

MORPHEUS

META-COACHING SKILLS

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The following articles were posted on the Meta-Coach egroup which is an exclusive egroup for certified Meta-Coaches.

Coaching

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From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #1
January 4, 2012

THE COACH'S GOALS IN A COACHING SESSION

In Meta-Coaching we often speak about your ability to facilitate your client's outcomes. And rightly so—that's what coaching is all about. As a coach, your client sets the agenda and the content of the session and it's your job to facilitate that. Coaching clients show up as psychologically okay, living in the present, and ready to begin to unleash their potentials. Now what they need is a clearly defined goal—a well-formed outcome.

- ▶ But what about you?
- ▶ What about the coach?
- ▶ What's your goals in the coaching session?
- ▶ What are your outcomes with your client?

Strange questions? At first they may seem to be strange especially with the emphasis that we make in *Coaching Mastery* on accessing the state of *knowing-nothing* and on *releasing your judgments* and *getting your ego out of the way*. And yet, should these not be some of your first and ongoing goals in the sessions with your clients? And if these, what else? What other outcomes would you like to achieve as you coach? Here are some suggestions for the new year.

1) *To be as clean as I can be a Coach.* Let's make the goals in the previous paragraph the first outcomes to go for. To do that, I'd suggest a mantra: "The coaching is not *about* me; it is *through* me, but never *about* me." "I'm here for my client and the cleaner I can be, the less I'll impose my own evaluations, judgments, preferences, styles, etc." If you set this as one of your outcomes for your coaching sessions in the new year, then you might want to use the patterns in *Coaching Mastery* until you do get your ego out of the way and release judgment.

2) *To learn more and more about how to be present to my client.* Here's another goal—being present in this moment to your client. That means shifting your time-line so that you are "in-time" with your client and that means for the duration of the session, releasing your sense of the past and future. It may also mean being present to the client's language, gestures, and patterns and so listening intensely. You can certainly use your coaching sessions to practice and develop your sensory-awareness, calibration to your client, and listening skills.

3) *To be a center of calm and stability for my client.* Obviously the more stress and anxiety you have in yourself, the less you'll be present to your client and the more you will contaminate your presence. And it is easy to turn up your anxiety. Just have someone benchmark your skills while you are coaching! So a goal might be to lessen your anxiety, to reduce your stress, to discover how you create your stress state by your meanings, to reframe yourself so that you shift from

anxiety and stress to calm, serenity, and stability. And of course, doing that will make it easier for your client as it creates the kind of space that you will want to create and hold for your client.

4) *To be able to recognize, detect, and respond to the frames of my client.* There's no greater opportunity to do this as in the coaching context. What an opportunity! With every session you have the tremendous privilege to hear the frames that's creating a person's sense of reality. And as you release your own anxiety about your performance and shift to being fully present to your client, with the tools you have (the Meta-States Model, the Matrix Model, The Axes of Change, the Meaning-Performance Axes) you can begin to hear all kinds of frames. So what if you set this as a goal? To recognize at least 5 frames during the session, then 10, then the frame in every paragraph of the client!

5) *To be able to meta-detail the client's goals and meanings.* Ah, this is one that will truly improve your coaching skills. Since the primary and most dominant kind of coaching conversation is the Clarity Conversation, the more you can facilitate both yourself and your client to meta-detail the client's communications, the more clarity you'll co-create. Meta-detailing is being able to identify the most relevant themes, values, and meanings and then to detail them into precise and specific actions. And because people get lost in both meta-land vagueness and irrelevant details, they need a coach.

6) *To be more lovingly firm, ruthlessly compassionate, and compassionately challenging as a Meta-Coach.* Ah yes, the ideal of a truly effective Meta-Coach—the synergy of compassion and confrontation that holds a fierce conversation that gets to the heart of things, that holds a crucible space and doesn't let the client off the hook!

That you have goals which you take into the coaching session with you, outcomes that you hold in the back of your mind, is inevitable. You have an agenda in every coaching conversation that you hold, even it is nothing more than just to pass the day or make some money.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #2
January 11, 2012

“BUT WHY DO I NEED A COACH?”

That’s what a Meta-Coach said to me recently. He had asked about improving his coaching, and my first response was a question, “Do you have a coach?” “Did you make arrangements with anyone at *Coaching Mastery* so that you and that person could do some buddy-coaching with each other?” That’s when I got the complaint, “But why do I need a coach?”

“Do you really want to know the answer to that question?” I then asked. There was a long pause. So I followed-up, “Or did you say that as a rhetorical statement and what you meant is, “I’m don’t need a coach!” He smiled.

Later that day I went for a run and during the run I began wondering, “How many Meta-Coaches not only do not have a coach and are not accountable to anyone, but also think that somehow they are beyond the need of a coach? And that led to more questions, “Do we have some Meta-Coaches who upon graduation thought that now they don’t need a coach? How many might actually be uncoachable?”

On my last trip to Taiwan for the ICF Post-Conference training, someone asked, “Do you have a coach?” And I proudly said, “Yes, of course!” Then I shared what I have stated so many times about the 27 Expert Coaches that I have interviewed, “When I ask that question of expert coaches, everyone of them has said, ‘Yes.’” That’s one of the reasons I have a personal coach and from time to time will hire someone to coach me on a specific subject. In fact, one of my future goals is that, when I’m ready to write a screenplay, I plan to get a coach to support me through that process. There are many reasons why you need a coach. Here are some:

1) For ongoing accountability.

A secret for developing expertise and mastery is to be accountable to someone for your action plan. Having someone to report to, to ask you your own custom-designed accountability questions, provides a tremendous structure for ongoing motivation and dedication. This is especially true for people who start projects strong and then peter-out, for those with non-closure as a meta-program, and those meta-program is primarily other-referent.

2) For not being tripped up by your blind spots.

You have them! I have them, we all do— blind spots that is. But what are they? Ah, the double-bind catch-22 of blind spots, if you knew them, you wouldn’t be blind to them! This is critical if you want to be successful as a Meta-Coach, because having a personal coach can serve as an outside perspective to the frames and experiences that you are inside-of. But you need a Coach who can and will confront you and hold you to being integrated and living up to your

values.

3) *To talk out confusions, ambiguities, and to think aloud.* Actually this is one of the biggest benefits of coaching— the ability to think and speak out-loud. How many times do we think and think and think and for all our thinking we only go round and round in circles and can't get any clarity, then we find someone that we can speak to and in the process of clarifying ourselves to them, our confusions evaporate? As a Meta-Coach this can be extremely useful and serve the function of having a supervisor to your coaching sessions, to your own goals, to your own sanity and serenity of mind.

4) *To stay current on your own self-actualization.* If you don't have a coach, then a legitimate criticism that reveals a degree of incongruency is the question that your clients may be thinking or asking, "If coaching is as important as you say it is, as valuable for growth and development as you proclaim, then why don't you have a coach?"

Another question that I usually ask the Expert Coaches is, "What are you working on now? What is your next level of development, the next potential that you are planning to actualize in your life?" And most of them without a moment's hesitation begin talking about what they are working on! Typically, this is when they really come alive. And no wonder—they are talking about a passion, something that is bringing out their best and making them more alive.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #3
January 18, 2012

“YOU ARE NOT YOUR BACKHAND!”

“To see things as they are, we must take off our judgmental glasses.”
Timothy Gallwey (1972, p. 25)

We date *the field of Coaching* to 1972 when Tim Gallwey wrote the book *The Inner Game of Tennis*. It’s a great book about how to coach. If you haven’t read that book, I’d recommend that you put it on your reading list. What will you learn from it?

- ▶ How to release judgment — which he calls the voice of Self-1.
- ▶ The value of awareness questions for unleashing a person’s innate potentials.
- ▶ How to access the state of relaxed concentration
- ▶ How to get into your genius coaching state —which Gallwey describes as giving yourself to Self-2 and releasing the internal chatter of Self-1.
- ▶ How to learn naturally and organically.

Over the holidays, I reread *The Inner Game of Tennis* as I was working on the next book in the Meta-Coaching series, *Systemic Coaching*. I also read this work again to refresh my understanding of Gallwey’s work regarding what he wrote that originally launched many people into the field of Coaching. I also read it from the perspective of Coaches who only know of Gallwey’s Inner Game approach without the rest of the models and patterns that we have in NLP and Neuro-Semantics.

When you read Gallwey you might think that he knows NLP. Maybe he does now, but he didn’t in 1972 because that was prior to NLP. And yet he speaks about the representational systems and distinguishes them as he encouraged developing sensory awareness in each of the systems. He also knew about the Korzybskian idea regarding the non-sense of identifying:

“The trick is not to *identify* with the backhand. If you view an erratic backhand as a reflection of who you are, you will be upset. *But you are not your backhand* any more than a parent is his child. . . . This same kind of detached interest [a meta-state] is what is necessary to let your tennis game develop naturally. Remember that you are not your tennis game. You are not your body. Trust the body to learn and to play ...” (p. 36, italics added)

What is this Self-2? In Meta-Coaching we would say it is your natural genius state and Maslow would call this your Real Self. Gallwey uses the terminology of Self-2 for the real and natural self that is a natural learner and passionate for life.

In the book Gallwey portrays a well-formed outcome in terms of giving Self-2 “a clear visual

image of the results” that you want.

“Getting the clearest possible image of your desired outcomes is a most useful method of communicating with Self-2 ... hold in your mind the image of where you want the ball to go and then allow the body to do what is necessary to hit it there.” (p. 40)

“Picture the desired outcome: don’t over-analyze: simply absorb what you see and try to feel what he feels...” (p. 68)

Speaking about this brings up two states: “the trying hard” state and the “let it just happen” state. And while Gallwey doesn’t talk about it as *states*, he does describe these two *experiences* (p. 41). The “trying hard” state creates interference, invites judgments, and makes it all the more difficult to be effective.

“Letting go of judgments, the art of creating images and ‘letting it happen’ are three of the basic skills of the Inner Game.” (p. 44)

And how often is this the problem that we all struggle with— *we are trying too hard!* We need to lighten up, let go, relax, and “flow” with an experience instead of trying to control it.

Now because there is an art in giving instructions, Gallwey spends time describing how to do that in a descriptive way (rather than evaluatively). He speaks about giving instructions that *guide a client’s discovery* (p. 50). And when someone discovers something for themselves, *it’s theirs!*

“Awareness of what *is*, without judgment, is relaxing, and is the best precondition for change.” (p. 68)

Now to calm the mind, you obviously have to “put it somewhere.” Gallwey asserts that “relaxed concentration [the genius state] is the supreme art” and so speaks a lot about how to focus the mind. How? Use detail awareness of sensory based information. The secret is to become absorbed in what you are watching. So in “watching the ball” in tennis, watch the seam and notice how it is spinning, or watch where it bounces.

“Focus is not achieved by *staring* hard at something. It is not trying to force focus, not does it mean thinking hard about something. Natural focus occurs when the mind is interested. When this occurs, the mind is drawn irresistibly toward the object (or subject) of interest.” (p. 78)

“Learning focus of attention is a master skill that has unlimited application.” (p. 81)

“Focus is always here and now – in present time and present space.” (p. 83)

If you want to read about “the genius state” of flow, of getting into that special place where what you are doing is expanding your skills in a highly meaningful way, then *The Inner Game of Tennis* will actually give you lots of ideas about that state. Here’s to your Coaching Genius!

Meta-Coaching New for 2012

- ▶ Your MCF License Renewal begins again every January and so if you have not renewed your license for 2012, you can do so by going to www.meta-coaching.org Click: About Meta-Coaching, click the last entry: Meta-Coach License Renewal.
- ▶ In 2012 Modules I and II will be conducted in many, many places around the world by Neuro-Semantic Trainers. Module III will be conducted in 6 places. *Coaching Mastery Boot Camp* — in 2012. Training for the Team Leaders occurs for one or two days prior to the Training.

1) May (May 14-21): Hong Kong

May 13 Team Leaders

Mandy Chai mandy@apti.com.hk

2) May (24-27) & June (21-24): Mexico City (Parts I and II)

Omar Salom Omarsalom@hotmail.com

David Murphy david@neurosemantica-latam.com

3) August (25—Sept. 1): Belgium. First Ever in Europe

Germaine Rediger – indialogue@me.com

Mario Mason --- mma@phoenix-strategies.com

4) September (15-22): Brazil, Rio de Janeiro – First ever in Brazil

Jairo Mancilha jairo@pnl.med.br

5) October (5-12): New Zealand

Lene Gray --- lana@ignition.org.nz

Colin Cox --- colin@ignition.org.nz

6) Nov. (17-21) & Dec. (6-10): Guangzhou, China (Parts I and II)

Mandy Chai: Mandy@apti.com.hk

Nov. 16 and Dec. 2 – Team leaders

7) November (23-30): Pretoria — South Africa

Cheryl Lucas --- cheryl@peoplesa.co.za

Carey Jooste — carey@psacoaching.co.za

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #4
January 25, 2012

COACHING TO FACILITATE LEARNING

“The Inner Game was born in the context of coaching, yet it is all about learning. The two go hand in hand. The coach facilitates learning.” (*The Inner Game of Work*, 2000, p. 177)

How about that? Coaching and learning as two facets that go together for the sake of actualizing one’s highest and best. In fact, many of the thinkers and writers in the field of coaching define it as the form of adult learning or as the art of being a life-long learner. Now if that’s true, then guess what your job is as a Coach? Your job is that of facilitating the learning experience of your client. And if that’s true, then suppose we ask a client at the end of the session a series of learning questions:

So what did you learn?

What learnings did you making during the session?

Were you aware that when you engaged a coach you were entering a learning context?

I wonder what *your* clients would say? How would they answer those questions? Were they even aware that they were in a learning context? Were they taking notes? Again, Gallwey:

“The coach is not the problem solver. In sports, I had to learn how to teach less, so that more could be learned. The same holds true for a coach in business.” (2000, p. 177)

As a coach, your job is to create experiences, contexts, and environments where intense and reflective learning can occur. How do you do that? Through the coaching conversation. Through the awareness questions, meta-commenting, and debriefing that you do with your client. All of this focuses on enabling your clients to learn *how to take control of his or her life*, how to own one’s life, one’s problems, one’s solutions, and one’s potentials. It focuses on clients learning how to develop confidence in self to figure things out (self-efficacy) and how to access resources.

Now in the process of facilitating learning, Timothy Gallwey speaks about the nature of coaching as “eavesdropping” on a client’s thinking processes. I like that.

“As a coach I am not listening for *the content* of what is being said as much as I am listening to the *way* they are thinking, including how their attention is focused and how they define the key elements of the situation.” (2000, p. 6)

That’s Meta-Coaching! It is coaching to the meta or higher structural levels even though Gallwey wrote it before Meta-Coaching was created and even though he is unfamiliar with Meta-

Coaching. This is listening for the meta-structures that models the client's way of constructing reality.

If those are some of the key things that clients can learn via a coaching program, what about you? If coaching is about learning, then what are you, as the coach, learning? What could you be learning? This is actually one of the exciting things about coaching, you have such an incredible opportunity to be a learner yourself and to learn all kinds of new and fabulous things. Is that true for you? Do you keep an ongoing list or a journal of the things that you are learning in your coaching experiences? Here are some possibilities:

- ▶ Learn to listen so well that you are able to hold up a mirror to your clients, so that each and every client can see his or her own thinking process. Listen for your client's way of thinking and focusing attention so that you can facilitate a higher level of meta-awareness.
- ▶ Learn about what thinking-feeling is getting in your client's way. What meta-states of self-doubt or self-criticism is occurring that's interfering with your client's success? What cognitive distortions?
- ▶ Learn about how to communicate with your clients without judgment. Learn how to communicate more educated guesses, learn how to encourage experiments in order to get feedback that will inform the adjustments to make that will lead to success.
- ▶ Learn how to create and ask discovery questions— questions that facilitate your client to *discover* him or herself— and their values, goals, visions, strengths, and weaknesses.

Learning —coaching is about learning. It is about unleashing new learnings and even more important, it is about facilitating adults to *learn about learning*. In this way a client learns about how he or she learns best and stays on the cutting edge of continuous learning. Then learning becomes a person's key strategy for staying competitive and creative and passionate about life.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #5
February 1, 2012

ARE YOU META-STATING IN YOUR COACHING?

As a Meta-Coach, *the process of meta-stating* is not something that you do from time to time when you suddenly get the idea of bringing one state to another state. It is something that already is happening in every minute of conversation in the coaching dialogue and it is something that you can do as a coach to facilitate and guide.

In case you had not noticed, your client is constantly meta-stating himself or herself. That's because they are not just sitting there having one thought or one feeling, they are having thoughts about their thoughts, feelings about their feelings, feelings about their thoughts, thoughts about their feelings. And they are not doing it just one time, but layer upon layer upon layer. *In the back of their mind* they are accessing and experiencing states (thinking-feeling-somatizing states) in response to their own states and to you. Are you noticing? Are you searching to find out what's going on?

Most Coaches do not! And why? Because they do not have the Meta-States Model for enabling them to detect and track the self-reflexive consciousness of their clients. But as a Meta-Coach, you have that model and if you use the tools within Meta-States, you can *detect and track* where your client's states-about-states go and what's occurring in your client as he or she is "making" (constructing) meaning in the coaching session.

- ▶ How do you do this?
- ▶ What are the tools within the Meta-States Model?

First, *ground the present situation*. Find out what is the trigger or context that your client is responding to. What is triggering you right now? What are you in reference to? What's on your mind? What is the context you're referring to? Ground this in a sensory-based description—one that you can see and hear and sense (feel). Identify also the state that this evokes in your client.

Next, *invite the person to go inside*. Find out what and how your client is *representing* the outside world. What's going on in the movie that's playing in the mind? What are they seeing, hearing, and sensing? Is your client inside the movie experiencing it or just observing it? And if they are observing it, what thoughts, judgments, values, filters, etc. are informing the observation?

While you are doing this, *validate, confirm, and check*. To successfully invite a client to go inside and give you a description requires safety, trust, and support. If your client thinks you're

going to judge them, make fun of them, think they are silly, stupid, or inadequate, they need to know that you are on their side, you are their confidant, you believe in them and you are trustworthy. So match, pace, acknowledge, validate, and confirm.

Next, *hold the present frame and invite to go back further to the next level*. “Holding” means repeating, summarizing, checking, and then repeating what your client confirms so that you can move to the frame that’s holding that “thought-feeling state” in place. Here you are inviting the person to go up into the framework that’s holding your client’s psycho-logics in place. This can be a scary place to go for many clients. It can be a dark and unknown place. It can be a place of blindness and blind-spots. Many people are so afraid of themselves and what they will find inside. So go slow enough so that they can go there and make their discoveries about the meanings that’s been creating the Matrix of Frames that they’ve been living in.

To do this, ask meta-questions. That’s one of the key skills of the Meta-States model. Asking meta-questions, you are meta-stating with your client and detecting the frames that he or she has been living inside of. And if you have your ears turned on, you will be hearing their frames as they make meta-comments and side-comments *about* the experience they are having in the process. If it starts to get real messy, confusing, layered, you may want to sketch out the layers on a piece of paper so that both you and your client can track the psycho-logics.

Finally, *quality control the matrix*. Eventually, you will get to the top. You will get to the edge of your client’s maps about the experience where he or she has created no further meaning. Now is the time to invite *the step back from the Matrix and invite the quality control questions*. This puts your client at choice point which is one of the greatest leverage points for transformational change.

The process of meta-stating is working with all of the internal structures that make up the inner game of your client. If you are not doing this, you won’t really understand the internal world of your client and won’t know the Matrix that’s informing and governing his or her world. Therefore your coaching will be shallow, superficial, surface.

The structure described here is set forth fully in *Meta-States* (2007), in *The Matrix Model* (2003), in *Winning the Inner Game* (2007), and in *Secrets of Personal Mastery* (1999). It is the structure that you learned in APG (or Coaching Genius). And it is one of the processes that distinguishes the depth and quality that you, as a Meta-Coach, brings to the coaching experience that most Coaches cannot.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #6
February 8, 2012

DETECTING THE BACKGROUND CONVERSATIONS

I wrote last week about coaching by meta-stating so that you can detect and deal with the thoughts in the back of the mind. This is one of the truly unique and special distinctions in Meta-Coaching that no other coaching system has. So as you develop your skills in this area of your client's self-reflexive consciousness, you are able to get to the heart of things much, much, much quicker than anyone else. This saves time and trouble; it saves money and effort. It gives you an elegance in your coaching that's unmatched by coaches from other schools.

And yet ... and yet even most Meta-Coaches are really *weak* in this area. Why? Because it is so easy to be seduced by content. It is so easy and seductive to get caught up in the primary and external details of the person's story. And when that happens, then you as a coach can be hypnotized by your client's details so that the client's story sets the frames and you may feel as stuck, blocked, limited, and control as does the client. Not good.

How about you? How much knowledge and skill do you have in *stepping back* from your client's story and details, recognize the meta-state structure, ask meta-questions, mirror back your client's current meta-stating pattern so that you can facilitate your client to step out of the current matrix? That sentence describes the richness of the Meta-States Model for your coaching and is not something that someone can pick up with one trip through APG (Coaching Genius), this is something that you have to practice so you can train yourself to think in terms of meta-levels. Then, and only then, will you be able to get to *the heart of your client's matter* quickly and efficiently.

Here's some ideas for your self-training in this area. Think about your client in terms of multiple levels of conversations. Realize that it is *conversations all the way up* and commit yourself to finding and facilitating those higher level conversations.

The first conversation is the most obvious and the most seductive. It is the conversation that your client tells as he or she shares goals, situations, limitations, resources, etc. This is the conversation you'll start with and you'll start by matching it. This allows the client to feel heard, understood, and acknowledged. It also enables you to move to the next level conversation, the first level meta-level (psycho-logical level) conversation that's in the back of the mind. Here you ask, "What do you believe *about* that (first conversation)?" "What do you understand *about* it?"

Once you get the first meta-level conversation, that's pretty close to the person's conscious awareness and so you elicit it as fully as you can and *hold it*. That's the key: *hold it*. And how

do you do that? You repeat it. You feed it back to the person so your client can begin to hear that conversation in the back of his or her mind. And then you invite the person to *step up to the next level conversation*. “And let’s say that’s true, so what? What would that mean to you? What do you understand about that, what do you expect, what’s your intention?”

This is the meta-stating process. You invite your client to meta-comment on the conversation that they are having with you or with themselves. In this way, you move up the levels to find what’s truly driving and self-organizing the person. AS you move up you are enabling (empowering) your client to get more and more *in touch with themselves and their inner voice that is typically unconscious*. You move up the conversation levels to the person’s expectations, beliefs-of-beliefs, norms, rules, models of the world, cultural assumptions, linguistic assumptions, etc. In this, it is *conversations all the way up*.

As a Meta-Coach, how high can you go? How many levels of conversation are you able to facilitate in your clients? The higher you can go, the more you can enable—the deeper into the person’s unspoken and outside-of-consciousness Matrix you can go. And as you do this, then both you and your client begins to truly *see* what’s going on in the person’s system of thinking-feeling-and-embodiment meaning.

As you do this, *track it*. As you begin, write out the levels. That will train you to think in levels. Eventually, you may train yourself to see the levels in your mind and/or you may decide to use your gestures (your semantic space) which is what I prefer to do, and/or also be able to repeat back to your client the layers of meanings in the multiple conversations.

Conversations— coaching conversations at multiple levels— as you begin to think in these terms and use the Meta-States Model and meta-questions, you will increase your power, your elegance, and your effectiveness with people. That will increase your competence and clients will recognize the value that you offer them via the conversations you facilitate!

To you having more great conversations!

Tom Kelsall, APMC Sydney, Australia
Guest Writer
2012 Morpheus #7
Feb. 15, 2012

DISCERNING CLIENT'S NEEDS IN DETERMINING IF READY FOR COACHING

Recently I presented Coaching to a group of psychology students and described the differences between therapy and coaching. As part of the presentation I said that, as a coach, I do not do therapy; instead when I meet clients who need therapy, I refer to therapists. I then went on to discuss how I discern the difference and, using the notes from the APMC Training Manual, presented the following criteria for when to refer someone for therapy:

- ▶ Their primary need is to heal past hurt or trauma — Strong sense of Trauma
- ▶ They don't have the ego strength to face what is — Weak sense of self
- ▶ They have mainly a victim mentality — Weak sense of responsibility
- ▶ They need re-parenting/risk of transference. — Weak sense of personal authority

This proved to be a very useful presentation for me, as within a couple of weeks I found myself, with some help and guidance from Michael Hall, using this very criteria. At Michael's suggestion I have written the following two case studies, as well as some of my learnings and conclusions from the experience.

Case Study 1

A referred professional women, doctorate level. This women's initial email gave me the first 'warning bells' against the criteria listed above. She spoke of feeling like a victim and how other therapists/coaches and workshops had not been able to help her.

Noticing these warning bells I proceeded with an introductory session with the women to establish if she had the ego-strength to face her reality and the willingness to do the work of change. I also began as I set frames so that she would not personalize. I explained that she is not the problem; her frames are the problem. And that it's important to actualise the changed frames and beliefs on the inside from coaching sessions to the outside with actions between sessions.

During the session she said that people don't push or challenge her and that she really wants someone who will, so she can make a change. So I presented her with a scenario of how I would challenge her in coaching and hold her to account. Because she said that she needed someone who would be 'strong' with her, I told her that if tasks are not done the first time we talk about it, the second time we dedicate an entire coaching session to it and the third time we discontinue coaching.

Some of the presenting problems that were evident in her included these:

- ▶ Lack vitality - "feeling exhausted and pressure"
- ▶ Discounting - "I beat myself up"
- ▶ History of not following through and/or of sabotaging myself and my goals. And yet a willingness to do the work (regarding actions/tasks). "This has been a problem in the past. I would have every intention but then forget or whatever, and self sabotage."
- ▶ Set backs from goals and lack energy. "My dream has been 'clouded' [tears] and I don't have energy for this after dealing with my ex-husband."
- ▶ Pressure. Speaking about her dream (and in tears) she said that she's feeling the time pressure. "It's a deep driver like something is going to catch me" (looking and gesturing over her left shoulder).
- ▶ Perfectionism as a blind spot. "I'm not a perfectionist, people just need to get things right. If I don't get it right something awful might happen. I've been shoving this down."
- ▶ Past betrayals and distrust and blaming. "People in the past have betrayed me (my trust) and some of them need to know that." I've tried lots of things with lots of different people and they didn't help me and there was a NLP Trainer who didn't train me properly ... "surely he's responsible?"

At that point she burst into tears and talked about her fear of abandonment/rejection. Then she said, "I want to run." At that she 'flipped out'. She went completely into an internal trance state and completely dissociated from me and the environment. She shut her eyes with her head in her hands, and her legs shaking uncontrollably, and she was experiencing rapid shallow breathing. At that point I had to run a process to bring her back into her body, change her breathing and bring her back into the present moment and environment with me."

After that we then discussed how emotional this was for her and I asked if she'd tried any counselling or therapy (also told her how I'd had counselling in the past which really helped me). She said she doesn't believe in psychology processes and doesn't know any good psychologists and that there are none who she would refer too in her town (being a doctor). I mentioned that I'm not trained as a therapist for healing emotional hurt/trauma and that it may be helpful before starting coaching. She also said that she didn't want to have to go through all of this again with someone else and that she trusts me

We concluded by agreeing to think about it for a week and talking about the best things from the session for her, which were meeting and feeling safe with me, lifting the clouds on her dreams and being clearer about what the problems are for her.

While not all the things written above are problematic on their own, they along with 'flipping out' and her seeming dedication to me after one meeting (my sense is that she sees me as the person who will solve all her problems), I remain concerned about her ability to face things and do the work.

In the meantime Michael Hall agreed that her "emotional reactions indicates lots of frames setting her up for semantic reactions which speaks about not being ready for a challenge!" and

that she would be best supported through therapy before Coaching. Michael recommended that she read the book, *The New Mood Therapy* by David Burns (1980), and that she then find someone who does RET or Cognitive Psychotherapy. I discussed this with her and offered to support her to find a suitable therapist, after doing some coaching around how this may well be the very best option for her.

Case Study 2

Referred professional man, partner level. I had an introductory session with this man that went well and met my criteria for coaching suitability and his for wanting to sign up for coaching with me. During the session I found him to be open, clear about his problems and what he wanted from coaching. He also mentioned that he could get a bit depressed from time to time, and that it wasn't anything "major" to him.

I then sent him Coaching Registration forms in which he disclosed that he was having therapy for diagnosed depression by a psychologist and was taking ongoing medication for treatment. After consultation with Michael Hall, as to how I could proceed, I had a phone session with the prospective client to explain coaching versus therapy and that I could continue to coach him if his psychologist would provide a "release", either written or by phone consultation with me. Such a release would say that the client was "good to go" for coaching which means taking on challenges and looking deeply within to change frames. He initially agreed and then emailed me to say that he didn't wish to proceed.

Conclusions

This was a very useful learning experience for me as I had not previously had clients come to me for coaching who really needed therapy first, even though I could present the theory. Below are the main conclusions and learnings I've come to from the experience:

- ▶ Well educated outwardly successful people are not automatically suitable for coaching. Make sure that their apparent success doesn't cloud any judgement about suitability.
- ▶ Introductory sessions are important to not only "sell" my coaching services, but also to validate client suitability.
- ▶ Have and utilise registration forms that detail medical history of counselling and therapy, as well as any medications the client is taking and what it is treating.
- ▶ Be careful about coaching people in therapy, and preferably not if they are on medication, and if I do so, be sure to get a release from the therapist. If the therapist won't, take that as a good cue to wait till therapy or treatment is completed.
- ▶ Use the Meta Coaching community to get support if unsure about a clients suitability.
- ▶ Know and uphold my values for coaching integrity and wanting the very best for my "client" firstly and foremostly.
- ▶ Support and coach people into therapy where appropriate and provide them with referrals if they would like them.

