibitions and taboos that prevent us from actualizing our best selves, stuck with relational patterns that undermine our personal and career relationships, and much more.

I have been reminded of that all over again when I wrote *Meta-Therapy* and as I have been preparing for the first training on *Meta-Therapy*. If your parents didn’t graduate from *Parenting #101*, and if they were parented by parents who didn’t understand the psychological development of a child up until adulthood, then they probably (unintentionally and unconsciously) programmed you with several *parenting errors*. That’s because almost everyone suffering from a neurosis or a character disorder *learned* that growing up.

Parenting is that critical a factor in mental health. Now this is not to blame parents. Nearly all parents do the best they can—given what they know. The problem is that much of what they “know,” is wrong, fallacious, and/or disastrous for their children. As such, the parents are trying to do the best they can—the problem is that they do not have sufficient information to actually do the parenting well or correctly. Myths fill their minds—“Parenting just comes naturally.” “You don’t need to study anything to be a parent, it’s instinctive.”

In the *Meta-Therapy training* we will visit this subject again and again. Why? There are several reasons. One is that therapy is, to a high degree, a re-parenting. It is a correcting of the parenting errors. Therapy often involves granting a person the permission to be a person, a fallible human being, to have one's emotions, to speak up, etc. This releases one from the prohibitions and taboos. Therapy also typically involves giving a person an experience of love, acceptance, understanding, and grace that was missing in one's childhood home.

Another reason for this subject is for therapists (and coaches) to help parents be *good* parents—intelligent and well-informed parents—who understand that children are *not* little adults. They are children. They do not think or feel as adults. As they grow, they grow up through various developmental stages and helping them to navigate those stages is critical.

Finally, the solution to parenting errors involves far more than the *content* of whatever ills occurred in childhood. Content is one thing, yet more important than content— and above and beyond content is *context* or structure. In Neuro-Semantics we talk about structure as process and as frames. And enabling people to get free of old contexts which they may still use as their references means *going meta to the meta place and establishing a whole new set of frames*. And that's what we will be doing in *Meta-Therapy*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #46
October 12, 2022

BEFUDDLED — AGAIN!

“We are so befuddled by language that we cannot think straight.”
Bateson (1970, 246)

As linguistic and semantic beings, *we live in the house of language*. And because we live there, language inevitably shapes our perceptions, meanings, understandings, beliefs, values, and in a word—everything human. It cannot *not* have that much influence. And as a neuro-linguistic being, you *think* with language, you *define* yourself with words, and you even *experience* your experiences through the terms that you use. No wonder we say in Neuro-Semantics that “the language you use defines the world you live in!” And yet that is probably an under-statement. Even more is involved.

Every day people (including you and me) *get taken in* by forms of the language that we use and it all happens without us even knowing that it is happening. Then those linguistic forms confine us to a map of the territory which has been sketched and distorted by unrecognized assumptions and unknown metaphors. If you learned the Meta-Model, you know that you can *talk yourself into problems*. We all do it. Your clients especially do it. Just use the “modal operators” of “can’t,” “must,” “impossible,” etc. and you can map yourself into a prison with no escape. Quote some “lost performative” like “Be seen, not heard,” and with those words you can create some serious consequences for your life.

The fact is— *language is our glory and our agony*. It is one of the key factors that make us human; and it is one of the key factors that create neurosis and character disorders. The key then is to take control of your language so that you have it rather than it has you. Otherwise you can be bedeviled by the form of the words you use. Use “nominalizations” and you freeze a dynamic, fluid, and ever-changing word into static, non-moving *things* thereby creating a world that is fated and determined. If you are depressing yourself, now you have, and are stuck with, “depression.”

“The structure of our language is relentless in forcing upon us ‘thing’ conceptions.”
(O’Hanlon, 1987, p. 239)

The solution for yourself, or when you are coaching, is to take apart the language that is being used to describe a problem. In that way you can *decode the ‘problem.’* Again, the word *problem*, as a nominalization, sounds like a thing. It is not. So turn it back into a verb. Someone is *problem-ing*. Because we live in a process-world, reality is *not* made up of things, but processes. So nothing is ultimately solid and rigid and human “things” are not as solid and rigid as they sound when you talk about them.

How you talk and how your client talks is ultimately *one of the most critical pieces* if you are to be a creative change agent. O’Hanlon said that “talk is both the patient and the therapeutic agent” when it comes to therapy (1987, p. 47). I like that. You and I, in coaching or communicating, *use* language and sometimes we need to turn our attention to language, and treat it as a patient that needs healing. Of course, that was one of the key purposes of the Meta-Model.

You may not realize it, but what you induce in a coaching session is some *linguistic hygiene*. To do that recognize that language is a *symbol*, and only a symbol (a map), it is not real. Recognize that language has limitations. Lots of them! Look for metaphors and expose the hidden parts by inferential thinking. Flush out presuppositions and make them explicit. Unfreeze the frozen nominalizations. Split fat words apart so that you can distinguish references that have been fused together (con-fused). Examine every *never-never question* (a question that takes a person to never-never land, the place of fantasy and unanswerable questions). Squeeze out some specificity from terms that are vague and ambiguous. Expose imperatives (modal operators) to reduce the demandingness in the back of the mind. Do all of this and you’ll be an excellent Meta-Coach and a great purveyor of sanity in the world!

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #47
October 19, 2022

STRATEGIC THINKING SAVES NLP

In spite of all the problems in *the world of NLP* (which actually are many), NLP has thrived nonetheless. Amazing! Why? What has enabled this problematic field to continue in spite of its divisions, squabbles, and misuse?

One considerable factor in my opinion is due to the fact that because *every behavior has a structure and therefore, using NLP, we can specific that strategy for any and every experience.*

Now if there's a strategy within and behind every experience, then in service of human progress, it's simply a matter of finding those strategies. So, how do we do that? The shallow and superficial approach is simply to ask a person, "How do you do X-experience?" Why is this superficial? Simple. The great majority of people do not know. Yes, they have ideas. They have suspicions and hypotheses, they may have a set of beliefs that they are ready to present to you. But for the most part, people do not know.

Okay, next question. Why do we humans *not know*? Again, the answer is actually pretty simple—the experience has become streamlined psychologically and somatically by repetition so that it now operates outside-of-conscious awareness. That's why asking for a conscious explanation is almost never very satisfying or informative.