I hope my experience, with Michael's support, may help you in the future as you validate your potential coaching clients. If you have any further comments and suggestions to add, we would really appreciate hearing them as well. To your success in Coaching!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #8
February 22, 2012

META-COACHING

Higher Standards—More Rigorous Assessments

In spite of the fact that during the past year, both Cheryl Lucas and I have written repeatedly about the relationship between the ICF and the MCF, we are still getting questions about the ICF. Mostly, Meta-Coaches are asking:

- Should I get ICF credentials?
- What is the process for getting ICF credentials?
- Is the MCF associated with the ICF?

I'm not going to answer any of those questions here. If you are interested, there are articles on www.meta-coaching.org and in your *ACMC Training Manual*. Yes, that's right! Just get out your Training Manual and you will find a two-page article written in 2004 by Michelle Duval on this subject and if you have a more current manual, an article that's been updated on that subject. Michelle not only did that, but she devoted a lot of time to detailing every hour of Module III, *Coaching Mastery*, and how the coach-specific learnings relate to ICF credentials. More recently, Cheryl Lucas has updated that paperwork with the new training format. So if you want to apply for ICF credentials, the paperwork is done, all you need to do is fill out the application, set for the assessment, and pay your money. And *if* having ICF credentials is important in your context, do it. If not, save your money and time and effort.

After all, *the standards you met in Module III of the Meta-Coaching System far exceed the standards of the ICF.*

Do you know that? I hope that by now you do. So tell people that. Be bold and speak forth the facts about the higher standards. If someone asks if you are ICF credentialed? Say, "No, I opted for a set of coaching standards that are much higher than those of the ICF!"

And when they say, "Oh really?! And so what standards did you opt for? And how are they higher than the ICF standards?", then say the following: "Thanks for asking that! Really! I went for the MCF standards because unlike ICF that has no theoretical frameworks or foundations, but accepts a wide range of theories and beliefs. The MCF is based on a systematic structure of psychology: Cognitive-Behavioral, Developmental, and Self-Actualization Psychology. It distinguishes the field of Coaching as distinct from the fields of psycho-therapy by focusing on psychologically *healthy* people. As such it uses the latest developments in psychology to understand how *psychologically healthy people develop, grow, change, and become their best selves.*

And to avoid the field of Coaching becoming a mesh-mash of eclectic grouping of ideas from

self-development, from therapies, from the New Age movement, and so on, the Meta-Coaching System has developed a *systematic approach* so that we can answer the question:

How do you know what to do, when to do it, with whom to do it, how to do it, and why to do that specific thing with that specific person at this specific time?

This *structural* approach has given the MCF a systematic structure so that Coaching does not become just a “nice chat,” or a “grab bag of tricks,” or a crossing-your-fingers-and-hoping-something will work approach.

- ▶ Meta-Coaches are trained in *The Axes of Change Model* that identifies the four mechanisms that govern how healthy people change and transform: motivation, decision, creation, and integration.
- ▶ Meta-Coaches are trained to think systemically using *The Matrix Model* to thoroughly cover the seven facets of human experience. First how we create our unique sense of reality via our meanings and intentions which we embody in our states. And then how we experience our “self” in terms of our value as persons (self-esteem), our powers (self-confidence), our relationships with others (social self), our experience in time (as a temporal being), and our maps about various domains in life.
- ▶ Meta-Coaches are trained to discern and diagnose in terms of a person’s Meaning and Meaningfulness (visions, values, understandings, etc.) and the person’s Performances (results, actions, skills, competencies) which come together as a synergy that indicates the person’s ability to actualize his or her highest and best (*The Self-Actualization Quadrants Model*).
- ▶ Meta-Coaches are trained to be courageous, bold, and ruthlessly compassionate as coaches so that the conversations that they facilitate “get to the heart of the matter” and become a “fierce conversation” that works like a Crucible of Transformation (*The Facilitation Model*). And to solidify this, they are benchmarked on seven core coaching competencies. (ICF has competencies but no benchmarks.)
- ▶ Meta-Coaches are not only rigorously assessed by *The Benchmarking Model*, they also learn it so that they can set up rigorous standards in organizations and with individuals for measuring intangibles like leadership, customer service, honor, etc. this enables their own work as Coaches to be measured.

In addition to all of that, the MCF as an international organization in 38 countries, provides ongoing support for Licensed Meta-Coaches and even holds the coaches accountable to the standards and ethics of Coaching. How? By receiving any complaint from a customer who feels dissatisfied with the professional service of a Coach. No other Coaching Agency in the world does that. In these ways, the standards are higher, more focused, and the assessment of credentials more rigorous. We designed it that way.

Femke Stuu, ISNS Global Leadership Teammember
Guest Writer
2012 Meta-Coach Reflections #9
February 29, 201

CURING THE DISEASE OF PRISON THINKING

He stepped out onto the stage while it was still dark. One. Two. Three. Then back. One. Two. Three. We couldn't see him, only hear his footsteps. The microphone in front on the stage picked them up clearly. One. Two. Three. And back. One. Two. Three.

For six years, those steps were all he could take. Captain Charlie Plumb, a graduate from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, flew the F-4 Phantom jet on 74 successful missions. On his 75th, five days before he was to return home, he was shot down, captured and imprisoned by the enemy. For 2,103 days he was a Prisoner of War. His cell was 8" by 8". Three steps took him from one wall to the other.

Though there's no contact with other prisoners, they find inventive ways to communicate through code. About 200 miles into his experience, Plumb is approached by Shumacher – another P.O.W. – through a metal wire that he put through a hole in the wall between their cells.

Lieutenant Commander Bob Shumacher said: *How you doing, buddy?*"

Captain Plumb thought, "Ah, that was my cue, I had been looking for somebody to tell my sorrows:"

"I'm doing terrible! For goodness sake, my President sent me over here, I get shot down. It's his beautiful little war, now look who's paying the price. And then some idiot mechanic put a faulty transmission in that airplane, something went wrong, it wasn't my fault! And get Congress over here, let them sit in this prison cell! I'm gonna rot away and die in here, help me!"

Shumacher: "You want to know your biggest problem?"

Plumb: "Oh man! You mean I got problems bigger than the ones I can see?"

Shumacher: "Sounds like you're suffering from a fairly common prison disease. Around here we call the disease Prison Thinking."

Plumb: *Prison thinking?* Roger, you think you're a prisoner." In the words of my sixteen-year-old daughter: "Well, duh!" Look at this, I'm bleeding from four open wounds. I have four holes in my body where blood's running out. I've no medical care. I have boils all over my front, all over my back, I'm down to 115 pounds, my sole possession in life is a rag that I've knotted around my waist to hide my nudity. I am rotting away in a communist prison camp, and now – to add insult to injury – they put me next to a positive thinker!" *OK, tell me about this prison thinking stuff."*

Shumacher: “Don’t you see? When a fighter pilot is first blown out of the sky, (or a manager is rebuked one more time, or a sales person is turned down one more time, or a mother is having challenges with that unruly child one more time), what the first emotion for all of us? Oh God, why me?! This is so terrible, what can be worse than this? This event will never have any value. In fact, the best this can be is make is through this tough time and try to forget it.

“Emotion number two is ‘Hey, I didn’t start this war, I didn’t build this airplane, I’m the victim!’ I’ve no control over my destiny. Emotion number three: If it’s not my fault, it’s gotta be somebody’s fault. Problem here is you start blaming other people for your problems, you give away control of your life.”

“Thinking you’re a prisoner: That’s what got prisoners killed. Why? Because they saw no way out, they felt powerless and either gave up or spent all their energy fighting their circumstances.”

In his presentations, Charlie plumb draws parallels between his experience as a P.O.W. and the challenges of everyday life. When I was helping out an aspiring Meta-Coach a few weeks ago, I myself ran into a bout of prison thinking. Since we didn’t have a third party present, I volunteered to pick a topic she could coach me on. After I gave her feedback on the 7 core coaching skills, there was something missing. I couldn’t quite put my finger on. About a week after our session, I suddenly realized something critical for skill development as a meta-coach: the entire time I was being coached, I answered questions whilst still operating from my prison: my limiting beliefs. Even my solutions and my outcome were based on a limiting frame I didn’t know I was stuck in.

And that’s exactly where – as Meta-Coaches – we can make a huge difference in our clients’ lives: we can help them become aware of their matrix and its limitations, help them quality control it, and then get creative in determining an outcome that they’d never even have thought of. As long as your client hasn’t stepped out of their prison, the outcome you set will be limited to the confines of their cell. That’s why the dance of motivation is so powerful, and critical. We use meta-questions to create a push-pull, use the as-if frame to imagine a whole new and compelling situation, and help them become aware of limitations they’ve created for themselves. Once aware, they have a choice. Before that, there is no choice at all.

One of the questions that I always have in the back of my mind when I am coaching, is “Where is my client right now?” A great deal of the time, they are stuck in their problem frame and when they start talking about what they want ... they’ve come up with solutions that are limited to their current limiting beliefs. In addition to holding that in mind, I also step into what Judith Delozier calls the Nrk Nrk state – a “know nothing” state, as if I just arrived from another planet and have no preconceived understandings of how this world works. Everything is new and all I know about is process. That way I get to be as free of beliefs and “common sense” as possible. After all, I don’t want any of my own limiting beliefs to get in the way!

Then, I start listening for patterns: what is my client repeating, what words are they emphasizing,

and are there any cognitive distortions present? That's when – as coaches – we can hold the frame in front of our client so they can step back from it. This may mean just feeding back what they've just said and let a long silence invite them to truly listen to what they're saying. It may also be that we need to frame it ourselves, tentatively: "Might this be 'all or nothing thinking'?" Once outside of their cell, they are free to create a new reality.

If Lieutenant Commander Bob Shumacher hadn't challenged Captain Plumb's thinking, he might've stayed stuck in his mental cell. Powerless and miserable. Instead, he was given a choice: *OK, so I guess I got a bad case of this prison thinking. What's the antidote to my disease?*" He said: "Well, the first thing is you gotta be a believer. I just gotta tell you this. Men come, men go. Some die. If there's any one single common denominator in survival in this prison camp is the guys that live, believe they're gonna live. They tap into sources of strength and power. They're believers. You gotta have courage for stepping up to the plate. It's the bottom of the ninth, we're 20 runs behind, and you gotta swing this bat like we're gonna win this game. You have to have integrity. We're honest around here. With each other. And with ourselves."

As Meta-Coaches, we are the Shumachers of this world. And so I leave you with this question: *"What kind of prison thinking is your client stuck in?"*

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #10
March 6, 2012

SELF-ACTUALIZING COMPANIES AND THE 3 BOTTOM LINES

For anyone who has a business or is part of a business, *the why question* is the question that governs motivation, energy, and direction within that company:

- ▶ Why are we doing what we're doing?
- ▶ Why are we engaged in this business?
- ▶ What "game" are we really playing as a company?

The most obvious answer and the first answer is usually—to make a living. After that, the answer may be—to create X product or Y service. But then again, "Why?" Why create that product or service? What is our larger or higher purpose?

Now for those of you who coach business managers and leaders, or who coach entrepreneurs who are creating their own businesses, or those of you doing business coaching, you probably already know that in Neuro-Semantics, our focus is on creating Self-Actualizing Companies and that means that we encourage companies to develop *three bottom lines: Profit, People, and Passion*. This is what the book, *Unleashing Leadership* (2009) and the workshop by the same title is all about. Several have asked that I put this in writing so that you can use it with business leaders and to sell your Self-Actualization Coaching. I go further, "I will not work with a company that doesn't have these three bottom lines as their objective." So here we go:

1) Profit.

Traditionally companies have one bottom line: profit. How much did we make this week, this month, this quarter, this year? And this is legitimate. After all, we go into business to make money! So also the investors, employees, and partners want to make money and enough money to have a good standard of living. Without doubt, a business has to be commercially viable if it is to survive. So one of the first objectives for any business leader is to create financial stability in the company, the stability that allows the business to grow, expand, effectively compete, etc.

But if the only bottom line in business is money, terrible things can happen and it is, in fact, typical to happen. With money as the only bottom line, then money becomes the *end value*. And with money as the end value, people tend to be tempted to do anything for the sake of profit. And when profits are put over people, then the careers, well-being, relationships, truth, conscience, and so on are all put risk. This is what has given businesses a bad reputation—people are sacrificed for someone else's profits.

To prevent that we have to counter-balance profit with some additional bottom line values as

criteria for a healthy business. Taking our cue from Abraham Maslow, a self-actualizing company needs at least three bottom lines: profit, people, and passion.

2) *People.*

People means that the company cares about its people and its design, objective, and goal is that people are growing, learning, developing, finding their best place to contribute, enjoy the process, experience rich and supporting work relationships, and fulfilling their potential. A self-actualizing or humanistic company is a good place to work. It's a place where people can be themselves, can be fully and completely themselves at the best. It is a place where people are not de-humanized, treated as tools or machines to be used up and discarded, but a place where the humanity of people develops and expands.

The bottom line of *people* means that the company is a place where people enjoy the work, enjoy the challenge, enjoy each other. People have friends at work. The management and leadership shows care and concern for people *as people* and are providing the encouragement, support, recognition, respect, etc. that enable people to feel that they count, that they are important, and that they are valued for more than just what they can do. They feel that their insights, opinions, and suggestions also count. The objective of *people* means people developing—growing, becoming, being empowered, tapping into their talents and potentials, learning, fulfilling their sense of destiny. Timothy Gallwey (2000) writes:

“The Inner Game argues for creating institutions that can offer people deeper meaning than just profitability.” (p. xv)

3) *Passion.*

Passion is the next bottom line in a self-actualizing company. This refers to the company having a purpose and meaning beyond profit and people development. The company has a purpose for being and living—something that contributes to the community, to the country, to the world. This purposeful passion enables people to know that what they are doing is significant and meaningful beyond themselves. Because of their products, services, and information, they are making a difference in the world. They are giving back and they are leaving the world a better place.

Companies who already are self-actualizing companies have already designed these three bottom lines into their organizational structure. You can read about some of them in *Unleashing Leadership*. How do they do this? One way that works is using Maslow's pyramid of human needs as a business model. That's what Chip Conley did with his company and describes in his book, *Peak: How Great Companies Get their Mojo from Maslow*. My prediction is that this is the trend of the future ... and coaches, especially Meta-Coaches are the very people who are making this happen!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #11
March 13, 2012

HYPNOTIC COACHING— I

Questions:

- ▶ Can a Coach use hypnosis while coaching? Is that allowed? Is it ethical?
- ▶ If a coach uses hypnosis, does he or she need to let the client know?
- ▶ Does hypnotic language patterns count as “hypnosis?”
- ▶ How should a coach use hypnosis, when, and why?

Well, to begin with, from the NLP perspective about hypnosis (which you would have learned in NLP Practitioner course), *all communication is hypnosis*. It is? How is it? What does that mean? It reveals part of the essence of communication, of conversations, of how we use language and what language (*linguistics*) does to us (in our bodies as our *neurology* processes it).

The very nature of words and language is such that when you talk about something and it is not immediately present where you are with your client (for example, when you talk about your client’s job, spouse, children, boss, future, home, money, etc.), to “make sense” of the conversation, your client has to “go inside” his or her mind and see, hear, smell, taste, and feel those things. Your client *transitions* from the outside world to the inside world. That’s a *trance*; that’s hypnosis.

Ah, so as a Coach, you are a hypnotist! Yes, you are. And your client is constantly going in and out of trances. Your clients are going “inside” to represent things— (the NLP VAK) and so *inside* their mind, they are seeing, hearing, and experiencing the words and the world you are talking about. So slow down, lots of things are going on when you ask the simplest of questions. That’s why Bandler said that 98% of communication is hypnosis. [John Grinder as you might guess took the opposite view and said there is no such thing as hypnosis! But of course, he also taught hypnosis, which doesn’t exist!]

So here is the bottom line: *You cannot not induce hypnotic states*. It is inevitable. If you and your client are communicating, then trances are being experienced. And these can oftentimes be very deep states, intense, emotional, and life-changing. And that’s what you want as a Coach— to induce life-change, self-actualizing trances, is it not?

Here’s another fact about communication / hypnotic trances: *Hypnosis is a form of state induction*. Ah, now you know why we stress state induction as a skill, and why we practice getting you to learn how to *induce a state* with your client— doing so is a practice of trance inductions. So, as your client accesses a state, as you help to amplify, deepen the state, all of the sub-skills of state induction reflect your hypnotic languaging skills. That’s right, the essence of it all comes down to language skills. And that’s why “hypnosis” is just a way of talking, a way of

helping another person access their own internal hidden resources.

Oh yes, it is also a way of sometimes de-hypnotizing a client. In fact, my sense is that this is most of the time. So when your client goes somewhere that is un-useful (which can be a lot!), your role first is to accept the experience, validate the person, and follow (match) your client. Then you are to make meta-comments to call attention to the experience, to the structure, and to ask quality control questions. Of course, to do that, you may have to interrupt the client's state and experience, break the spell that he or she is under, and get the person *out* of the hypnotic state that they so easily go to. In a word, you have to de-hypnotize them! So in all of this, you keep calibrating the person's state— its quality and its usefulness so that you can know what to do when.

Here's another aspect of hypnosis as a Coach. As you and your client identify activities that will actualize what your client really wants, you mark those things in your mind so that you can then easily *embed* them back to your client as a question or a command and in this way set up a post-hypnotic suggestions as part of their tasks between sessions. "So how much do you *feel excited* about observing how often you can *catch yourself repeating that line to yourself?*" (*The italicized words can be spoken as an embedded command to your client, something your client will not be aware of, it will be outside-of-consciousness.)

Now it's important for me to stress that *hypnosis does not have to be an eye-closing experience*. Not at all. In fact, when you "run patterns," or "do NLP" or "do hypnosis" with clients and you make it overt and obvious, that's a sign of a new beginner and novice. Much more elegantly you can carry on a conversation your client can go into trance states *with eyes wide open* and experience life-changing frames. Your conversation itself can enable your client to experience an transition into various states to access all sorts of unconscious resources. Enabling the unconscious part of your client's mind to work with the coaching process means that you are working with the person's whole MBE (mind-body-emotion) system. In Neuro-Semantics we do not encourage the "unconscious mind" and the "conscious mind" dichotomy. That's because we know we are working holistically with the person's full intelligence.

This brings me back to calibration. To really deeply and intensely observing your client. After all, do you know how to recognize when the unconscious part of your client's mind is dominating? Do you know how to recognize the things that are *not* being generated by the person's conscious mind? Do you know how to observe the outside-of-awareness responses of the person, those that are the cues of the unconscious part of the mind? If not, here's a whole new set of things to observe *while* you are carrying on your coaching conversation!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #12
March 20, 2012

HYPNOTIC COACHING — II

If “hypnosis” is a term that describe what each of us do when we “think” and “communicate,” then hypnosis is not an add-on to coaching, it is inherent in the process. “Thinking” itself is an expression of hypnosis or trance because when we think, we “go inside” and make movies in our mind. We see, hear, feel, smell, and taste things that we create in our minds of things previously experienced or that we want to experience. In hypnotic languaging, this is called hallucinating. In communication languaging, this is called by a range of terms: imagining, remembering, creating, problem-solving, etc.

Yet regardless of what we call it, the processes are the same. We have *transitioned* from the outside world to the inside world (trance) and seem *asleep* to the outside world as we *focus* more and more exclusively. So no wonder coaching conversations partake of the nature of trance! And if that’s the case, that explains why the Milton Model of Hypnotic Language is part of the NLP Communication Model and the source for understanding this aspect of communication.

The two original books in NLP that detailed out the patterns of hypnotic communication were discovered in modeling Milton Erickson to identify how he used language in “precisely vague ways” to achieve the successful outcomes for his clients. What we learned from Erickson is that if you pace, pace, pace with a client by entering into the client’s world—the client’s world of hopes, values, understandings, meanings, then you can lead by speaking in the language of trance. So you will *use* generalizations, deletions, and distortions as you speak in cause-effect, complex equivalences, and nominalizations. You will say artfully vague things like:

“The deeper and slower your breath, the more you can access your most resourceful state of curiosity to wonder, really wonder how you are going to feel good in knowing that this is just a mis-step that can easily be corrected, can you not?”

And the power of hypnotic trance is this—the person will *make sense* of the vague terms by filling them in with their own sights, sounds, sensations in their mind as well as their evaluations, frames, beliefs, and meanings. In hypnotic language you are *not* controlling the person’s mind, you are pacing and leading to where the person wants to go. You are providing an experience that allows the person to access his or her resources and creating the new maps and experiences. This is especially so in the coaching conversation since the client is his or her own best expert of the outcome that will be set.

I mentioned in the previous post that in Neuro-Semantics we do not encourage the “unconscious mind” and the “conscious mind” dichotomy. That’s because we know we are working holistically with the person’s full intelligence. I also ended by asking about the signs and clues

that the larger, outside-of-conscious mind is responding during the coaching session. What are those signs? How can you tell?

Here's a hint. What is mostly outside-of-awareness are *our frames—our meanings* and therefore our meta-states. And when a person goes there, when he or she turns inward, goes inside, transitions from the outside world to the inside world, how can you tell? Most typically, they will get very quick and relax. They may look up or defocus their eyes, blink a lot, or even close their to focus on the internal stimuli rather than the outside stimuli. Watch for facial relaxation, deeper breathing, and less and less responsiveness to outside stimuli. Later your client may say that they can't believe that an hour has past (that's the time distortion of trance).

What's most outside of consciousness are the mental contexts that your client is operating from. So ask yourself and turn into meta-questions for your clients:

What are you assuming and presupposing and not questioning?

What are you taking for grant?

What do you believe about that belief?

If there's a set of rules in the back of your mind about that, what would they be?

In all of this you are looking for what's the client is blind to. Mostly we are blind to what we are so familiar with and comfortable with, we can talk about problems and solutions and never hear what we are really saying. There are also other areas— the blind spots that your client does not know consciously, the things your client only has a vague awareness of.

Hypnosis as a process can be overt and explicit or it can be covert and implicit. When you make it overt then the expectations about "hypnosis" and what your client thinks it is can actually undermine its effectiveness. If a person thinks of it as magic, as mind-control, as demon-control, and other such myths, the very word "hypnosis" will scare them and break rapport. Then they will not be open to your influence.

Finally, hypnosis is about engagement. It is about invitation to go into a state so that one becomes *subject* of the experience, can lose complete awareness of self as observer and the objective view. So the experience is one of empowerment. People feel completely in control of themselves and that's because they are. They are the ones creating the experience.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #13
March 22, 2012

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT META-COACHING

I have received some questions from several people who had questions about Meta-Coaching, the Meta-Coach License, the structure of Neuro-Semantics, etc. So here goes. If these questions and answers provoke more questions — please send them to me and I'll attempt to provide answers to them.

1) What is the Structure of the Meta-Coach Foundation and how is it related to Neuro-Semantics?

The Meta-Coach Foundation (MCF) is the division of Neuro-Semantics commissioned to promote, support, legitimize, and govern Meta-Coaching. Those serving on the MCF board are the certified Meta-Coach Trainers (these are the people who have completed the 3-year internship). Germaine Rediger created the MCF website (www.metacoachingfoundation.org) and administers it, especially working with Meta-Coaches to keep their information on the website and updated each year. Cheryl Lucas (2011 and 2012) is the President of the MCF. Both are Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Cheryl is a Meta-Coach Trainer.

As a division of the ISNS — International Society of Neuro-Semantics, the MCF is accountable to the International Leadership Team — 13 Neuro-Semantic trainers in 9 countries.

Every Certificate for the License of being Meta-Coach says ISNS at the top and is signed by Neuro-Semantic Trainers.

2) What does it mean to be Certified as a Meta-Coach under the MCF which is under the ISNS?

To be certified as a Licensed Meta-Coach means that an organized international body has assessed your knowledge and competence and declared that you have reached the core understandings and skills so that we trust that you are able to effectively operate as a professional in the field of Coaching. As a Meta-Coach, the ISNS is the governing body which provided the original training, models, and assessment for your training. It is also the body that provides the structure of the Conflict Resolution Process and which holds you accountable to the Vision, Mission, and Values of Meta-Coaching / Neuro-Semantics.

3) How is the MCF organized and what are the MCF Chapter meetings about?

The MCF is organized into Regions with a Regional Director who is responsible to the President of the MCF, Cheryl Lucas. And the Regional Directors collaborate and share information among them about ideas for keeping people involved in the Chapters.

The MCF Chapters are primarily practice groups because it is in continuous practice that Coaches improve. So at Chapters the core of the experience are presentations of the models and patterns, practice, benchmarking, etc. And these learning experiences count for continuous education for the Meta-Coach License — as Cheryl has detailed in recent emails. The Chapters can also do other things to encourage networking, conferencing, developing promotional materials, etc. — everything that is done is designed to *support and promote Meta-Coaches*.

4) What is the governing body of Meta-Coaches in each country, the MCF?

Well, yes and no. The governing body is the *Institute of Neuro-Semantic— in that Country*. If there is no Institute, then the ISNS and the MCF Leadership of Meta-Coach Trainers operates as the governing body. As Institutes of Neuro-Semantics are established in a country, the Neuro-Semantics Trainers are the leaders of all of the divisions or sections— Coaching, Consulting, Training, etc.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #14
March 28, 2012

SELLING COACHING TO A BUSINESS

I was reading Joseph Yeager's book, *Thinking about Thinking with NLP*, the other day and came across the following quotes. As a business consult, Yeager's 1985 book was one of the first NLP books that applied NLP to business. These quotes speak about how to think about what you are selling:

"People don't need NLPers, they need different results in their lives and NLPers are one way to get those differences. ... You need to be sure you have properly defined your product. Your product is not NLPing. Our product is performance." (p. 46)

"... Your client doesn't want to buy NLP; your client wants his problem fixed. And, to boot, he wants the situation fixed to his specifications, not yours." ... He doesn't need the elegance of your solution. He needs quick, cost-effective results." (pp. 98-99)

How about that! People don't need NLP! People don't need Meta-Coaching! No. What they need are *the results* that you can facilitate them experiencing as you coach them for greater clarity, precision, decision, strategy, change, and experience. They want results!

But what results? Ah, when you know that, you will know your niche and how to sell yourself as a coach and your coaching as a process that enables clients to get their results. So make a list.

What do the people you interact with say that they want? Do they speak about —

Thinking and feeling differently?

Performing a skill that they cannot perform today?

Becoming more competent in a skill they already have?

Having a close and loving relationship with someone?

Managing those who report to them more effectively and efficiently?

Leading so that people catch a vision and feel inspired by that vision?

Delegate so that they don't worry themselves sick?

Able to change a habit that is now undermining their health?

Discovering *the results* that people want enables you to know what to benchmark (measure, scale, quantify) and what to highlight in describing the value of what you offer. Now while this is not new or rocket science, it is something that people in coaching, consulting, and counseling often overlook. Yeager next offers an important insight about the difference between two contexts: business and self-development.

"Business works best when the options are strictly defined and limited and the actions of the business are able to be reduced to procures and routines. Therapists and psychologists [and coaches] often try to *expand* people when business wants to *focus* people. The issue is efficiency and most therapists [and coaches] don't have that in mind as a core value.

They are solving for things like potential and growth and other value-laden notions that are great for a seminar in human development but not in the office where routine is usually the rule of the day— not diversity.” (p. 97)

Did you notice the meta-programs within that quotation that business people (managers, leaders, HR) sort for? Procedures and details. Notice the values presented here that people in business pay attention to — efficiency, routine, focus, not expansion, human development, etc. Does this mean that people growing, learning, developing, and actualizing their highest and best is irrelevant for business? Of course not! What it means is that we have to show business leaders *the value and results of people developing*. We have to show how that by expanding people, they increase their intellectual, creative, and relational capital.

It means we have to show the value of such things as precise communications, assertive skills, disciplined consistency, creative innovations, inspirational communications, managing differences, resolving conflicts, etc. Generally, these are not the things that companies buy or want. What they want are the results which come from these things. Show how poor communications, vague communications, misunderstandings, conflict, people not speaking up, people not having a vested interest in coming up with new ideas, etc. interferes with business results, even sabotages and undermines a business.

What results can you deliver on? With all of the rich systematic structure that’s within the Meta-Coaching System, you might go through your training manuals with that question in mind. For example, in *APG* or *Coaching Genius* — the theme is “genius” or the excellence of the “flow” state of laser-beam focus. What’s the value of that? What results from that? How can you sell that? Here’s some things that immediately comes to mind for me:

- Focus — concentration — elimination of distraction, getting off-track.

- Being able to turn concentration on and off at will.

- Being able to access your best resources when doing what you do resulting in higher quality products and services.

- Being able to handle interruptions effectively and gracefully.

Here’s to your ever-increasing ability to coach for highly valued results!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #15
April 4, 2012
You Are a Conversation #1

BEING THE CONVERSATION

We all know that coaching is a conversation. What you may not know is that *you are a conversation*. *Your client is a conversation*. So when we say that coaching is a conversation that changes your client's conversation, we are talking about two things.

- We are first of all talking about the inner conversation that your client has within his or her mind, the inner game of the conversation that makes up your client's frames of beliefs, understandings, representations, etc.
- We are also speaking about something much more profound and foundational; your client's ontological *being* a conversation and its transformation in terms of your client's identity and sense of self.

The first kind of conversation is the one that I wrote about in the book, *Coaching Conversations*, and the kind of conversation that we detail in the seven kinds of conversations that we have with our coaching clients. It is what Timothy Gallwey first called *the inner game* in his class 1972 book that launched "coaching" as a new profession (*The Inner Game of Tennis*). It is also the conversation that I wrote about in *Winning the Inner Game* (2005) and the series of books that came from that perspective: *Games Business Experts Play*, *Games Fit and Slim People Play*, *Games for Mastering Fear*, *Games Great Lovers Play*. So if you are coaching business, health and fitness, emotional mastery, relationships, these are books that speak directly to those areas. Also, I originally titled the *Inside-Out Wealth* as Games for Creating Wealth.