What is as person to do? Again, NLP comes to the rescue. In the Strategy Model developed by the NLP developers, there is another presupposition, namely, that when a person begins talking about an experience, they will tend to *do the experience*. Therefore if you watch really carefully and ask really great questions, you can elicit the structure. Listen for the sensory predicates, watch the eye accessing cues at the moment the person uses a particular predicate, observe where in space the person puts various semantic structures (e.g., beliefs, values, etc.). Do all of that and you can pretty much *follow the structure of the experience as the person is re-experiencing it.*

Now while there are numerous usages of the word "strategy," here I'm using it as a description of a process, a recipe formula of an experience. Here the focus is on the structure of the experience, not the content. "Strategy," however, can be used in other ways. For example, it can refer to where you stand in relationship to an experience, outcome, or person. "Where are you with X?" "Where do you want to be?" It can be used when you think about how to achieve an outcome. How will you use your behavior, speech, actions to move toward your goal.

Thinking strategically in NLP mostly refers to thinking about how an experience works or functions. It answers the question, “What is the *process* by which a person is able to get himself or herself into X-state and perform Y-behaviors?” And if there’s a structure to every experience, this gives us a way to replicate expert performances.

The confusion I often hear in NLP people and some Neuro-Semantic people is the idea that all you need is the right state. Obviously, the right state is critical. But you can get yourself into the most optimum state, a genius state, yet *if you don’t know the strategy for how to do it*, you may feel good, but you will not perform well.

In addition to the right state, you have to know *how to perform the required behaviors*. This is true for any sport performance, it’s true for any leadership performance, and it is true for even the simplest activities— reading, writing, speaking, persuading, parenting, exercising, etc. You have to be able to answer the question, “Once you are in the right state, *what are you going to do, specifically?*” Today NLP thrives, and its upgraded version of Neuro-Semantics, because there’s a hunger and a need in people for learning *how to do the things that they need to do to live the lives they want to live*.

For more: See *Secrets of NLP*. For books on modeling: *NLP Volume I* by Robert Dilts, *NLP Going Meta*, *How to Think as a Modeler*, *Advanced Neuro-Semantic Modeling*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #48
October 25, 2022

SURPRISE THEM!

If you are not regularly surprising your clients, you are probably being too nice, too gentle, and too predictable. If that's the case, then set your goal to *stop it* and learn how to introduce some gentle surprising as part and parcel of your coaching skills.

To do that, first recognize the probable of being *too predictable as a coach*. When you are predictable, your clients will start to tune you out because ... well, they can predict what you're going to say or do. At that point, they have you pegged! They have your number. You are in a rut and they know it and this reduces the *sense of adventure* that is inherent in good coaching. When the day comes that your client begins to finish your sentences and questions—that will be the day when you know that you are truly in a rut.

Surprise is defined as “to encounter suddenly or unexpectedly, to catch unawares, to cause to feel wonder, astonishment or amazement, to present something unanticipated.” It comes from *sur-* over, above, upon and *prize* to take, to seize. A surprise *seizes* the mind, it can *take over* one's perspectives, understandings, expectations, etc.

Operationalizing this in coaching, when you surprise a client, you open up a possibility that he did not expect or anticipate. You introduce something new and novel that she had not expected. And this new thing could be something new, something ambiguous, something confusing, or something uncertain. The person is left engaged with it trying to figure it out.

There are lots of ways of surprising a client. Here's a few ways you can surprise your clients:

- Reframing their problem as a skill, a competency, a strength. “This isn't depression, it is a great strategy for containing your anger.”
- Exploring a word, idea, or experience in such a way that treats it as fascinating. “Tell me how you are using the word ‘patience’ because it sounds like a bad thing.” “Is this a misguided part within you?”
- Charmingly responding to an insult or criticism as a compliment. “You've got me there, I do make stupid mistakes at times, it reminds me of my fallibility.”
- Saying something in such a way it completely captivates attention. “How will you feel when you are completely un-insult-able?”
- Encouraging a paradox by prescribing a symptom. “Your task is to spontaneously offer three compliments on Thursday.”
- Introducing randomness into a stable problem. “Flip a coin and feel anxious on when it comes up heads, and normal on days when it comes up tails.”
- Begin exploring what has not been said or questioned.

- Questioning the message of a symptom. “What message is this symptom sending you?”
- Opening up a large range of other possibilities. “That’s one way of looking at it, what are seven other ways?”

In any of these ways (and many more) you induce the client and leave her in a state of beneficial uncertainty. “What now?” “What does that mean?” “What should I now do?” “How should I respond to *that!*?” By surprising a client, you could be inducing one or more states into your client (depending on the context, content of the conversation, and how you deliver it). You could potentially induce openness, exploration, wonderment, curiosity, playfulness, creativity, etc.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #48
November 2, 2022

STUCK IN A CLOSED FEEDBACK LOOP

How is it that a person gets *stuck* in life? What does this metaphor actually refer to and mean? Essentially it means that what they want, they cannot get. When the person sets a goal, works out a strategy, and then sets out to enact the solution, he finds himself doing something that does *not* work. He then repeats it and it still does *not* work. And the more it does not work, the more and harder he tries ... only to discover that it still does *not* work. At that point the person will often say, “I am stuck.”

Now there are different kinds of *being stuck*. In this case, the person is actually stuck in a very special way. *He is stuck in an ineffective strategy*. She now has a pattern of “doing more of the same” which drives her deeper and deeper into a rut. She is in a loop—repeating it endless without achieving her objective.

He has a V-K loop in his eating strategy. He sees (V) “delicious” food, especially sweets and desserts, and he immediately *feels* an impulse (K) to eat what he knows at some level in his mind he should not eat and that will not do him good in the long run. But he eats it anyway.

She is stuck in an A_d (language)—K- — V^c —K+ loop. She thinks and talks to herself (A_d) about how she is anxious or insecure (K-), constructs a movie of going to the mall and shopping for new clothes (V^c) and she then goes out to the mall. Later when she feels concerned about spending money on clothes she didn’t really need, she talks to herself (A_d) so her discomfort (K-) increases which then leads she to run the same strategy ... over and over again.

What’s the real problem with these feedback loops? The inner problem is that they involve a system of closed loops. That’s why they go round and round. The end of the strategy triggers the beginning of the same strategy. And because of that, the problem is that there is *no new information* coming in from outside, no true feed-back. That’s why it has now become a vicious-cycle, perhaps well intended, but ineffective. What’s the solution to closed feedback loops? There are several potential solutions to this.

1) The first solution—interrupt the strategy and introduce feedback. The problem arises because we have developed a way to do something whether it is how to decide on what to eat or how to deal with anxious feelings. Then it habituated and that made the strategy automatic in our behavior *and unconscious in our perception*. Now we cannot see it. Literally. We are blind to it. So interrupt the strategy and ask the ecology question,

especially the long-term frame of reference question. “Does this way of operating enhance my life?” “Does it bring out my best?” That’s usually a good interruption.

2) Another solution is to paradoxically *prescribe the very symptom*—which happens to be the problem. What this does is to make the experience the person is having *conscious*. Ask for no change. Just let it operate as usual with the additional factor of having the client do it *on purpose* (intentionally) which then makes him conscious of doing it. Paradoxically, this changes things considerable. He can no longer say, “I wasn’t aware. It just happened.”

3) Follow “the rabbit hole” into the meaning dimension of your matrix of frames (your meta place) and see how far it goes. What meta-level structure is holding the first level strategy in place? And whether that is a belief, a decision, an understanding or whatever, what next meta-level structure is holding that in place? Keep identifying the next level frame until you get to the top of a person’s construction. Once there, step aside from it and evaluate its ecology.

Getting stuck is never fun. It is never useful or productive. And getting stuck in a vicious loop can be maddening. As a Meta-Coach, learn about this form of being stuck and out to coach a person out of the loop. It will enhance your skills and confidence.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #49
November 9, 2022

PCMC— 2022

We have just completed the first PCMC since 2019 and the first one this year. In this post-pandemic world, things are getting started slowly; most trainers say that it is like starting all over again. So while I would have hoped for 50 or 60 Meta-Coaches showing up for the advanced coaching skills, we had 27 altogether in Mexico City. And for getting started again after 2½ to 3 years of shut-down, that was a good number.

Within the PCMC training there are actually *three trainings*. First is the three-days of *instructional training*. The focus there is on understanding and practicing the PCMC skills. Second, there is the three-days of *experiential learning*. The focus in those three days shifts to actual coaching sessions and learning how the core skills (ACMC) and the advance skills (PCMC) shows up in real coaching sessions. With each session, there is extensive debrief, benchmarks, and time for questioning to understand how to coach to a particular subject. The third training is the *coaching assessment* for those who want to sit for assessment and find out where they are in the process—how close (or far) they are from that full competency. And this year, in all ACMC and PCMC trainings that I'm doing, there will be a full day where I do live coaching sessions to demonstrate the skills and have them video-taped.

Differences Between ACMC and PCMC

There are actually many differences. Chief among them is the *integration* of the coaching skills. While you learn this in the first three modules and test for them at ACMC, there is no expectation that you can put them all together at the same time. But we expect that at PCMC. That's the reason for the requirement of 400 paid professional coaching hours, peer coaching, and case studies. You need that much experience. With that experience you can over-learn the skills so that they become habituated and automatic.

After the *core skills* that you learn at ACMC, there are five *advanced skills* that are required:

- 1) *Getting the subject* in 3 to 5 minutes.
- 2) *Inside induction questions* by which you take the client inside and move to the heart of meaning.
- 3) *The coachable moment* is attempted so the client *experiences* the session.
- 4) *Catching and setting frames* to organize and structure the information you gather.
- 5) *Detecting patterns* to challenge the client and know how to intervene.

Additionally, PCMC is all about deep compassionate listening. The listening that you began to learn at APMC deepens in multiple ways. Here you learn to “get your ears” (Fritz Perls):

- 1) *Critical acknowledgments*: ability to hear semantically loaded statements.
- 2) *Inferential listening* to identify the implications of your client.
- 3) *Strategy process*: ability to detect and hear the client’s structuring process for creating his experience.
- 4) *What is unsaid*. The ability to hear what is expected to be said, but is not said.

How much shock do you experience with these requirements? It is the *patterning* at the PCMC that indicates that you can hear structure, that you can see and hear the invisible structure that your client lives within. When you can think in terms of structure, then “getting the subject” in three or five minutes becomes not only possible, but easy to do. “A piece of cake.” Without being able to hear structure, getting the subject seems like “mission impossible.”

For the dozen or more people who are in the process of reaching PCMC, I’m very pleased that Ivan, David, and Omar will be providing ongoing training, practice groups, and will be ready to benchmark whenever a person is ready. The best avenue for this is for the coach to video-tape all coaching sessions, benchmark themselves, and if they think they have demonstrated competence in all of the skills, to send the video to them.

I’m also pleased to have spent time mentoring David and Ivan about *how to train PCMC*. They will become the first Trainers to train PCMC and they will do it collaboratively, co-training it. As the Meta-Coach System (and community) keeps growing and developing with these leaders, I see a bright future for Meta-Coaching.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #50
November 17, 2022

THE WEALTH WITHIN EXPERT SKILLS

In the recent PCMC training, *an Aha! moment* reminded me of something that I had known in the past, but had forgotten or at least lost awareness of. I remembered afresh that *there are some skills so impactful, they do multiple things simultaneously*. What skills are these? They tend to be the expert skills in any given field—the skills of those who through years of experience have learned how to be truly effective and efficient.

As a result, Geraldine kept asking me, “Now where I put that? Do I put it under supporting, or inferential listening or meta-stating?” I got into the habit of mischievously smiling and saying, “Yes.” But that never satisfied her. “But where do I mark it on the benchmarking sheet?” Another mischievous smile, “You choose.” “Can I mark it in more than one place?” “Yes.” I said and then a pause, “And that’s your answer.”

Amazing, isn’t it? When you get good at something, you can do more than one thing by doing just one thing! You can perform one skill in such a way that it can have multiple effects. You can bring up something as a question and while it implies inferential listening, it can also confront a blind-spot, set a frame, and induce a state to give a client for an experiential experience. So much with so little!