Yet it is the second kind of conversation that I want to now focus on. The second kind of conversation is unique to NLP and Neuro-Semantics because this field arises from a particular understanding of language itself. And that's why Alfred Korzybski originally created the hyphenated words: neuro-linguistic and neuro-semantic. The *neurology* part of linguistics and semantics highlights that our experience in language (linguistics) by which we create meanings (semantics) is an *embodied experience*.

That is, what you and I do when we *language* something, using symbols that stand for something else and thereby construct *meaning*, we do so within our neurology—our multiple nervous systems, brain stem, cortex, and multiple layers of brain structures. And so as we *use and do* this, it is what creates us and our reality as we experience it. Recently I came across a quote from the poet Hölderlin which put this in a profoundly succinct way: "We are a conversation."

We are a conversation in that it is through the linguistic semantics of language that we receive

from our parents and teachers that we learn to *be* who and what we are. How they *language* us—the words they used and the meanings they constructed has constructed our sense of self and sense of reality. It has created our embodied meanings about others, time, meaning, intention, emotions, and all of the rest of the Matrix world that we live in.

We are a conversation because when we entered the world, we grew up in some family cultural conversation, some religious conversation that was going on, and whatever ethical, political, educational, etc. cultural conversations that were going on. The *conversations* served the function of being “the instincts” that we learned. And so all of the conversations, those intentional and purposeful, and those accidental and off-the-cuff that had no intentional meaning, informed us of meaning and began defining our very sense of self—our identity, our value, our destiny, and so on.

This idea—*You are a conversation*—also governs the languaging that you do today as a Coach and that’s why Coaching, as a change process, works. Clients come to you to explore their wants and needs, to understand themselves more clearly, to create plans, to change, to experience, to becoming more resourceful, etc. and they know that it will happen by the new and strange and different conversation that you will facilitate. They may not have a clue as to how a *conversation* can do that, how it is that powerful, but they know that somehow talking about themselves, their lives, their problems, their needs, their desires, their hopes and fears, etc. will change things, will make life better.

But as a professional Coach, you know that the magic occurs in the conversation itself. That’s why you sell Coaching as “a conversation like none other, a fierce conversation that gets to the heart of things and that has the possibility of transformation.” You know that because *we are a conversation*, changing the conversation that your client has with you will change them, change the direction of their lives, change the operational frames that determine their inner and outer games.

We are a conversation because “in the beginning is the word” (John 1:1). That’s true psychologically for all of us. Words enable us to talk about, refer to, describe, evaluate, know, understand, conceive, communicate to others, etc. And as you use words to do these things, to set these meta-frames, you construct your inner semantics about things. The world that comes to be for you arises from the words that you hear, use, and invent.

So as a Meta-Coach, the words you hear from your client tells you about the world the client lives in and the self of the client. No wonder listening is so important! The languaging of your client is not innocent, but determinative of their ontology (being-ness), expressions, needs, wants, construction of problems and solutions, and much, much more. Nor is your languaging innocent. What you say (what you don’t say) and how you say it highly impacts the influence you have with your client. *You are a conversation.*

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #16
April 11, 2012
You Are a Conversation #2

LANGUAGING AND THE CONVERSATION YOU ARE

If indeed, you and I and all of our coaching clients are a conversation, then what does this mean for you as a professional Meta-Coach? From the last post on this subject, it means that your primary tool as a coach is your use of language. It means that the languaging of your client offers you a tool for linguistic focus. If your client is a conversation, what conversation have they had and are they continuing to have, that creates their identity, sense of self, and experience of reality? What conversation are they?

Languaging plays an absolutely crucial a role in our lives. You *think* in words and in language, and most of the time, if you can't find the words to encode your thoughts and express them, you cannot even *think* the thoughts. If you can't find the words, it's very hard to know what you are thinking which is why you then grope for words so that you can become clear— to yourself.

Philosopher William Barrett writing about Wittenstein's work on language writes:

“Our groping in thought is a grouping within language for the particular language we want to use for our purpose.” (*The Illusion of Technique*, 1979, p. 184).

I quoted Wittenstein in *Mind-Lines* for his quotation:

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” (1922)

Now most of us use words unthinkingly. There's a reason for that. It is because language is so pervasive. We experience language as our mental-emotional-neurological environment in which “we live and move and have our being.” Like water to fish, we live in language in a way that is mostly unconscious. Most of the time we're completely oblivious to it. And that's why really, *really* listening to your client and slowing them down by reflecting back their very words and asking them, “Do you hear what you are saying?” can facilitate *the shock of becoming aware of the language that they are living in and being.*

This highlights why finding the right word for something can create one of those sudden Eureka! moments and why the wrong word for something can create misery, pain, problems, unsolvable puzzles, confusion, distress, and disempowerment. This explains why, when you do the Mind-to-Muscle pattern with a client, enabling your client to find and create *the right words for him or her.* This languaging is at the heart of the pattern. When you do that, your client is then able to *experience* the translation from “a great idea” (principle, concept) to muscle-memory and become that client's way of *being* in the world. Similarly it highlights how it is that sometimes just

changing a word, redefining what something means changes everything.

Last week in the US media, someone in the government called the kind of meat used in ground beef by a new term. And by doing so it set off a fury of conflict, distress, and media attention. What did the person call the ground beef that has been used and processed for decades and decades? A government auditor called it “pink slime.” Nothing changed, nothing new was done, no one altered anything, but the new term let loose an avalanche of outcry from the meat industry, hamburger chains, grocery stores, etc.

So what’s the problem? Does a rose called by another name smell any different? You bet it does. Does eating a hamburger at McDonalds made of pink slime seem different than eating ground beef? You bet it does! And why? Because the *meaning* of a word is its *use*. Use any word in a given way, and that’s what it means to you. After all, how do you determine the meaning of a word? You get a dictionary and look up how it is *used*.

“The meaning of a word has to do with the way we use it within the total web of our discourse.” (Barrett, p. 76)

What does a dictionary give you but the way a word has been used and is being used by a language community. It lists the words uses.

“However far we push the reduction of meaning to usage, and in the last instance to behavior, we end up with a world in which there are meanings. We begin there too. ... to have any experience at all, or to explicate any meanings at all, we have to presuppose ... that we already exist within a world in which there are meanings.” (p. 76)

Languaging not only occurs within the privacy of your thoughts, in some hidden inner space of your mind, it happens “out in the open in the exchange between persons” (Wittgenstein). So in Coaching! Meaning is created and recreated in the open exchange of the dialogue in the conversation that you have with your client. As you explore *what* your client is saying and *how* he or she is saying something, then out in the open in that exchange you are constructing neuro-semantic reality for yourself and your client.

That’s why as a professional Coach you will want to know as much about language as you can learn. That’s why the Meta-Model and the Meta-States Model offer you tremendous resources in both precision languaging and in the meta-languaging of a person’s frames.

[For books on these: *The Structure of Magic Volumes I and II*, *Communication Magic*, *Meta-States*, *Mind-Lines*.]

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #17
April 18, 2012
You Are a Conversation #3

WHAT CONVERSATION ARE YOU AND YOUR CLIENT?

I began this series of articles from a quotation, “*You are a conversation.*” So *if indeed, you are a conversation and your client is a conversation, then—*

- What conversation *are* you and your client?
- What kind of conversations can people *be*?
- What are the possibilities for *being* a conversation?

The generic answer is that you (and your client) *are* the conversation that you have had, and continue to have, in your mind as you think, feel, and language the meaning of things.

So, for example, if you think in terms of being a victim to other people’s actions and if you hold an inner conversation of “having no choice,” that you “have to” think-and-feel as you do, then you will feel like a victim and that will energize you to talk and act like a victim. “Victimhood” will result as your conversation, your inner game. You will then *be* the victim that you language for yourself. That would be the conversation that you *are*.

If, on the other hand, you *think* in terms of being the author of your own life, the architect of your own future, the source of your actions and experiences, then the conversation that you will be having in your mind and the conversation that you will *be* will be a conversation of empowerment. And if someone pays a lot of attention to you and calibrates to you, they will be able to pick up this “conversation” from you. They will note that your words are the words of empowerment:

“I am responsible for myself, for my thoughts, feelings, speech, and behavior.”

“I wonder what I did that contributed to this result?”

“Yes, that’s what I did and I chose to do that because...”

In both of these examples, the conversation that your clients have within themselves, with you and with others, and the conversation that your client *is* will be manifested in many ways. To shift metaphors, the conversation is your client’s inner game.

When a client *is* the victim conversation, that person does not merely use the words of victimhood (*X made me feel, Y forced me to say that, Z left me no choice but to ...*), the person lives from the state of being “at the cause” of someone else’s actions. The person *feels* this at the

core of his or her existence. The person feels insecure, unsure of self, unable to take effective action, feels generally helpless to solve problems, and at extremes, will feel apathy (why try), hopeless, despair, and depression. These very real emotional states will *embody* the assumptions and frames of the victim conversation.

When the client changes this conversation and begins to think, feel, say, and do the empowerment conversation, and when your client begins to *be* the empowerment conversation, the transformation will alter all of the old frames. Your client will start to think and feel of being “at cause” for his or her life. This will not only show up in the words and language that your client uses, but much more profoundly, in the states that they operate from. Your client will *feel* fully able to help oneself, to take effective action, to be the author of the script he or she operates from, and will *embody* a strong sense of power. This will induce such states as proactivity, responsibility, initiative, seeing and seizing opportunities, responsiveness to challenges, etc.

As a Meta-Coach, use your experiences this week to begin noticing the conversations that you and your client have with each other and what conversation that your client *is* (his or her identity conversation). As you step back, play with giving the conversation a name or label:

Victim Conversation	—	Empowerment Conversation
Distracted Conversation	—	Focused Conversation
Living in the past Conversation	—	Being present in the moment Conversation
Perfectionism	—	Optimizing
Frustrated with spouse	—	Managing Frustration
Feeling like a failure	—	Learning from feedback

If *who you are* determines your conversations and if *you are a conversation*, then as a Professional Coach, you’ll want to first of all notice the conversations. And with your clients, notice them over time. What are the patterns? What are the recurrent themes? Having noticed the themes or patterns, then notice the words. You might even ask,

“If you step back from these words (X and Y) that you are using, what are these words doing *to* you, what states are they inducing in you? Are these the best words for you?”

Obviously, the conversations you have in your mind and with others *induces states* and as that happens, then the conversations become *embodied*. And that’s how the person *becomes* or *is* a conversation. Now in terms of the goal of coaching— we could frame one objective of a Coaching Session is to *change the conversation*. Imagine this beginning:

“Great to see you again. If you *are* a conversation and coaching is a conversation to change conversations, what conversation would you like to change in this session? What conversation would you like to *be*?”

THE PSYCHOLOGY WITHIN YOUR COACHING

Because you have experienced APG at least once on your journey toward becoming a Licensed Meta-Coach, I don't have to sell you on the power of the 14 coaching patterns in APG. You already know that the meta-stating offers a higher level of coaching. You know that by meta-stating your clients for self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-appreciation of their skills, ownership of their powers, confirmation of their ideas, dis-confirmation of limiting beliefs, alignment of attention to intention, possibility thinking, implementation, choice about excuses, and so on—you have at your disposal the power to coach and meta-coach in ways that ICF and other coaches can't even imagine!

What you may not know is that there is a 3-day training within the NSTT (Trainers' Training) on *The Psychology of APG*. Well, there is! And every year we run *The Psychology of APG* as part of our training of Trainers. And with regard to this training — you are especially included. This year it will be in Colorado in July as the first three days of NSTT. So especially if you are a Licensed Meta-Coach in the USA or Mexico or Canada— this is a special offering for you.

This is an exclusive training. It is not a training for those who have not experienced APG but for Meta-Coaches and others who have already experienced APG. And by attending it inside of NSTT, you get to meet the next generation of Trainers and if you so desire, to hear some of the trainers in the Master Trainer Track present and be benchmarked — we do that in the evening sessions.

The Psychology of APG

Date: July 24-26, 2012

Time: 9 am to 6 pm.

Investment: US \$750 (\$395 prior to June 1; \$495 USD by July 1)

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sales@countryinnsgj.com — contact person: Angelica.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #18
April 25, 2012
You Are a Conversation #4

DETECTING THE FRAMES HIDDEN WITH THE CONVERSATION

If indeed you are a conversation and your client is a conversation, then being the conversation (whatever that conversation is) means that the conversation's frames (assumptions, premises, presuppositions) are now embodied. That is, you have incorporated into your very neurology the conversation that you are. And so has your client embodied his or her conversation. And if that's the case, then if you look close enough, if you calibrate thoroughly enough, if you take your linguistic conversation deep enough, then those frames will be revealed in your client's body, physiology, movements, gestures, etc. And that is precisely why in Meta-Coaching we listen for, notice, calibrate to, and use the client's semantic space.

In the last article, I wrote about noticing and calibrating to your client. Now I want to take that to a deeper (or higher) level here. Now I'm speaking about not only hearing the conversation, but hearing the frames that enable and advantage that conversation. What are the frames that privilege that conversation? Do you know? These *frames* are the ideas (beliefs, understandings, decisions, memories, identifications, and so on) that inform and make the conversation possible so if you can get to them, identify them, address them, you will be able to get to the heart of things very quickly.

Let me use the examples that I brought up in the last article—the victim conversation and the empowerment conversation. What are the *frames* that make each of these conversations possible? What does a person have to assume, accept, and presuppose to *be* either of those conversations?

Obviously even to ask these questions is to explore with your client his or her philosophical understandings about life, self, others, the world, etc. It is to explore the psychology (theories of human beings, human nature, human functioning) that your client consciously or unconsciously is operating from. Let's take these one by one.

First, the Victim Conversation

This conversation assumes that you are not in charge of yourself, that things are predetermined and fated, and that your life is simply living out a destiny that's been set for you in your genes, in the stars, in God's will, in the environment, by the government, by your first five-years, etc. We call the philosophical and psychological *frame* for this inner game, and for *being* this conversation *determinism*. Something or someone or a bunch of someones *determine* your life, your emotions, your thoughts, your actions, your possibilities, your potentials, etc.

To *be* this conversation these are the kind of things you have to believe, understand, identify with, and the decisions you have to make. You have to set frames of prohibition that dis-allow and taboo you from taking charge of yourself. You have to talk using the language of the modal operators of necessity—about what you have to do and must do.

“I have to go to work, I must exercise to avoid getting fat, I should study more if I want to get a raise or to avoid being fired.”

Then, as you use that prison language, then *lo and behold!* you will find yourself imprisoned! Not imprisoned behind literal bars of stone or iron. That kind of prison would be easy to break out of. But bars of thought and emotion and memory and imagination and because you have created the prison *in your mind*, it is not so easy to break free of.

Second, the Empowerment Conversation

Human beings who speak about being free to choose, who value that, who believe in that, who think in terms of how to gain more and more personal freedom and power and choice, they *are* that conversation and they live in a very different world. They use the modal operators of possibility and choice as they speak.

“I get to be the person I want to be.” “I want to follow my dreams and passions.” “I have inward permission and freedom to unleash my potentials.” “I wonder what’s next that will surprise and delight me?”

Above and beyond these first and second level thoughts-and-feelings are higher and higher levels of frames that govern the person’s mental maps and sense of reality. We usually call them limiting beliefs. These frames comprise *the heart of the matter*. They make up the content beliefs or meta-states that set the frame for us. And how, as a Meta-Coach, do you flush them out? Simple, say something like the following:

“Let’s say that what you have just said is true, so what? What would that mean to you? What do you believe about that?”

By holding the statement that you have received, whether it is a first level or second level thought or emotion and inviting the person to step back to identify what they think-and-feel about that, you are beginning to expose their matrix of frames. And do that repeatedly, three or seven or ten times, and you will have exposed the whole belief system that your client is operating from and that explains the conversation that they are.

Most professional Coaches cannot do this. I think (I hope) that most Meta-Coaches *can* do this. If my hope is accurate, then most Meta-Coaches can do something that most professional Coaches cannot and which gives them a tremendous and powerful advantage— you can get to the heart to things with your clients very quickly to bring about transformational change and vitality of life! How much is that worth? In terms of what people pay Coaches, a lot!

From: Cheryl Lucas, MCF President (2011- 2012)
 Germaine Rediger, Developer of the MCF website
 L. Michael Hall, Co-Developer of Meta-Coaching

Congratulations on Renewing Your License as an International Meta-Coach

On behalf of the MCF and under the auspices of the ISNS, we congratulate you on your continued commitment and dedication to the Meta-Coach Foundation and to the Meta-Coaching System—the most systematic and systemic Coaching System in the world.

This recognizes that you have renewed your license as an officially Licensed Meta-Coach recognized by the Foundation and under the auspices of the International Society of Neuro-Semantics, the credentialing and training body. This guarantees your right and privilege to be listed on the MCF website and to inform organizations, corporations, business, and universities of your standing in the MCF.

You also have the right to the VIP area of the Meta-Coach website (www.meta-coaching.org) that not only promotes the Meta-Coaching system, the modules, but provides ongoing research in Meta-Coaching as well as supportive articles and materials that are developed by the community.

In 2012, the ID. And Password for this VIP area are:

Username: metacoach

Password: coach12m3ta

This will grant access to this page: <http://meta-coaching.org/meta-coaches-only/>

Thank you for being one of the committed and professional Meta-Coaches who are helping to keep the community alive and well and the standards high and rigorous. Together we can do so much more than alone or apart.

To your highest and best

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #19
May 2, 2012

THE ART OF PRIMING— PART I

When you coach, do you prime? How about as a speaker, presenter, or trainer? How are you at priming? No, I'm not talking about putting on a first level coat of paint on a house, I'm talking about an advanced coaching skill. In fact, if you look in the *Coaching Mastery* manual you will see *priming* as one of the advanced skills of a coach. So what is priming and how do you do it?

What is Priming?

In *priming* you are getting a person in a state of readiness for a thought, belief, emotion, and/or response. Milton Erickson thought of it as creating a “readiness to respond,” as creating response-potential or readiness. So yes, it's a form of framing.

How do you Prime?

In priming, you present a word, or some see-hear-feel stimulus, to an individual or an audience in order to activate the person's mind in a certain way. You guide and gently nudge it to go in a certain direction so that it increases the possibility that the person will move in a given direction and that it will think, understand, interpret, feel, go into state, etc.

An example of priming is mentioning a series of things in a category without specifically referring to that category. In doing this, you get a way of thinking–feeling started. As the process continues, you are priming others to think of something in a particular category.

To prime, you could tell a story that implies or suggests an idea. You could, metaphorically, “plant seeds” of thoughts and then invite more attention, as you do development will then grow in that direction. This develops “response potential.” Priming is creating a readiness to respond in a certain way.

A Strategy for Priming

- 1) Identify the subject or content of a message or state that you want for another person or an audience. What is your desired response? What potential do you want to help facilitate or develop in the person?
- 2) List the presuppositions of the desired response. What has to happen in order for the desired response to occur? What representations? Metaphors? Structure? What must a person think, feel, notice, focus on, assume, believe, etc.?
- 3) Identify a word that describes what you want to prime, then make a list of synonyms of that word. Use those synonyms as you talk but not the referent word.

Linguistic Priming

A primary way that you can learn to prime is by the way you use language, even specific words. You can, and do, prime by the words you use. The mere fact of *what you call* something powerfully influences how you and others experience it. This is the power of language and linguistics. Language has this incredible tendency—it calls experiences and thought and emotion and hopes and fears into existence by the mere fact of the terminology.

“In the beginning was the word . . .”

Words call worlds into being. Language contains a self-organizing factor so that what you call it tends to invite it to become real. Think of the power of such labels as: failure, loser, reject, bumbling idiot, beautiful, humorous, fun.

“The language a leader chooses matters a great deal in shaping behavior.”

Wendell Johnson noted how this happens with the word “stuttering” in his chapter “The Indians Have No Word for It” (*People in Quandries*, 1946). The native American tribes in Iowa that he studied didn’t have the experience of stuttering and significantly, the tribes also didn’t have a word for it! They didn’t punctuate it as an experience that meant anything. So without meaning and language—it didn’t come into embodied existence in those people.

An example of the power of language occurred when some students at Stanford University set up an experiment that they called *the Community Game*. The game itself is simple. In the first round, you choose to *cooperate* with the other player or *defect* from him. The person you are playing with does the same.

But the trick is this: neither player knows the other’s decision before the outcome of the first round. If you both choose to cooperate, you both earn \$40. If you decide to defect while your partner cooperates, you get a much better payoff, \$80. If however you decide to cooperate while the other player seeks to defects, then you lose \$20.

The results? In *the Community Game*, 70 percent of students choose to cooperate and 30 percent chose to defect. But when they played the same game and called it *the Wall Street Game*, only 30 percent choose to cooperate while 70 percent chose to defect.¹

How about that! Now what caused this tremendous difference in how people played the same game? *What they called the game*— the name, the words, the linguistic suggestions and implications! This is an example of the effect of linguistic priming using words or names. The word *community* influenced people to collaborate whereas the words *Wall Street* influenced people to play the game for their own economic advantage. Simply changing the name made a huge difference in the way people thought, felt, and responded to the very same game.

By the way, does the set-up of the game remind you of anything? Oh yes, the famous Prisoner’s Dilemma game that economists often use. I wonder if calling it *prisoner* and talking about time in jail instead of money values influence how people play the game?

To your powers of priming for bringing out the best in people!

1. *Collaboration*, 2009, by Morten T. Hansen. pp. 86-88.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #20
May 9, 2012

THE ART OF PRIMING— PART II

If *priming is creating response potential* in someone by the way you use language, use semantic space, use metaphors, etc., then *priming is also a powerful communication tool for a professional Coach* and especially for Meta-Coaches.

What makes priming a powerful force in everyday life is that we are making subtle suggestions to a person's unconscious mind which, in turn, influences his or her subsequent behavior. This was the discovery that Stephen Macknik and Susana Martinez-Conde discovered when they, as neuro-scientists, modeled the tricks that magicians use in their magic shows. Magicians? Magic Shows? Neuro-scientists?! Yes, it is all in their 2011 book, *Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic reveals about our brains*.

For example, in terms of the speed that your brain can function, here is a set of questions. See if you can answer these questions as quickly as you can:

What color is snow? What color are clouds? What color is whipped cream? What color are polar bears? What do cows drink?

Now for a question for you. Did the answer to the last question bring the idea of milk to your mind? It did for me the first time I read through the questions. And why? Because the questions set you up for that answer, they primed you for it, they implied and suggested that response. That's priming. The questions *set you up* to respond in a certain way.

What Stephen and Susana discovered in magicians is that they often use priming to bias a person's responses. One mentalist trick that they explored is normally done with either three or seven spectators, and while I know that you are reading this alone, in spite of that, it should still work just as well if you use it with yourself. To see if it does, get a pen and follow these instructions. First, choose a number between 1 and 50 with these conditions:

- 1) The number must be double-digit.
- 2) Both digits must be odd numbers.
- 3) One number must be larger than the other.

If you have done that, the mentalist would then reveal what your choice. He or she would ask you if you choose thirty-seven. So, did you? You actually had seven number choices that you could have picked from that would have met the conditions above (e.g. 13, 15, 19, 31, 35, 37, 39) and that means there is a 12.5 % for any of these choices.

So why do 94% of people answer with the number thirty-seven? Because of the little suggestion in the paragraph about three and seven.

In Signal Detection Theory, the idea is that priming sets us up for perceptual misinterpretations due to what we are expecting, believing, understanding, and looking for. By implying or suggesting an expectation, we are set to detect signals that connect with those expectations. But often, the priming sets us up in terms of expectations gone wrong. Our desires lead us to see what we want to see. It's like a false alarm. That's why police often see a person drawing a gun— after all, they look for and expect that they will be seeing persons drawing a gun. So when they see a person slowly move his hands to put them in their pockets and then quickly move their hands to show the policeman when so commanded, well it is a situation just waiting to become a disaster.

Magicians use both bias and priming to cause false alarms which relates back to Theory of False Solutions. One way they create a strong mis-direction is that they give clues to people that a certain method is being used to accomplish a trick and then to use a different method. That is, they *prime* a person for certain expectations and then switch to a different strategy.

This also explains why kids (small children) are harder to fool than adults. The reason is because they do not have strong expectations about the world. In NLP we would say that they just have not created mental maps about sufficient things. Plus they also are in the “magic thinking” stage of cognitive development and just think that magic actually exists! This means that young children are not sophisticated enough to be fooled because they lacked learned expectation. Stephen and Susana also note that children under five experience a difference sense of time. For them, the world is less ordered. “Before you're five, your entire life is a magic show, so what's one more trick?” (p. 158)

There's another factor. Every magician also knows that adults are better at *not* paying attention(!). They're better at screening out everything else and restricting their consciousness to a single focus. The authors relate this to the neural correlates of attention which result from activation of inhibitory neurons which in turn suppress neurons in the surrounding visual regions that could cause distractions (p. 157).

In communication, priming is a form of framing. And obviously, as with anything that is powerful, influential, and impactful, it can be used for good or evil, ethically or unethically. Now my guess is that when priming occurs in Coaching, it mostly happens accidentally and unknowingly by both coach and client. Yet if you, as a professional communicator, know what you are doing, know the tools of your trade, and know how words work— then you can learn to use priming to assist the process of generative change for the unleashing of potentials. After all, when you open your mouth to curiously question, to set frames, or make reflective comments, you have the power to influence the direction that you encourage your client's mind to go in.

Left Over Notes on Priming

That “magical feelings” take place when our experiences are violated is a fact that makes perfect sense to anyone who considers it. What is surprising is the horsepower necessary for a brain to form an expectation in the first place.

Priming: Tossing of a coin. You are more likely to see it vanish in midflight after real tosses have primed you to know what an actual tossed ball looks like.

1. *Collaboration*, 2009, by Morten T. Hansen. pp. 86-88.

2. Macknik, Stephen; Martinez-Conde, Susana. (2011). *Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic reveals about our brains*. London: Profile books.

Double doors in hallway, carpet on the left side, plant on the right.
If a person thinks, feels, believes X, would he or she respond with Y?
What is the probability about this?

Framing –to prime responses — one of the most unconscious processes that there is. Then as a coach you may engage in some “weird talk” —with your client as you talk to parts of that person.

Illustration — Yeager.

“Oh, by the way, I left out the best part of what you’re going to get. Would you want to hear that now?”

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #21
May 16, 2012

TRANSFORMATIONAL LISTENING

Question: *Is it possible to listen in such a way that the listening itself facilitates the transformation?* Is that kind and depth and quality of listening possible?

Given what Maslow wrote in his book on Science, I would say yes.

“To be able to listen without presupposing, classifying, improving, controverting, evaluating, approving or disapproving, without dueling with what is being said, without rehearsing the rebuttal in advance, without free-association to what is being so that succeeding portions are not heard at all—such listening is rare.” (p. 96)

Such listening is rare and that’s because there are many enemies which interfere with the quality of your listening. There is the interference caused by fear, tension, stress, impatience, pre-mature evaluations, the need to be helpful, the need to be seen as smart, competent, the need to be successful, etc. These are the things that get in the way. These are the ego-investments that create filters that cause a person to not really listen.

Such listening is also truly *respectful* listening because it enables you to let things be, to let people and their experiences unfold their own nature, and to let us see its secrets. Respect drives this kind of listening. This is the respect of a non-interfering willingness to let things be and express themselves. And when you do that as a coach, the client has an opportunity to truly hear him or herself and with that level of awareness, change naturally occurs.

F.J. Roethlisberger, a General Semanticist wrote this about listening in the journal, *ETC.* in 1953

“The biggest block to personal communication is man’s inability to listen intelligently, understandingly, and skillfully to another person. This deficiency in the modern world is widespread and appalling. In our universities, as well as elsewhere, too little is being done about it.”

Ah, *listening deficiency!* Living in our competitive societies, most of us are most of the time chiefly concerned with getting our own views across, are we not? Most of the time we tend to experience other people’s speeches to be a tedious interruption of the flow of our own ideas! I see this all the time in the first days of *Coaching Mastery*. People come into the program so excited about learning to be a coach and having lots of things they can contribute to others and they are so impatient about the opportunity to *do* something that will solve a person’s problem. Yet they are so excited, so impatient, that they can hardly still themselves and accurately listen. In the typical 25 to 30 minute coaching session, I catch on average 5 to 10 things that the client said which the coach apparently never heard. I write those in for the line: “Things not heard.”

For half of those the coach will say, “Yes, I heard that but I didn’t know what to do with it.” For the rest, they say, “He said that?”

What is listening? Listening is not simply maintaining a polite silence while you are rehearsing in your mind what you are going to say when you can grab a conversational opening. And it especially does not mean waiting alertly for the flaws in the other person’s thinking so you can straighten him out.

True listening means working hard to see the world and the situation the way the speaker sees it. It means listening with accurate empathy, not sympathy, which is feeling for *him*. *Empathy means taking on the other person’s perspective and frames so that you can see and experience the world as does that person.* Listening requires entering actively and imaginatively into the other’s matrix of experience so that you can understand that person *on his or her terms* rather than your own.

Active listening respects and appreciates the uniqueness of each and every speaker: *This* speech by *this* individual at *this* time and place is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. A listening deficiency involves listening in terms of the generalizations that we use in our mind to classify things:

“Oh this is a case of stress management; a case of learning how to delegate and release; a case of people getting too used to each other and taking each other for granted.”

As you know from *Coaching Mastery*, in Meta-Coaching, we focus on *sacred listening*. We listen in a way that treats a person as valuable and special in and of him or herself and not instrumentally. I don’t listen to use the person but to be with and understand the person. Often, that is enough to create many miracles. Listen to someone more deeply and intensely than anyone has ever listened to them and holding the space so the person can be with his or her own thoughts often is the most transformative thing ever experienced.

In really active listening you listen by exploring with absolute curiosity and fascination and what results is that the speaker becomes aware of him or herself in new ways. And by active, caring, accepting, appreciating listening we create a crucible space for our client that allows transformation to occur ever so naturally and inevitably as the self-actualization drive is allowed to emerge.