And yes, it is a nightmare for a benchmarker, yet this is the way it is with true expertise. A simple response can be so rich in its effects, so full, that it affects many things at the same time in the human system. This again reinforces the systems understanding that in a system you cannot do just one thing.

Now for those who are benchmarking, the short answer is that when a person does an activity that could be marked in several categories—just mark it down somewhere. Record it in one place. Don’t concern yourself about where else you could mark it. The person you are benchmarking will be doing that regularly and you will easily see that he is operating at the 3.0 level on all of the skills. Even when I benchmark at the PCMC level, I focus on getting one mark down, not everything that could be marked. Why? In part, because everything occurs so quickly.

Actually this is a good example of what true *wealth* is. When you have a skill that produces lots of results, this is what we mean by the term “wealth.” It is a case of *a little producing abundance*. You are getting a lot for the little invested. Conversely, most coaches try to do too much. They talk too much. They explain too much. They end up

talking as much as the client or more. Not good. As you get better—more skilled, develop more expertise, *you will accomplish more by doing less*. Sometimes your questions will be a single word. Sometimes your challenge will simply be the raising of your eyes. You don't have to say a lot or impress your client with all that you know—after all, it is not about you anyway. It is about the client and her experience.

Much talking and explaining in coaching typically reveals an immature level— a beginners level. As you improve, you see patterns and your questions and responses become more focused, more targeted. So here is a picture of a vision of the PCMC level of coaching— being able to become more focused, more succinct, more intentional so that what you do becomes increasingly more and more impactful. When you reach that level, there is real wealth in your expert skills.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #51
November 23, 2022

WHY YOU SHOULD READ THE MANUAL

Having not picked up the ACMC manual in 3 years, because I haven't taught it in 3 years, I picked it up the other day. I picked it up to look at several pages in it and check my memory about what is in it. That's when I experienced something that *I truly did not expect to experience, not at all*. I was impressed. Now I'm not writing this to pat myself on the back. What I was impressed with is how much there is in the manual. I was impressed with how thorough it is in terms of the Meta-Coaching system and how many questions it answers. As I flipped through the pages, I saw, over and over again, answer to questions that I'm constantly being asked.

My first thought was, "Meta-Coaches ought to be reading this!" Upon entertaining that thought, the words of one of the expert coaches I interviewed a long time ago in South Africa came into my mind. The year I interviewed her, and after saw her coach (and I was impressed because she was really good), I asked her, "*How did you get so good?*" Her answer? "I took the manual and I read it *every single day* for two years."

I was not just a little skeptical; I was a lot. "Every single day?" She said that she made it her morning reading. She would read a page or two and then sit and think; she would write notes and insights about what she read. Then she went about her day, coaching and doing other things. "Every single day?" "Yes, I made it my mantra."

Last week I understood those words at a much deeper level than I did those many years ago. If you want to fully understand the *models of Meta-Coaching*—you will find it in the manual. If you want to understand how you as a coach are to *facilitate* a client's experience—it is in the manual. If you've forgotten the distinctions between coaching and therapy and how to articulate the differences—it's in the manual.

In 2015 at Trainers' Training in Mexico, Alan Fayter held up the 300-plus page manual for NSTT and say, "This is a Treasure Chest." He called it that several times. He explained how it is a treasure chest and his words stuck. Thereafter, that's what we call the NSTT manual, *The Treasure Chest*.

That's also what the ACMC manual is—a treasure chest of resources. It covers the core competencies in great detail. It covers the Matrix Model and how to coach to a person's matrix. It covers the Axes of Change Model, the Benchmarking Model, the Business Model, the Self-Actualization Model, and much more. If you ever have trouble *defining*

coaching or Meta-Coaching, many of the first pages in the manual give you the words. All you have to do is read them and repeat them. If you have forgotten about some of the history of Meta-Coaching, that's in there too. If you want the 9 distinctions by which you can determine coachability, check out page 33.

The manual was not designed to sit on your shelf gathering dust. I designed it as a thorough textbook for Meta-Coaching. When I, or any of the Meta-Coach Trainers train it, at best we can only cover a small percentage of it, maybe 25 percent at best. That means there's another 75 percent just waiting for you to open and discover. If you fret about how to do business as a coach, there are dozens and dozens of pages and practices that you can use to design your business plan and all of the variables that go into creating a good one.

All of that and more is why *you should read the manual*. It's why you should set it as a goal to read through it *once a year*. If you truly aim to become fully competent and professional as a coach, this would be a great beginning place. So let these words echo in the chambers of your mind over and over—*read the manual*. Hear them whenever a question arises in your mind about coaching—*read the manual*. Hear them when you close your eyes at night—*read the manual*. Hear these words in your voice, in my voice, and in the voice of God if you need to (!), but hear them. You'll be glad you did.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #52
November 30, 2022

The following comes from the
Meta-Coach egroup on April 22, 2015
It is now in the PCMC manual.

HOW TO WRITE A CLIENT CASE STUDY

If you want an accelerated way to learn about *the structure of a coaching session*, get into the habit of writing case studies. Writing cases studies will train your brain to begin to think in terms of structure, of frames, patterns, and processes. Do that a dozen times and you will begin to see and hear them *in real time in your coaching sessions*.

Writing one case study is the minimal prerequisite for completing the PCMC requirements. There are other requirement like attain 400 hours of paid professional coaching, ten hours of buddy coaching with another Meta-Coach, and some hours of Self-Coaching. The paperwork for these is minimal, just recording the fact that you completed these. Conversely, the paperwork for the Client Case Study involves more. The APMC Manual describes in as follows:

Create a document of a case study of 5 pages of a client who you coached in a formal coaching program for six or more sessions. Use the following as a checklist for what the content of the document must contain.

- 1) Client details (name and email address) with one line summary of coaching outcome and results.
- 2) Describe the presenting situation. What does the client need or want? What concerns or issues are presented? Briefly describe how you contracted for the coaching program (i.e., did you use an Intro. session?).
- 3) Describe the outcomes selected for the coaching from the first session. Make sure the description is stated in a way that fits the well-formed outcome pattern.
- 4) Describe the overall design of the coaching program.
- 5) Write a description of your coaching style and format (i.e., phone, face-to-face, skype, zoom, etc.).
- 6) Describe your fee structure and schedule.
- 7) Write a summary of each session: kind of conversation you had (e.g., clarity, decision, planning, experience, change, etc.), the patterns or processes that you used, your thinking about what was presented, the landscape that you created of the client, results of the session, feedback and evaluation, client take-aways, the tasking you co-created with the client, etc.
- 8) Include any evaluations that you obtained from your client.