Here’s to your listening mastery!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #22
May 23, 2012

MORE ON PRIMING

The Art of Priming (Part III)

When I ended the Art of Priming after only two articles, and then started something else last week, several people wrote and asked for more illustrations and examples of priming. So while I explained priming is an advanced skill for the PCMC level and that I give lots of examples of where a coach could do some priming when I set with Coaches for their PCMC status and even on the Assist Team when we do so many coaching sessions and then unpack the structure, I said that I might just offer a few examples. [There is no priming in this first paragraph; do not go back and hunt for it, you won't find it unless of course you do, but then who knows if you really do?]

Given that priming is creating response potential, then to develop this art, you'll want to be in a curious and explorative mode so that you can think and ask yourself, "What is the response potential that my client has that I, as a professional coach, can prime so that it facilitates the outcomes that my client wants?"

Let's say that your client wants to become less stressed by business and life, to become more relaxed and calm. You then set your goal for facilitating the response potential of becoming more patience, relaxed, and calm. So what are the words, synonyms, ideas, metaphors, etc. that suggest these states?

A calm lake — fishing in that calm lake — sitting around waiting for the fish to bite — a blue sky and slow moving white billowy clouds — a hammock between two trees in a quiet meadow — walking in your bare feet on a sandy beach listening to the waves coming in during the late afternoon — sitting on a park bench watching people walking by—

As you just let your stream of consciousness flow with ideas and images in this way, you gather up a list of possibilities that you can use for the framing. It's not unlike creating a menu list of possibilities when you are inducing state as a coach. Now to prepare someone for accessing a calm and relaxed state that will facilitate more patience, you are ready to do some priming.

Good afternoon, good to see you again for our coaching session, would you like some soothing green tea, I have some that has been slowly simmering and that's waiting for you in the room. Just feel free to put your feet up and enjoy a few moments lingering over the tea if you like ... I'll be there in a few moment, so there's no rush, take all the time you need to find a comfortable place there.

Would that be suggestive? Would that help prime the person for a session on reaching his or her goal of becoming more relaxed?

Priming uses ideas, images, metaphors, and suggests indirectly and implicitly to set a person in the direction that the person wants to go and so influences at an unconscious level by presenting ideas so indirectly that there's little to no conscious awareness and so no resistance. Is it manipulative? Yes, if you are imposing and trying to get the person to go where *you* want them to go rather than were *the person* wants to go.

Suppose a person has been struggling in some relationships and has mentioned several times that he ought to forgive someone. Once you check with the person that forgiving is what is needed and what he wants to do (rather than confront), then you might create a plan for forgiving.

“Hi John ... good to see you this warm afternoon, you can put all of your things over there and just *let them go* and we'll get started in just a minute. Anything else you need to *let go* or take care of before we start? Always so nice to *get a fresh start* on things. Okay, well, if you're ready, let me *close this door on all of the things out there* and we'll be able to focus on your most important goal for today.

During this past winter I went to Crossroads Gym when I was home in Colorado. I generally parked in back and walked down a corridor to the front office area ... then leaving I began noticing that every single time I would use the left of the two-double doors rather than the right. This got me interested. Why? In the USA we walk and drive on *the right side* of the road or sidewalk and yet here I am always selecting to go out on the left side. Why? And as I got curious I noticed that so did everybody else make the same choice.

Then I noticed that 10 feet prior to the door on the right hand of the corridor was a potted plant with Christmas colors in it. So in walking down the hallway on the right, I would step a bit to the left to not stumble into the plant. That primed me to be more on the left. Then the carpet on the inside of the double-doors was a small carpet and was put only on the left side. Another little hint for moving to the left.

Here was priming, not with words but with the structure set-up of a hallway. It created response-potential in almost everyone. Once I noticed, I intentionally went out of the right side door. Ohhh, that didn't feel right! Somehow it felt wrong. Yes, I had been primed!

Where do you want your clients to sit when they come into your coaching room (if you have an office)? How do you set up the room so it primes them for the response you want? Do you want your clients active and action-oriented, reflective, responsible, courageous, or what? What will you put on the walls? How will you decorate your coaching room? I once had a very timid client, and then another, so I went and bought a very large picture of a lion and put it on the wall behind me.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #23
May 30, 2012

COACHING AND BENCHMARKING

Very soon (June 2012) we will hit 1,500 Meta-Coaches on this planet in 40 countries— Egypt and Panama being the latest countries that will have a Licensed Meta-Coach. In the past 3 weeks I've been in Hong Kong and Mexico City in the last two *Coaching Mastery courses* and sharing the leadership with 13 Team Leaders in Hong Kong and 17 in Mexico City.

The challenge we began this year with was with the quality of benchmarking. That's because it was the first time for nearly everyone on the Assist Team and most did not have their own coaching practice. Of course, I prefer to have brand new people on the teams than to have no one! But it did create a real challenge in keeping the standards high and rigorous which is one of the distinguishing features of Meta-Coaching.

When you are on the Assist Team, you essentially experience in-depth training in two skills: the giving and receiving of feedback. These two are core competencies for a highly effective coach. If you can't calibrate and receive feedback from your client in the coaching experience or give high quality feedback to your client—your coaching skills are missing the mirroring skills which are so unique in coaching.

Yet these are not easy skills. Oh yes, they sound easy. While they seem deceptively easy, they actually require a high level of awareness and meta-awareness and an even higher level of communicating back to the client in sensory-specific words which are crystal clear in precision. Most people cannot do this. They have to be trained and that training takes more than just a session of two of listening to a coaching session. In recent years we have been doing 4 and 5 sessions a day and for people new to benchmarking, doing two days of that. And even then, most people are still only partially ready. This past week in Mexico City, we did 4 sessions on the training day and then one in the morning of Day 1 of Meta-Coaching, another that evening after the 12-hour day, and then again on Day 2, and so it went!

Why is the process of learning to benchmark so challenging? Why does it require so much practice and attention? Several reasons:

- *Benchmarking requires a rigorous attention to details.* In Hong Kong, Dr. Paul Chan counted the sub-skills of the 7 skills— there are 70 of them! That's a lot to attend to. So to begin with, you need to have a strong awareness of the skills and the 10 sub-skills (on average) of each.
- *Benchmarking requires a simultaneous recording while listening and calibrating.* When the coach begins the session, the process of recording as much as you can begins— and while you catch one thing, a WFO (well-formed outcome) question and are writing that,

you have to keep alert to what the client does and says and then what the coach says and does to follow up on that. Recording the key questions-and-answers of the session enables you to keep track with the order and progress of the conversation so that later you can feed that back to the coach.

- *Benchmarking requires constantly noticing what is **not** happening that should be occurring.* As if all of this isn't enough, as a benchmarker, you also have to be alert to what should be occurring in the session which is *not* happening. As I listen to the client and coach, I'm constantly writing down the key statements of the client and keep noticing those that the coach never responds to. "Did the coach hear that? Why is the coach not responding to that? Will the coach bring it up later?" The semantically loaded things that the client says and which the coach *does not* respond to will be the list of *things not heard*, indications of not listening as well as a coach should and can.
- *Benchmarking requires the ability to track the session and feedback to the coach his or her strengths and weaknesses.* This is a truly advanced skill and almost no one who first benchmarks has sufficient "room" in consciousness to do this in addition to all of the detailing of the skills and sub-skills. Yet this is another coaching skill— tracking the client over time as the session continues. Here in benchmarking you do this with *both* the client and the coach.
- *Benchmarking requires the ability to step back and focus on three or four of the most relevant things in the session that will most help the coach become more skilled.* This is another advance skill not common to those first benchmarking. After gathering all of the information, this skill is that of stepping back to see the overall patterns of the coach and feedback to him or her in succinct and focused way the most important feedback that will make the most difference. This is the coaching skill of pattern detection— a 3.5 skill of supporting.
- *Benchmarking is really a high level coaching skill!* When you benchmark, you are exercising some of the highest coaching skills: acknowledgments, confirmation, confrontation, and pattern detection in *supporting*, exact word listening, tracking, listening for what's not said, succinctness in *listening*, awareness and testing questions, recognition of WFO and indepth questioning, recognition of irrelevance, non-useful, etc. questions, and so on. That's one of the reasons we prefer those who benchmark to have a coaching practice and regularly (daily or weekly) be coaching.

The bottom line? *Benchmarking is an advance coaching skill.* So if you are serious and committed to your own development as a professional Meta-Coach—get to your local MCF chapter and practice the benchmarking. Then join the team for some indepth training in benchmarking. You will become more skilled as a coach if you do!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #24
June 6, 2012

A NEOPHYTE, AGAIN!

Do you know the problem that most people have when they first experience the Coaching Boot Camp of *Coaching Mastery*? Yes? No? Well, I'm going to reveal "the problem" anyway. In recent years I've been focusing my attention on this problem and observing it and seeking to understand it. And this year, with our first *Coaching Mastery* in Hong Kong and our second in Mexico, I think I have flushed out *the problem*. See what you think.

The problem is this: People come to *Coaching Mastery* and then meta-state themselves with hatred, disgust, even contempt when they enter into the neophyte state. I began to figure this one out when I sat in the triads and listened to person after person say that what they wanted in that coaching session was to "learn the seven core coaching skills and to feel totally comfortable with them so that they would know them automatically." That's right. I heard those specific words and variations of them at least five times.

Now what was even more shocking, the coaches accepted that as a legitimate well-formed outcome and started to coach them to it! Shocking! Right? Or would you have jumped in with both feet and start coaching the person who wanted that? Two persons said that they wanted "to experience no confusion, no awkwardness, and no self-conscious overload" as they learned one or more of the core competencies. Oh really? That's what you want?

Yes I'm here making fun of these so-called "outcomes," but if I had been the coach, I would have asked the dozen-plus well-formed outcome questions buttressed by dozens of clarification questions to flush out the ill-formedness of these goals. What would I have asked? I would have asked things like the following:

- So you want to learn the core coaching skills? [Yes.] And why? [To be fully competent.] And what's your time-line for getting to the place of full competency where you will automatically know the skills and have them at automatic access? [Maybe by the end of this coaching session.] By the end of this coaching session? And do you really think you can become fully competent in 22 minutes? Could it possibly take a bit longer? And what do you have to do in your learning strategy to take any piece of intellectual knowledge and integrate it into your neurology so that it is automatic and you feel totally comfortable with it?
- I hear you saying that you don't want to feel confusion or any awkwardness with these core coaching skills. [Right.] And right now you do feel confusion? [Yes.] And right now you feel awkward in using them? [Yes, I'm so focused on remembering them, I don't listen as well as I normally can and I'm not fully present.] And so you want to what ... speed up the learning and integration process? [Yes, speed it up so that there's no

confusion or awkwardness.] None at all? Not a single tinge of those states? [Well, maybe a little.] And you want this when? [Now?] Is that a question or a statement? [Well, why can't I eliminate confusion and awkwardness right now?] Is that a pattern that you've integrated into yourself? [What? I don't understand.] Do you have the pattern of learning something new and complex in a way so that you skip over the conscious incompetence stage and immediately access unconscious competence? [Well, no.] And so what makes you think you can do that with learning the coaching skills?

Now you know *the problem*. It is actually the problem that all of us face whenever we enter into a new domain and learn new skills, especially advanced skills that are complex and/or dynamic. The problem is that as we move from unconscious incompetence into *conscious incompetence* we become a neophyte again— a beginner, a new learner and so *of course* we feel awkward, self-conscious, confused, overwhelmed, weird, strange, and —depending on how you meta-state that experience— you may feel stupid, you may judge yourself as “I'll never get this!” “This is too hard.” “What's wrong with me, I know better than to say or ask that?!”

Ah yes, *getting through the conscious incompetence stage*— that's the challenge, isn't it? Actually, this “problem” is the problem that many people in business, in leadership, and in specialities face whenever they begin to expand their world and seek to add new skills to their repertoire. They have to step into the state of being a neophyte, again!

Now depending on their expectations— this can be a small problem, a gigantic problem, or not problem at all. What do you expect? Do you expect to learn the seven models, the seven core skills, and the 70 sub-skills immediately? Or in one day? Or in one practice session? What do you expect of yourself and your learning strategy?

For human beings, the process of learning and integrating a new skill is generally a slow and frustrating process. It is one that involves making mistakes, lots of mistakes, learning from those mistakes, practicing the new skill a 100 times, getting feedback, trying again, and eliminating old habits and bad habits that interfere with the new skill. You can *expect* that.

If you expect to get the new dynamic complex skills of the seven core coaching skills *immediately* and *fully integrate* them into your way of thinking, talking, and responding, I can pretty much guarantee that you will be disappointed and frustrated. Why? Because learning these dynamically complex typically means *unlearning* lots of old habits and then *learning* dozens of new distinctions about each of the skills. And that means *at first* you will be naive and unsophisticated. So if you have any fear of looking foolish—your fear will heighten your self-consciousness and make you feel all the more awkward, weird, and stupid.

Solution? Embrace the state of incompetence, embrace it fully, make lots of mistakes, and enjoy the mistakes and the process of correcting them. Write “Neophyte at Work” on a name tag and put on your right side. Put “Incompetence moving toward Competence” on your left side. It's just the process of learning!

Michelle Tanmizi

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Guest writer for Meta-Coaches Reflections

June 10, 2012

Following Michael's 'Reflections' on Collaboration, I sent Michael this article and he has asked me to share it with you.

A LICENSE AND LESSON IN HUMBLE PASSION

As a recently certified Meta-Coach, I wear my credentials proudly and joyfully. I had worked hard for it, am passionate about coaching and am happy to be a part of the Meta-Coach community. Recently, however, during a business meeting with a future collaborator, I noticed that every time I mentioned the word Meta-Coach, it was met with a subtle smile. So I asked about it. My future business partner told me that he had a Meta-Coach collaborator in the past but had to sever the relationship because she was 'always' talking about how good Meta-Coaching is and implying, through her words and actions, that her coaching was superior. While my future business partner recognised that this Meta-Coach was very good in her work, he severed the relationship because he could no longer work with her ego. This got me seriously thinking about humility and passion.

When I first discovered Meta-Coaching, I knew right away that it was what I had been looking for. I knew even before being qualified that it was the methodology that I would connect with and that it was what I would require to bring my skills to the level that I want. Having now achieved that certification, my belief in Meta-Coaching is even more firmly grounded. Newly certified, I am excited about my new direction, passionate about the subject, eager to coach and also eager to share my passion. So I can understand when a person has such a strong belief in something that he or she wishes to share this knowledge.

Passion, however, is a fire that when unmanaged, may burn out of control. While it is commendable to be proud of being a Meta-Coach and being passionate about it, it is important to realise that serving large doses of this passion to everyone we meet may turn away potential collaborators and clients instead of fueling interest. And this is when I noted that it is important to remember about humility.

I believe that while it is great to understand and know the value and effectiveness of Meta-Coaching, it is important not to discount all other schools of coaching. We are in this industry to service people and this common goal is what binds and defines each of our individual purpose. I respect and am happy to collaborate and even discover other schools of coaching because I believe that all forms hold some kind of strength and I intend to be always open to learning.

It was mentioned during trainings again and again, the power of collaboration. I agree and believe in that. Perhaps collaboration needs to be redefined as not just collaboration among ourselves, but also with other non-Meta Coaches. It was said that we are a small, albeit growing, group and that the reputation of our foundation has not yet reached the four corners of the earth.

Well, acceptance and respect of other schools of coaching as well as humble passion in what we do is a positive way to gain this reputation. I believe that we can learn from each other and grow together in our purpose to serve.

It is in humble passion that Meta-Coaching will grow. We know it works. And as mentioned before in trainings, don't focus on *talking* about the superiority of Meta-Coaching, *demonstrate* it and then let your higher quality skills speak for themselves. You will find, in doing so, that there will be no need to use ego-promoting statements because your actual skills will show (or not show) that you have a high level of competence. And clients and collaborators will see and feel for themselves this competence as the evidence will speak for itself.

To walk the talk and work in integrity are more powerful ways of cementing our worth in the coaching community. What we do and who we are with our skill speak volumes about the discipline that we carry. I am proud to be affiliated with the Meta-Coach Foundation, but I am more proud just to have learnt skills in order to allow me to be the best Coach I can be. And when we speak of our personal passion for coaching authentically without discounting any other schools, this speaks volumes about the kind of coach we are and opens doors to opportunities

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #25
June 13, 2012

“I JUST WANT TO PUSH FOR EXCELLENCE, COMFORTABLY”

Three Meta-Coaches wrote to me after I asked for some examples of challenging or difficult things that clients say and each described a similar situation. The client wants to push toward excellence, he or she wants to be the best they can be, another wants to be and express more of her creativity, or to step up commitment to the business that he is in, but they also want to feel at ease and comfortable while doing these things.

I have heard this before. In fact, I often hear this kind of thing. People want comfort, ease, immediate gratification, immediate results, no stress, no sense of work or effort, etc. while going after new learnings, new skills, new competence, and genius level activity. Wow! Yet are these well-formed goals? Is there not an inherent contradiction built into the very goal?

- I want to lose weight and keep eating as I am.
- I want to develop cardio-vascular strength without doing cardio-exercise.
- I want to get rich quickly without any effort or risk.
- I want to develop rich and deep relationships without any expending any effort in listening, understanding, giving of myself, disclosing, caring, or any of that stuff.
- I want to learn new stuff by just hearing about it one time and immediately knowing it at expert level.
- I want to find the Expertise Drive-Through so I can purchase insights as quickly as possible. I want to learn effortlessly and to be transformed without having to swallow.

Frequently coaching clients want a lot, have extremely high goals and objectives and somehow think there must be some magical solution that can avoid all processes for reaching the goal. Yet while they want the final result, they do not want to go through the process. Have you met clients like this? You will. And this is one of the inherent values of the Well-Formed Outcome Questions. When you ask those 14 questions, it reveals and exposes the seeker to the process for getting to the final desired results.

What do you say when a client says, “You know I have enjoyed the coaching, but the overall pattern of my life has not changed?” Explore the experience of Coaching—

- What have you enjoyed about the coaching? Good.
- What have you not enjoyed about the coaching? Tell me more about what you haven’t enjoyed. What belief or frame of mind has created that lack of enjoyment for you and has prevented you from enjoying or acting on that part of the coaching?

Explore the pattern that the person says that he or she wants to change—

- What overall pattern do you want to change? [Let them fully describe it.]
- How committed are you to changing that pattern? Have you made the commitment to change the pattern? What will be the price that you will pay to change it? [This explores the motivation and decision axes.]
- Are you willing to do anything it takes to change that pattern? What are you willing to do that you have not done so far? What are you not willing to do that, at some level, you know is preventing you from changing the pattern?
- Do you know at this point the secondary gains and positive intentions that are interfering with you changing that pattern?
- Do you have any guesses about what's interfering with you getting the final results?
- How will your sense of self and your identity need to change so that you can change the pattern of your life?
- What beliefs and meanings will you have to adopt in order to change the pattern of your life?

When a person wants to change (at least, kind of wants to) and yet does not change, there's undoubtedly some frames (beliefs, understandings, meanings, intentions, memories, imaginations, etc.) preventing the change. That's what needs to change--- the interfering frame or frames. Those frames are the problem.

- Are you willing to endure the discomfort and insecurity in order to move through the period of learning and development?
- Are you going to let the feeling of "being awkward" or "out of your comfort zone" or insecure (not-confident) stop you from developing and becoming competent in this?

Confident about Competence

There is healthy and unhealthy competence. To feel confident when you are not competent is unhealthy, neurotic, untrue, unreal, in-authentic, and a farce! To require confidence when you are incompetent or in the process of becoming competent is to ask for an unrealistic state.

Further, why in the world would you want to feel confident when you are incompetent? The lack-of-confidence and insecurity are great emotions to give you the energy to push through that stage. So don't sabotage the process by asking for a false feeling of confidence when it would be a lie and self-deception.

Now here's something else I'd like to confront you with— there are thousands upon thousands of skills that you are incompetent about and probably always will be! In fact, the more you study, the more you learn, the more you are going to discover about additional areas of incompetence. Are you okay with this? How okay? Knowing that you will always be incompetent about many things, can you still maintain a solid sense of yourself and give yourself fully and completely and passionately to what you can become highly competent in? That's the secret for expertise in a given excellence.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #26
June 20, 2012

YOU ARE THE CRUCIBLE

Do you know what the point is of *Day 1 in Coaching Mastery*? Day 1, if you remember is not only the introduction and orientation to the Coaching Boot Camp, it presents the theme of *Relationship*, of facilitating relationship because as we are apt to repeat over and over, if you can't create a trusting intimate relationship with your client, you cannot coach. So what is the point of Day 1?

Day 1 focuses on the first two coaching competencies of listening and supporting. You listen to support; you support in order to listen better and together these are both facets of creating the rich, intimate, and deep coaching relationship that's required if the client is to trust you and open up to your questions. So what is the point of Day 1?

On Day 1 there are three patterns, *Releasing Judgment* is the first pattern. Then there is the discovery and change of your *Social Panorama*, and the in the evening, Getting the Ego Out of the Way by entering the *De-Contamination Chamber*. All of these patterns is designed to enable you to be the best caring coach that you can be— non-judgmental, accepting, appreciating, open to people, believing in people more than they believe in themselves, clean and without imposing advice or control. So what is the point of Day 1?

On Day 1 we introduce the concept of sacred listening. This contrasts with instrumental listening which means listening to the person *for the purpose of* being a good coach, helping the client, demonstrating competence. Are those bad things? No, of course not. Yet they are attitudes and intentions that can get in the way and contaminate the purity of your presence.

When you listen sacredly, you listen for no other reason that *to be present to your client with care and support*. By releasing the need to *use* the listening to do anything to the client—and just listening because the person is worthy of being listened to, you listen in a cleaner way. There's no hidden agenda like showing off what a great coach you are! So what's the point of Day 1?

The point of Day 1 is simple. In the process of coaching, *you are the crucible*. You create the sacred space where your client can just *be*. You create the space wherein your client can feel free and safe to explore, to expose vulnerabilities, to dream again, and hope, and turn up desires, and dare to expand his or her horizons. You create the space wherein your client can bring his or her hot thoughts, hot boiling emotions, fiery needs and wants, and hurting memories or fears or meanings and old defensive learnings or limiting beliefs and let them dissolve in acknowledgment, acceptance, appreciation, and love.

In this way you become a crucible to and for your client so that the very environment of being in your presence, your client finds a space unlike every other conversational space— a space for being real, being more authentic than he or she ever thought possible, and being genuine with all of the frames and meanings that currently define life. You are the crucible space where a person can be truly and fully heard without judgment or correction, to be understood, and to be seen.

After the movie *Avatar* came out I began using the line in that movie for the kind of intimacy that we seek to enable every Meta-Coach to be able to create. In the movie the words, “I see you” in the Navee language meant far, far more than “I can visually recognize you.” It refers to seeing a person inwardly, authentically, the heart and soul of the other person. And Jake discovered that at the end of the movie when the Navee girl that he fell in love with saved his human body in the little trailer. And then, in a moment of intimacy she said, “I see you.” And he responded, “I see you.”

This is what happens in coaching. The coach, as the crucible, facilitates the experience so that we relate to the client and essentially say, “I see you as a person, as unique, and distinct. I see you.” And this is as sacred as it is fearful, as awesome as it is rare. Do this and you are moving to the highest levels of Coaching — beyond the PCMC level to the MCMC level.

You are the crucible. You accept emotions and needs and behaviors (however ugly or hurtful) and thoughts and beliefs (however stupid, ridiculous, and limiting) and you just accept without trying to give advice, correct, or judge. You hold what is given so that the person can see more clearly and more deeply. You hold so that the person can stay with all of those hot thoughts and emotions without running, avoiding, and defending. You just hold believing that they client will make the adjustments, changes, evaluations, and judgments that are needed. You hold the space as a crucible so that the person can *encounter* him or herself with respect, honor, trust, belief, and so on.

Do that and the healing, the renewal, the revitalization, the aha! moment, the transformation, and the breakthrough will tend to just naturally occur. You don't have to make it happen. It will happen. The person will do it. You get to be the witness to it.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #27
June 27, 2012

I recently did an Introduction to Meta-Coaching and used the following as the framing and content presentation.

INTRODUCING META-COACHING

Getting the Core of Coaching Right

Everything called “coaching” isn’t coaching and everyone who calls him or herself a “coach” isn’t a coach. It takes a lot more than merely naming yourself a *coach* and what you do as *coaching* to make it so. Branding alone is completely insufficient to establish a solid foundation for these things. Yet today there’s lots of confusion about coaches and coaching. There are lots of pseudo-coaching and pseudo-coaches. There are probably tens-of-thousands of so-called Coaches who are presenting things that are *not* coaching at all. So, *what is the real thing?*

In 2001 when I began, one of the conversations that I had with Michelle Duval was about this, “What is coaching? What are the factors that make coaching *coaching*? How can we best define coaching? At that time we identified five factors (which is still in the book, *Coaching Change*): 1) conversation, 2) self-reflexive conversation that gets to the heart of things, 3) creates generative change 4) systemically which 6) all serves the purposes of self-actualization. It was later that we added 6) implementation that executes the desired outcome as a plan and gets results which can be measured and 7) facilitation and specifically process facilitation of these processes.

Recently I looked at these things with another prism, namely, what you have to get right in order to have effective coaching that is true to what coaching truly is. Here is what you have to *get right for effective coaching*:

First and foremost — You have to get your Psychology right.

Coaching (and not consulting, mentoring, therapy, and training) is based on the psychology of the bright side of human nature— on *Self-Actualization Psychology*. Why? Because coaching is for the psychologically healthy. It is for those ready to embrace change that will disturb the equilibrium of life. The market and the population for coaching is the well who are ready to be challenged and stretched. This distinguishes coaching from therapy which is for those who are not psychologically healthy and who need to get out of the past, become okay, and develop the ego-strength to be challenged and stretched for embracing new generative changes.

Second, you have to get your Objective right.

The objective of coaching is to facilitate the processes for unleashing potentials to enable a client

to self-actualize. That's why a coach is not the *content* expert, a coach is a *process expert*. That's why a true coach elicits the client's agenda to find out what the subject and content of the coaching will be able. A true coach enables the client to set the agenda and facilitates it by co-creating it with the client. This distinguishes coaching from consulting, training, and mentoring. In those professions, you are the content expert and you know what the client needs. Not so in coaching. In coaching, *you do not know what the client needs*. And even the client most often doesn't know what he or she needs. That's why you when you get this objective right, you also get your first and last questions as a coach. First question: What do you want? Last question: Did you get it? By getting the coach's objective right you also ask about how the client will know when he or she has achieved the desired outcome? Ah yes, the last question of the well-formed outcome questions, the KPI question about knowing. And that allows you to ask the measurement question: How will you measure the change?

Third, you have to get the Change right.

In coaching, the change that we facilitate is *generative change*, not remedial change. Remedial change is therapeutic change— finding and giving remedies for what's ailing a person. That kind of change enables a person to get over the past, come into the present, become okay, and be ready for the future. Not so in coaching. In coaching it is all about *generative change* and this kind of change can occur at numerous levels: behavioral, evolutionary, transformative. And because it does, this giving us three forms of coaching: performance, developmental, and transformative coaching. Generative change also involves *unlearning* because what very often the very knowledge and skills that got a client to where he or she now is will not take them further. In fact, it might positively prevent the client from developing the new learnings that are needed to move on. So you coach to the client's unlearning. And that's where the Crucible Model shines the best.

Fourth, you have to get your Epistemology right.

The epistemology of coaching is systemic thinking and responding and it is work systemically with the client's self-reflexive consciousness. After all, that's what coaching is—coaching is systemic and holistic, it is *not* linear. Linear thinking sees things only partially as it focuses on parts rather than the whole and it dichotomizes rather than work holistically and simultaneously. This then leads to short-term superficial solutions that jumps on presenting problems without in-depth probing. That's why you use the Matrix model in coaching and the Meta-States model as you work with the client's self-reflexivity. (Soon Volume IX will be published, *Systemic Coaching*.)

Fifth, you have to get your Conversations right.

A coaching conversation is not the ordinary kind of chat that people experience have everyday at the breakfast table, the work cafeteria, and in pubs. It is not an advice-giving conversation, not a therapeutic conversation, and not storytelling conversation. It is an intense dialogue for the purpose of discovery and unleashing. It is an intimate and fierce conversation. In Meta-Coaching we have identified the seven kinds of Coaching Conversations: clarity, decision, planning, experiencing, change, confrontation, and mediation.

Coaching Facets**Meta-Coaching Models****Psychology**

Self-Actualization Psychology
SA Assessment Scale; Matrix; Quadrants

Objective

WFO; Benchmarking; Fierce Conversation Facilitation

Change

Axes of Change/ Crucible Model

Epistemology

Matrix Model — Systemic and Self-Reflexive
Meta-States / Meta-Programs

Conversation

NLP Model; 7 Kinds of Conversations

What then is Meta-Coaching?

It is a conversation like none other that gets to the heart of things— the heart of a matter to facilitate generative, transformative change by activating and mobilizing a client's internal resources thereby empowering the person as we confront his or her highest visions and values to support them making real their inner potentials. As such, Meta-Coaching is an intense, intimate, and fierce conversation to actualize new possibilities.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #28
July 3, 2012

THE RUTHLESS COMPASSION FACILITATION MODEL

Sometimes the process of figuring something out takes a long time. For me, sometimes it waits until I stumble upon the right words. Sometimes it waits for the right metaphor. I have found this true so often that while it no longer surprises me, it does continue to delight me. I had been studying resilience for three years prior to figuring out the meta-levels involved and when I discovered that, I discovered the Meta-States Model. I had been working on frames, reframing, frames of mind, etc. for two years before I stumbled upon the Matrix Model and that happened not because of words that I was playing around with, but because Dr. Bob asked me, “Michael, how many things do you not leave home without?”

In 2007 I began working on developing a *process facilitation model* because that was the next piece to “the seven things coaching is” that Michelle and I had come to figure out about coaching and I knew that whatever the model would be, it would be a *process* facilitation model rather than facilitating some specific content. But trying to put my finger on it, trying to summarize it in a few succinct words for a description— that was the hard part. And yet, now looking back on it, the words had been with me all the time. What I didn’t have was a format.

The words had been with me in fact, from the very, very beginning of the development of Meta-Coaching. Graham Richard gave them to me. He gave them to me in the very first public interview that I did with him in November of 2002 in Sydney at the Media Executive Hotel. I had interview Graham two times prior to that as I explored with him executive coaching— and modeled from him his frames of mind, beliefs, understandings, values, processes, etc. Yet what he gave me, while I understood the words and the general idea, it would be years later before I truly understood in any deep way the full significance of what he meant.

The words was his description of his style of doing coaching. His words are the words I quote in every *Coaching Mastery* course that I present—words that describe how people experience him as an Executive Coach— he is *ruthlessly compassionate*. And that’s what every client needs in a coach. That’s what is required if a coach is to fully actualize the potential of “coaching” — that is, holding an intense, intimate, meaningful, life-changing, transformative and fierce conversation. The coach has to be ruthlessly compassionate. And Graham is. He has fully integrated both sides of two poles and created a synergy between the compassion, the care, the love, the respect, the honor, etc. of the person and the challenge, the not-letting-the-person sell him or herself short, the holding-the-feet-to-the-fire, the not putting up with any excuses, the holding accountable and responsible for oneself and one’s choices.

That's what being ruthlessly compassionate is all about. And so in 2007 I put *Compassion* (or care) on the *meaning scale* as the client's experience of the coach and I put *Ruthless* on the *performance scale* as the performance of challenging, confronting, and holding accountable. And that generated the Process Facilitation Model of tough-and-tender facilitation.

The tender part of facilitating the processes of effective coaching which is real and genuine and authentic, establishes meaning. What does the coach and coaching mean to the client? It means being treated with care, being listened to sacredly, being believed in, having someone want the very best for you, experiencing someone standing in awe of your potentials. This describes the coach's state—both the emotional state and the state of being. All of these meanings are on the meaning scale. Do that and clients know that you truly care about them, that you are there for them, that you respect and honor them and their right to their life and choices and with that they feel safe in your hands. They know that you have no agenda, not even your own success, in coaching them. They know that you only want their best for them and that they get to specify what that best is (their well-formed outcome).

Now when you facilitate *that*—you have created the relationship via the compassion of listening and supporting so that they trust you, so that they let you question them, challenge them, and confront them. Now for the tough part. Now you can continue the process facilitation on the *performance side* and do so in such a *ruthless way*—that is, without ruth. And what is “ruth?” Webster defines ruth as “compassion for the misery of another” (from French “ruen, “to rue”). So ruthless is “having no ruth, merciless, cruel, ferocity.”

The performance here speaks about not letting the person get away with letting oneself off the hook from one's excellence, one's potentials, one's possibilities, one's sacredness, one's greatness. Maslow put it differently when he said that most people “sell themselves short, they sell human nature short.” Being ruthless in your compassion means that you don't let people do that— instead you awaken them even when they want to sleep. You challenge them even when they want rest and peace. You disturb them when they want to make excuses. You hold their feet to the fire when they want to avoid, deny, lie, be delusional, hide behind masks and personas. Without any mercy you expose them to their own truths, their own realities. You confront them on their little lies, cheats, deceptions, blind spots, incongruencies. You bring up unpleasant things, hurts, griefs, distresses because you know that it is just human stuff, human fallibility, just emotions, just protections against rising up to be everything that one can be. You confront and challenge them to be more real and more authentic than they ever thought possible.

And they pay you to do this! They pay you to lovingly listen and support them like no one has ever been fully and truly present to them and to then challenge them to get real and stop the BS like no one has ever challenged them. With them you are ruthlessly compassionate. And as such, you are able to facilitate the synergy of care and challenge so you are tenderly tough. Now how you will do that for yourself so that it fits you – your style, your brand, your way of being, well, that's your journey as a professional coach. Yet that is the goal—*for you to develop your own ruthlessly compassionate style*. Then you can facilitate the care side *and* the challenging side and in that systemic synergy become the Coach, the Meta-Coach that you can become.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #29
June 11, 2012
Re: The Next Advancement of the Axes of Change

THE CRUCIBLE AXES OF CHANGE

The following is a longer article than usual and one about a new development—the unifying of two models: The Axes of Change and The Crucible Model. The reason is as David Murphy said, “The more critical distinctions that a coach knows and is able to handle, the more effective the coach.”

“But what if they could be recognized?” Ah, yes, it was that question, and it was repeated several times by several different people that began it all. I was either presenting *The Axes of Change Model* and someone asked how *The Crucible Model* related to it or I was presenting *the Crucible Model* and someone asked how it related to the *Axes of Change*. In answer I would explain the difference between the two change models that we use in Neuro-Semantics using the distinctions that I wrote in book on *The Crucible*. I would say,

“They address different kinds of change and operate in different ways, the *Axes of Change* is a conscious model whereas the *Crucible* is mostly unconscious and deals with deeper changes, changes more likely to be in one’s blind spot or at the level of one’s assumptive frames. You can’t put them together.”

“But what if you could?” Ah, there’s that question again. And it wouldn’t go away. I kept finding it popping up whenever I thought about change or spoke about change, and then it began popping up when I was out on my daily runs. So I began asking the question of myself.

“Okay, *what if* we could put the two models together? If we could, and I don’t believe we can, what would it look like? How would the different features interact? What could we do if we could combine the two models?”

The question, “Can the two models be united into a single form?” suggest that if they can, then there are over-laps between them, and the processes of each could be enriched by the other. Conversely, the question, “Are these models completely different? Do they deal with facets of change that have no connection at all?”

In answer I first reviewed the “facts” of the case, the 10 change factors that are explicit in the two models. These ten factors are the very mechanisms of change and the six in the Crucible model arose from seeing them mentioned, quoted, and used by those pioneers in the Human Potential Movement, these were processes of change that they knew about and worked with in facilitating change in people.

Axes of Change:

- Motivation: away from aversions and toward attractions.
- Decision: probing frames and provoking a commitment.
- Creation: inner and out game of creativity and innovation.
- Integration: reinforcing what’s same as the plan, testing what’s different.

Safety Mechanisms for Change:

- Unconditional Positive Regard of Self:
- Witnessing — Pure Observation:
- Acceptance — Acknowledgment:

Confrontational Mechanisms for Change

- Truth, Reality, Authenticity:
- Responsibility, Ownership:
- Appreciation, Sacrilizing:

The next question that I had was a critical one, “Is it possible to frame each of the Crucible factors as a continuum and then turn them into axes? If I could do that, then could I use those continua as more axes and integrate them into the *Axes of Change*? And if I could do that, then could I find the perceptual filters or meta-programs that would be governing each? And if each could be so framed, then could I come up with coaching questions that a coach could use to facilitate the development of that change element? So these questions became the focus of my search for the answers. The results from the search is given below.

The interesting thing about the form of a continuum is that it gives us a set of distinctions as a mechanism is viewed from its two polarities and the developmental steps between the polarities. And if we think of the mechanism as a whole and that all of it is valuable, rather than in either-or thinking, then we begin asking how we can use each end of the continuum in service of the change. We can also ask degree questions, “To what extent are you X?”

Change Factors as Meta-Program Distinctions

1) Unconditional Positive Regard of Self

Continuum of positive regard between the poles of doing and being; behavior and person, conditional and unconditional. I have put this on the “Quality of Life” meta-program (#59).

Validator	Positive Regard	Confidencer
<hr/>		
Being Unconditional		Doing Conditional

Do you regard yourself with a positive regard (value and worth) unconditionally?
 How well are you able to distinguish yourself from your behaviors?
 Are you more than what you do? Say? Think? Feel?
 Is your essence the same as your expressions?
 Do you confuse self-esteem with self-confidence?
 What do you do that you positively regard about yourself conditionally? (Skills)
 How strong and robust is your sense that your value-worth-person is unconditionally given and can never be put on the line?

2) Witnessing — Pure Observation

Continuum of information processing between the poles of perceiving (witnessing) and judging (evaluating). I have put this on the Adaptation meta-program (#37).

Witnesser	Information Processing	Judger
Perceiving Sensory based facts		Judging Evaluative interpretations

Are you just observing and noticing the sensory-based factors?
 How do you describe the situation without any judgment or evaluation?
 How well are you able to set aside your filters, values, concepts and return to seeing-and-seeing, hearing-and-hearing, etc.
 What do you need to evaluate and judge? Are you able to do that?
 Do you have full permission within yourself to make judgments and deliver them when it's appropriate?
 Do you have full permission within yourself to suspend judgments when you are just observing?

3) Acceptance — Acknowledgment

Continuum of dealing with reality between the poles of rejection (denial, fighting) and acceptance (acknowledgment). I have put this on the “Security” meta-program (#62)

Denier	Dealing with Reality	Acceptor
Reject Fighting Reality Authoritarian I demand life to be fair		Accept Acknowledging Reality Authoring– Authoritative I accept that life is not fair

Are you accepting / acknowledging what *is* as simply what *is*?

How accepting can you be especially when faced with something you don't want to accept?

Do you fear accepting would mean condoning, approving, or resignation?

If you reject, this will that make it go away?

What facets of reality can you deny and reject so that you can invent a better reality?

4) Truth, Reality, Authenticity

Continuum of truth-speaking between tough (blunt, crude) and tender (soft, diplomatic) poles. I have put this on the "True speaking" meta-program (#66).

Nurturer	Truth Speaking	Truther
Tender		Tough
Person-centered		Facts-centered
Soften what you have to say		Let it rip!

Are you able to recognize and state the truth or reality of this?

What is your truth? What is real and authentic about this?

Is that realistic? Is it actual?

What is not true about this? What is not realistic?

What is the unvarnished truth about this?

Are you able to state this truth in a diplomatic way that nurtures the person?

5) Responsibility, Ownership, Proactivity

Continuum of responsibility between self (yours, ownership) and other (dis-own, release, boundary). I have put this on the "Modus Operandi" meta-program (#38)

Response-abler	Responsibility	Limits recognizer
Self		Others
Ownership		Accountability
Have to, Must, Possible, Can		Impossible, Can't

What is your responsibility in this? What did you do or could you have done?

What is not your responsibility in this? Is that something that you have control over?

Are you okay with it being out of your control?

How is that your responsibility?

What responsibilities does the other person have and accountable for?

6) Appreciation, Sacrilizing

Continuum of valuing between counting (sacrilizing, giving rich meaning) and

discounting (withdrawing, suspending meaning). I have put this on the “Staging Information” meta-program (#5).

Sacrilizer	Valuing	Suspender
Counting		Discounting
Sacrilizing		Suspending Meaning
Give rich meaning		Depriving X of Meaning

What is valuable in this? What could you value and appreciate?
What is the highest and most precious meaning, value that you can give to this?
What is not valuable in this and needs to be suspended as semantically meaningful?
What has been given too much semantic meaning?

Use of the Advanced Model

What I’ve been finding is that as I ask someone about a change that they want to make — their response will indicate where they are in the process of change. So if I use the 10 factors as my lens for diagnosis and understanding, they tell me where the person is, what to do next, where the person is stuck, etc. That is, if you use these 10 factors as a set of filters or lens for listening to a client will tell you what mechanism of change to use as the leverage point.

So while you use the Axes of Change Model in the traditional way, when you don’t get the responses that you want, you can now go much deeper. Now ask, “Is that your truth right now?” “What is your truth or reality about motivation right now? Or, about making the decision to make this change?” Ask about responsibility: “So what will you do about that?” Ask about appreciation: “So what is the value or positive intention that you can appreciate about that?” You can ask these questions about each of the four mechanisms of the Axes of Change: Motivation, Decision, Creation, or Integration.

Example:

“So what is your truth about your motivation?”
“I don’t feel that I have enough motivation.”
And so what will you do about that? If that’s your truth, what is your responsibility to that?
“Well, I guess I need to get more serious.”
And that will mean that you do what?
“I don’t know... I don’t think there’s anything I can do.”
Is that your truth, you don’t think there’s anything you can do to get more serious about your motivation to take care of your health?
“Well, no. there are things I can do.”
Great, and what would those things be? ... [Description of some things.] So, will you do these things?”
“Yes, I will.”
So what can you appreciate about this new commitment?

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #30
July 18, 2012

THE ART OF HEARING META-LEVELS

If you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will hear and see your client's presenting meta-levels. And when you are able to calibrate to this, you will be able to "detect meta-levels" —a 3.5 level skill in Meta-Questioning. That's because by calling attention to the meta-levels, you are asking about and inquiring about meta-levels.

I recently sat with a coach and client as I was benchmarking. The client wanted to stop her procrastination. She had a habit of putting things off to the last minute and while she usually "got by with it," she knew that it was a matter of time before she would not get by with it. When the coach asked her how she felt about this, she commented:

"I don't like it, well, actually I do because I always get away with it. I just feel lucky about that. Yet I hate it."

Did you hear the meta-levels in that statement? Stop for just a moment and see if you can recognize the meta-level in that statement.

Primary State #1: I don't like it.

Primary State #2: I like it because I always get away with it.

First Meta-Level: "I feel lucky about it.

Second Meta-Level: I hate it.

Detecting meta-levels enables you to help a client sort him or herself out especially when there are numerous thoughts-and-feelings emerging about an experience. This facilitates the first coaching conversation— that of the clarity conversation. In this instance the client had two contradictory states at the same time— liking and disliking the last-minute activity. To that experience she had a first level frame about feeling lucky. That probably kept the procrastination in place for a long time. But more recently, she has moved to hating that sense of depending on luck.

Knowing all of that enables you to ask powerful, "juicy" questions as a coach:

- How long have you had the sense of *hating* the dependency of luck?
- What do you now believe that creates this *hate* of luck about putting things off?
- How will your sense of self change, shift, or grow when you give up the dependency on luck of acting at the last minute?
- When you *hate* this enough, what new belief will you need that will support you planning, preparing, and acting with proactive awareness?

Does this enable you to see the value and importance of *detecting meta-levels*? Almost no one demonstrates this skill while learning Meta-Coaching in *Coaching Mastery*, but as ACMC level coaches advance in their skills, detecting meta-levels becomes a detection and listening skill as well as a meta-questioning skill. And as you develop it, it enables you to work with a person to get to the heart of things within the person's matrix of frames.

Someone recently asked me, "Do you have any tips for detecting meta-levels?" One great tip is to develop your kinesthetic feel for levels by moving your arm up and down as your client speaks about things "out there," things at the primary level, and things inside. We have been using that exercise in *Coaching Mastery* for several years and yet I find that most people do not continue to practice it. And so it is not in their muscle-memory. Here is something else that you can do with your buddy coach and/or at the MCF chapter.

You can also map out the levels with a piece of paper by identify the activity that the person is doing or wants to do. Then when your client talks *about* it, you can write the frame (or meta-level) and if there's other thoughts-feelings (states) about that frame, you can record that. In this way, you begin to detect and work with the levels that your clients present to you.

Listen especially for the word *about*. This term typically refers to the next higher level. If the word *about* doesn't occur, listen for the juxtaposition of one idea to another as in the example that I began this post with.

In the same session, the client said, "I do set milestones when I do plan something, but I let them get away. Urgencies of other things come up and then I forget." Here the client begins with a meta-awareness: a plan with milestones. Then back down to the primary level: urgencies which lead to forgetting. Even hearing these two levels can then enable the coach to move the client upward to the next higher level:

- So you do plan and set milestones and then you forget (acknowledgment), so what frame of mind do you need to set so that in the face of the urgencies you don't forget?
- So how strong of a decision do you need to make so that you stay the course you set?

If you want to be able to ask such meta-questions with more effectiveness, learn to detect and identified meta-levels. Again, this is where the Meta-States Model is foundational in Meta-Coaching and my recommendation is to take APG once a year the first four or five years of being a Meta-Coach. If you do, you will hear and learn many more things than you did the first time. The meta-state structure is the structure of the meta-levels.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #31
June 24, 2012
Consulting to Coach #1

CONSULTING AND COACHING

Coaching and consulting—in Meta-Coaching we say that coaching is not consulting and that consulting is not coaching, that these are very different modalities for interacting and working with people. We say that consulting is giving expert advice and coaching is process facilitation of the self-actualizing drive and potentials in people.

Yet also in Meta-Coaching we say something else. We say that you need to consult in order to coach. What does that mean? It means that the consulting skills are required in the process of selling coaching to an individual or a business or a corporation. And that means there is a time and place to present your expert knowledge about coaching, about process facilitation, about self-actualization, about how people tap into and unleash their potentials, about change, about organizational change, about cultural change, about working systemically with an individual or an organization, etc.

The time to present your expert knowledge of what you are doing, why you are doing it, and even how you will do it is when someone is considering buy your services as a product they need. This means that if you are going to be success in working *on* your coaching business, you have to have a degree of consulting skills. To that end, I'll describe some of the key aspects of Coaching Consultation — consulting in order to coach.

Now when it comes to consulting, there are a number of people who have made a name for themselves in the field of coaching, and one of the experts of consulting is Peter Block. He wrote the best-selling book, *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used* (1981, 2000) and followed that book up with *The Fieldbook and Companion* (2001). So when I first thought about writing about consulting, I pulled out his books.

Now when I first read Block's original book, that was several years before I even thought about modeling Coaching and creating a brand like Meta-Coaching. What I found in flipping through the book and revisiting his work I experienced as upsetting, strange, surprising, exciting, and unexpected. So I had to completely reread the book! Why? Because even way back in 1981, and especially in the 2000 revision, Block was in the process of changing his definition of consulting and essentially describing the consulting work by what we would today call coaching. Didn't I say amazing and surprising?!

Why would he do that? Well, I also discovered that—the reason for his thinking. And this is the exciting part— it is a reason that corresponds with what we in Neuro-Semantics propose under the theme of self-actualization! Interested? I hope you're as fascinated about this as I have become.

That means that even though consulting is presenting and sharing of expert knowledge, you can do it in a coaching way and if so, then here's what is exciting— *as a licensed Meta-Coach you already have a lot of excellent consulting skills!* Do I here a Meta-High Five? In other words, to pick up on how to consult to set up a coaching program with an individual or group, you can pretty much rely on your coaching skills.

Now normally, we think of *true and pure consulting as giving advice from one's expert knowledge and skills*. In his original book, this is how Block thought about it and yet he had his doubts because of the inability to control whether the client will use the advice.

“Every time you give advice to someone who is faced with a choice, you are consulting. When you don't have direct control over people and yet want them to listen to you and heed your advice, you are face to face with the consultant's dilemma. A *consultant* is a person in a position to have some influence over an individual, a group, or an organization, but who has no direct power to make changes or implement programs.” (1-2)

“The foundation for consulting skills is some expertise...” (5)

“The core transaction of any consult contract is the transfer of expertise from the consultant to the client.”

Yet Block presents this thinking about consulting as a problem. You can offer precise information and solutions and yet you have no power to get that advice implemented. You are not in a position to carry-out the advice, it is in someone else's hands. This is the “people problem in the field of consultation:

“Internal consultants, especially, are well aware of the problems involved in operating in the role of expert. ... Problems that are purely technical are rare. Most problems have a ‘people element’ in them. And if the prevailing organizational climate is fear, insecurity, or mistrust, essential information on the people part of the problem may be withheld or distorted. Without valid data, accurate assessment becomes impossible.” (pp. 23-24)

“Plus, the shelf life of a solution is down to one minute.” (xviii)

So what does Peter Block suggest? His solution: to reframe *consulting as a collaborative role*, one of facilitating the client to find the answers and advice and solutions. Wow! Doesn't that sound like coaching?

“Problem solving becomes a joint undertaking, with equal attention to both the technical issues and the human interactions.” (25)

“Consulting at its best is an act of love: The wish to be genuinely helpful to other.” (xix)

“Managers have moved from command and control to more of a coaching function.” (xx)

“The stance we want to take is that we can be a *guide through a process of discovery, engagement, and dialogue.*” (175)

“The resource the consultant has to offer is to clarify issues— layers of the problem— not to offer solutions.” (200)

Referring to the whole-system discovery “changes the role of the consultant” to that of the coaching role (214).

“Your job is fundamentally an educator, not a problem solver.” (326)

How do you consult in order to coach? All of the beginning things will be things you already know how to do.

1) *Gain rapport.* Use your skills of listening and supporting to connect with the person or persons you are interacting with. Be present to them.

2) *Explore to discover needs.* As you connect through listening and supporting, explore with the person or persons what they want, what they need. If the company has not initiated the contact, then do this discovery on your own time as much as possible. Use written things on the internet, library, and magazines to learn about the company, how they are doing, their reputation, etc.

3) *Set frames.* As you hear things, frame them. Classify them as belonging to this or that category, as something you do or don't deal with, as this or that kind of problem (formulaic, systemic, etc.). Here also you can present information about what you can do to solve a problem, facilitate a process, etc.

4) *Induce states.* Calibrate to the state of the persons you're talking with, noting what state would be the best state for them to be in and elicit that state. Enable them to be able to access states most appropriate to being consulted and for thinking through a buying decision.

5) *Receive and give feedback.* Calibrate to everything going on, especially the person's strategy for decision-making, processing of information, and so on and feed it back immediately in that moment. Doing that gives the person an experience of the power of coaching— the product that they are considering.

It begins here, but there's a lot more. So until the next post—

To your success in consulting to Coach

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #32
August 1, 2012
Consulting to Coach #2

CONSULTING AS CONTRACTING

I began this series on Consulting to Coach by quoting the consultant expert Peter Block and his definition of “consulting.” As long ago as 1981 he defined consulting as giving expert advice (the traditional definition) *and also by a facilitative empowering of the client for a co-development and transfer of expertise.* All of that was in his book, *Flawless Consulting*. By the time he wrote the *Fieldbook*, Block defined the core competency of consulting as that of contracting:

“The core skill in consulting is how to contract with your clients ... Contracting is about building and renegotiating relationships.” (p. xv)

“In an expert stance, the consultant is at the center of the discovery process, interviewing and gathering data, then analyzing that data. ... It is the consultant who makes meaning of the data and it is the consultant’s meaning that forms the picture that is fed back to the system. In a collaborative mode, the consultant partner with the system to create a container in which discovery occurs and then engages the system in making its own meaning. ... the system comes to know itself — both as it is and as it can be.” (p. 130)

This gives a picture of what Block refers to as *contracting*. It is setting up the process for how the consultant will be interacting with the organization and what the consultant will be doing. So what will the consultant be doing? Here is his list:

1) Discovery.

Discovering refers to gathering data, that is, collecting information so as to find out what is going on, where the organization is at the moment, what the current situation is. This means interviewing, reading documents, and even snooping around to get a sense of the lived experience of people in the organization.

2) Analysis.

Analysis refers to making sense of the data, analyzing it, and using the consultant’s expert knowledge about organizational development (OD)— what indicates a healthy organization in contrast to an organization that would be dysfunctional.

3) Feedback.

The next stage is feeding the data and analysis back to the decision-makers in the organization and co-creating a consensus about what needs to be done. Block describes this as the organization coming to “know itself”— what it currently *is* and what it *can be*.

4) *Contracting*.

Creating the agreement about what is to be done, how it will be done, criteria to be applied, evidence of success, etc.

In terms of this contracting process, Block adds other comments about what consulting is and how it works. Notice in the following quotes how closely this describes what today we would define as coaching leaders and managers within an organization.

“Consulting is about helping design systems in which people can grow and flourish and achieve their desired future.” (p. 201)

“At its heart, consultation is a form of facilitated learning.” (p. 254)

“Some consultants believe they have the answers to even the most complex problems. The homeopathic consultant assumes the client is in the best position to know what he/she needs from the consultant. I do not want to impose myself or my solutions on others...” (p. 255)

Now if these comments sound like “consulting” in *Peter Block’s thinking* is very close to coaching, yes, that’s right. That’s how he thinks about it and perhaps a big reason why he has become so well-known and effective as a consultant. This is what surprised and shocked me when I first read the book having had the last decade or more focusing on Coaching. It also excited me about what it means for you, as a Meta-Coach, when you go in to work with organizations. Block has obviously from our perspective moved more and more into a coaching methodology while still calling it consulting.

In fact, another surprise (well, to me) is that in the *Fieldbook of Flawless Consulting*, he quoted Timothy Gallwey and his books on the Inner Game repeatedly. What is the surprise in that? Namely, because it was Timothy Gallwey who was perhaps the key person who actually helped to launch the field of Coaching originally!

And the point is? One point is that while we can and do distinguish consulting and coaching as we do when in Meta-Coaching we define the field of coaching, a person consults best when he or she coaches. *That is, there’s a big place in consulting for using the methodology of coaching.* So even if you are a pure Consultant who gives advice, you will not be spending all of your time doing that, a great deal of your time will be doing *coaching*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #33
August 8, 2012
Consulting and Coaching #3

CONSULTING AND COACHING

Here are some suggestions when you enter into an organization to consult in order to coach.

1) First, do your homework.

Do not go in without studying the company. Aim to find out as much as you can about the company—the industry that they are in, the current conditions of that industry, competitors, trends, strengths, challenges, etc. Read their website to get an understanding of how they present themselves, their vision and mission, their values, code of ethics, etc. Get acquainted with their language—the special terminology that they use to describe their leaders, managers, organization, products, services, etc. That will enable you to pace how they talk about things and save you from having to ask those kindergarden questions about their words. Do that and like any client, they will that you have not listened to them, taken time to pay attention and seek to understand them. Do that and they will not feel supported.

2) Coach as you Consult.

This is what will make it easy for you— use the seven core competencies of coaching to consult: create relationship by listening and supporting, create indepth discovery by questioning and meta-questioning, create a robust sense of compassionate confrontation by the mirroring skills of receiving and giving feedback, as well as by inducing state so that the persons you are interacting with experience what you are talking about. The tools you need to co-create with the decision-makers in the organization are the very tools that you've been trained in as a coach. So use them.

3) Be Professional.

Look professional and carry yourself in a professional way which again means pacing the particular organization in terms of dress and language.

4) Operate from Abundance.

If you really want to blow it, be needy. Put yourself in a state where you feel the need to get the contract, “I just have to get this contract! I have to work with this organization!” Instead, access of state of interest and such abundance that your attitude is:

“Well, maybe we can work together; maybe I have something to offer; maybe I would want to work with you— but I don't know. First I have lots of questions for you to see if this is something I even want to do.”

Strategically take the stance or position that you are qualifying them as much as being qualified by them. Think of it as a mutual qualification process, not a selling process. Do not go in to sell, go in to find out, discover, entertain.

5) Be ready to say no.

Be ready to turn the work down if there is not at least a 60 percent chance of success. Be ready with a whole series of questions about the work and the context of the work, and the context-of-the-context. That is, whatever coaching that you would agree to do— is the organization ready to support that work? Who will support it? How? Is the culture in that organization a coaching culture to support people growing, changing, developing, asking questions, contributing their human capital of intelligence and creativity to the work? If not, then you need to contract with the leaders to facilitate them creating the coaching culture first.

If you accept an assignment to coach people and those people will not have managers and leaders who are fully on board with their development, then warn them. “As people become more self-actualizing, more responsible, more wanting challenge and willing to challenge, then there will be a high likelihood that they will not stay long. Your best people will leave and go where they can thrive and have a voice and make a difference. Are you ready for that?”

If you are working on a change initiative and the leadership team have not created the context that will support it, then the change initiative like 80% of change initiatives will fail. And that will then reflect on your reputation. Do you want that? Yes you may get a short-term benefit of the work and money of that contract, but if you think long-term, you have undermined your reputation as someone who can facilitate sustainable change and you have lost a credible source for a testimony to your skills. So think long-term and systemically.

6) Think and work systemically.

What are the system that you are encountering in the organization? To find out, you’ll have to ask lots of systemic questions to discover the key variables, the relationships between the multi-causal factors, the nature of the organization as a system, etc. As you do this, distinguish between the symptomatic factors, those that are causal, and those that are contributing factors.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #34
August 15, 2012
Another Kind of Coaching Conversation

THE 8TH CONVERSATION

In the Meta-Coaching system we have 7 conversations (clarity, decision, planning, change, experience, confrontation, or mediation conversations). These are the seven different kind of conversations that you, as a coach, can facilitate with a client. These seven kinds of conversations cover just about anything and everything that you deal with as you facilitate change and self-actualization with individuals and organizations. Classifying conversations with these seven categories or classes brings order to what otherwise could be very disconcerting and even chaotic. Yet there is another conversation that is missing.

What is missing, however, is not just another kind of conversation. What is missing is a higher level conversation, a meta-conversation, a conversation about your conversations and one designed to both quality control your conversations and change your conversation. This meta-conversation is about the conversation itself and enables you and your client to step back and observe, examine, and evaluate your conversation or conversations. And when you are able to facilitate this eighth conversation, then as a coach you will be able to be a catalyst for a new conversation.

Why is that important? First of all it is important for those times when you are having a conversation that is *not* going anywhere or going in circles or not achieving the client's outcome. This doesn't mean that you are particularly "stuck," only that for some reason or another, the conversation is not progressing as would you expect it to. Perhaps it is *not* the conversation that you need to be having. It's also important if you are indeed *stuck*. That can happen. After all, there are times when the conversation you're having feels effortful, laborious, struggling, and like your trudging along in deep mud that makes every step feel like you are in slow motion. If you're stuck, that's a good sign to have the Meta-Conversation.

Then there are also those conversations that are not just simply ineffective, they are wrong. They may even be toxic. For example if something (or someone) has seduced you into having a Blaming Conversation with your client. Somehow you have allowed your client to explore "who is at fault," or "what is at fault," and in doing so eventually moved into a conversation that was seeking someone or something to blame. That is definitely a conversation to step back from, recognize it for what it is, and step out of it. Time for the Eighth Conversation.

A less obvious toxic conversation is the Whining Conversation. This is the conversation that begins with an exploration of "what's not working," and then making a list of "how bad things

are,” and how things are so hard and difficult today. When you have been seduced into the seduction of whining about problems and difficulties and how long things take and how much they cost— you and your client definitely need to step back and out of that conversation.