The Art of Writing a Case Study

Writing a Case Study gives you a chance to *step back to a meta-position* to reflect on what you experienced with your client. It gives you a chance to think through the processes you used and their effectiveness. This enables your thinking and writing to identify the structures that are there, or were there(!), and the structures that you can tune your eyes and ears for in the next sessions. But what do you write?

1) *Outcomes*. “My client at first said that his outcome was to achieve X.” Whatever X is, it will almost always (99% of the time) be vague, general, and frequently ill-formed. So in the first session as you use the 18 Well-Formed Outcome questions along with the checking, clarity, testing, and exploration questions, you will help the client re-formulate what he wants. Identify what that coaching for clarity results in: “By the end of session one, my client said he wanted Y.” If this shifts 3 or 4 times in the session, write down the succession of outcomes. Because some clients are very unclear about what they want, you could very well do the WFO questions for several sessions.

“My client said he wanted to change some beliefs that’s holding him back from leadership.” I asked, What are those beliefs? He didn’t know. I asked, How do you know there are beliefs holding you back from leadership? He didn’t know. I clarified “what kind or area of dimension of leadership do you want to step up to?” As we talked about that and we got his goal more grounded, we discovered that he was afraid of conflict, afraid of standing out, afraid his old buddies would think that he’s acting superior, etc. I asked what he believed about these areas and we found numerous beliefs that he agreed were limiting.

2) *Processes*. Identify what you did in the sessions. What processes did you use? What models guided your thinking and interacting? Did you use any particular patterns? If so, how did you come to decide on the given pattern? How did you introduce it to your client? As you used the pattern or process, how did it go? Did you have any troubles with it?

“I began with the WFO questions and then used the testing, checking, and clarification questions to specify the limiting beliefs. We then used the meta-model questions to describe fully what empowering beliefs would entail. Once we had the first two, I used the Meta-Yes pattern to de-stabilize the old and begin installing the new. His homework was to express the belief and ask 10 confirmation questions for the new belief and 10 disconfirmation questions which would elicit a ‘no’ for the limiting ones.”

3) *Thinking Processes*. If we could peak into your mind and follow the line of reasoning which you did to come to the conclusions that you did, what would we see or hear? What was your line of reasoning? What were your premises or assumptions in deciding to do what you did?

“Recognizing that my client was mid-way up the scale of being global, and also highly kinesthetic, I realized that things worked best if he would create a ritual for his patterns. So with Meta-Yes and Meta-No—having the belief written on a piece of paper and standing away from it ... and reading the disconfirmation questions, he would access a “no that is not ecological for me, not good for me” and step further away from the limiting belief. We did the opposite with the empowering belief. “How far away does

the empowering belief seem to you?” He say 10 meters, so we went there and in the coaching session, I asked the confirmation questions, “Do you want that belief?” With each yes that he felt I would ask, “How much does that pull you toward that belief?” and he would move.”

4) *Challenges*. What occurred that challenged you? What surprised you, confused you, or especially delighted you? Did anything upset you? How did you handle whatever it was that occurred?

“The first challenge was discovering that he was primarily kinesthetic rather than auditory. I began with the auditory processing, which is my favorite system, but noticed that it did not effect him much. I then tried vision. Finally after we used a kinesthetic process I began hearing all of his kinesthetic predicates, which I had missed before.”

5) *Style*. What was your style of operating in the session? What were your states and how did that influence the coaching session? Were you in your best states? Your worst states? If your client described your style in the session, what would your client say? (Yes, you will probably have to guess.)

“My style is more sitting and talking, so with this client I found I had to stretch out of my comfort zone. He asked if we could go for a walk during the coaching. I really did not want to and I resented the first 15 minutes of the walk, but after that I let it go. I kept reminding myself that I am here in service of the client, not the client is in service of me. It was getting the ego out of the way... and I refreshed that pattern two times to get ready for the session with him.”

6) *Tasks*. How did you and your client come up with, identify, and agree upon some tasks that would carry the benefit of the session out into everyday life? How did you introduce the tasking? How did that go over? How much buy-in to the tasking did the client express or demonstrate?

“The tasks were easy with him—easiest ever because he was eager to do things and all I had to do was prod him about turning a pattern into a ritual. I learned a lot about co-creating tasks with clients from the sessions with him.”

7) *Results*. What resulted during the session and after the session? What states, actions, insights, discoveries, etc.? What did the client say was the best thing in the session? What did the client say was something that you could have done that would have improved things? How did you respond to that feedback?

“His original fears about conflict, being thought arrogant, etc. that held him back began to lessen and he began stepping up to take on many of the mentoring activities that his manager had been encouraging him. I introduced the leadership benchmarks to him and we used them to identify specific behaviors. One task was to write them out and put them on his wall in his office so that he would constantly encounter them. After three months, he was asked one day to sit in on a disciplinary case with an under-performing employee and using his genius state of leadership, he later said that it was surprisingly easy to walk through the steps with the man.”

8) *Reflections.* What insights or reflections did you have after the session? Did you make any learnings about yourself or what to do in future sessions?

“I learned a lot about the importance of representational systems. I have to admit that it was all theory before, but now it was much more real. I learned flexibility in how to use various patterns with different clients. I also examined my own attitude of wanting to do the session the way I wanted to and had over-valued my “style” as if it were sacrosanct.”

There you have it. Writing a case study offers you a way to analyze your sessions, your way of operating as a coach, and a way to give feedback to yourself. If you are using the inherent supervision processes that are built into Meta-Coaching, by reporting on some of your sessions at MCF chapter meetings, you can continue that benefit by yourself through the process of writing up case study notes from time to time.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #53
December 1, 2022
LPG Report

LIVING YOUR GENIUS

It is one thing to access and develop an optimal state that allows you to concentrate with a laser-beam focus. It is an entirely different thing to be able to *live* that genius state. As you discover the basics of NLP to call forth a state of excellence and then using the basics of Meta-States, you set the protective frames so that you can turn that *best state* on and off at will, you now have in your repertoire the ability to *be at your best* when you need to. That's APG—accessing personal genius. It's *genius* because it is *you* with all of your developed resources and *you* at your best.