The How-To of the Meta-Conversation

Let’s say then that you discover that you are engaged in the wrong conversation, or that you have the sense that you might be. Then what? How then do you initiate the Meta-Conversation for changing conversations? Like the other conversations, it is a matter of asking some great facilitation questions. Here is a list that will enable you to shift to the eighth conversation:

- Let’s take a step back and let me ask you, Do you like the conversation that we’ve been having?
- What kind of a conversation would you say that we have been having up until now?
- If you were to give a name or title on the conversation we’ve been having, what would you call it?
- Is this the conversation we should be having? If so, why? Why have this conversation?
- What’s good about the previous conversation?
- What’s not so good about that conversation?
- With the conversation we’ve been having, do you feel that we have been making progress toward your coaching outcomes?
- What kind of a conversation do you think we need to have right now?
- Are you ready to shift gears and have that conversation right now?

Whatever Coaching Conversation that you have, it needs to be a real and authentic conversation. And to facilitate that, both you and the client need to be real. Yet that can be frightening. It can feel very uncomfortable. It means coming out from behind yourself, your roles and masks and P.R. and get real with each other. Now when your conversation becomes real, whether it is a needs to be intimate, focused on meaning, disclosing one’s inmost truths, and accountable.

Sometimes the coaching conversation degenerates to a mere chat. Coach and client then engage in a nice, even pleasant, conversation. But it is a conversation that they could have at the pub or at a breakfast table. The conversation has stopped being focused and real, it is now just a talk and the talkers are hidden behind their roles and tasks.

Sometimes for effective coaching it is critical to change the conversation. And that’s what the Meta-Conversation is designed to do. Now you can step back, take a meta-moment, and re-evaluate the current conversation to test it for its quality, effectiveness, and authenticity. And here is the principle in Meta-Coaching: when you change the conversation, people change, cultures change. Often, the very problem with a person or with an organization *is the ongoing conversation* that no one seems able to change.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #35
August 22, 2012

DETECTING QUESTIONS

What if you are asking the wrong question? After all, we say that *the most effective coaches ask great questions*. Yet **what if** when you are coaching you end up asking the wrong questions? First, how would you know that the question was the *wrong* one, and second, if you did find out that the questions you're asking are taking the client in the *wrong* direction, then what? How do you correct it? How do you find and ask the *right* questions?

The Subject and Intention Criteria

As you well know, clients often come into coaching with an idea of what they want. And when they do, they often immediately jump into the *how* question. "How do you do X?" Don't be seduced. If you do, you'll begin asking the *wrong* questions. First, find out *what* it is that your client really wants.

- When you ask about *how* to do X, *what* is it that you are wanting to achieve?
- *What* is this about? Let's say you do X, what is this X about?

Strategically, the *what* needs to come before the *how*. So first flush out the *what*. And when you get the *what*, back up one more step, and ask *why*.

- This seems important to you, right? *Why?* *Why* do you want this?
- *Why* is it valuable for you to achieve this? When you get this, what does that give you that's even more important? [then repeat seven times!]

Here you are getting the person's intention and the person's intention-of-intention and several levels up (which is the reason for asking seven times) in order to make sure that *what* the person wants to learn *how* to do truly fits their values and that they have sufficient motivational energy to make it happen.

The Sequence Criterion

The next criterion to use in Coaching is that of sequence or syntax. In NLP we call this the issue of "strategy." This means that when you coach to facilitate a person to become empowered and resourced so that the person can take charge of oneself, we want to make sure that the person has a legitimate and valid strategy. This is critically important. After all, you know from NLP, every experience as a *structure* and that's why we model top performers—in order to identify and replicate the very best structures or strategies for experiences.

There is a best strategy for spelling, getting up in the morning, getting quality sleep, delegating, eating healthily, etc. I put a whole section of basic NLP strategies in the book, *Sourcebook of Magic, Volume I* because if you don't know or use a valid strategy, you can waste lots of time

and energy trying to figure out how to effectively achieve something. Robert Dilts' book, *NLP Volume I* is a whole book on the Strategy model and has many examples of highly effective strategies. This also is a significant part of both NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner trainings.

So in coaching your clients, begin here. When your client says that he or she wants to X (e.g., delegate, exercise better leadership, organize home or desk, raise healthy children, create an investment plan for money, etc.), first find out the person's current strategy. The set of *wrong* questions would be: When do you want to do this? Where? With whom? What's stopping you from succeeding? The set of *right* questions will be:

- How do you think about X? How do you represent doing X?
- What is your plan (strategy) for doing X? How well is it working?
- How do you know it is not as effective as you want it to be?
- Who do you know that can effectively do X?

When you find out what the person knows and how the person is currently operating, then you can begin to explore specifics about what they are doing. Then when they ask, "How do you do X?" you won't get seduced into immediately answering. Instead you will ask, "Do you really *not know* how?" That's because sometimes clients ask even though they already know.

The *how* set of questions in the Well-formed Outcome pattern are the meta-detailing questions. Once you have the *What* and *Why*, you're ready for the how. This will give you and your client the process information for achieving the desired outcome.

The Ecology Criterion

All questions can go wrong. Because questions directionalize the brain and send a person into a given direction, to be effective in Coaching it's critical to be able to hear questions that lead a person astray and that are dysfunctional by nature.

- "What's wrong with those people?" Presupposes that the problem is outside oneself.
- "Why can't she see what I'm saying?" Presupposes communication is linear rather than systemic involving multiple influences at the same time.
- "Does doing X have to take that much time or effort?" Presupposes that excellence can be achieved with little cost in terms of time and effort.

Here are three criteria that you can use to help determine if you are asking the wrong kind of questions: subject and intention, sequence and strategy, and ecology. To your Meta-Coaching skill of asking great questions!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #36
August 29, 2012

DEMONSTRATIVE SELLING

When you go into an organization to sell Meta-Coaching and yourself as a Meta-Coach, *use the power of demonstrative selling*. And what is that? It is selling *by doing* what you're selling. That is, consider that the very best way to sell this intangible experience called "Coaching" is to *do* the very thing that you are talking about. Given this frame about selling, then how would you *sell* Meta-Coaching?

Set your aim first and foremost to get real and personal and intimate with the person you are selling to. Set your objective to create a crucible environment for him or her or for the group so that you can then facilitate a fierce conversation that gets to the heart of things regarding what the person or the group wants. In other words, without saying a word about what you are doing, *coach* as an expert Meta-Coach right from the start.

Ask them *what* they want, and as they describe *what* they want, ask them the Well-Formed Outcome Questions to facilitate them getting really specifically tight and focused on their desired outcome. Chase down every vague and undefined phrase and help them become even more specific. Ask why its important, what they will get from it, and do that until you awakened in them a very, very strong desire. If they talk in terms of away-from values, pace that over and over, "What else will this prevent?" Then turn to the toward values. Yes, coach them using the Axes of Change.

By using the Well-Formed Outcome questions and the Motivation Axes of the Axes of Change questions, you will be *coaching the person to create a well-formed description of what's wanted that will make a measured difference in the company*. Do that well, and they will never ask about your credibility, testimonies, etc. Why? Because you have fully demonstrated it!

If by chance they miss it, call it to their attention.

"Let me invite you to step back from the conversation that we've had during the last 20 minutes. As you step back and reflect on what's been happening, how would you describe it? [Pause ...] Did you get clearer about your objectives? Did you gain insights into your motivations, the processes involved, and how you can measure the success of the objectives? Do you have a greater sense of the meaningfulness of the goals that you've talked about and turning that into performance? How valuable has this been? What new insights have emerged for you?"

When you engage in demonstrative selling you provide the very service that you will be selling and given that Coaching offers an intangible product— the experience of a series of coaching conversations designed to empower, facilitate unleashing of potentials, and enabling people to become more fully themselves in an authentic way— then the more real, authentic, focused, congruent, and giving you are, the more attractive your offering. Why? Because ultimately they are buying *you*.

In the demonstrative selling of Meta-Coaching, be sure to give the client the very best experience that you can facilitate and then release the person to his or her own choice. That also is part and parcel of the essence of coaching. Free the person to be responsible for the choice to buy or not to buy. To do that, release any and every *need* for the sale. Truly respect the person to make the right choice for them at that moment. This will demonstrate the empowerment of coaching— namely, that the coach is not responsible *for* what the client does or chooses. The coach is only responsible *for* him or herself in what is said and done to facilitate the mobilizing of resources that will enhance the client’s possibilities.

Throughout the process, the person or group will be responding. They will respond by describing what they want, how they want it, when, where, etc. they will also be responding by how they answer questions and react to your questions. And all of this responding is feedback. So be sure to calibrate to the responses you are getting because one of the most powerful things you can do is to provide the person or group with feedback— sensory-based immediate, timely, and relevant feedback. And because that’s also a part of coaching, you will be confronting them with themselves. And that also is what they are buying. And there’s not many places they can buy that!

Mirror back what you have seen and heard and offer them the very highest quality of feedback, possibly the very highest quality of feedback that they have ever received. How much is that worth? And doing that will often be a “moment of truth” for them ... moments when they are held accountable, their “truths” are revealed and discovered, and blind spots are exposed. If they are not ready to buy after that, they more than likely also do not have the culture in their company that’s ready for Coaching. Better find that out sooner than later.

The great thing about selling coaching is that all you have to do is do your best coaching and see if that is what they truly want to buy. When you do this— access your best coaching states, access your most caring beliefs, and be as real and authentic as you can be. To your great Meta-Coaching success!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #37
Sept. 4, 2012

COACHING SELF-ACTUALIZATION

If you are a Meta-Coach, you are a Self-Actualization Coach. That's because self-actualization is built into very heart and soul of Meta-Coaching. That's because our objective and focus in Meta-Coaching is enabling people and organizations to actualize (make real) their very highest potentials and best performances. This gives Meta-Coaching its engine.

So, as a Meta-Coach, do you know how to deliver on the promise of self-actualization? Promising is one thing, delivering is another. Promising is P.R. (Public Relations), it is branding, it is awakening, it is raising the bar. But if you can't deliver, if you can't transfer into everyday behaviors, your promising will undermine your credibility.

Conversely, if you can deliver on your promises, if you can effectively facilitate people and organizations making real (actualizing) what they dream for, then your promising will be backed up by your competencies. This will establish your credibility; it will make you more believable; it will expand your business; it will open doors for you; it will enhance your reputation and business.

So back to the question: Do you know *how* to deliver on your promise of self-actualization? Next question: Do you want to learn *how* and develop your skills in doing so?

If so, then do you first of all have the understanding comprehension of the facts about Self-Actualization Psychology and of the Neuro-Semantics models? Do you know and understand the Matrix enriched Volcano of Human Needs, the Self-Actualization Matrix; the Self-Actualization Quadrants, and the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale? Comprehensive understanding comes first. And there are books available for conveying this, Maslow's original books and the series in the Meta-Coach series. There are also lots of articles on www.self-actualizing.org.

But knowledge is not enough. Knowing about self-actualization, about the processes of unleashing potentials, about how to use the models, how to take someone into the construct of meaning, the crucible of change, or the zone of peak performance, etc.—none of that is not enough. After knowing comes doing. From knowing all of us have to translate into neurology so that it becomes patterned into our skills— what we are able to do.

Given our focus on mind-to-muscle processes, this highlights one of the real strengths of Neuro-Semantics. We have numerous processes by which we transfer from the level of concept and knowledge to the level of activity— the skill-set that makes the knowledge practical and

actionable. And regarding self-actualization, we now have the first seven core competencies that make real the experience and ability of self-actualizing.

There are 7 *core competencies* that you need to develop if you can deliver on *actualizing* a person's highest values, visions, and meanings into best performances. These are the prerequisite skills for actualizing one's highest and best. While there are other skills that enable self-actualization, these are the foundational skills first to learn and master.

The Competency	Self-Actualization Injunction	What to Stop
1) Authenticity	Get Real! You have to be real to self-actualize.	Stop playing the Games.
2) Passionate	Get Emotional, excited. It takes energy to self-actualize. You've got to care, love, feel.	Stop acting sophisticated!
3) Empowerment	Get response-able, power. You have to own your powers to s-a. You have to be the author of your life.	Stop being a victim. Stop playing helpless
4) Congruence	Get Aligned, whole, integrated. You've got to walk your talk to s-a.	Stop the gap between talking and doing.
5) Creativity	Get meaning, get meaningful You have to invent great meanings to self-actualize.	Stop the discounting. Stop the negativity.
6) Presence	Get into the here-and-now of today. You've got to be present to self-actualize.	Stop the escapes.
7) Courage	Get bold, audacious, ferocious! You've got to take risks to self-actualize.	Stop playing small. Stop selling yourself short.

In Neuro-Semantics we now have 4 primary workshops that cover the heart and soul of self-actualization. These four map out how to unleash vitality, potentials, creativity, and leadership. The first two focuses primarily on the individual and the second two on business and groups. Below is a description of the new Professional Track of Self-Actualization that leads to a "Human Potential Peaks" Certification and the Self-Actualization Diploma. And our first time for delivering this will be this November in Hong Kong — Nov. 24 through Dec. 2. For more information — click the following websites — www.self-actualizing-training.com

Asia Professional Training Institute —Mandy Chai; info@apti.com.hk

www.apti.com.hk

The Human Potential Peaks series

Day 1: Self-Actualization Psychology

A psychology of the vision of the incredible potentials within human beings. A description of people operating at their best (self-actualizing their potentials) and seeking the peak of their highest drives and values. In this opening introduction, you will learn about the numerous models in Neuro-Semantics that allows you to fully experience your authentic self and seek the human potential peaks.

Days 2-3: The Peak of Vitality

First, discover your biological self and how to effectively master your driving “needs.” Doing this releases lots of energy and vitality so you can move to the level of *being* your authentic self. Release yourself from being stuck at a lower level need. Learn how to use the Hierarchy of Needs via the *Self-Actualization Assessment Scale* as you seek the peak of your highest drives where you can be fully alive/ fully human.

Days 4-5: The Peak of Unleashing Potentials

Discover your most unique human drive (making-meaning) and your innate powers for becoming the author of your life, the architect of your future. Enter into your Meaning-Making Construct to clear out every non-enhancing meaning as you develop a high level of meaningfulness. Create your own crucible of authenticity so that you can change old meanings with ease and grace.

Days 6-7: The Peak of Creativity

After *creating* your best authentic self, it’s time to create solutions to all kinds of other problems—problems that people need solving and that adds value thereby creating wealth for yourself and others. Experience the creativity of identifying and solving problems as you seek the peak of creative innovations.

Days 8-9: The Peak of Leadership

First there is self-leadership, bringing out the best in yourself, then there is self-actualizing leadership— bringing out the best in others. By seeking the peak of actualizing your own best potentials and authenticity—imagine the kind and quality of relationships, families, businesses, companies, corporations, organizations, and governments that you can create!

Day 10: Using Human Potential Peaks for Coaching and Training

Day 10 is *an Insider’s Guide* for using Self-Actualization Psychology for Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches—preparing them for how to teach and certify the *Seeking the Peak series* as well as how to use the unleashing of potentials methods as a transformational coach with individuals and groups.

Human Potential Peaks Certificate

A Certificate indicating completion of the four modules of the Self-Actualization workshops as you have learned how to unleash your vitality, potentials, creativity, and leadership. The **Peaks Certificate** indicates that you have learned the fundamentals of the Neuro-Semantics of meaning-making, meta-stating, and transformation.

Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma

An ISNS Diploma indicating that you have completed the HPP along with NLP Practitioner training and Introduction to Meta-States (APG) as well as a self-assessment on the seven core competencies for actualizing your highest and best.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #38
Sept. 4, 2012

THE META IS IN THE DETAILS

[The following came from a May 2005 post that I sent out under this same title, I thought it would be still appropriate.]

In Neuro-Semantics, *the meta is in the details*. We call this *meta-detailing* and it is one of the most fundamental principles and techniques in Neuro-Semantics. What is meta-detailing and why is it so important?

Meta-Detailing means taking any meta-idea (i.e., principle, belief, understanding, paradigm, model, etc.) and detailing it down to specifics. It is translating great ideas into action plans, into behavior, into "the one thing that I will do today to begin to make this real in my life is..."

Meta-Detailing synthesizes the meta-program continua of global—specific and in doing so enables us to not get lost in the forest and to keep perspective. I write an entire chapter on this in the book that Bob Bodenhamer and I wrote in 1999 that first challenged and then revolutionized the "sub-modality" model in NLP, *The Structure of Excellence*. That book is now titled, *Sub-Modalities Going Meta*.

This is important in Neuro-Semantics because meta-detailing is neuro-semantic in nature. It is getting into neurology the great thoughts and feelings we have at the meta-levels of our mind. No wonder Neuro-Semantic Trainers around the world teach and train meta-detailing in as a skill in Wealth Creation training, as well as in the training for Games Business Experts Play; Games Slim and Fit People Play, and many others. Why? Because without the ability to translate into action steps, the great ideas are lost in the ozone of meta-land!

Most recently as I have presented the Wealth Creation training in many countries from the USA to Moscow to England, France, Australia, etc. the focus again and again goes to the importance of meta-detailing. I even stressed that this is the magic key that every business expert and every self-made millionaire knows and practice. And I almost said, "without meta-detailing, if you only live in the great ozone reaches of the mind with tremendous ideas how a great project, product, or service, you will never become financially independent."

But I didn't. I didn't because I like to back up such generalizations with some evidence or at least an example of a particular person that I can point to. Today (2005) I have that person! That's because I have just finished a biography on Buckminster Fuller, one of the outstanding geniuses of the twentieth century. Fuller was a man who registered many patents and invented many things, and who was an incredible person in his own right and self-actualizing in many ways. Here was a man born with such a distortion in his eyes that he could only see shadows and no

details until he was four. Born crossed eyed as he was he was "presbyopic to an absurd degree."
"Until four I could see only large patterns, houses, trees, outlines of people with blurred coloring. While I saw two dark areas on human faces, I did not see a human eye or a tear-drop or a human hair until I was four."

His Biographer, Hugh Kenner, wrote

"Fuller, though he developed no disdain for minute things, became 'a student of large-scale patterns,' the world having presented itself for four years in large-scale patterns exclusively."

This was both his genius and also simultaneously his demon or dragon. Known for his invention and patenting of Geodesic domes, the dome was his breakthrough, his one solid commercial success. So you would think that would have set him for life. But no. He was able to dream and he wanted so much to get others to see the big picture with him, but he apparently was not able to translate the meta awareness down to the details (as he obviously did with working out the mathematical and engineering details). Here is what his biographer wrote:

"Bucky insisted on keeping control of the use of his dooms. People who wanted to fool with geodesics met a wall of discouragement when they tried to get data. He wanted to indoctrinate them first. Geodesic orange-juice stands were proposed, and he might have gotten rich on the franchise. He scorned such trivialization. To some associates it seemed maddening behavior . . ."

"That is why he is not a millionaire today; he would never stick to some invention and develop it as best it could be developed in an imperfect world. It was always necessary to change the whole world first, and never possible. Now just as he will not permit us to build special -case buildings, he will not permit us to think in special cases either." (287)

"He made houses, made cars, made bathrooms, made domes, always with a view to demonstrating some larger pattern. One reason they never made him rich was his lack of entrepreneurial fanaticism about the end product; they were not end products, but instances." (300)

Here's to your ability to more fully experience the neuro-semantic secret of meta-detailing so that you can mind-to-muscle what you know and put it into your neurology as part of how you move through the world.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #39
Sept. 7, 2012

THE FIRST EUROPEAN COACHING MASTERY

We have just completed the very first *Coaching Mastery* for APMC credentials on continental Europe. Previously we have conducted *Coaching Mastery* in the UK (London), Sweden, and Norway, but never on the continent itself. Now we have.

And how? Well, as with anything like this, *it takes vision*. And for there to be vision, there has to be people of vision— leaders. In this case, the visionary leaders were *Germaine Rediger* (Belgium) and *Mario Mason* (Paris, France). Actually, the vision has been within Germaine for years and when it didn't seem to be coming together, I asked Germaine to collaborate with Mario, and so they did. This is the power of collaboration.

Sharing this vision was also another group— a group of Meta-Coaches and Neuro-Semantic Trainers. *Leonie Zonjee* in Netherlands made it central to her work and so sent five of the people she had trained in NLP and APG. And from Italy, *Nicola Riva* sent a participant and both of them committed themselves to be on the Assist Team to make it succeed. It is that kind of vision and commitment that is the key to success! My congratulations to both of you and to the entire Assist Team of Meta-Coaches!

At this training I think we had the most international Assist Team ever with people representing nine countries. This was also one of the most mature and experienced teams that I have ever worked with and so the quality of the benchmarking and team leading and group coaching was at a high level.

South Africa	— Danny Tuckwood and Barbara Walsh
Italy	— Nicola Riva
Netherlands	— Leonie Zonjee
Switzerland	— Dawn Voyce
Egypt	— Mohamed Terek
England	— Geoff Dowell
	— Denis Bridoux (who did the translation to French)
Hong Kong	— Michelle Tanmizi
France	— Stephanie Vigne
	— Mario Mason
Belgium	— Germaine Rediger

And those who had not been back since the 2009 reformulation of *Coaching Mastery*, they kept saying that it was a totally new and unfamiliar training, and one with a very focused design. We

had four re-visiting for renewing their License as a Meta-Coach and they made the same kind of comments.

For Germaine Rediger who is in the internship for becoming a Meta-Coach, she “shadowed” throughout adding her charm and focus during the co-training. And then during the interview she gave us a view of an executive coach coaching in the Belgium government and “burning” people with her fierce conversations!

And this is just the beginning. Leonie is taking about bringing *Coaching Mastery* to the Netherlands, Mario is planning to do *Coaching Mastery* in Oct. Of 2013, Dawn asked about it in Switzerland as did one of our participants. And from this training — *three new MCF chapters will be opening*. There will be a MCF Chapter in Paris, in the Netherlands, and in Brussels. And Geoff has launch Neuro-Semantics in the UK and is planning to be a part of a MCF Europe.

So to all, to the new 21 Meta-Coaches and the 4 who renewed their license— *well done!*

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #40
Sept. 10, 2012

LESS IS MORE/ SLOW IS QUICKER

When I first began modeling expert coaches I focused on the most obvious things—the foundational skills that made them so effective and that comprised their expertise. That led to the 7 core skills. Later as I continued to meet and interview expert coaches around the world, I would not only check and re-check about the basics, but begin noticing other things that I had not originally noticed. As of 2012, I have interviewed and modeled 28 different experts from a dozen countries.

At the beginning of this year, when I reviewed some of the interviews that I had recorded, a paradox jumped out at me that I had kind of sensed, but had never articulated. In fact, for a long time I was unable to describe my intuition in words. And it was not that I had not tried. I had. But I just could not find the right words to describe the competency. But having sensed it at some level, I did what is called an “unconscious uptake” in NLP as I identified with the expert and what the different experts were doing. By taking on the experience even without knowing that I was doing it, I began allowing it to become embodied in myself. Only after I had done that with three different experts and began experiencing the skill myself was I eventually able to identify it.

Well, that’s not exactly true. I was not the first to identify it, others were. Several Meta-Coaches on the Assist Team who were very skilled in Meta-Coaching themselves, started calling my attention to it and they did so by asking me about how I was “able to do so much with so little.” What they were commenting on was the way I kept slowing down clients by doing two things: checking clarity and asking testing questions and then out of that I would be able strangely to go very deep into the background information (the thoughts and feelings in the back of the mind which were unconscious in the client).

Reflecting on what I was doing then enabled me to recognize the pattern that I had picked up from the expert coaches. And the pattern is a paradoxical one as stated in the title: *They were doing more with less and going faster by going slower.*

If you’ve heard me recently in *Coaching Mastery* for ACMC credentials you have heard me encourage Meta-Coaches to go slower, gently interrupt the client, get the client to clarify, clarify, clarify his or her words and from the information, go deeper and deeper into the frames in the back of the mind which are holding the surface information in place.

What I have found myself in demonstrating coaching is that by believing that I don’t need lots and lots of talk, but that I can mine and harvest lots of depth from just a few statements, I am able

to use whatever a client offers believing that within such are many doors into the deepest/ highest parts of his or her matrix of frames. And it has proven to be true. Instead of making the mistake of a novice coach, chasing everything and anything the client offers with this focus, I access the know-nothing state and ask for more and more clarification of the surface information. Doing that brings forth increasing depth and richness of description giving the client more clarity about one's own thinking and believing and assuming.

One thing that surprised me in this process of discovery is that this part of the modeling process only revealed its secrets by my own willingness to apply to self and develop my own skills in the art. So what I couldn't describe, when I mimicked what I was sensing and practiced that inarticulate experience, only then were others able to recognize that I was doing something new and different.

So here is the paradox: Instead of strictly following everything the client says, which most often sends a novice coach into going in circles, slow things down. Recognize that even in a small bit the person's patterns will be there. Recognize also that if you do get it the first time, because it is a pattern, it will appear again, and again, and again. (That's why it is a "pattern"!) By slowing things down and harvesting a piece of the client's frames, you can usually get to the heart of things quicker.

This also helps alleviate the fear that I hear new coaches-in-training express. They say that they are constantly afraid that they will miss something. Yet once you understand that people are consistent, regular, and methodological in producing their patterns, then this fear will evaporate. And as it does, you can simply explore almost any piece of behavior that is significant to the person. The patterns of meaning (believing, deciding, understanding, etc.) that load that experience with significance is the key. Those are the frames where you will find the leverage point for change and transformation.

So, relax, slow down, be present, use the know-nothing frame and enjoy the process of discovery. As you relax, so will your client. As you go slower, your client will go deeper. As you use your ignorance of his or her reality, your client will help you understand them more fully and in the process, they will gain clarity and focus and even transformation. After all, you are the facilitator; they are the agent of their own change.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #41
Sept. 19, 2012

CHECKLISTING YOURSELF AS A SELF-ACTUALIZING COACH

A couple weeks ago I wrote about the new format to Neurons for the Self-Actualization Psychology training. The title is — *Seeking the Peak*, or *Peak* for short. One of the things that I'm seeking to do with all of the trainings in the Professional Tracks is to identify key competencies and then to create specific behavioral benchmarks. The 7 competencies for self-actualization are authenticity, passion, empowerment, congruency, creativity, presence, and courage. What follows here is a set of questions that apply this to coaching (I did this for training and sent to the Trainers egroup last week). Use the following criteria and questions to assessment the extent to which you are moving to becoming a Self-Actualizing Coach.

The Competency	Checklist Questions about Actualizing Your Potentials As a Coach
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- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1) Authenticity | <input type="checkbox"/> I am <i>real</i> as I coach, no pretending.
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not hide behind a role, position, title.
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not play any games with people.
<input type="checkbox"/> I let my clients see and experience the real me.
<input type="checkbox"/> My clients see and appreciate my authenticity.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to be real even in the roles I play as a coach. |
| 2) Passionate | <input type="checkbox"/> I get emotionally excited about coaching. You can hear it in my voice.
<input type="checkbox"/> I truly care about my clients, I feel benevolent good will toward them.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am continually interested, fascinated, curious as I coach.
<input type="checkbox"/> I can't wait until I have a coaching session.
<input type="checkbox"/> I fully manage my states as I access the right ones and step out of the unresourceful ones.
<input type="checkbox"/> My passion about coaching sells it to people. |
| 3) Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> I never play the victim if things go wrong. I own my responsibilities.
<input type="checkbox"/> I never feel helpless, but sense that I can always do something.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am the author of my life and the architect of my future.
<input type="checkbox"/> I empower my clients to own and use their powers.
<input type="checkbox"/> I draw the line between responsibility to/for very clearly and precisely. |
| 4) Congruence | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel whole and integrated as a coach. I experience self-harmony. |

- I walk my talk and carry through on what I promise.
- I express many of my highest values in my work as a coach.
- I use my congruence to challenge incongruence in my clients.
- I live my integrity and do not compromise it.

5) Creativity

- I find my work as a coach meaningful.
- I give lots of meaning to my work, I never discount the value of what I'm doing.
- I love great problems because that means an opportunity to create and solve problems.
- I have lots of fun co-creating great solutions with my clients.
- I am highly skilled at reframing to give great meanings for self and others.

6) Presence

- I live in the here-and-now of today with my clients.
- I do not escape into the past or the future.
- I stay in the now when I'm coaching. I often can get lost in the moment.
- I use the moment-to-moment experience of coaching to detect patterns.
- I have no ego-investments when coaching.

7) Courage

- I am be bold and audacious in challenging clients.
- I do not play my life small or sell myself short of possibilities as a coach.
- I regularly take risks and engage in high quality risk management planning.
- I am willing to find and express my greatness in my skills as a coach.

Now, as you know, the great thing about core competencies and benchmarks is that they give you *a way to measure the important things to measure*.

What I find fascinating about self-actualizing and trying to create benchmarks for the distinctions is that, unlike the benchmarks in Meta-Coaching for the core competencies there, those skills are primarily behavioral. By way of contrast, in self-actualization the skills are much more characterological. What's the difference? Behavioral skills are about *doing*— what you *do*. So you can simply take an example of doing, like doing a coaching session with someone, and test to see if the person can demonstrate competence in those behavioral skills. Not so with the character-based competencies since they are about *being*, rather than *doing*.

How do you measure and benchmark *being*, about experiencing your character and the qualities of *being* and *becoming*? That's the question and the challenge. And as you can see above, here are some behaviors, long-term behaviors that you can begin to use to indicate and benchmark a self-actualizing way of being in the world.

Interested? Then do check out the *Seeking the Peak* training that will be in Hong Kong this November, the very first *Human Potential Peaks* training that puts all four of the Self-Actualization Psychology trainings together into a single unit for certification and even a Diploma. Contact *Asia Professional Training Institute* (APTI), Info@apti.com.hk. Or go to — www.apti.com.hk. — or even better: www.self-actualizing-training.com

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #42
Sept. 26, 2012

META-COACHING GOES TO BRAZIL

Last year two people from Brazil came to Colorado to become the first two Meta-Coaches in that country, Jairo Mancilha, M.D. and Rosa Castro and this year both returned as NLP Trainers to become Neuro-Semantic Trainers. And through the visionary foresight of Dr. Mancilha and more than a year of planning and preparation, the Meta-Coaching System was delivered to 30 Brazilians last week. Jairo has been an NLP Trainer for twenty years and a leader in Brazil in NLP Training and the NLP Association there.

So two weeks ago (September 15) we traveled two hours northeast of Rio de Janeiro up into the mountains and into a rain forest to a resort. Several of us who went for daily runs had only the mountain trails to run and so through the Amazon jungle up the mountains we ran. And it was so remote, I began thinking that “Boot Camp” was really the right language—except I had forgotten to bring my boots!

Now taking Meta-Coaching into a new country, and especially in a country where English is not the primary language involves a lot of preparation— translating manuals—the APG manual and the 250 page *Coaching Mastery* Manual into that language, as well as the feedback forms. In Brazil, we had to translate everything into Portuguese and we had to have several translators for the simultaneous translation.

Part of the preparation involved two trips to Brazil to deliver APG and then another APG delivered by Jairo Mancilha, M.D. and Rosa Castro prior to *Coaching Mastery*. It also involved working with 20 some people to create the group that would become the Assist Team. Over the year I devoted 6 days to that preparation.

The Assist Team was made up of eight participants who took on the challenging role of being both participants and Team Leaders / Benchmarkers. Then in addition there was Jairo and Rosa as Meta-Coaches plus three Licensed Meta-Coaches who came in from North and South America: Annie Letourneau from Canada and Ivan Robles from Mexico who were experienced with being on the Assist Team and Roberto Bernal from Panama.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Bruno Miranda | 11) Annie Leathern — Canada |
| 2) Carlos Martins | 12) Ivan Robles Garcia — Mexico |
| 3) Jairo Mancilha | 13) Roberto Bernal — Panama |
| 4) Máira Lorangeira | |

- 5) Raquel Couto
- 6) Ronald Procópio
- 7) Rosa Castro
- 8) Victor Ribeiro
- 9) Walther Hermann
- 10) Willians de Albuquerque

After the training I discovered that there had been a small group of guys and one or maybe two gals who were so eager to learn that they stayed up to the early hours of the morning (till 2 and 3 am) studying and drilling. So when “The Test” came on Day 8 at the end, one of them — instead of quoting off the 10 meta-questions in the manual, he quoted 26 meta-questions (and in order!). That was Victor who was also one of our translators and team leaders! Talk about commitment to one’s learning.

In the training 3 weeks ago in Brussels, one of our participants— Leo Brenner— provided feedback about how important and valuable it would be to conduct a consultation with every participant on Day 5 after the first three coaching sessions and before the next four. Leo suggested we talk about the “strengths” identified and the “next steps” suggested and have a short interview to provide some directed guidance for the next coaching sessions. So that’s what we introduced on the morning of Day 5. Each team leader spent 5 minutes with each participant and Leo was right— it was a valuable innovation, and one that we’ll continue.

Annie helped with the group anchors, the “How Fantastic” and “How Fascinating” and because in Portuguese “High Five” and Meta High-Five doesn’t make much sense, she found the way to do that. So *Meta Toca Aqui* (“touch here”) became the culturally translated version for identifying the slapping of hands when one holds up a flat hand.

With 32 Meta-Coaches, Meta-Coaching has now entered into Brazil and will be developing two or three new MCF chapters for ongoing practice groups in different cities. And all this is also in preparation for the next module III, *Coaching Mastery* which will occur in August 2013. Congratulations to all!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #43
Oct. 3, 2012

ARE YOU SECURE ENOUGH TO TRULY LISTEN?

Do you know what holds you and me back from really, really listening? For Carl Rogers what holds us back is fear and insecurity. At least that's what Carl Rogers wrote:

“It takes courage. If you really understand another person in this way, enter into his private world and see the way life appears to him, without any attempt to make evaluative judgments, you run the risk of being changed yourself.” (1961, *On Becoming a Person*, p. 333)

When Rogers speaks about understanding someone “in this way” he is speaking about empathetic understanding— “understanding *with* a person, not *about* him.” And for Rogers, this is such an effective approach that it can bring about major changes in personality (1961: 332).

“If I can listen to what he can tell me, if I can understand how it seems to him, if I can see its personal meaning for him, then I will be releasing potent forces for change in him.”

What stops this? Judgment. Evaluation.

“This tendency to react to any emotionally meaningful statement by forming an evaluation of it from our own point of view is the major barrier to interpersonal communication.” (p. 331)

And our evaluations and judgments are so easy, so natural, so quick, are they not? We make them so fast and so unconsciously that for most people—they have no awareness that they are not listening to another person. Instead they are listening to themselves. Amazing! They are listening to their own evaluations of the other person as their internal dialogue includes such responses as: “That’s ridiculous.” “That’s not right, not good.” “That’s stupid.” “How can anyone with a brain think that?!” This not only prevents us from listening to each other and especially to our clients, it also prevents us from listening to ourselves! All we are actually hearing are our evaluations of ourselves and our life!

Listening—true, empathetic, clean, uncontaminated listening is hard work. It is also a very rare skill that very few individuals ever attain any actual skill in. And why? In part it is because we are so impatient and so much in a hurry. We want quick fixes. We want instant success and solutions. So we do not take the time to listen. We do not slow down ourselves or the person who we are seeking to hear.

Impatience blocks us from truly and effectively listening. We want to get to the end, to the results. So we keep on superficially “listening” when we don’t understand and should be asking

questions and grounding things into sensory-based reality and by the time the speaker takes a breath for air, there are so many things that have been said, we hardly know where to begin. So mistakenly, we ask about the most recent thing we heard. This is the structure for chasing rabbits and never truly coming to understand the person.

First position is another big hindrance to true listening. If you listen *from your perspective* you will keep contaminating your listening. True listening listens from the point of view of the person speaking, not from your point of view. If you want to listen empathetically, you have to ask yourself a very different question. You have to ask,

“How does this person see life? What does it look like and sound like and feel like from her point of view? How is he interpreting things and giving meaning to things?”

If you listen from your own point of view, you are answering another set of questions: “Does that make sense to me or not? What do I think of that? How could he see things in that irrational way?” True listening takes second position to the person you are listening to in order to try your very best to step into his or her position and see things from that point of view.

All of this highlights the fact that *you have to be secure in yourself— very secure — in order to truly listen*. If you are insecure, you will fear losing yourself. You will fear being changed by what you see and hear from another.

And this fear, the fear that you will be changed when you deeply listen to another person, actually is a very real and legitimate fear. We are changed when we listen. Are you ready for that? You will be affected! You will be touched, influenced, and your understanding of things will expand. And that could very well shake up your world. Are you ready for this adventure?

“Very rarely do we permit ourselves to understand precisely what the meaning of his statement is to him. I believe this is because understanding is risky. If I let myself really understand another person, I might be changed by that understanding. ... It is not an easy thing to permit oneself to understand an individual, to enter thoroughly and completely and empathetically into his frame of reference. It is a rare thing.” (Rogers, 1961: 19)

Listening— this is the key skill for the Coach because the quality of every other coaching skills depends on the quality of the Coach’s listening. So, are you secure enough to *just listen*? Are you secure enough in yourself so that if your listening changes you or challenges you— you are good with that?

To your excellence in active listening!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #44
Oct. 10, 2012

A META-COACH'S JOB

I often learn lots of new things about Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching when Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches publish articles and books. They provide new ways of thinking about things, new perspectives, and often new processes. Such is the case with the newest book by Tim Goodenough and Michael Cooper in their new book *Raising Talent: How to Fast Track Potential Into Performance* (I wrote a short book review of it for Neurons two weeks ago). In the book they have offered many descriptions of Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching and the following quotation is one of them:

“Part of a Meta-Coach’s job is to help a client to find the leverage point, or top-most (cluster CEO) meaning that they want to shift, either by removing, reframing (giving it new meaning), out framing (making another meaning superior to the existing meaning), or using any other of the many different methods to engage in positive healthy change. Once the client has replaced the un-useful meaning with something that he or she chooses to be much more useful, the next step is to help co-create a more effective and high-quality mindset—to build more positive meanings around the new positive to reinforce the inner game. Then the world is just to practise the outer game, the trained ability, test, refine, test, refine.” (*Raising Talent*, Tim Goodenough, Michael Cooper, p. 79)

What if we used this description as your job description? Could we? Would you like that? Do you consider it your job to “find the leverage point” for change? If so, then that leverage point that you will be going after when you coach is “the top-most meaning” of your client. Top-most means “the cluster CEO meaning.” And this language implies that your client doesn’t just have one meaning about something, but layers upon layers of meanings, and at the top is *the CEO meaning*. So again, is that what you do? Are you ready to do that? If so, do you know what they are referring to?

In this new book, the authors write this about CEO meanings:

“The rule of thumb, when preparing for or reviewing an event, is that any significant meanings related to that event will be part of shaping the experience. And it is the top meanings (the CEO meanings—the ones that are normally out of conscious awareness) that are key to changing and shifting these meanings. ... Performance may be enhanced or limited by the meanings performers give to the current state of key relationships in their lives ...” (p. 41)

This describes the highest frame of meaning, in which all of the other (lower) frames are embedded.

“The mindset doesn’t hold just one set of meanings for how you see the world, but layers

of meanings about meanings—thousands of meanings in fact...” (p. 43)

“In the exploration phase of Meta-Coaching, once a client has clarified and specified what he or she wants, we listen for the ‘loaded’ words, words that are accompanied by a specific gesture or are spoken in a different tone of voice ... or repeated several times.” (p. 44)

After this, Tim and Michael describe the usefulness of a *lightning rod* as a tool that attracts lightning. So given that metaphor, they then describe a Lightning Rod Technique which would be one that could “bring out the negatives very quickly.” And given that we often cannot move on to add new powerful processes until we eliminate the negative beliefs that get in our way, they say that it is important to be able to evoke the negative beliefs and the limiting beliefs as quickly as possible. From all of this they have a *Lightning Rod Movie Technique* (p. 67ff).

And what in the world is a *Lightning Rod Movie Technique* and how would you use it?

“If you create an extremely positive Lightning Rod Movie effectively enough and follow this process, it is very likely any limiting beliefs that are directly related to this movie will be ‘triggered’, and once triggered you now know what to let go of to fast-track your development and growth within the context of the movie.” (p. 67)

They then offer a series of examples. “Seeing 10 million on your bank account statement.” “Celebrating your thirtieth wedding anniversary and you are more in love than ever.” “Spending a day where your opinion is respected both at home and at work and you feel valued and are intellectually and emotionally engaged and fulfilled.” (p. 69). Ah, yes, big dreams and visions. Maybe impossible ones in your mind. That will do it!

But they are not done. Then, to that they then offer another process, the “Positive Why Question” as a way to facilitate the next step. They invite you to ask a *why question* about why you deserve that.

“Why is it that I know that if I work hard enough I can beat any opponent any time, anywhere in the world?”

Lots of good stuff, right? As I wrote in the review on Neurons, I highly recommend this book. It is through and through a Neuro-Semantic book and Tim and Michael should be heartily congratulated for a tremendous contribution to the field of Neuro-Semantics!

For more about it — go to www.raisingtalentthebook.com

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #45
Oct. 17, 2012

I HEARD GRAHAM RICHARDSON COACH

It's always a privilege to watch and listen to an expert coach at work in his or her craft. And this past week at Palmerston North in New Zealand, the 47th class of *Coaching Mastery* got to observe Graham Richardson coach. Graham flew in from Sydney Australia and spent two days with us— providing everyone a chance to hear an extensive interview as well as he set in the coaching groups to observe the rigorous benchmarking. Then in the evening, he did two coaching sessions.

The modeling of expert coaches is one of the real uniqueness of the Meta-Coaching System. When I first developed Meta-Coaching, and as it continues to evolve, much of it is based on the real life experiences and activities of expert coaches. Yes, I did an extensive literary search and review at the beginning and continue to do so. But concepts not lived, not actualized and embodied are just that—concepts. And Meta-Coaching is based on both— a detailed and systematic understanding of self-actualization psychology *and* real life experts in the field.

Now when you see and hear Graham, you are going to see one of the original models of Meta-Coaching, one that set the stage for the idea of being *ruthlessly compassionate*. Graham says he doesn't understand that description and it doesn't seem that way to him, but that people always say that's how they experience him. He also says that people say, "You don't let us get away with things." And that's certainly what we viewed last week in his coaching sessions—a relentless questioning and exploring of the person's outcome and intention and a not-letting-them-off-the-hook as he followed them and always kept nudging them back to their stated goal.

This time I also noted something else in each session. I noticed how that in the "not-letting-them-off-the-hook" Graham kept exploring their strategies. He kept asking questions that implied he was trying to understand how they put their internal world of meaning and understanding together so that it somehow made sense to them.

In one session the client said she wanted to deal with self-doubt and guilt which was holding her back from relationships which she said she wanted and that she needed to be calm and open. From that description Graham's questions not only explored what these words meant but how the different experiences — self-doubt— guilt— relationships — calmness — openness, and more were related to each other. And several times when he was not getting it, he would challenge the client by announcing, "I'm confused." Then he would describe where the described experience made sense to him and where it broke down. "How did this X lead to that Y?" "You used to do that, but no longer?"

Each was an excellent example of operating from the know-nothing state and relentlessly

exploring until there was clarity— for him, for his client.

“What is it about that doubt that’s a problem for you?”

“When it does come, how does it operate?”

“Oh, that’s your way of transforming it from cold to warm?”

Following a client into his or her Matrix involves a different kind of conversation. Graham calls coaching a “one-way conversation.” It isn’t a back-and-forth, you share your story and experience, and I’ll share mine, what it reminds me of in my life. It is completely following the client’s experience and trying to understand it *on the client’s terms*. And yet in doing so, it often (maybe always) involves finding those connections between one thing and another that when the client describes it brings awareness that the problem is the logic that connects the items. It doesn’t make sense when brought to the light of day. It seems very different when exposed to the light.

A simple way to think about this is to recognize the four basic aspects of any chunk of meaning. This is a short and succinct summary of the Meaning Matrix. Within a chunk of meaning there are four questions that we all ask as we attempt to ascertain its meaning. And I found that Graham consistently explored these four areas with clients.

What is it? What do you call it? It’s category?	The Identity Question.
What does it do? How does it work?	The Causation Question.
What is its significance? Importance?	The Value Question.
What is your intention? What do you want?	The Intention Question.

When you watch Graham, he completely stays with the client. His presence is seen and heard every second with what we benchmark as “encouragers” to speak ... and these are usually quick little statements (okay, yeah, right, yes) punctuated with nods. And at first I lumped all of these together as “Encouragers.” But this time I thought I saw and heard something else, something new to my perception. So later I asked him about it, “Do you use ‘yeah’ and ‘yes’ to send different messages?” He wasn’t aware of that, not until I quoted back the words using his tonality and emphasis. Then he noted that he did.

Talk about the principle that *mastery is in the details!* As a coach, even in your use of sound-responders as your client speaks can create anchors for different states in your client. That is, what and how you say yeah, yes, right, okay, sure, hmmm, ah, etc. can be used as a much finer distinction. And in all the previous times as a modeler or benchmarker, I had never caught that before.

Now wouldn’t you have loved to have seen those coaching sessions by Graham? Well, plans are underway right now so that you can do precisely that! We are planning to bring Graham to Paris, France approximately one year from now (Oct. 2013) so that he can do a full day of coaching sessions with people after which I’ll be interviewing and modeling him in those sessions. Stay tuned to this egroup (!) for specific details as we develop them.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #46
Oct. 24, 2012

NO FAILURE JUST LEARNING AND TRYING AGAIN

“It is only a matter of time!” Last week that became one of the themes that we stressed over and over at *Coaching Mastery* in New Zealand. But not only there. I’ve stressed it in many places. Maybe, everywhere! And there’s a reason— participants often come to the Coaching Boot Camp for training and what they mostly want, or at least what dominates their consciousness, is “the certificate.”

Yet here is the paradox—the very frame of mind of focusing on something external like the certificate, that mindset itself undermines a person’s ability to do his or her best and to succeed in reaching the benchmarks. So the solution to this problem strikes most people as sounding contradictory: Forget getting the certificate; forget the scores you get on the benchmarks, focus on your client, be fully present, listen, really listen and you will be much more likely to succeed. Forget to succeed!?

What this mantra “It is only a matter of time” means is this: *If you are committed to yourself, to your learning and development, and if you are willing to be persistent, if you are willing to be resilient and not sell yourself short— you will eventually succeed. It is just a matter of time.* Conversely, if you get yourself tied up with self-judgment, self-accusation, self-doubt and other ways of focusing on yourself (instead of your client), then you make it much more difficult to succeed.

So what make strike you as paradoxical and contradictory at first, when you examine the structure of these two experiences— the paradox vanishes away. All of the coaching skills depends upon being *present to* your client— listening, really listening, calibrating, receiving feedback in a hundred modes, questioning, etc. But when you are worried about your score— *who* are you focusing on? *Who* are you paying attention to? *Who* are you present to? Not your client!

“*It’s just a matter of timer*” encourages you to just keep at it. Just keep learning, finding out what doesn’t work, and what you need to unlearn and eliminate as interferences. Keep refining your attention and understanding so that you become more skilled and competent in the coaching skills. Just keep attending the MCF chapter for the practice groups. Just keep doing all of the things that you learned in *Coaching Mastery*.

Discouraged? Need some inspiration? Then click on this link. Here is a tremendous picture of

not giving up. Watch little Hollie Steel in the TV show and competition, *Britains Got Talent*, which occurred in 2009. Now you don't need to whine or cry or sniffle ... that's not the point. What is the point? Pull yourself together and get into the right state and then *do it!*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFA9Zb26rkQ&feature=related>

Now was that powerful or what?! And if a little girl of 10 years old can pull herself together, and succeed in her second attempt at singing like that, what is stopping you from keeping at a visionary goal that you have for yourself?

As an extra, listen to Simon coach? "Everyone gets nervous." he says. "You are now officially the bravest girl in the world!"

In NLP and in Neuro-Semantics we say that there is no failure, only feedback. And if there is feedback, then there is information that enables us to learn, to refine, to set up a deliberate practice that will improve our performances. Is that saying just a saying to you or have you learned to *live it*? That's the secret of success— *living the principle that there is no failure*. And when you live that, then *you can't fail*. That's not possible.

For everyone who is still working on integrating the coaching skills to reach benchmark criteria, just keep at it. It's just a matter of time. Mastery never happens in a moment, in a week, nor even in a year. Mastery involves lots of deliberate practice, lots of trial-and-error learnings, lots of incorporating a learning so that you embody it in your way of being in the world.

To your Resilient Commitment to Yourself!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #47
Oct. 31, 2012

FRITZ PERLS ON COACHING

Fritz Perls lived long before the Era of Coaching. It was Tim Gallwey who is credited with launching “coaching” as we now think about it with his 1972 book, *The Inner Game of Tennis*. So if 1972 is the launch date of Coaching, and Fritz Perls died in January of 1970, then he lived and died before the Era of Coaching began. And yet ...

And yet surprisingly (or not) what he wrote in his last book contains foundational ideas that today fit the field of coaching. Now that book was transcribed in 1972 by non-other than 21-year old Richard Bandler which he wrote down from audio-tapes that were sent to Robert Spitzer after Perls’ death. Yet what he wrote in that book provides many of the ideas that today we embrace as the foundation of “Coaching.”

Did you find that last statement surprising or shocking? When I recently re-read *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy* I was surprisingly shocked to discover that at the same time the idea of “coaching” was emerging, Perls, a second-generation leader in the first Human Potential Movement, was beginning to implement the Psychology that Maslow along with Rogers and others had created. Much of what Perls was doing as he wrote about Gestalt today fits with what we understand about coaching. Let me give you a flavor of the book, *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy*.

“This book is an explanation of a somewhat new approach to the entire subject of human behavior—both in its actuality and its potentiality. It is written from the belief that man can live a fuller, richer life than most of us now do. It is written from the conviction that man has not yet even begun to discover the potential of energy and enthusiasm that lies in him.” (xiii)

So how did Fritz go about developing self-actualization? What were the processes and techniques that he focus on in enabling people to unleash their potentials? In the following quotation where he uses the term “self-realization,” he is speaking about self-actualization.

“Without awareness, there is no cognition of choice. Awareness, contact, and present are merely different aspects of one and the same process— self-realization. It is here and now that we become aware of all choices.” (66)

The next quotation focuses on the process of *facilitation* even though Fritz speaks about a therapist and patients:

“The therapist cannot make discoveries for the patient, he can only *facilitate* the process in the patient.” (76)

And how? Oh, yes, by the skill of questioning:

“*By his questions* he can bring the patient to see his own behavior more clearly and he can help

the patient determine for himself what that behavior represents. Questions designed to bring factors within the area of the patient's awareness. He uses the technique of asking questions rather than of making statements so that the burden of recognition and action is placed where it belongs— on the patient.” (76)

That certainly sounds like something you hear in *Coaching Mastery* when we talk about the power of asking questions rather than making statements. Now when it comes to questions, it was from Fritz Perls that Bandler and NLP got the focus on moving from *why questions* to the more productive *how questions*. If the following sounds like a passage right from the game book of NLP, you now know where Bandler and Grinder got it!

“Asking questions that begin with ‘why’ are of little therapeutic value. “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?’” (77)

“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. 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 ... is mostly taken up with self-torture, futile self-improvement games, achievements, and so on.” (122)

Fritz also wrote about the theme of self-actualization in terms of becoming real, becoming authentic and with becoming alive.

“The idea of Gestalt therapy is to change paper people to real people. And to make the *whole* man of our time come to life and to teach him to *use his inborn potential* to be, let's say, a leader without being a rebel, *having a center*, instead of living lopsided. All these ideas sound very demanding, but I believe it's now possible that we can do it.” (120, italics added)

Perls focused on learning, as the process whereby you “discover that something is possible.” And what we need to discover is how to be present, live in the now, and cope with our needs.

“It is possible to discover means and ways whereby you can grow and develop your potential, and iron out difficulties in your life.”

“A little bit of honesty goes a long way and this is what most of us are afraid of — being honest with ourselves and stopping the idea of self-deception.”

“If you are not in the present, you cannot have a creative life.” (127)

Then there is the focus on wholeness, on being whole and integrated which obviously is one of the key themes of any form of Coaching.

“What we want to do in Gestalt therapy is to integrate all the dispersed and disowned alienated parts of the self and make the person whole again. A wholesome person is a person who functions well, can rely on his own resources, and can resume his growth, whenever the person

gets stuck in his growth.” (181)

So even though Fritz Perls was not a coach and NLP did not move into the field of Coaching until the 1990s, what Fritz Perls did, as a second-generation leader of the Human Potential Movement, was provide many of the foundational ideas that today makes NLP and Neuro-Semantics a powerful framework for coaching. And here’s the strange part, while Richard Bandler was transcribing all of this and then teaching a “Gestalt Class” which created the first NLP group, he and them were *so close to creating coaching*. That’s a little bit more of “the secret history of NLP!”

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #48
November 14, 2012

COACHING BELIEF CHANGE

Recently I was asked the following by a person new in Meta-Coaching:

“Can you *coach* a person through a change of beliefs? Or do you have to use a formal Belief Change pattern? And if it is possible, how would you do that?”

I said, “Yes, of course.” Then later another coach who had been a Meta-Coach for over four years said that he was surprised at my answer and that he had been under the impression that the only way was to use the Meta-Yes pattern or a Mind-Line pattern or possibly Dilts’ Museum of Old Beliefs pattern. So being surprised at his surprise, I thought it be good to describe a way of conversationally *coach* a belief change without using a formal pattern.

Actually this describes how most coaches learn coaching. They first start with a pattern. They learn it formally and procedurally and then over time they learn to adapt it to their style as they make it conversational. That’s truly an excellent strategy. First learn the pattern in its structural patterning, the step by step procedures with all of the requisite details, then integrate it into your style. The problem for some is that they rush this process and begin adapting it to fit their style before they thoroughly learn the original structure. And if you do that, you’ll not integrate a solid and well grounded process.

With a belief that needs changing, you have two kinds of limiting beliefs or toxic beliefs. So first, identify the kind of limiting belief that you want to change.

1) *Tabooed beliefs*: These are beliefs against something. They forbid and prohibit some experience. “I can’t learn this stuff.” “I don’t deserve to be wealthy or to have the good things of life.” “I can’t stand anger, it’s bad to be angry.” “I just cannot stand criticism; criticism makes me feel like I have no self-esteem.”

2) *Mis-informed and fallacious beliefs*. These are beliefs based on false information, erroneous facts, myths, misunderstandings, mental maps that are simply wrong and will not work. “If I fail I will have no self-esteem and that proves that I should never have attempted it.” “Life is a win–lose or zero-sum game, if someone wins, someone else loses.” “The only way to get to the top is to put others down. You’ve got to destroy the competition or be destroyed by the competition.”

Once you know which kind of limiting belief you’re dealing with, then use the following questions.

For Taboo Beliefs:

1) If you go inside right now and say these words to yourself, “I give myself permission to

... [experience the forbidden experience]” notice what happens. And how well does it settle in you? “I give myself permission to learn this stuff at a rate and speed just right for me.” “I give myself permission to desire to be wealthy and enjoy the good things of life.”

2) If it begins to settle, how many times will you need to repeat this to yourself so that it settles fully into your neurology and into your muscle memory?

3) If it doesn't settle well, what is the objection? What stops or forbids the acceptance? How do you know that there's some aspect of yourself that objects to it? Is it a voice, image, kinesthetic sensation? If that objection expressed itself, what would it say?

4) How do you answer that objection? What would be the best response or reframe to it? Integrate the objection to create a new permission: “I give myself permission to be angry *and to be respectful* of others so it doesn't get out of control.”

For mis-informed and foliaceous beliefs:

1) Intellectually do you believe that? Ask this to confirm that the person knows that the belief is wrong, stupid, ridiculous, etc.

2) Yet it is still running you (verbally pacing). What would be the opposite belief to this that you would prefer to believe? “If I fail, I will maintain my self-esteem and hold onto my value as an unconditional given.”

3) As you state that thought to yourself, do you like it?

4) Would you really like to believe it? Would it empower you as a person?

5) Would that belief be ecological and enhancing?

6) Are you now willing to give that belief a chance and let it commission your nervous system and neurology?

7) As you say it to yourself, notice how well it settles down and how many times will you need to repeat it until it settles down very well inside?

8) How long will you need to live with it and entertain that belief until you make it yours? Are you willing to do that?

9) What will begin to result if you live with it and it becomes your frame of mind?

“Life can be a win-win game so that all of us can win.”

“The best way to get to the top is to put others up. Success like wealth is never created alone, it takes collaboration.”

When you know that beliefs come in sentences— statements that we think and that we then confirm until we validate, then enabling a client to identify that ideas that they would like to set as reality structures in their mind begins the building up a new belief process. Then asking them to confirm it as good for them, ecological, beneficial invites them to confirm, to say yes to it and to give that new idea a chance.

Beliefs that don't seem to be able to “go in” and stick are usually blocked by a limiting belief (a prohibition) which must first be dis-confirmed. So ask questions about the benefit of that belief, whether the person likes it, whether it enhances their life, empowers them as a person, etc. These ecology questions indicate that the belief is bad for them, not-good for them. It thereby invites them to say no to the usefulness or benefits or values of the belief. And as they dis-confirm its

value, the belief weakens. Then you can ask, Are you ready to refuse to empower this old idea? Are you willing to suspend it as an unecological thought? Will you now make an executive decision to not invest meaning in that old idea? Now knowing that you coach best by asking questions—you now know the kind of distinctions and questions to ask to facilitate a belief change.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #49
November 21, 2012

LOWER LEVEL COACHING

Expose of a so-called “Master” Coach

There are very, very few books that record *Coaching Conversations* verbatim. I’m not sure why, but the fact is simply that— there are very few. After the very first year of Meta-Coaching, even before I began writing the series of books on the Meta-Coaching System, the first book that Michelle Duval and I put together was *Coaching Conversations*. Why did we do that? First and foremost to present real live conversations and analyze them using the Meta-Coaching distinctions.

Recently I found one very short example of a coaching conversation. It comes from the book, *Group Coaching: a Comprehensive Blueprint* (2011) by Genger Cokerham who is a MCC (Master Certified Coach) with the ICF, in fact a board member of ICF. The book is about coaching groups and one of the valuable things I picked up from the book was how she has not only coached groups, but also *created* groups to coach. She does that by identifying an “ideal client” and then calling a group together of similar minded people, people who would want the niche coaching that she was in.

Most of the rest of the book, however, is okay and tending toward being a bit mediocre. It was “okay” that is, until I found on pages 89-90 what she presented as an example of “laser coaching.” At first I was excited, thinking that this would really be top-notch, world-class stuff. It wasn’t. In fact, it is not only *not okay*, I consider it to be a very poor example. From our perspective, you and I would consider it poor in terms of meeting the benchmark competencies that we have in Meta-Coaching. But don’t take my word for it, check it out for yourself.

What follows is first of all *the coaching conversation as it is in the book*. Afterwards, I have provided my analysis of it from the perspective of what I would say as a person benchmarking this conversation. As you read this dialogue for the first time without any of my comments, see what you think about the conversation and whether you think it reach the benchmarks of the seven core coaching skills.

First, however, a definition of what she means and I suppose what ICF means by “laser coaching.” The following comes from the recognized founder of the field of Coaching and the person who started ICF, Thomas Leonard:

“Laser coaching is defined as a specialized coaching technique and approach that promotes quick alignment, a rapid sense of relief, and a way of quickly unblocking someone who may have felt stuck in their way of thinking for a long time.” (86)

Cokerham says that “laser coaching” will make your coaching more efficient in terms of time and

that's because you have learned to recognize the "essence" and get the client to move forward easily and skillfully. She says that the first step in laser coaching is to identify where lasering might be useful and ensure that the timing is right. The second step is to share a truth relating to their situation, and third is allowing the client to look at their situation in a new way (90). Here is her example of "laser coaching." (pp. 89-90)

Coach: What are we laser coaching about today?