To date there have been tens-of-thousands of people who have experienced APG. But that is just the beginning. That is just step one. There is so much more. That's where LPG comes in. LPG comes in to equip you with 19 meta-stating patterns that will make you *resiliently empowered*, so that you have a really *good heart*, and *create wealth from the inside-out* as you tap into the abundance values within you, and because you have learned *the mastery skills of managing your attitude*.

The last week of November I presented LPG to a really great group of people in Mauritius after not having trained it in more than a decade and a half. I experienced a steep learning curve myself from both recalling the patterns and updating it with more recent developments in Neuro-Semantics. Day 4, in fact, was essentially completely new from how we use to run LPG—now day four is the culmination of the previous days. Now it builds up to launching everyone out into the world with a super-charged attitude of their own choosing.

Living genius is about sustainability. It's about persistence, staying the course, and about growing in one's meta-skills and one's creativity. How many learn something revolutionary like NLP or Meta-States but do not stay with it? How many do not ever experience the full benefit of the models they studied? LPG is the remedy.

- **Day one** is about *living* your optimal state in the face of things that devastate most people—conflict, stress, set-backs, insults, adversity. The cure is to become un-insultable, beyond the media's negativity, and undefeatable.
- **Day two** is about developing and keeping a good heart—a loving, playful, positive, and open heart—in spite of the petty small-minded of others, their pessimistic predictions of gloom and doom, and their over-critical judgments.
- **Day three** is about the inner structure of true wealth and how to live *inside-out wealth* and thereby become a wealth creator. It's about rising above scarcity,

competition, and the life of the jungle to create collaborative partnerships out of the abundance of opportunities all around us.

- **Day four** brings everything together in the highest kind of meta-state, *the gestalt state*. These are the immediate primary “states” that you can create in a few moments. These are the long-term complex states that require significant time. Like the state of health, wealth, leadership, resilience, etc. these states time to develop and install.

When you can do all of that, when all of that prepares you from the inside–out, *living your genius is your way of being in the world*. It is not something that you do on special occasions—it is lifestyle. It is *being* who you are—at your best.

Now we know that when you “run a pattern” with someone, you are also simultaneously “coaching” them. You are *coaching them to achieve the particular outcome of that pattern*. Any given pattern has an objective and design. Follow the steps, ask the questions, induce the experience, and you will have a high likelihood of co-creating that objective with your client. This is especially true of the 19 LPG patterns. *In LPG you get to do a lot of coaching* and if you have been through the Meta-Coach Modules, this will give you four days of intensive practice as well as seeing each pattern demonstrated.

Ready for LPG? Put your APG training to good use by following it up with LPG and join the community of people *living their genius*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #52
December 7, 2022

ARE YOU TRULY COMPETENT?

In the field of coaching, there are lots and lots—perhaps a majority—of coaches who are *not competent*. Training programs for coaches that involve less than ten days of training do not even have a chance of truly preparing someone for coaching. In Meta-Coaching, we *begin* with a minimum of 14 days in the three modules and that is just *the beginning*. If you took the full NLP training you have 25 days plus 8 (32) and that gives you a more solid background. But even then, that is not sufficient.

What then defines true competence?

How can you know when you are truly competent as a Meta-Coach?

Know the Seductions that Can Deceive You

There are several things about coaching that can *seduce you into assuming that you're competent when you are not*.

First, it is so easy to call yourself a coach! In fact, because there's no law against it, anyone can “call” themselves a coach. And a great many people do just that. They get a few days of training or they read a book and *Presto!* suddenly they think they are a professional coach. But are they really? Can they actually *coach*? Yet true competence, you have to have both expert knowledge and well-developed skill—skill that you can demonstrate on demand. And here's the thing— *The field of coaching will ultimately succeed or fail depending on the true competency of those who become professional coaches*.

Second, it is very easy to imitate coaching. That's because on the surface, what happens in coaching looks deceptively easy. After all, what does a coach do but listen and talk, then call it “coaching” and charge \$100. Easy, peasy. But, of course, *real coaching is not easy*. So while it looks like you are *just talking*, you are doing so much more. You are engaged in high quality information gather and frame setting. It looks like you are *just listening*, but no, you are creating in your mind a model of the client's inner world so that you can enter into it, and recognize the leverage point for change and renewal. It looks like just repeating what you hear, but no, you are determining the actual subject, using focused feedback and orient the person for the conversation.

Third, it is easy to get quick superficial results. Because simply spending time listening to a person satisfies a basic human need and creates a sense of relief, many incompetent coaches do that *and then assume they are a good coach*. Yet every good bartender can do that! Every hair-dresser does that! The problem? Sometimes this gives the false impression or belief that they have solved their problems.

Amazingly, *coaching competence cannot be based solely on results*. Why not? Because you don't have control over your client. And in coaching, *the client does the work*. You facilitate. You facilitate your client's truthfulness, honesty, self-discovery, effort, etc.

True Competence

What then is true competence based on? How can you tell if you are competent?

True Competence is based on facilitating a client's self-actualization of his or her inner potentials.

This requires numerous abilities.

1) The Ability to take a Person Inside.

Coaching is *inside-out*. An effective coach enables a client to go inside to his inside world, to his meta place. This is not easy. Most coaches actually do not know how to do this. Many are afraid of doing it. Real coaching is a conversation *that gets to the heart of things—the person's internal meanings*. And most of these are not conscious to the client.

As a conversation like none other, coaching gets to the heart of the matter by taking the client inside into *the meta place* where you enable him to set new frames, deframe old ones, learn new meanings, unlearn old ones, install updated programs for operating in the world, detecting potentials, developing them, and unleashing them. That's a lot!

2) The ability to demonstrate the Coaching Skills.

If you are truly competent, you can demonstrate the coaching skills *on demand*. To do that, over-learned them so they are now habituated practices you have at automatic access. In Meta-Coaching this includes the skills required to create a *trustful relationship, questioning for deep exploration, feedback loops, induction so that the client has an experiential experience, framing skills, patterning and the boundaries of the field*. And again, that's a lot!

3) The Ability to Measure Competence

Measurement is critical because if you can't measure something, then you have no way of knowing if something is real or not. You have no way to tell when you have succeeded or failed in reaching a goal. Conversely, if you can measure it—you can manage it! In Meta-Coaching we have created a behavioral and operational definition of every one of the core and advanced coaching skills. We also have a Benchmarking Model by which we can construct benchmarks for the goals of our clients.

And to become competent? Give yourself to extensive *deliberate practice* with other Meta-Coaches. Do that in the practice groups, join or create a deliberate practice group, get on the "team" as an ACMC training. Video your coaching sessions and benchmark yourself, then send to someone who has been trained in benchmarking.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #54
December 14, 2022

QUESTIONS TO REFINE YOUR COACHING

You already know that *you coach best by asking questions*. Questions, unlike telling, lecturing, and giving advice, can direct a person's mind and plant a idea that can grow into all sorts of powerful responses later on. While I was researching for *Meta-Therapy* I re-read a lot of books on Brief Psychotherapy, Solution focus Therapy, and Ericksonian psychotherapy. I found myself delighted by the creative use of questions in these schools—all inspired by the premise that *questioning is perhaps the most powerful tool for framing and reframing a mind*.

Several of these stand out and some operate as torpedo questions taking a client directly into the *meta* place where meaning governs the experience. While you can find some of these in the feedback form, others are presupposed.

- 1) Questions eliciting pre-session change.
- 2) Questions that describe life after the problem (the miracle question).
- 3) Exception finding and constructing questions.
- 4) Hidden coping questions.
- 5) Scaling questions.

Pre-Session Change Questions

When you first meet with a client, be sure to ask what has change since he set up the appointment for coaching. On the surface, it seems strange. Change before the coaching? Yet it happens and it happens regularly. Why? Because when a person calls for an appointment or signs up for a coaching program, she has already begun to anticipate a new orientation, new competencies, and a new way of being. And given the role of imagination, this sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy. Often times it is enough to jump start a change the person has been wanting to make. So ask about it.

“What has changed?” “How much of a change is that for you?” “How surprised are you to find that the desired change has already started?” “How have you done that?”

Remember, clients have all the resources to make the changes they desire. And if you really, deeply explore and listen, you will discover precisely what any given person needs to make a change and keep it.

Life After the Problem Questions

When you ask the miracle question, you are asking a suppositional question in the subjunctive case. You are using the *what if* or *as if* frame. “If you had a magic wand and tomorrow you got precisely what you have longed for, how would you know? What would life be like tomorrow?” The power of this question is that it enables your client to skip over defining the problem, understanding the problem, and solving the problem.

Instead you are going straight for a *description of life after the problem*. This is as solution-focused as a person can get. Steve de Shazer created it and I'd recommend his books, *Making Difference Work* and *Clues* if you want to become really skilled with it.

Exception Finding and Constructing Questions

Here's another fascinating questioning technique that I frequently use and which I do not see or hear many coaches using.

“So given X is what you want, when was the last time you experienced some of it?”

“Never, not even a little bit?” “Okay, even if it was just a little bit, what was it like for you?”

Clients often discount exceptions as flukes or accidents or “that's nothing.” Perhaps they have an *either/or* thinking pattern, or *all/or/nothing*, or *perfectionistic*. Consequently there may be times when they are actually getting or achieving their desired outcome *and not even know it*. By finding and then developing the exception, you bring it out from the *background* and *foreground* it. This will frequently surprise the person and it gives you the chance to validate that the person already has a good foundation for achieving what she wants.

Hidden Coping Questions

Here is another place where clients frequently fail to recognize that they are already coping effectively. This is especially true for clients who hold very high expectations for themselves. When you ask, “How did things go since our last session?” they often contend that things are just the same or even worse. Be skeptical. Ask questions about what's been happening. Remember that all facts are filtered and interpreted through thinking patterns. So to get to the facts, you have to go through that person's thinking patterns.

After hearing a hair-raising story about what did go on during the week, I have often commented, “My God, it's amazing that things are not a hundred times worse! How did you prevent things from really going bad?” Suddenly that opens up a whole new realm. Suddenly she realizes that she actually *did very well* and that *her coping skills are much better than she realized*. Coaching, like sports and athletics, like skill development in any area, is frequently three steps forward and two steps backward. Improvement is seldom an upward straight line; more frequently it is a jagged line up and down and over time slowly going up. So it is with coping with life's challenges.

Scaling Questions

Many of you, perhaps most of you asking scaling questions to gauge how much a person is experiencing a state. Yet that is only one use of scaling questions. “On a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being complete confidence, how confident are you that you will let this new insight, this belief, this decision, etc. guide you this coming week?” “Where would you place yourself on *implementing this* systematically this week?” Gauge the exception that you found. “While it is not a complete solution, if you could repeat this exception at will, how much of a solution would that be?”

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #55
December 21, 2022

DID YOU KNOW THAT ACMC ENDS IN PCMC?

Sometimes people ask, “What’s after ACMC?” Sometimes people wonder how PCMC relates to ACMC. “Is PCMC even needed?” Geraldine expressed it best recently when we conducted the PCMC training in both Mexico and Mauritius:

“The process of becoming a Meta-Coach only begins with ACMC and it is completed with PCMC.”

What does that mean? What does that imply? In ACMC, you are introduced to lots of coaching skills, but we only focus on seven key skills. Yet you are introduced to framing, pattern detecting, coachable moments, getting the subject, the use of humor and metaphors, and much more. But with all of the things we have crammed into the eight-days of ACMC (and the days of *Coaching Essentials* and *Coaching Genius*), there is simply not enough time to focus fully on all of the essential skills for coaching. So what we start in ACMC, we complete in PCMC.

But I cannot describe PCMC as just more of the same. It is not. First of all, PCMC *goes at a much, much slower pace*. Surprise! Who would have thought? On day one we cover three skills and day two just two skills. The focus is now on quality and depth, not the speed of trying to cover everything. There are lots of exercises for deliberate practice and we end at 6:00. Yes! We do *not* go to 9:00 pm in PCMC. It is truly a slower speed and one in which we focus on integrating the skills.