Client: I wasn't able to phone more than one prospect today.

Coach: And did you have a phoning goal?

Client: Yes, my goal was to make ten calls today.

Coach: How important is that goal to you?

Client: Very. There are fifteen of us competing for two job opportunities, and the only way to make the cut is to phone and make appointments with prospects. So it is very important to me.

Coach: What prevented you from completing your calls?

Client: I stopped phoning after not reaching the first or second person I called.

Coach: What was the emotion that you experienced at that moment when you gave up phoning?

Client: I was frustrated and felt like dialing was useless if no one was in the office today.

Coach: Was that reaction based on an assumption or was it the truth?

Client: It was just what I felt, so I guess it was an assumption.

Coach: What are the odds that no one in the city was in the office today?

Client: That doesn't make sense, does it?

Coach: Not really. What has to happen to make sure you follow through on your calls tomorrow?

Client: I will sit down in the conference room at 9 am tomorrow and not get up until I finish my ten calls.

Coach: Will you send me a text at the exact moment that you complete those calls?

Client: Really? Sure, I will send you a text each morning when I complete my calls this week. Is that okay?

Coach: Great! That sounds like a plan! I am looking forward to getting that text every day this week. I am confident this is going to be another successful week for you.

So what do you think? Now here are my responses to that dialogue in italics and brackets:

Coach: What are we laser coaching about today? [*A well-formed outcome question, What do you want?*]

Client: I wasn't able to phone more than one prospect today.

Coach: And did you have a phoning goal?

Client: Yes, my goal was to make ten calls today.

Coach: How important is that goal to you? [*The 'why is it important' question of WFO questions.*]

Client: Very. There are fifteen of us competing for two job opportunities, and the only way to make the cut is to phone and make appointments with prospects. So it is very important to me. [*The client didn't answer the question, "how important?" she did not say. But the coach didn't seem to notice or use the energy of the importance to amplify that.*]

Coach: What prevented you from completing your calls? [*A good basic NLP question, 'What stops you?'*]

Client: I stopped phoning after not reaching the first or second person I called.

Coach: What was the emotion that you experienced at that moment when you gave up phoning? [*Coach goes to emotions rather than the meaning-frame that was activated by the experience of not reaching*]

someone.]

Client: I was frustrated and felt like dialing was useless if no one was in the office today. [*'Frustrated' is an emotion, but 'felt like dialing was useless' is not an emotion, it is a judgment. That was the frame, the meaning that the client gave to not reaching someone after not reach the first or second person. This would have been the entrance in, but the coach doesn't respond to it at all.*]

Coach: Was that reaction based on an assumption or was it the truth? [*A testing question, but framed as an either/or choice, which reduces the quality of the question.*]

Client: It as just what I felt, so I guess it was an assumption.

Coach: What are the odds that no one in the city was in the office today? [*Another testing question. A question about the probability. Could be effective if asked with humor, otherwise a rhetorical question.*]

Client: That doesn't make sense, does it?

Coach: Not really. What has to happen to make sure you follow through on your calls tomorrow? [*Whoooo, the coach took the bait of answering the question and stating it doesn't make sense rather than staying in the questioning mode and letting the client answer that. Coach could have asked, 'What do you think? Does it make sense to you?'*]

Client: I will sit down in the conference room at 9 am tomorrow and not get up until I finish my ten calls. [*Whooo client doesn't answer the question posed: "What has to happen ... ?"*]

Client answers as if the coach had asked, "How will you make sure to follow through?"]

Coach: Will you send me a text at the exact moment that you complete those calls? [*Whooo... Where did this come from? This is a leading question! Does the client want to do this? Is this a goal that the client has set?*]

Client: Really? Sure, I will send you a text each morning when I complete my calls this week. Is that okay?

Coach: Great! That sounds like a plan! I am looking forward to getting that text every day this week. I am confident this is going to be another successful week for you. [*Whooo.... "Great!?" Presented as a statement, not a question like, "Would this be a good plan for you?" "Would you want to do that?" "Would it help?" Coach makes another statement, "I am confident ... another successful week!" Really? Could have been a great question, "Do you feel that this will give you a successful week?"*]

All in all, I would rate that as a lower-level coaching session, not a higher level one. The coach shifted from asking "powerful questions" to make statements and some of them imposing what the coach thought would be best rather than checking with the client. Looking at the behavioral benchmarks for supporting and questioning, the coach was operating at a level 2 and not even a 2.5 let alone at a "Master Coach" level!

I have often said that the average APMC credentialed Meta-Coach is operating at a level well above what ICF considers a MCC (Master Certified Coach). And that comes from having seen and modeled some of the so-called Master Coaches as well as things like this— a published transcribe of a coaching session that is presented as at a master level. So if you want to be truly *masterful*— keep going back to the core competencies and drive them into your behavior until they are automatic! Here's a big reason for re-visiting *Coaching Mastery*, isn't it?

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #50
November 28, 2012

THE ART OF CHALLENGING WEASEL WORDS

As a coach, and especially as a Meta-Coach, you test and challenge clients. It's your job! It is what a client pays you as a coach to do. They want you to challenge them and hold their feet to the fire of reality. And so in the benchmarks for the core coaching skills, there is under the category of Questioning— "testing questions" and under the category of Supporting— "confrontation."

Now most of the time the testing is around checking and confirming the strength of a client's statements: "That's what you want? That's your commitment? And under confronting, you compassionately confront incongruencies and blind spots. Yet there's another area for testing and confronting and that's around *weasel words*.

Ah yes, *weasel words* —these are words and phrases that we all use from time to time by which we are able to *weasel out* of a commitment or a decision. Weasel words typically indicate that a person is wavering on whatever is being said, or having second thoughts about it, or possibly presenting something that he or she is not being fully convinced about it. As such, weasel words indicate states of ambiguity, of indecision, of self-doubt, of self-questioning, of non-commitment, and so on.

Given that there are these weasel words and that the clients we coach will be using them, then as a Meta-Coach, you will want to be able to first identify when client's use them and then figure out a way to effectively question them, and sometimes even to challenge these weasel words.

Here are some examples of weasel words:

- "Maybe I don't take it as serious as I should."
- "Yes, I *think* so."
- "Maybe, I'm not sure. It makes sense."
- "I *think* I *could* do ... (x) ..."
- "Probably I ought to do that..."
- "If that comes up again, I'm *pretty* sure I'll be able to handle it."

Within these sentences are words and phrases that are weasel words. And the more careful you listen to people, the more you'll hear them when there's a hesitation or question in someone's mind holding them back from making a definitive statement or a full fledged decision or commitment. And when you here this kind of language, you can test, challenge, and even confront it.

How do you do that? What's the best way to do this? Begin by simply reflecting the weasel word back: "*Maybe?*" "You *think* so?" "You are not *sure?*" By reflecting back these little words that give the client an out, you give that client a chance to hear him or herself and then respond to that hedge. Doing this confronts a person with the strength or weakness of a statement and the person's commitment to something. And so people will often respond to this by saying:

"I guess that doesn't sound very strong or that I'm very committed."

"Yes, it's just a probably ... I guess I'm keeping my options open."

"Could? Did I say that? I mean I will do that."

From here you can keep testing:

"So are you keeping your options open? Is that what you really want to do in the face of what we've been talking about?"

"Is this what we should focus on? What do you think? Is this hesitation the interference keeping you from going for your goal?"

"So will you? Are you sure? Definitely? Without question?"

Now another thing about weasel words is how quickly, subtly, and non-obtrusively they occur in your client's language. They sound normal and natural. They sound like the common language and way that people talk. So unless you have your *Weasel Word Detector* turned on, you will not hear them. And strangely, most of the time, your client also will not hear them.

Yet weasel words need to be challenged because within them people hide and within them people make excuses and then excuse themselves from closing the knowing-doing gap. Using these weasel words clients stop themselves, and let themselves down easily from the commitment that they have made or that they know they need to make. You might also, just for the fun of it, begin to listen to your own weasel words. In fact, I think I *could* do that right now, in fact, I'm going to make a commitment that I *probably* will do that, say in a *day or two* from now, unless of course, something more interesting comes up.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #51
December 6, 2012

THE POWER OF META-COACHING IN TRAININGS AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION

This past Monday we completed the very first *Self-Actualization Psychology Training* for the *Diploma* in Hong Kong. We used that day for a debriefing and preparation for Trainers and Coaches in using this Psychology of the bright-side of human nature. One of the things that Mandy Chai noted to the group on a couple of occasions was her recognition that the presence of lots of Meta-Coaches. In fact, 90% of the room was made up of Meta-Coaches. And what Mandy noted was that their very presence made the training much, much more powerful.

Why? Because when it came time to do the processes of unleashing, the very fact that there were so many Meta-Coaches, people were able to have experiences that were so much more transformative! Now I had not even thought of that or recognized that, I suppose I have come to anticipate and expect that level of coaching in the trainings — yet it was true. The participants in the experience consistently reported that they were having profoundly moving and transformative experiences.

What could explain that? As much as I could wish that it was the presentation skills of the presenter (!) or the design of the program (!), it was without question *the quality of the people facilitating the experience*. Even I know that when it comes to the knowing—doing gap, the understanding—practicing gap, the gap between comprehension and mobilization—the secret is the implementation through coaching and especially through Meta-Coaching. So a big Meta-High-Five to all of the Meta-Coaches! You have made us proud and demonstrated the quality of your coaching skills!

Now why would so many Meta-Coaches show up at the *Self-Actualization Psychology* training? Precisely because *the unique and special psychology of Coaching is Self-Actualization Psychology!* And where can you get University level training in that kind of Psychology? Yes, you could get it in most Universities under “Humanistic Psychology” or under “Positive Psychology.” So go for it. But know this—the expression of the Maslowian and Rogerian Psychology that you will learn will be mostly academic, not practical.

You will get some history of each and you will get lots and lots of theory. You will get little practice, and you will get almost no practical applied processes for delivering Self-Actualization Psychology. It’s sad to say, but this happens to be the typical case everywhere. So where will you get *Applied Self-Actualization Psychology*? Ah, yes, at the Neuro-Semantic program called, *Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma*.

Equivalence: And what you will get will be the equivalent of two-and-a-half semesters of information and training. So the eight-hours of nine days (72 classroom hours) will be more and in much more depth than you would get in two semesters at a University stretched over a year's time. [2 hours a week times 13 weeks (26 hours); two semesters (52 hours); 3 semesters (88 hours)].

Curriculum: What is the curriculum that you will learn in the *Applied Self-Actualization Psychology* of Neuro-Semantics? You will learn four areas for unleashing and four dimensions of self-actualization:

Biological Self-Actualization: Unleashing vitality.

Psychological Self-Actualization: Unleashing potentials.

Existential Self-Actualization: Unleashing creative problem-solving and innovating.

Sociological Self-Actualization: Unleashing leadership.

Dimensions: Now within these four dimensions of Self-Actualization Psychology are certain *peaks to seek*, that is, heights of human possibilities to identify, discover, define, experience, and actualize. What are these *peaks* that you can seek and experience?

In Biological Self-Actualization— the Peak of Being Real, being Authentic.

In Psychological Self-Actualization — the Peak of getting into the Zone and synergizing your highest meanings (visions and values) with your best performances (competencies).

In Existential Self-Actualization— the Peak of engaging an intensely focused Creative problem-solving Coaching Conversation for innovating.

In Sociological Self-Actualization— the Peak of creating Self-Actualizing communities (families, groups, teams, companies, organizations, associations, countries).

Competencies: And there's more. From each of the dimensions of Self-Actualization Psychology there are multiple skills to be learned, practical applications for how to handle the making-real or actualizing of one's potentials. These skills range from the Need Gratification skills, Semantic Loading and Unloading skills, Assessing one's coping/ mastering of healthy need gratification, to Climbing the Meaning-Making Ladder, Detecting Meaning Constructs, Suspending Meaning, Sacrilizing, Unlearning using the Crucible, Expanding Meta-Programs for Synergizing Meaning-and-Performance, Experiencing an Optimal Zone State; holding a well-formed coaching conversation about outcomes, problems, solutions, and innovations; Unleashing Your Leadership Matrix, Using the Hierarchy of Needs as a Business Model; Doing Change Management/ Leadership with the Axes of Leadership, and much more.

Benchmarks: In Self-Actualization Psychology we also have benchmarked eight features (traits, skills, characteristics) of a self-actualizing person: present, authentic, empowered, passion, creative, courage, congruence, and collaborative. This also you will not find in any University course.

So where are you going to find that in an University? Which University currently teaches all of that as part of their curriculum? Well, the question is rhetorical— None of course. But it is available in the *Seeking the Peak training of Self-Actualization Psychology*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #52
December 13, 2012

MORE LOW QUALITY COACHING

This time on Feedback

In the Meta-Coach Reflection (#49) I mentioned a coaching book written by a person who presents herself as a “master” coach and a board member of the ICF which included a coaching conversation with a client. While it was presented as high level coaching, in the Meta-Coaching system, that coach would not have even reached the minimum for ACMC competency, let alone anything representing quality coaching or expertise.

Here is more from the same book which represents some basic misunderstandings that are current in the field of Coaching. Actually it is worse than that. As you can see from the quotations that follow, I would say that the author who presents herself as a “master” coach does not understand what feedback is, let alone is able to give back feedback, to say nothing about high quality feedback. The following quotations come from *Group Coaching: a Comprehensive Blueprint* (2011) by Genger Cokerham.

About feedback, the author’s first mistake is in calling it “positive” feedback. In Meta-Coaching, as you well know, any evaluative statement like that (positive, good, excellent, great, etc.) are evaluations and not sensory-based information at all. Cokerham writes:

“Give positive feedback in terms of your feelings and your opinion, not as a judgment or critique.” (80)

What!? “Give positive feedback in terms of your feelings and your opinion”! How can that *not* be a judgment? Of course it is. Whenever you use *your feelings and your opinion*— whatever you say is *your evaluation and judgment*. What does this author think? And this is a person granted the “Master Coach” level in ICF! You’ve got to be kidding.

But it gets worse:

“I might say, ‘It was meaningful to me the way you took responsibility for your mistake and apologized immediately,’ rather than ‘You handled that situation well.’”

What!? “It was meaningful to me...” What are you doing *putting yourself* into the picture? So what if it was meaningful to you? How about some objective standards and criteria? What about some sensory-based responses so that we can tell if the person “took responsibility” for a mistake? What did you hear and see in the person that represented for you “taking responsibility?” Yes, it may be a tad better than “You handled that situation well” but not much. Both statements are vague, fluffy, non-specific, and without any criteria that can be seen or heard.

Here's some more. I'll let you read it and see what you think. Is it sensory-based or evaluative-based? Is that accurate and high quality feedback by the seven distinctions we have in the APMC training manual or not?

"You might say, "Helping your client navigate through a difficult course by encouraging her to identify several positive options, you demonstrated your professional expertise and commitment by looking out for her best interest while allowing her to emerge confident about making her own decisions."

Here's what I read in that so-called "feedback" statement. The subject is "helping client navigate a difficult course" okay, how? "By encouraging her to identify several positive options." Okay, and that means what? What feedback is given? "Positive options" I cannot see that or hear that. It offers no visual or auditory or kinesthetic images. I have no clue as to what the coach said or did. And so how did that "demonstrate" "professional expertise and commitment?" How do we know that the client was "looking out for her best interest?" Isn't that mind-reading?

Want more? Okay, here we go:

"Another example might be, 'I really admire the way you handled that situation just now with Laura. It was so thoughtful and supportive.' This is an example of a specific praise that will help the client recognize the behavior they exhibited and that you observed as effective."

"I really admire ..." is again getting one's personal emotions involved. "It was so thoughtful and supportive" ... "thoughtful" "supportive" what do these nominalizations mean? And that is *not* an example of "specific praise" ... for what specific "behavior?" What behavior was exhibited? No behavior was ever stated! It's hard to imagine how a person could cram more subjective criteria and non-specific terms into a single sentence. And she thinks this is "specific?" I want to know what planet she grew up on!

Here's another line that I groaned when I read. Feel free to groan when you read it. It has mind-reading ("you make her feel..."), nominalizations (essential, success), and lots of vagueness ("one of your team members shared...").

"Example: 'You managed your team so well that one of your team members shared that you make her feel essential to overall team success.'" (81)

If that is "feedback" in the world of ICF, then no wonder a person so vague and fluffy in writing could be considered a Coach and could even be considered a "master" coach. In the Meta-Coaching system, none of this would fly. And in any high quality NLP based coaching, it would not fly. There are so many violations of the Meta-Model of Language that we can hardly call it communication. It has the structure of hypnosis, not communication precision.

And now you have more evidence about why when someone asks you if you have ICF certification or credentials, you can boldly and factually reply with a smile and kindness, "No, I wanted much higher quality credentials than that."

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #53
December 19, 2012

A COMING PCMC EXPLOSION?

It's coming. I don't know when, but it is coming—an explosion of many ACMC coaches stepping up to the PCMC level. Everywhere I hear people talking about it. I even have overheard Meta-Coaches secretly talking to each other, saying in whispers, “When are you going to do your PCMC?”!

It could begin to happen in 2013. One person is already planning to do her PCMC assessment in Sydney at the end of the Coaching Mastery there in April. And there's a group in South Africa talking with me about hosting a PCMC intensive. And then there are seven of the Team leaders in China who are planning for it in 2013. In fact, I have just completed 1 ½ days of intense Coaching Conversations with six Meta-Coaches doing these “Preparation for PCMC” days.

Currently we have two ways that you can do your training, preparation and assessment for the PCMC credentials.

1) *Revisiting for Assessment.* The first way is to return to *Coaching Mastery* as a participant and use the seven coaching sessions over the eight days. In this way, you can see where you are on the competencies and spend the eight-days focusing on really taking your skills to the next level. I will be personally benchmarking you and consulting with you about how to step up the quality of your coaching. Then when *Coaching Mastery* has ended, you would set with others (ideally there would be 4 or 5 doing it with you) for another 1 or 2 days to be assessed during a 45 minute coaching session. If you would like to do that, do let me know 5 or 6 months prior to the *Coaching Mastery* training so that I can schedule those extra days.

2) *Intensive Assessment.* The second way is to gather ten Meta-Coaches together who are all ready to set for the PCMC journey. With 10, we will plan for three day intensive made up of one coaching session after the other with the individuals being assessed. That's what we did with the first twelve who reached PCMC credentials. If this makes sense, then plan to schedule with me 6 to 9 months prior.

At the PCMC level you move beyond *the reactivity stage* of coaching where as a coach you tend to you grab whatever you can from the client and begin “coaching.” This is how almost everybody coaches during the *Coaching Mastery* training. If you've been on the Assist Team and have benchmarked the sessions, you have seen it again and again. And no matter how many times we say, “Slow down, pace, pace, pace and then lead” beginning coaches go fast, far too fast. After lots of practice coaching and especially after accruing 400 hours of paid professional coaching, most coaches settle down and move beyond the reactivity stage. Then you move to the *calm measured stage* of coaching. Now you are a person who sets the stage as you prepare the

client for the leveraged questions that you will use to get to the heart of the matter.

When you are at the reactive stage, you feel the need to coach, the need to *do* something—especially to find a problem and solve it, quick. And so you tend to be reactive. You jump at anything that slightly sounds coachable in your client. As a result, however, your coaching tends to be shallow rather than deep, superficial rather than profound. You also will find that the problems you focus on solving are not the real problem, just the presenting problem. You find that if you had gone slower, waited, kept probing, kept checking clarity, etc. you would have found the real problem.

The danger here is the danger of *quick solutions*. I see it all the time when I'm benchmarking at the ACMC level. Coaches, pushing for results and solutions, ask, "What are you going to do?" Client says, "I don't know." Coach then asks, "When are you going to do it?" Still, "I don't know." What resource do you need? "I don't know." Who do you know who has the answer? All of these questions indicate the lack of listening, the lack of rapport, and the need to get a solution—which strangely is what is preventing the deep listening.

At the PCMC level, a coach immediately recognizes that when a client is not clear about the *what* or the *how*, they immediately back up to the *why*. And when the *why* isn't clear, then they back up to inviting the client to dream, to awaken to possibilities. Overall, the coach realizes that the goal of coaching is that of empowering the client, not solving a problem. Rushing into problem-solving like advice giving assumes that the coach needs to be *doing* something. Prior to that a coach needs to *be*.

When you get over that reactivity, you integrate several coaching principles: "The client does all the work," "The coach facilitates the client to do the work of taking responsibility and unleashing his or her potentials," "The coach holds the space by sacred listening," etc. So you go much slower, to first discover what the client really, really wants. You learn to use a *acknowledge-test-explore pattern* in nearly all of your responses. And you once you get the client's objective, you detail it via clarity checks to make sure you are on the same page with your client.

Now you are able to frame the responses and patterns that you detect and to do so in a way that holds the client's outcome frame. Doing that allows you to check everything for relevancy and empower the client to follow his or her outcome to its end. Framing is a very rich skill and as a Meta-Coach you frame things so it facilitates the efficiency, ease, and effectiveness of the client's outcome. When you do this, you fulfill the saying, "Whoever sets the frame, governs the game."

By framing also you manage the coaching conversation in a way that you never thought possible. At the *ACMC* level, the conversation often seems completely unpredictable, unwelcoming, and chaotic. But when you learn to frame at the PCMC level, you create a safe and structured environment thereby enabling you to guide the conversation ever so gently (or not) so that the client can access the required resources and attain the goals that they want.

The four additional skills that we benchmark at PCMC level is framing and pattern detection, clenching of the KPI, and tasking. The sessions are 45-minutes and the aim is level "3" on the seven core skills. In the practice sessions prior to the assessment sessions I will be giving detailed explanations about framing and the WFO questioning and then coach you as you are coaching by calling out feedback in real-time: "Relevant," "Irrelevant," "Off target," "Almost there."

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #54
December 27, 2012

FRITZ PERLS, SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND NEURO-SEMANTICS

One of the books that I reread as I prepared for the very first *Self-Actualization Psychology* training and diploma was the last book by Fritz Perls and the one that got young Richard Bandler involved in transcribing— *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy*. I wrote about it in the Morpheus #47 (Oct. 31, 2012). Now that book was transcribed a year or two *after* Perls died (which was January 1970) and during the time when the first Human Potential Movement was still in its heyday. So one of the things I reread the book to look for was little glimmers of comments about the Human Potential Movement and its influence or affect on NLP given this was the book that got Bandler involved in the first place. Here's what I found.

Self-Actualization and the Discovery of Learning

In discussing *learning*, Perls says that learning is not just taking in some information. Instead it is “Discover[ing] that something is possible.” Then relating that to self-actualizing, he added that it is possible to discover means and ways whereby you can grow and develop your potential, and iron out difficulties in your life (p. 127). He also warned against being phobic of pain.

“The very moment something unpleasant, painful comes up, at that moment we become phobic. We run away. We desensitize ourselves.”

Self-Actualization and Honesty

My favorite quotation from Maslow about honesty is his comment that “When in doubt, be honest.” Perls wrote something very similar in *The Gestalt Approach*.

“A little bit of honesty goes a long way and this is what most of us are afraid of — being honest with ourselves and stopping the idea of self-deception.” (p. 127)

The importance of honesty in self-actualizing is that being honest is how we commit ourselves to reality, to what's real in contrast to what is false, what is a lie, what is deceptive. And this also lies at the heart of coaching— facing up to what's actual, what's true, what's real.

Self-Actualization and Being Present

About *being present*, this was one of the central themes in everything that Fritz Perls did in Gestalt therapy and what he wrote about. It was from Perls that we got the common NLP saying, “Lose your mind and come to your senses.”

“If you are not in the present, you cannot have a creative life.” (p. 127)

“If you live in the present, you use whatever is available. If you live in your computer or in your thinking machine, or in these obsolete responses or in your rigid way of coping with life, you stay stuck.” (p. 128, your “computer” or your “thinking mind” was Perls' way of describing the conscious mind)

“Come on the hot seat and work on the phenomenological basis. This means work on the awareness of the on-going process. If you live in the present, you use whatever is available. ... ‘How’ covers all possible means of behavior. ‘How do you experience waiting?’” (128)

This last quotation is perhaps the most direct reference to Phenomenology in NLP. This refers to the philosophy about the way we experience of subjectivity and of course, NLP is the “study of the structure of subjective experience” (*NLP Volume I*, Robert Dilts).

Next is a quotation from Perls that offers a perspective about criticism or insults and how to handle what someone calls you and says about you.

“Neurotic suffering is suffering in imagination— suffering in fantasy. 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’s your so-called ego or vanity that is hurt.” (pp. 127-8)

Finally, one of the things I found afresh in the book is a whole list of awareness questions. In *Meta-Coaching*, we benchmark *awareness questions* under “Listening” as one of the advanced skills, at 3.5. You already know that all you have to do is ask, “As you reflect on that, what are you aware of?” Perls argued that we need to get acquainted with the on-going process of awareness and how the different people avoid the full involvement in what is there (p. 129). For him, this is the basis of expanding awareness. Here are many more versions of awareness questions that I found in the book that Fritz Perls used.

- What are you doing now?
- Were you aware of what you did with that sentence? (“Don’t you like me smiling?”)
- Were you aware of how you avoided me?
- Is your fear pleasant or unpleasant? Do you feel comfortable with your fear? (A meta-state)
- Is your feeling of boredom pleasant or unpleasant?
- Are you aware of your voice? Talk to Don about your voice and what you’re doing to him with your voice.
- Are you aware that you’re always saying “I think,” “I’m trying?”
- Is this what you’re aware of or is this what you think? (“You seem to want me to carry the ball.”)
- Are you aware of what your hands are doing? (p. 138)
- How are you doing this trying? (“I’m trying too hard...”)
- Ah, for the first time he sees! Yah! (p. 139, a comment Perls made as he worked with a couple)
- Are you aware of what your eyes are doing? (They are wandering around.)

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Morpheus #55
December or January November 14, 2012

DETAIL MASTERY

If you want to move to the PCMC level of competence in coaching and become truly professional in your coaching, you have to master details. (Yes, it's true, so go ahead and groan and moan and get it over.) Good, you're back!

Mastery is in the details. Without details, there's no precision, clarity, or a crystal clear focus. It is the critical details that are also at the same time the critical success factors in any and every field of endeavor. So what are the specific details that you need to know and focus on with a client to demonstrate expertise in facilitating the unleashing processes? Specificity gives a persona clear target to aim for. Details make that which is vague to become clear.

Kinds of vagueness:

Static vagueness: nominalizations. Frozen world. In denominalizing you create a dynamic world that is alive and where you can see processes. By detailing, you can operationalize your terms so that you can describe how a person does whatever it is that he or she is doing. This gives specific awareness of what you can do to change things.

Evaluative vagueness: Judgments, evaluations. Difficult to know what's going on when a person evaluates and judges. By what criteria? By what standards? Details enable a clear description apart from evaluations and judgments. Details clear out and prevent confusion.

Go find two blades of grass that are identical. (*Training with NLP*, O'Connor and Seymour, p. 74).

Global vagueness: over-generalizations, categories and classes but no members of the classes. No specific examples or cases to flesh-out the principles. Details ground experience in reality and make it real. This then creates a credibility since it is not fluff but tangible. Details make the invisible — visible. Details create distinctions and gives your descriptions a distinctiveness. A narrow focus on what you do best gives you a competitive advantage because you have a distinctiveness that separates you from the competition.

How?

1) Learn the Meta-Model of Language and how to use it. *Communication Magic* (2001) and *Mind-Lines* (2007).

Fill in the deletions, the portions that have been left out.

Specify the generalizations.

Straight out the distortions.

From: L. Michael Hall
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THE TEST

The ACMC Qualification Testing: After lunch is the Test. Create brand new groups and have those new groups bunch up for the oral test. Most of the questions will be for 60 seconds, some for 30 and some for 2 or 3 minutes.

Test Questions:

- 1) What are the 4 mechanisms of change for psychologically healthy people?
- 2) What are the 7 core coaching skills?
- 3) What are the helping professions?
- 4) What are the 5 core skills of the helping professions?
- 4) What are the 8 matrices in the Matrix Model?
- 5) What are the 3 key actions or activities of a Neuro-Semanticist?
- 6) What are 10 basic meta-questions that is in the manual?
- 7) What are the 7 kinds of coaching conversations?
- 8) What are the 5 steps in the process of meta-stating?
- 9) What are the 7 models of Meta-Coaching?
- 10) What is the 8th. Model? (Answer: Meta-Programs).
- 11) What are 14 of the 18 questions of a well-formed outcome?
- 12) What are the 14 criteria of a well-formed outcome?
- 13) What are the 8 roles of change?
- 14) How is MC defined in the manual? (13) What are the 7 distinctions?
- 15) How is self-actualization defined using the M/P axes? (Answer: the *synergy* of M/P)
- 16) What is the form and structure of the Facilitation Model? (On the M/P scales)
- 17) What does M/P mean regarding “facilitation?” (A: Ruthless compassion; Compassionate challenging).
- 18) In the Facilitation Model, what skills are on the M axes? On the P. Axes?
- 19) What are the two loops of communication? What are their directions?
- 20) What does it mean to “follow the energy” through the system? What model does that involve? (A: Identify by language / linguistics and gestures the matrix activated and address that matrix by pacing the language.)
- 21) What does it mean to “hold a frame?” (A: Repeating back the statement from a client and using it as the classification/ category for the person.)
- 22) What are the models for each of the 5 parts of *the question*?
- 23) What is semantic space and how is it important in coaching? (A: The externalization of a person’s inner mapping, shown in actions, gestures, where a person looks.)
- 24) What are the 4 steps of the benchmarking process? (82)