Now while you learned about *framing* in NLP, Meta-States, and ACMC, with this next level of training—the aim is that *you integrate your learnings about frames and framing*. It’s the same with pattern detection and using questions to get the subject. As a result, most people find PCMC to be very transformative in the sense that in the training they *much more fully integrate what they already know*.

In becoming a *Meta-Coach*, you begin your journey with NLP and Meta-States, then you put it together in ACMC. But as you know, ACMC is intense. It is loaded with learning so many things. That’s why the coaches that are really skilled, have taken ACMC three or more times. All of that helps but still, after ACMC you probably experience coaching as a profession made up of lots and lots and lots of factors and variables.

PCMC changes that. Now instead of all of the parts, you see it as a whole, as an integrated whole. This amazingly reduces the complexity and makes it so much easier to manage.

The integrative aspects that occur in PCMC do not only occur in the first days of instruction and practice. Surprisingly, many have said that it came together for them in the practice days. Whether it was my demonstrations or someone else's coaching or the debriefing of the coaching experience—something clicked and now they see the process as a whole, as a system.

As a result, PCMC coaches experience the line that we often say, “*you can go much faster by going slower.*” And they really do. That's because, in part, they are doing multiple things as they do one thing. The one thing has effects throughout the client's system. If at the APMC level, you learn to be effective, then at the PCMC level you learn to be efficient. Now you can see that the coach is saying less and less and accomplishing more and more. They are more succinct, more brief, and more to the point.

To finish your Meta-Coach journey and become truly professional— plan to complete it with the PCMC training. The training is generally six days, three instructional days; three practice days. Most people do not set for assessment and that's perfectly fine because the focus is on learning and competence. And almost everyone at the end of the six days are twice as knowledgeable and skilled as a Meta-Coach. They have *become in their person a coach so that coaching is not as much what they do, as who they are.*

Special notice: We will always be conducting PCMC at least one time every year somewhere in the world; next time? Hong Kong, Oct. 2023.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Morpheus #56
December 28, 2022

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO *NOT TELL*?

In coaching, we do not tell. We do not *tell* our clients what to think, feel, say, or do. We do not give advice and we do not intrude into their life assuming that we know what is best for them. Rather than telling, we use the coaching methodology to facilitate our clients discovering their own values and visions in life so that they can make their own choices and become fully self-determining. Our aim is to coach ourselves out of business!

But sometimes you have to tell. Sometimes a client *just does not know* what he needs to know in order to make a decision or even carry on a conversation. Sometimes she is just mis-informed or deceived or just wrong. Then what? As a Meta-Coach you are not to tell, and “telling” is a level 1 skill, so it really takes away from effective coaching. Given that, now what?

Actually there’s lots of solutions to this. In ACMC we recommend that you introduce and offer a *menu list*. In that way, you don’t have to tell. Instead, you are presenting a list of possibilities (a menu list should have at least three and ideally five to seven items). Typically a menu list “primes the pump” of creativity and mindfulness so that your client is off and running with her own solutions which is the whole purpose of menu lists.

Then there are homework assignments. You learned this in ACMC when we said repeatedly, “Give your client the list of Cognitive Distortions and ask them to familiarize with them.” After that, all you have to do is ask a discovery question, “What distortions did you catch yourself using in telling about that event?” Or, “Did I just hear you personalize?” This holds true for many things that you can *task your client to do*. Give them a handout on the specific meta-program which is over-driving a client. Give them a handout on a pattern that you’ve used with them and ask them to do it several more times.

Third, there is feedback. Instead of telling, offer your feedback about how *you are experiencing your client right now ... in real time*. “As you talk about X, my sense is that you really miss him and maybe you wish you could ask for forgiveness, I may not be getting that right, what do you think?” Offering your perspective as *yours* and make sure you offer it *tentatively*. This is one of the great gifts within the coaching relationship. Here you can “tell” that is, say what you feel like you need to say, without telling. You own it as yours.

Fourth, offer it as a recommendation or suggestion. The ideal time for this is at the end of the session when you are wrapping up and solidifying the tasking. Frame it thus:

“One recommendation for this next week that strikes me as a potential solution would be for you to begin observing when you get triggered by your colleagues.” Then offer it. You could set it up for some unpredictability. “On odd days of the week, predict that you are willing to fully cooperate and notice how your boss responds. Don’t tell him you are pretend. Let’s see if he can tell. On even days, don’t pretend. Just respond as you normally do.”

Fifth, use paradoxical injunctions.

“Since you are experience bouts of anger at work every day, I want you to use that anger for self-discovery. So every time the anger hits a ‘6’ on the scale, I want you to go to the restroom, sit on a toilet, close the door, and on the toilet paper write down every ugly thing you can think of about the person who triggered you. Get it all out. Then stand up and royally flush all of the toilet paper down the toilet. You can stay as angry as you can be. Then when you hear the flushing sound, let the anger go.”

Sixth, use summaries and implications. An excellent habit to get into is to do a two or three minute summary at the end of the session. Start it with, “Today I have heard ...” then highlight the key expressions. As you do this, interlace the summary with implications.

“As you talked about needing more exercise, that suggests that there’s a part of you getting ready to make a decision about exercising for your health and fitness, and I don’t know if you will start it this week or if you’re still preparing for it, but you can notice it and let me know next time.”

Seventh, interlace these communications with metaphors. What metaphor would suggest or imply something you would like to say?

“As you told me that the changes are inconsistent and off-and-on, I thought about a river, sometimes the going is smooth, sometimes rough, sometimes you are in the white waters and it is both exciting and scary, but the river keeps moving you forward.”

Eighth, introduce relevant facts. In a matter-of-fact tone of voice, simply comment, “In Meta-Coach, we call emotions *symptoms* because they come from your meanings and reflect your meanings. What meanings are driving your fears?”

“In the neuro-science a study showed that multi-tasking reduces comprehension and memory by 30%, so knowing that, are you ready to set a goal about focusing completely on X?”

Telling cheats a client out of learning for himself. And if you tell, while it can make you feel good, it is likely to prevent your client from discovering it on her own. Ask questions to facilitate your client’s discovery. If she discovers it, *it is hers*. She is much less likely to forget it. If you are tempted to tell, bite down on your tongue until it bleeds. (That will kill the pleasure of telling! :) Instead of telling, learn the advanced skills of *un-telling* mentioned here.